Shared Visions? Diversity and Cultural Membership in American Life

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Sociological theory and public discourse raise concerns about division, fragmentation, or attenuation in our collective life rooted in, among other things, racial or religious differences, but we know very little about how ordinary Americans imagine themselves as similar to and different from their fellow citizens. In a recent, nationally representative telephone survey (2003, N *= 2081) we asked over 2,000 Americans whether the members of ten different racial/ethnic, religious, or social groups "share your vision of America." We used cluster analysis and found three patterns of responses to this set of questions, patterns that reflect differences in social location and correspond to different views of diversity, group stereotypes, and understandings of American society. We argue that what we find reveals different dimensions along which Americans draw symbolic boundaries in public life, and that how these boundaries are drawn is rooted in three different visions of America. Optimistic pluralists believe in the positive value of diversity and are unwilling to exclude people on the basis of religion, ethnicity, or lifestyle; critics of multiculturalism are critical of diversity and are wary about contemporary social changes and political and social "out-groups;" and cultural preservationists imagine an America with a moral order underpinned by shared values and a history of a unified white, Christian culture. In the conclusion, we discuss the implications of these findings for scholarship on multiculturalism and the "culture wars," and we call for more research on how ordinary Americans interpret the meanings and implications of social differences in public life. Keywords: symbolic boundaries, multiculturalism, diversity, cultural membership, race and religion.*

Leading up to the last three presidential elections, talk of "red state/blue state" differences was prominent in the news; some credit Barack Obama's victory, in part, to his promise to reduce the rancorous polarization that many see as having damaged our public life. This concern about fragmentation and division echoes within scholarship on multiculturalism, which questions whether solidarity—a sense of national purpose, identity, and shared fate—will attenuate in an era of increasing racial, religious, and cultural diversity (Hartmann and Gerteis 2005). Some have written that we are in the grip of a culture war (Hunter 1991; Hunter 1994; Wolfe 1998). And ordinary Americans share some of these concerns, understanding diversity as something that can expand horizons and enhance life at the personal level, but also interpreting diversity as potentially undermining a sense of national solidarity (Gerteis, Hartmann, and Edgell 2008).

Authors' names listed alphabetically; authorship equally shared. Earlier versions of this article were presented at the 2007 ASA Annual Meetings, 2005 Midwest Sociological Society Annual Meetings, the 2005 Society for the Scientific Study of Religion Annual Meetings, and the Department of Sociology Colloquium, University of Missouri. The authors would like to thank Kathy Hull, Doug Hartmann, Paul Lichterman, Steve Ellingson, Michael Evans, Rhys Williams, Joe Gerteis, Karen Cerulo, Ron Breiger, Mary Jo Neitz and the Department of Sociology Colloquium, University of Missouri, and several anonymous reviewers for their comments and feedback. Research supported by a grant from the Edelstein Family Foundation as part of the American Mosaic Project at the University of Minnesota (Douglas Hartmann, Joseph Gerteis, and Penny Edgell co-principal investigators). Direct correspondence to: Penny Edgell or Eric Tranby, Department of Sociology, University of Minnesota, 909 Social Science, 267 19th Avenue South, Minneapolis, Minnesota 55455. E-mail: edgell@umn.edu; tran0410@umn.edu.

***Social Problems*, Vol. 57, Issue 2, pp. 175–204, ISSN 0037-7791, electronic ISSN 1533-8533.** **© 2010 by Society for the Study of Social Problems, Inc. All rights reserved. Please direct all requests for permission to photocopy or reproduce article content through the University of California Press's Rights and Permissions website at www.ucpressjournals.com/reprintinfo/asp.**
DOI: 10.1525/sp.2010.57.2.175.

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Some scholars, however, reject the idea of the culture war and find strength in multiculturalism. Often, this work points to the central importance of unifying similarities in culture and values. For example, in responding to James Davidson Hunter's (1991) culture wars thesis, Paul DiMaggio, John Evans, and Bethany Bryson (1996) use General Social Survey data and find that among ordinary Americans, liberals and conservatives share the same values and attitudes on a range of social and political issues, with the exceptions being issues of sexuality, gender, and reproduction (particularly abortion). They conclude that there is no "war," except, perhaps, among social movement leaders and knowledge workers (cf. Ginsburg 1989; Williams 1997). In addressing concerns about fragmentation resulting from both liberal/conservative differences and from multiculturalism, Alan Wolfe (1998) concludes that we are "one nation, after all" because we share the same core values regarding democracy, individual freedom, equality of opportunity, and tolerance. A recent review of these debates urges us to stop worrying about whether differences in values lead to fragmentation, and to concentrate instead on social inequality rooted in growing economic and educational differences (Fischer and Mattson 2009).

We agree that understanding whether our values are shared or divergent sheds light on questions of national solidarity, but we also share a concern with social inequality. Below, we draw on the symbolic boundaries literature to assess how Americans evaluate themselves in relation to particular others. We investigate how Americans answer the questions "Who is like me?" and "Who is different?" when they are confronted with members of specific groups based on race, religion, and lifestyle. Such an investigation provides a different kind of window onto questions of solidarity; instead of shared values, the focus is on the formation of symbolic boundaries rooted in group-based identities, boundaries that can become a basis for social inequality, intolerance, or exclusion (Alexander 1992, 2006; Lamont and Molnar 2002; Pachucki, Pendergrass, and Lamont 2007). Our aim is to shed light on how group-based identities are understood to intersect with, reinforce, or undermine the symbolic boundaries of a common American identity; this is the question of cultural membership.

Our approach assumes that perceptions of solidarity with real others in a particular context is a distinct object of inquiry, a cultural and historical phenomenon that, while related to both interests and values, is not reducible to political or economic factors (Alexander 1992, 2006; Pachucki et al. 2007). Differences in culture, race, religion, language, or politics may lead to different values or interests, but they may also keep us from perceiving the values we do, in fact, share (Bail 2008). The perception of division may itself become a social fact, a "definition of the situation" that is real in its consequences (Thomas 1961).

This approach is similar to other recent scholarship that assesses the dimensions that inform boundary work and how that relates to national solidarity (Bail 2008). However, while Christopher Bail (2008) analyzed the different aspects of immigrant identity that might make a "hypothetical immigrant" more or less welcome in a given country, we look at attitudes toward specific minority groups that differ in religious identity, race, ethnicity, and lifestyle. Also, while Bail (2008) compared respondents' boundary drawing to elite discourse on immigrants and immigration, we compare respondents' boundary drawing to their own understandings of core traits of American society. This allows us to assess whether there is a relationship between the content of one's vision of American society and assumptions about who shares that vision.

As part of a larger project investigating racial and religious diversity in the United States, we asked a nationally representative sample of Americans about whether members of ten groups based on race, religion, and lifestyle "share your vision of America[1]." Using this data, we pose and answer three research questions. First, do Americans draw symbolic boundaries that correspond to differences in race and religion, saying that racial and religious others

1. The ten groups we asked about are African Americans, Hispanics/Latinos, Asian Americans, recent immigrants, white Americans, Jews, Muslims (followers of Islam), conservative Christians, atheists, and homosexuals.

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"do not share my vision of America?" Second, do all Americans draw these symbolic boundaries in the same way? For example, do some Americans see race as having implications for our shared vision but not religion, or vice versa, and are such differences in boundary drawing rooted in differences in social location (race, gender, social class)? Third, if Americans do draw symbolic boundaries in different ways, is this linked to broader cultural differences including understandings of diversity, group stereotypes, and values? Taken together, the answers to these three questions allow us analyze the degree to which social differences rooted in race and religion form the basis of durable symbolic boundaries that exclude some racial and religious minorities from cultural membership.

The customary techniques employed to analyze survey data—for example, variations on standard regression models—do not lend themselves to the kind of boundary mapping that we want to achieve. Privileging linear thinking, they depend upon assumptions about a unitary social space in which each individual's response can be predicted by a single metric (equation) (Abbott 1988). Instead, we use a cluster analysis that allows us to identify patterns of responses across all ten of the questions about shared visions. We identify three clusters. For some Americans, whom we term *cultural preservationists*, religious differences form the basis for a symbolic boundary that excludes those perceived to threaten a Judeo-Christian cultural core. For other Americans boundaries are drawn based on their overall evaluation of diversity itself as positive or negative. One group, whom we call *critics of multiculturalism,* take group identities and differences seriously and focus on how such differences are divisive in American society and culture. Our third group, *optimistic pluralists,* evaluate diversity positively and do not see *any* group-based differences as a legitimate basis for exclusion; they believe that members of all ten subgroups we asked about share their vision of America.

Race, Religion, and Cultural Membership

The literature on symbolic boundaries has a dual focus on understanding the properties of symbolic boundaries themselves (durability, saliency, scope, the conditions for construction and change over time) and on analyzing how symbolic boundaries may relate to social boundaries and, in particular, to those boundaries such as race or gender that historically have been characterized by relations of inequality (Lamont and Molnar 2002; Pachucki et al. 2007).

One important aspect of the work on symbolic boundaries has been an exploration of cultural membership, or analyses of how social actors understand themselves as similar to or different from one another, and accompanying understandings of the social obligations entailed in these relationships of similarity and difference. Understanding cultural membership can help to shed light on the intertwined problems of moral order and social inequality, or how groups understand and enact relationships of trust, social obligation, and hierarchy (Alexander 2006; Durkheim [1893]1984; Wuthnow 1987). Cultural membership is not formal membership. The boundary that marks cultural membership defines insiders and outsiders not in legal or technical terms, but rather in terms of authenticity or legitimacy. It separates "true" or "good" or "worthy" members of the community from "false" or "bad" or "unworthy" ones (Alexander 2006; Alexander 1992; Pachucki et al. 2007). Cultural membership is like Benedict Anderson's (1991) "imagined community." It cannot be taken for granted, and questions of authenticity are endemic.

Michele Lamont (1992) has argued that it is important to understand not only specific boundaries that people draw but also the underlying dimensions that people use to identify others as "like me" or "not like me." In private life in the United States, she identified "money, morals, and manners" as the three dimensions along which symbolic boundaries are drawn. We take a similar approach in focusing on the underlying dimensions along which Americans draw boundaries in public life. Bail (2008) noted that when it comes to boundary drawing in public life, and the question of cultural membership in the nation, members of the dominant

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group may draw exclusionary boundaries based on race, religion, culture, language, and social class (perceived education and occupation). We decided to begin by investigating religion, race, and ethnicity as dimensions along which symbolic boundaries may be drawn in the contemporary United States

We chose to focus on race, ethnicity, and religion in part because of the availability of a good, nationally representative data source with appropriate measures of how Americans perceive a wide range of religious, racial, and ethnic minority groups, along with questions about American identity. Moreover, other research shows that in our national context, religion, race, and ethnicity have had important implications for boundary drawing in public life.

Religion is a strong basis for the formation of subcultural identity in the United States (Smith 1998). In part, this is because religious subcultures often generate visible behavioral markers (styles of dress, public use of symbols) that help groups define themselves against one another (Marty 1976). As Bail (2008) notes, such visible markers of religious difference can have public implications for including religious minorities into full cultural membership. Even when such markers are not present or not salient, religiously based social and political movements bring religious identity to public consciousness (Regnerus and Smith 1998).

In America, religious differences are a subject of both scholarly and popular discourse, and "private" religious identities have public implications (Edgell et al. 2009). The politicization of religious differences is something that people react to as a social fact in its own right (Regnerus and Smith 1998). This can lead to the perception that religious others do not share one's vision of America (see Edgell et al. 2009; Greeley and Hout 2006).

This may be especially true for non-Christian religious others. The widespread understanding of America as an historically Christian nation (Hartmann, Zhang, and Wischstadt 2005) has evolved to a more religiously pluralistic "common creed," which forms a basis for trust and solidarity and informs models of the public good (Caplow, Bahr, and Chadwick 1983; Hout and Fischer 2001; Williams 1995, 1999), and which makes one's religiosity a proxy of moral worth, both as a community member and a citizen. Religious differences, in such a context, may form the basis for symbolic inclusion and exclusion in American public life regardless of the strength of any particular religious subculture. Previous research has shown this to be the case for the nonreligious, especially atheists (Edgell, Gerteis, and Hartmann 2006). It may be more generally true for all those who seem outside of a common Judeo-Christian cultural "core" of values, as evidenced by recent research on the reasons for the persistence of anti-Muslim prejudice in an era of otherwise increasing tolerance (Cimino 2005; Kalkan, Ayman, and Uslaner 2009) and by research revealing that the symbolic threat that homosexuals pose to heternormativity is a key part of the familism that is central to religious belief and participation in religious institutions (Edgell and Docka 2007; Hull 2006; Sherkat and Ellison 1999).

Racial and ethnic differences may also form the basis for drawing symbolic boundaries in public life. Racial inequality is pervasive and persistent in our society (Bobo and Smith 1998), and has formed the basis for both political mobilization and social movement activism. Recent scholarship argues that multiculturalism is replacing assimilation as the dominant cultural frame through which Americans understand issues of racial and ethnic difference (Alexander 2001; Eck 2001; Foley and Hoge 2007; Glazer 1998). In such an environment, the cultural implications of racial differences take on heightened saliency, as a discourse of group-based rights arises in a context that has generally favored individual rights, and where demands for recognition and redistribution of resources go hand in hand with affirmations of racial and ethnic identities (Lipsitz 1998; Tranby and Hartmann 2008).

Finally, religion and race may intersect and reinforce one another, shaping both one's own sense of identity and one's views of racial and religious others. In the American context, white and African American evangelicals share many core features of theology but not others. Moreover, they differ widely on political and social attitudes, with white evangelicals favoring "freewill individualism" and not being in favor of government transfers of resources to help the poor or groups historically facing discrimination (Edgell and Tranby 2007; Emerson and Smith 2000). African Americans from the evangelical black Church tradition have a

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more communal orientation and favor social justice politics and a redistribution of resources to groups facing historic discrimination, based in part on their collective ethos and in part on their theology of an active, involved (not remote and disinterested) deity (Lincoln and Mamiya 1990; Pattillo-McCoy 1998). Likewise, white and Hispanic or Latino Catholics have different social and political attitudes (Edgell and Tranby 2007; Hinojosa and Park 2004).

One America? Or Many?

We expect that racial, ethnic, and religious differences may form the bases for drawing symbolic boundaries that define others as not sharing one's vision of America. But are those differences equally salient for all Americans? Different ways of imagining "who we are" and "how we do things here" emerge even in small, face-to-face communities (Becker 1999; Lichterman 1996) and are more likely in collectivities too large to foster face-to-face interaction (Anderson 1991). One way to understand fragmentation and solidarity in American life is to know whether all Americans draw symbolic boundaries in the same way. If religion is a relevant dimension for some Americans, is it relevant for all? The same question can be asked regarding race and ethnicity.

One America

Anderson's (1991) work on imagined communities would suggest that differences in social location and political/cultural orientation may not matter. In large, complex collectivities that are far too big for face-to-face interaction, Anderson argues that images and symbols from mass media and popular culture provide the content of the imagined community (cf. Baker 2004). Talk about red state/blue state divisions, about the importance of a broadly based Judeo-Christian moral center, and about the problematic nature of multiculturalism may lead to a shared sense regarding which kinds of social difference lead to a lack of cultural unity or shared vision of America. From this perspective we would not expect that the symbolic boundaries of imagined America depend on who is doing the imagining, since the shape of this common imagining would be strongly shaped by a relatively unified media account of the culture war, with all Americans imagining that war to be a good "map" of who is like them and who is not (Becker 1999; Griswold 1992).

Two Americas

Hunter's (1991) culture wars thesis would lead one to look for overall orientations toward values and modernity to be the basis for different ways of drawing symbolic boundaries. One would expect the orthodox and the progressive to draw boundaries in different ways, with progressives being relatively comfortable with both racial and religious others. For those in the orthodox/moral traditionalist camp, religion would be a key basis for symbolic exclusion, since orthodoxy as a more general cultural orientation is often rooted within and perpetuated by traditional religious communities. Conservative Protestants, orthodox Jews and Catholics, and other moral traditionalists would be expected to have a distinctive set of symbolic boundaries. For progressives, religious differences should not be so salient.

Wolfe critiques this view in *One Nation After All* (1998), saying that the meta-narrative of two "camps" divided by their reactions to modernization is not a useful one. Yes, there is a liberal political theory promoted by those who are comfortable with the choice, freedom, and diversity of late modern life and not worried about the need for a common moral or religious "core" to hold us together, and concentrating more on problems fostered by inequality. And there is a conservative (or traditionalist) political theory that is concerned with the importance of shared moral values, less comfortable with diversity if it means divergent standards of moral judgment, and less concerned with social inequality than with social fragmentation. However, Wolfe's

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(1998) study, based on 200 in-depth interviews with middle class Americans from all over the country, finds that ordinary Americans combine the best features of both of these traditions of political theory. They are concerned about *both* equality and freedom, about moral standards *and* tolerance for diversity. Wolfe's work would suggest that we would not find two different ways of drawing symbolic boundaries in American public life. However, if Americans are asked not about abstract values, but about whether members of particular racial, ethnic, and religious groups share their vision of society, it may emerge that there are, indeed, distinctive liberal/progressive and conservative/orthodox ways of drawing symbolic boundaries in public life.

Many Americas

Finally, if Anderson (1991) is wrong and the media is not so formative of people's views, then differences in social location and life experiences may fundamentally shape the drawing of symbolic boundaries (cf. Sewell 1992). We know that men and women, whites and African Americans, conservative Protestants and liberal Protestants think differently about racial inequality and about public expressions of religiosity; (Edgell and Tranby 2007; Pattillo-McCoy 1998; Peek, Lowe, and Williams 1991) do they also draw symbolic boundaries in different ways in public life? There may be many imagined Americas, which correspond to different perceptions of how particular racial and religious groups either share one's vision of America or do not, depending on one's own point of view in the matrix of race, class, and gender-based identities (Collins 2000).

Visions and Values

The question of values raised at the beginning of this article, and posed by Hunter, Wolfe, and many multiculturalism theorists, is an important one. To the extent that our data allows, we address the relationship between symbolic boundaries and cultural content, or the question of shared or divergent values. The main part of our analysis is about Americans' perceptions of who might share—or not share—their vision of America. But what is the vision itself, the thing that people believe to be either shared or not shared? We set out to understand if the drawing of symbolic boundaries is related to how those we surveyed answered our questions about values like democracy, America's core strengths, and American identity. Our questions about values can shed light on whether some visions of America lend themselves to a broader, more inclusive set of symbolic boundaries while others favor a more closely drawn and exclusive set of boundaries.

Data

We use data from the American Mosaic Project to investigate our questions about imagined communities and symbolic boundaries. The American Mosaic Project (AMP) is a multiyear, multimethod study about the bases of solidarity and diversity in American life. This article uses data from a nationally representative random-digit-dial (RDD) telephone survey ($N = 2{,}081$) conducted during the fall of 2003 by the University of Wisconsin Survey Center. Households were randomly selected, and respondents were randomly chosen within households. The survey, on average, took slightly more than 30 minutes to complete.[2]

2. African Americans and Hispanics were oversampled by directing a disproportionate number of calls to telephone exchanges with large African American or Hispanic populations, in order to provide complete data on these populations. However, we do not use these oversamples in these analyses in order to ensure the generalizability of our findings. The survey was also conducted in Spanish if the respondent preferred.

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The response rate of 36 percent achieved in this survey compares favorably with the response rates that most national RDD surveys currently achieve and there is no evidence of systematic nonresponse bias in our sample, as detailed in Appendix A. The data can be weighted to match the gender and age distribution of the United States and account for survey design characteristics, including oversampling and nonresponse. Weighted data are also a close match to the racial distribution of the United States. All reported descriptive statistics, cluster analyses, and bivariate analyses use these survey weights. However, sampling weights are not used in our multivariate analyses because, when applied to our models, the *F* tests proposed by William DuMouchel and Greg Duncan (1983) reveal that the weighted and unweighted estimates to do not significantly vary.

The great strength of the AMP is that it was designed explicitly to answer the kinds of questions we pose in this article. The dependent variables used in the subsequent analyses were developed specifically for the survey, as were many of the questions regarding values and cultural content. Moreover, we gathered data on attitudes about race, religion, politics, diversity, and American identity, as well as demographic information, all of which are essential for helping us answer our research questions. This data has been productively used to answer related questions about racial and religious attitudes (Edgell et al. 2006; Edgell and Tranby 2007; Tranby and Hartmann 2008)

Variables

Dependent Variables

The variables used in the following analyses are questions that ask the respondent how closely members of a particular racial, religious, or social group agree with the respondent's vision of American society. We used the following wording: "I will read you a list of different groups of people who live in this country. For each one, please tell me how much you think people in this group agree with YOUR vision of American society." The respondents were queried about the following groups: African Americans, Hispanics/Latinos, Asian Americans, recent immigrants, white Americans, Jews, Muslims (followers of Islam), conservative Christians, atheists, and homosexuals.[3] The response options were almost completely agree, mostly agree, somewhat agree, and not at all agree. The "start point" or the group respondents were asked about first and the order in which groups were asked about was determined randomly for each respondent.

These questions allow us to examine how Americans draw symbolic boundaries in unprecedented ways because they are fundamentally questions about insiders and outsiders. Someone who shares the respondent's vision of American society is perceived to be "like me," to value the same things about America, believe in the same set of rights and principles, and understand what it means to be an American citizen in the same way. On the other hand, those who do not share the respondent's vision are clearly "not like me" and are outsiders when it comes to the respondent's vision of politics and the national culture. Thus, the answers to the questions we posed imply a cultural membership—a specific vision of American society that others either share or do not. They also imply a boundary around that shared content that demarcates "others" who have a different vision or who live in a different imagined community.

3. Respondents were asked about all of the ten groups regardless of their own racial and religious identity because, in our view, the extent to which one perceives solidarity with racially or religiously similar others is an interesting empirical question. Moreover, in analyses not shown here (available upon request), we investigated whether cluster membership is changed by excluding respondents' answers regarding perceived similarity with members of their own religious and racial group and found no substantive differences.

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Table 1 • *Descriptive Statistics for Independent Variables Used in Analyses*

Independent Variables	*Description of Variable*	*Mean or %*[a]	*S.D.*[a]
Age	Age of respondent in years (ranges from 18 to 93)	44.48	16.47
Female	Female dummy variable (1 = female)	51.6%	—
Education	Highest level of education completed by the respondent (1 = some high school or less to 6 = post graduate)	3.80	1.54
Income	Family income in 2002, before taxes (1 = less than $10,000 to 8 = over $100,000)	5.37	1.89
Black	Respondent is African American (1 = African American)	12.0%	—
Hispanic	Respondent is Hispanic (1 = Hispanic)	11.7%	—
County population	Population of the county in which respondent lives, in 2000, in ten thousands	95.97	184.08
Northeast region	Respondent lives in the Northeast	19.0%	—
Midwest region	Respondent lives in the Midwest	26.5%	—
West region	Respondent lives in the West	22.7%	—
South region	Respondent lives in the South	31.8%	—
Republican	Respondent identifies as a Republican (0 = other)	35.1%	—
Catholic	Respondent attends a Catholic church or claims a religious preference for Catholic (1 = Catholic)	25.6%	—
Con. Protestant	Respondent attends or prefers a church that is part of a conservative Protestant denomination (1 = conservative Protestant)	27.4%	—
Religious involvement	Religious involvement scale (0 = least involved to 13 = most involved)	6.67	3.79

Note: [a]Results are weighted to match the gender by age distribution of the United States and to account for survey design characteristics, including nonresponse.

As described above, we focus on religion, race, and ethnicity as important dimensions along which these boundaries may be drawn, but we also include homosexuals in the list of groups we asked about. We chose this strategy because attitudes towards homosexuality and the threat that this group poses to heteronormativity are a central part of religious belief and participation in religious institutions in the United States (Christiano 2000; Dimaggio et al 1996; Edgell and Docka 2007; Sherkat and Ellison 1999). This is true not only for religious conservatives but for most mainstream religious institutions, as is evidenced by the number and heatedness of recent controversies regarding same-sex unions and queer clergy across denominations. Therefore, attitudes towards homosexuals are likely an important indicator of religiously based boundary drawing among groups, much like attitudes towards atheists and Muslims. We include recent immigrants in the list of groups we asked about because attitudes towards this group are key components of attitudes towards race, ethnicity, and difference (Bail 2008). We investigate how Americans answer these questions about symbolic boundaries and cultural membership, as well as how these questions are related to ideas and ideals about the moral order, values, and diversity.

Independent Variables

Descriptive statistics of the independent variables used in our regression and descriptive analyses are presented in Table 1.[4] Many of these measures are measured in a straightforward

4. Missing data on many of the independent variables was imputed using hotdeck or regression-based imputation, depending on the variable type. Imputation specifications are available upon request.

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manner and so are not detailed here. We include important demographic controls such as age, gender, income, population, and region of country, which is common practice in analyses of polarization and boundary drawing (cf. Bail 2008; Dimaggio et. al. 1996; Edgell et al. 2006). We also include measures of racial/ethnic identification and religious identity and involvement because, as we argue above, we believe that these are important dimensions along which Americans draw social boundaries. Finally, we include a measure of political party affiliation because of the current politicization of racial and religious differences in America (Dimaggio et al. 1996; Hunter 1991).

We constructed a religious involvement scale using the subjective importance of religion in respondents' lives, rate of church attendance (worship), and the number of church activities (not worship) in which a respondent engages.[5] We have successfully used this variable in previous analysis to construct a robust involvement measure that more fully captures the various ways that individuals can be involved in religious activities and is not as sensitive to concerns about over- or underreporting that characterizes the use of church attendance measures alone (Edgell and Tranby 2007). These three items have an alpha reliability coefficient of .79, and produce a 14-point scale. Variables used in bivariate analyses are described in the tables in which these analyses are presented.

Methods and Analytical Strategy

We begin our analysis by examining whether and to what extent Americans use group-based identities along racial and religious lines to draw symbolic boundaries, using the dependent variables described above. Various types of cluster analysis were used in an exploratory fashion in order to identify patterns of responses across the questions. The term *cluster analysis* encompasses a number of different methods for grouping objects or responses of similar kind but they all work by sorting patterns of responses into groups in such a way that the degree of association between two respondents is maximized if they belong to the same group, and minimized otherwise. These types of methods are well-suited to our boundary mapping analysis because they allow us to assess how patterns of responses among our questions cluster into one or more set(s) of common response patterns (Aldenderfer and Blashfield 1984; Everitt, Landau, and Leese 2001; Romesburg 1984).

The first clustering method, hierarchical clustering, was used to establish the number of groups present in the data.[6] The purpose of this clustering method is to join together variables into successively larger clusters based upon response patterns across variables (Aldenderfer and Blashfield 1984; Everitt et al. 2001). The distance measure used in this analysis was the classic squared Euclidean measure because it gives more importance to greater distances, emphasizing differences between groups. The cluster method used was the Ward's method, which minimizes the variance within groups. In keeping with standard practice for exploratory analyses of this kind, we decided on the groupings in such a way that they made theoretical sense while offering a parsimonious and manageable representation of reality (Aldenderfer and Blashfield 1984; Everitt et al. 2001).

Once the number of clusters or groups was established, *k*-means clustering methods were used to estimate final cluster centers, or the modal response pattern for each variable in each cluster. The purpose of this method is to detect response patterns across our ten variables and to assign similar response patterns into the same "cluster," maximizing the differences between clusters (Everitt et al. 2001). In this procedure, the number of clusters was specified based on

5. The variable that measures the number of church activities, outside of attending services, in which the respondent participates, includes the following activities: evangelism or outreach, service work or charity, political or social activism, religious education, and socializing.

6. Results available on request.

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the hierarchal cluster solutions arrived at in the first part of the analyses and confirmed using *F*-tests. Initial cluster centers were chosen by the statistical program in the first pass of the data and then each additional iteration groups observations using nearest Euclidean distance to the mean of the cluster. Cluster centers change at each pass. The process continues until cluster means do not shift.[7]

There are two main concerns with using these methods to find patterns of responses in the data. First, because these methods typically maximize the differences across clusters, any interpretations based on these methods may overstate the differences across clusters while ignoring similarities between them (Aldenderfer and Blashfield 1984; Romesburg 1984). In order to counter this tendency, we used randomly generated half-samples of our data, different demographic subgroups, different distance measures and cluster methods (in the first step), and different numbers of clusters and different initial cluster centers (in the second step) to ensure our clusters were consistent and robust.[8] While we remain sensitive to the fact that there is substantial variation within each cluster, the consistency and robustness of our findings leads us to conclude that there are real and interpretable differences between each cluster. Second, these methods discover patterns in the data without providing an explanation or interpretation as to why they exist (Romesburg 1984). The next stages of our analysis are designed to give meaning to these clusters by investigating the social location of those who fall in each cluster and the content of the vision of American society embodied by each cluster.

Next, we set out to determine the extent to which there are differences in the drawing of symbolic boundaries across different groups of Americans. There are two possibilities: first, it may be that different groups of Americans draw entirely different sets of symbolic boundaries with many different imagined Americas, depending on their social location; or it may be that differences in social location lead Americans to select a particular imagined America and set of symbolic boundaries from a finite and shared range of possibilities. We decide between these possibilities by examining whether the tripartite typology found in the first part of the analysis is present across various demographic subgroups of Americans using the cluster analysis strategy described above and by using simple descriptive statistics and logistic regressions measuring the odds of being in a cluster relative to the odds of being in the other two clusters to determine which social locations are associated with which set of symbolic boundaries.[9]

Finally, we examine the content of the visions of America held by members of the three groups we discovered in the first step by linking these visions to broader questions of diversity, group stereotypes, and values. We do this by systematically relating the cluster solution to a series of related attitudes about diversity, American democracy, and racial and ethnic groups, using analysis of variance between groups. The Bonferroni-adjusted multiple *t*-test is used as the multiple comparison procedure in this part of the analysis, although alternative tests give similar results.[10]

7. An alternative clustering method that could also be used to conduct this analysis is latent class analysis. Analysis done using latent class analysis produces substantively identical cluster solutions (results available on request).

8. Results available on request.

9. We used a series of logistic regressions instead of the more efficient multinomial logistic regression because we wanted to compare the odds of being in a specific cluster relative to the odds of being in the other two clusters rather than the odds of being in a specific cluster relative to the odds of being in another cluster. In other words, we decided that the series of logistic regressions provided a clearer and easily interpretable contrast than multinomial logistic regression and the conceptual clarity gained was enough to outweigh the efficiency lost by using a series of regressions. Results from multinomial logistic regression lead to substantively similar conclusions (results available upon request) so the choice is likely a trivial one.

10. Results available upon request.

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Table 2 • K-*Means Cluster Solution for Visions of American Society Questions*

		Critics of Multiculturalism		*Optimistic Pluralists*		*Cultural Preservationists*	
Variable[a]	F-*Tests*[b]	*Mean*	*Mode*	*Mean*	*Mode*	*Mean*	*Mode*
African Americans	583.16***	2.9	3	1.8	2	2.4	3
Hispanics	494.30***	3.0	3	1.9	2	2.3	3
Asian Americans	802.64***	3.1	3	1.8	2	2.1	2
Recent immigrants	433.56***	3.1	3	2.0	2	2.4	3
White Americans	361.51***	2.7	3	1.9	2	1.8	2
Jews	612.83***	3.0	3	1.8	2	2.2	2
Muslims	398.94***	3.4	3	2.3	2	3.1	3
Conservative Christians	247.79***	2.9	3	2.5	2	1.9	2
Atheists	580.08***	3.4	3	2.3	2	3.6	4
Homosexuals	767.21***	3.2	3	1.8	2	3.2	3
N		901 (44%)		628 (30%)		529 (26%)	

Notes: [a]Question wording: How much do you think people in this group agree with your vision of American society? Response categories: 1 = almost completely agree, 2 = mostly agree, 3 = somewhat agree, 4 = not at all agree.
[b]*F*-Tests and significance levels are corrected and are used to test the null hypothesis that the cluster means are equal.

Results

How Do Americans Draw Symbolic Boundaries?

We begin our analysis by using clustering methods and our survey questions about "shared visions" to arrive at a robust clustering solution with coherent and interpretable cluster centers to determine the extent to which Americans use race and religion to draw symbolic boundaries. The results of this analysis are presented in Table 2. This analysis reveals that Americans have three distinct sets of response patterns to our ten questions.

The first cluster is the largest in the sample. We call this cluster the critics of multiculturalism because, in part, the modal response is that every group we asked about only "somewhat shares" the respondent's vision of American society. While this could indicate a cautious approach to each of the specific groups we asked about, we believe a better interpretation is that these respondents take a cautious approach to group-based identities *in general*. We explore this contention in more detail when we investigate the content of this vision of American society (below). The second cluster, who we call the optimistic pluralists, is the next largest group. This cluster seems to have the most inclusive set of symbolic boundaries, saying, on average, that members of each of the groups we asked about "mostly agree" with the respondent's vision of American society. Our follow-up analyses lead us to believe that this cluster is comfortable with group-based identities in general. This finding runs counter to our expectations derived from previous research about cultural membership and social boundary drawing, because Americans in these first two groups do not appear to draw symbolic boundaries in public life on the basis of religious or racial/ethnic differences. Rather, symbolic boundaries appear to be drawn on the basis of attitudes towards diversity and difference *in general.*

The third cluster is the smallest, but has the most complex set of symbolic boundaries. We call this cluster the cultural preservationists. This group has an inclusive understanding of some racial, ethnic, and religious groups, including Asian Americans, white Americans, conservative Christians, and Jews, with the modal response pattern being that members of these groups "mostly agree" with the respondent's vision of American society. They are somewhat less confident that African Americans, Hispanics, and recent immigrants share their vision. But they draw the sharpest boundaries with Muslims, atheists, and homosexuals, with the

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modal response being that members of these groups only "somewhat" or "not at all" (in the case of atheists) agree with the respondent's vision of American society. This group, then, appears to draws symbolic boundaries most sharply on the basis of *religion*, and, in particular, on religious outsiders rather than on some general understanding of group-based identities and secondarily on the basis of race.

Do All Americans Draw Symbolic Boundaries in the Same Way?

We continue our analysis by examining the extent to which there are differences in the drawing of social boundaries across different groups of Americans. We examine two different ways in which this might happen. We replicate our cluster analysis for a series of demographic subgroups based on gender, race, and religion in order to see if different groups of Americas draw entirely different sets of symbolic boundaries with many different imagined Americas. The results from these analyses are summarized in Table 3, and the complete cluster solutions are presented in Appendix B.

For the majority of the subgroups, our results are substantively similar to the results for the entire population. However, the best-fitting cluster solutions for, men, church attenders, and conservative Christians resulted in only two clusters. For church attenders and conservative Christians, the critics of multiculturalism and cultural preservationists groups overlap significantly in attitudes towards our ten groups and so are best described by one large cluster. In analyses not presented here, we find that result is likely due to the fact that there are few interpretable differences in the content of visions of America (measured as described below) for critics of multiculturalism and cultural preservationists for both church attenders and conservative Christians. For men, the cultural preservationist group is present in a three-cluster solution, but this group is small (describing less than 10 percent of the cases) due to the fact that comparatively fewer men are cultural preservationists in the full sample

Table 3 • *Summary of* K*-Means Cluster Solutions for Various Demographic and Religious Subgroups*

Subgroup	*# of Clusters*	*Description of Clusters*
Men	2	Optimistic pluralists and critics of multiculturalism groups are present, cultural preservationists are absent
Women	3	Similar to whole population. However, women are more cautious about atheists and more optimistic about whites and conservative Christians
Whites	3	Substantively similar to whole population
Blacks	3	Critics of multiculturalism group identical to whole population, optimistic pluralists are more cautious about Muslims and atheists, cultural preservationists are more cautious about all groups
Hispanics	3	Substantively similar to whole population
Church attenders	2	Optimistic pluralists group similar to whole population, 2nd cluster is mixture of critics of multiculturalism and cultural preservationists
Nonchurch attenders	3	Substantively similar to whole population
Catholics	3	Similar to whole population except all groups are more cautious of atheists
Liberal Protestants	3	Substantively similar to whole population
Conservative Protestants	2	Optimistic pluralists group is more cautious of Muslims and homosexuals, 2nd cluster is mixture of critics of multiculturalism and cultural preservationists

Note: See Appendix B for complete cluster solutions.

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Table 4 • *Results from Logistic Regressions Predicting Cluster Membership*

	Critics of Multiculturalism		*Optimistic Pluralists*		*Cultural Preservationists*	
Independent Variables	*OR*	*S.E.*	*OR*	*S.E.*	*OR*	*S.E.*
Age	1.002	(.004)	.990*	(.005)	1.008	(.005)
Female	.696**	(.092)	1.383*	(.212)	1.145	(.173)
Education	.859***	(.041)	1.200***	(.064)	1.007	(.056)
Income	.982	(.037)	1.077	(.049)	.944	(.043)
Black	1.617**	(.297)	.733	(.162)	.760	(.172)
Hispanic	.807	(.170)	1.021	(.249)	1.345	(.306)
County population	.999	(.000)	1.000	(.000)	1.000	(.000)
Northeast region	.654*	(.129)	1.577*	(.331)	1.051	(.220)
Midwest region	1.058	(.179)	1.071	(.216)	.884	(.173)
West region	1.040	(.192)	1.517*	(.310)	.572*	(.126)
Republican	.880	(.126)	.661**	(.110)	1.862***	(.301)
Catholic	1.261	(.211)	.849	(.155)	.947	(.182)
Conservative Protestant	1.017	(.173)	.615*	(.119)	1.538*	(.291)
Religious involvement scale	.977	(.019)	.948*	(.020)	1.098***	(.025)
N	2034		2034		2034	
Model Chi-Square	42.20***	14 *df*	84.7***	14 *df*	77.37***	14 *df*
Goodness of fit	2031.30	2018 *df*	2043.32	2018 *df*	2026.69	2018 *df*
Correctly classified	58.2%		71.5%		75.1%	

Note: Data shown are odds ratios from logistic regressions with standard errors in parantheses.
$^{*}p < .05$ $^{**}p < .01$ $^{***}p < .001$ (two-tailed tests)

and so was eliminated from the final model. This result is congruous with previous work that finds that women have a wider range of attitudes then men towards racial and political out-groups (Edgell and Tranby 2007; Golebiowska 1999). However, and importantly, none of these differences are large, with a three cluster solution being the next best fit in all three cases.

In sum, these analyses demonstrate that the three clusters we found in the full sample—optimistic pluralists, critics of multiculturalism, and cultural preservationists—are robust, consistent, and sensible descriptors of American's symbolic boundaries, for both the whole population and the majority of subpopulations. We conclude from this analysis that differences in symbolic boundaries across social locations, if they exist, will be found in the concentration of members of different groups in one of the three clusters.

We next examine the extent to which the drawing of symbolic boundaries across the three clusters varies systematically by social location. The logistic regressions in Table 4 allow us to examine the likelihood of being in a particular group relative to the other two groups while controlling for the effects of other social locations and states. The estimates are presented as odds ratios in order to simplify interpretation. Thus, values greater than one indicate a positive relationship between the independent and dependent variables while values less than one indicate a negative relationship.[11] The various measures of fit demonstrate that these models are a reasonable to good fit to the data.

The first model in Table 4 presents the odds of being in the critics of multiculturalism cluster, relative to being in the other two clusters. The results of this model indicate that women are 30 percent less likely [(.696-1)(100%) = –30.4%] than men to be in the critics

11. Reported standard errors are individual-level Huber-White sandwich estimates of variance, more commonly referred to as robust estimators. Huber-White sandwich estimates of variance yield more consistent estimates of the variance in the parameter estimates even in the presence of model misspecification.

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of multiculturalism cluster relative to being in the other two clusters and controlling for the other variables in the equation. Those living in the Northeast are also less likely to be in critics of multiculturalism cluster. The more educated are also less likely to be in the critics of multiculturalism cluster, with each increase in the level of education completed resulting in a decrease in the likelihood of being in the critics of multiculturalism cluster. The most powerful predictor of being a critic of multiculturalism is race, with African Americans being 60 percent more likely than whites to be in the critics of multiculturalism cluster, relative to being in the other two groups.[12]

The second model presents the odds of being in the optimistic pluralist cluster, relative to being in the other two clusters. In contrast to the results for critics of multiculturalism, women and the more educated are much more likely to be optimistic pluralists, such that women are 38 percent more likely than men to be in the optimistic pluralist cluster and each increasing educational credential received resulting in a 20 percent increase in the likelihood of being in the optimistic pluralist cluster, relative to being in the other groups. Those living in the Northeast and West are more likely than those living in the South to be in the optimistic pluralist cluster. The regression results also allow us to determine who optimistic pluralists are less likely to be, with Republicans, conservative Protestants, and the religiously involved being significantly less likely than Democrats, nonconservative Protestants, or the less religiously involved to be in the optimistic pluralist cluster. Age also reduces the odds of being an optimistic pluralist, with each one-year increase in age decreasing the likelihood of being an optimistic pluralist by 1 percent, relative to being in the other two groups.

The third model in Table 4 presents the odds of being in the cultural preservationist cluster, relative to being in the critics of multiculturalism or optimistic pluralist clusters. Cultural preservationists are more likely to be in the South than in the West. Republicans are also 86 percent more likely than Democrats to be in the cultural preservationist cluster relative to the other two groups. Religious preference and involvement also distinguishes cultural preservationists from the other two groups. Attending or preferring a conservative Protestant denomination increases the odds of being a cultural preservationist by 54 percent. Additionally, each increase in religious involvement increases respondents' odds of being in the cultural preservationist cluster. We conclude from this analysis that differences in social location lead Americans to select a set of symbolic boundaries from a finite and shared range of possibilities

What is the Content of the Three Imagined Americas?

We continue our analysis by examining how those in the optimistic pluralist, critics of multiculturalism, and cultural preservationist clusters answer a range of questions about diversity, racial and ethnic groups, American democracy, and values in order to give meaning to the different visions of America embodied in these clusters. The results of these analyses are presented in two tables, Table 5a and Table 5b. In this section, we proceed by describing the results of the analyses for each table, and each panel in the tables, in sequence. We argue that these visions, while overlapping in some ways, have different and sometimes disparate understandings of diversity, values, and the role and place of different groups in society.

Table 5a, Panel A concerns views of diversity. While there is much agreement here, with most respondents in each group valuing diversity in their community and among their friends, there are real and interpretable differences between the clusters. Critics of multiculturalism are, on average, the least optimistic about diversity, being the least likely to say that diversity is a good thing and being the least likely to value diversity in their community and among their group of friends. Those in the optimistic pluralist cluster are the most optimistic about diversity.

12. We initially included measures of racial, political, and religious isolation in these analyses in order to check for social isolation effects. However, these variables were never significant and did improve the fit of the models, so were dropped from the final models.

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Table 5a • *Differences in Response Means and Percentages for Selected Attitude Measures, by Cluster for Whole Sample*

	Critics of Multiculturalism	*Optimistic Pluralists*	*Cultural Preservationists*
Panel A: Views of Diversity			
Diversity is a good thing (0 = diversity is bad OR both good and bad)	38.7%‡	54.0%‡	45.7%‡
Values diversity in their city or town (1 = strongly disagree to 4 = strongly agree)	3.39‡	3.76‡	3.51‡
Values diversity among their group of friends (1 = strongly disagree to 4 = strongly agree)	3.52‡	3.83‡	3.63‡
Panel B: Views of American Society			
Democracy is a core strength of America (1 = not very important to 4 = very important)	3.74‡	3.83	3.88
Economic opportunity is a core strength of America (1 = not very important to 4 = very important)	3.82	3.85†	3.78†
Individual freedoms are a core strength of America (1 = not very important to 4 = very important)	3.91†	3.93	3.96†
People should have a shared set of moral values for a strong America (1 = strongly disagree to 4 = strongly agree)	3.42‡	3.23‡	3.61‡
For a strong America, it is enough for everyone to follow the same rules (1 = strongly disagree to 4 = strongly agree)	3.16†	3.36†	3.25
Learn about different people is the best way of dealing with them (1 = strongly disagree to 4 = strongly agree)	3.55	3.73‡	3.61
It is important to recognize the rights of groups (1 = strongly disagree to 4 = strongly agree)	3.41	3.58‡	3.35
The United States is a Christian nation and that is a good thing (0 = Christian nation, bad thing)	88.7%	87.2%	98.1%‡
The United States is NOT a Christian nation and that is a good thing (0 = NOT Christian nation, bad thing)	38.6%‡	63.9%‡	23.6%‡
The United States is a white nation and that is a good thing (0 = white nation, bad thing)	51.4%	43.8%	66.5%‡
The United States is NOT a white Nation and that is a good thing (0 = NOT white nation, bad thing)	76.0%	87.0%‡	80.1%
N	901 (44%)	628 (30%)	529 (26%)

Notes: ‡Mean response is significantly different from BOTH other clusters at the .05 level; †Mean response is significantly different from the ONE other cluster with the most distant cluster mean at the .05 level (e.g., the mean response of optimistic pluralists on the "economic opportunity is a core strenght of American" item is significantly different from the mean response of cultural preservationists, but not critics of multiculturalism, at the .05 level).

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They are the most likely to say that diversity is a good thing and that they value diversity in their community and among their group of friends. Those in the cultural preservationist cluster score in the middle on these three items.

Of course, these are central tendencies within the clusters; there are some critics of multiculturalism who are more optimistic and some optimistic pluralists who are more pessimistic. However, these central tendencies are strong and show us that for most people in the critics of multiculturalism cluster, a view that racial and religious differences lead to a fragmented vision of America goes along with a more critical stance toward diversity itself. Likewise, those in the optimistic pluralist cluster are likely to believe that group-based differences are not a barrier to a shared vision of America and they also tend to be optimistic about diversity. We believe this indicates that our language of having a "shared vision" was associated, by survey respondents, with concerns about division and conflict; we discuss this more below.

Variations in views of American society and the values important to it are presented in Panel B. The three clusters generally hold similar beliefs about the core strengths of American society, showing only small differences in the beliefs that democracy, economic opportunity, and individual freedoms are core strengths of America. This confirms that in some ways the arguments about a "vast middle" are correct, at least when it comes to these very core values. A few exceptions to this agreement exist, with critics of multiculturalism being less likely than those in the other two clusters to say that democracy is a core strength of America, while the optimistic pluralist cluster are more likely than the cultural preservationist cluster to believe that economic opportunity is a core strength of America.

There is more variation in the balance of the items concerning views of American society. Those in the cultural preservationist cluster are the most likely to strongly agree with the statement that people should have a shared set of moral values for a strong America. Optimistic pluralists score the lowest on this item, with critics of multiculturalism falling in between the two. Rather than a moral basis for a strong America, optimistic pluralists tend to favor a more procedural orientation, having the highest level of agreement with the statement "For a strong America, it is enough for everyone to follow the same rules." Those in the critics of multiculturalism cluster, on the other hand, do not believe that procedural rights are important for a strong America, scoring the lowest of the three clusters on this item. Optimistic pluralists also tend to support the rights of groups and value interaction and communication as the best way to deal with different types of people, scoring the highest of the cluster on this item.

Turning to attitudes about the religious and racial identity of the United States, the shared set of moral values favored by those in the cultural preservationist cluster is racially and religiously based, with those in the cultural preservationist cluster being much more likely than the other two groups to say that the United States is Christian nation and that is a good thing, with 98 percent of those in the cluster saying it is a Christian nation and that it is a good thing, and that the United States is white nation and that is a good thing.[13] Those in the optimistic pluralist cluster, on the other hand, are more likely than the other two groups to say the United States is *not* a Christian nation or a white nation and that is a good thing. The attitudes of critics of multiculturalism are more difficult to characterize. They tend to fall in between the other two groups, although they are the least likely to say that the United States is *not* a white nation and that is a good thing.

Table 5b reports views toward selected social, religious, and racial groups, along with attitudes towards difference in public life. Panel A shows the substantial differences in group stereotypes and attitudes across the three clusters. The optimistic pluralist cluster tends to have the most sympathetic view of minority groups, being the least like to believe that homosexuals have too much power in American society, that African Americans are a threat to public order,

13. These items represent different ways of combining four questions that ask respondents if the United States is or is not a Christian nation, if they think that is a good or a bad thing, if the United States is or is not a white nation, and if they think that is a good or a bad thing.

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Table 5b • ***Differences in Response Means and Percentages for Selected Group Stereotypes and the Role of Difference in Public Life, by Cluster for Whole Sample***

	Critics of Multiculturalism	*Optimistic Pluralists*	*Cultural Preservationists*
Panel A: Group Stereotypes			
Conservative Christians have too much power in American society (0 = too little or about the right amount)	29.9%‡	39.6%‡	10.4%‡
Homosexuals have too much power in American society (0 = too little or about the right amount)	35.9%‡	13.5%‡	45.3%‡
Jews have too much power in American society (0 = too little or about the right amount)	20.5%‡	8.6%	11.2%
African Americans are a greater threat to public order than others (0 = less threat or about the same)	19.6%	8.9%‡	15.3%
Muslim Americans are a greater threat to public order than others (0 = less threat or about the same)	22.9%	17.1%	31.3%‡
African Americans divert resources away from others (1 = strongly disagree to 4 = strongly agree)	2.08	1.56‡	2.01
New Immigrants divert resources away from others (1 = strongly disagree to 4 = strongly agree)	2.68‡	2.31‡	2.88‡
Asian Americans are the model minority (1 = strongly disagree to 4 = strongly agree)	2.40‡	2.70	2.66
I would disapprove if my child wanted to marry someone different scale	2.40‡	1.10‡	2.80‡
Panel B: Role of Difference in Public Life			
Public schools should teach about racial and ethnic diversity (1 = strongly disagree to 4 = strongly agree)	3.46	3.63‡	3.46
Racial differences divide Americans a lot (0 = not much, only a little, or some)	57.2%‡	49.4%	45.0%
The government should guarantee equal treatment of all religions (1 = strongly disagree to 4 = strongly agree)	3.09	3.32‡	3.03
Public schools should teach about religious diversity (1 = strongly disagree to 4 = strongly agree)	2.94†	3.09†	3.06
Religious differences divide Americans a Lot (1 = strongly disagree to 4 = strongly agree)	46.0%‡	37.9%	37.0%
Panel C: Experiences of Discrimination			
Experienced racial discrimination (0 = has not experienced racial discrimination)	43.0%‡	33.6%	36.8%
Experienced religious discrimination (0 = has not experienced religious discrimination)	24.6%†	19.1%†	24.1%
N	901 (44%)	628 (30%)	529 (26%)

Notes: ‡Mean response is significantly different from BOTH other clusters at the .05 level; †Mean response is significantly different from the ONE other cluster with the most distant cluster mean at the .05 level (e.g., the mean response of optimistic pluralists on the "public schools should teach about religious diversity" item is significantly different from the mean response of critics of multiculturalism, but not cultural preservationists, at the .05 level).

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and that African Americans or new immigrants divert resources away from others. Optimistic pluralists are also the least like to disapprove were their child to marry someone from a different ethnic, racial, or religious group.[14] On the other hand, optimistic pluralists are the most likely to believe that conservative Christians have too much power in American society, with 40 percent of this group agreeing with that statement.

Critics of multiculturalism have a distinctive set of group-based views. On average, they are in the middle on whether conservative Christians and homosexuals have too much power, although they tend to score much higher than cultural preservationists on the first measure. Those in the critics of multiculturalism cluster are also in the middle on whether immigrants divert resources from others and on the intermarriage scale. They are the most likely to believe, on average, that African Americans are a threat to public order and divert resources away from others and that Jews have too much power in American society. On the other hand, those in the critics of multiculturalism cluster are the least likely to believe that Asian Americans are the model minority.

Those in the cultural preservationist cluster are the most likely to make distinctions about cultural and religious groups. They are the most likely to believe that homosexuals have too much power in America, that Muslims Americans are a threat to public order, and that new immigrants divert resources away from others. They are also more likely than the other two groups to disapprove were their child to want to marry someone different from themselves. On the other hand, they are by far the least likely to believe that conservatives Christians have too much power in American society. Those in the cultural preservationist cluster score in the middle on whether African Americans divert resources away from others.

Panel B of Table 5b reports differences in attitudes towards the role that race and religion should play in public life. Those in the critics of multiculturalism cluster are, as one would expect, somewhat cautious about the role of difference in public life. On average, they are more like the other groups to say that both racial and religious difference divide Americans a lot. Moreover, critics of multiculturalism are less inclined than the other two groups to say that public schools should teach about religious diversity. Those in the optimistic pluralist cluster, on the other hand, are more optimistic about the role of difference in public life. They are more likely than the other two groups to believe that public schools should teach about racial and ethnic diversity, although their views on the teaching of religious diversity is indistinguishable from those in the cultural preservationist cluster. They are also less likely than critics of multiculturalism to believe that race divides Americans a lot. Optimistic pluralists are the most likely to agree that the government should guarantee equal treatment of all religions. Those in the cultural preservationist cluster, while valuing the Christian tradition of the United States, are less likely than those in the optimistic pluralist cluster to believe that the government should guarantee equal treatment of all religions.

Panel C describes reported differences in experiences of discrimination. The critics of multiculturalism are more likely than members of other clusters to report that they have experienced racial discrimination and are more likely than optimistic pluralists to report that they have experienced religious discrimination. It seems possible that the criticism of multiculturalism embodied in this cluster comes from negative experiences with difference in their everyday lives.

In order to explore the contradictory findings that African Americans are concentrated in the critics of multiculturalism cluster and that this cluster has the most negative attitudes towards African Americans, we analyze differences between African American and white critics of multiculturalism on selected measures in Table 6. This table reveals many differences

14. The intermarriage scale is a count scale that measures if the respondent would disapprove if his son or daughter wanted to marry someone different from him/herself. Respondents were asked the same questions for eight different racial, religious, and social groups. These measures have an alpha reliability coefficient of .88 and create an eight-point scale.

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Table 6 • *Differences in Response Means and Percentages for Blacks and Whites in the Critics of Multiculturalism Sample on Selected Attitude Measures, Selected Group Stereotypes, and the Role of Difference in Public Life*

	Black C-MC	*White C-MC*	*Optimistic Pluralists*	*Cultural Preservationists*
Diversity is a good thing (0 = diversity both good and bad or bad)	30.1%	37.8%*	54.0%	45.7%
Values diversity in their city or town (1 = strongly disagree to 4 = strongly agree)	3.73	3.30***	3.76	3.51
Values diversity among their group of friends (1 = strongly disagree to 4 = strongly agree)	3.71	3.47***	3.83	3.63
It is important to recognize the rights of groups (1 = strongly disagree to 4 = strongly agree)	3.67	3.32***	3.58	3.35
The United States is a white nation and that is a good thing (0 = white nation, bad thing)	5.4%	72.5%***	43.8%	66.5%
The United States is NOT a white nation and that is a good thing (0 = NOT white nation, bad thing)	84.0%	71.9%	87.0%	80.1%
African Americans are a greater threat to public order than others (0 = less threat or about the same)	2.5%	23.3%***	8.9%	15.3%
Muslim Americans are a greater threat to public order than others (0 = less threat or about the same)	5.8%	27.2%***	17.1%	31.3%
African Americans divert resources away from others (1 = strongly disagree to 4 = strongly agree)	1.38	2.23***	1.56	2.01
I would disapprove if my child wanted to marry someone different scale	1.79	2.49**	1.10	2.80
Racial differences divide Americans a lot (0 = not much, only a little, or some)	64.1%	54.8%*	49.4%	45.0%
Religious differences divide Americans a lot (0 = not much, only a little, or some)	54.4%	45.8%*	37.9%	37.0%
Experienced racial discrimination (0 = has not experienced racial discrimination)	80.3%	43.5%***	33.6%	36.8%
Experienced religious discrimination (0 = has not experienced religious discrimination)	25.9%	26.9%	19.1%	24.1%
N	120	609	628	529

Note: Significance levels apply to differences between black and white critics of multiculturalism.
*$p < .05$ **$p < .01$ ***$p < .001$ (two-tailed tests)

between African Americans and whites in this cluster. African American members are more likely than whites to value diversity in their community and among their group of friends and to believe in the importance of group rights. In contrast, white members of this cluster are more likely to believe that the United States is a white nation and that is a good thing, that African Americans and Muslims are a threat to public order, that African Americans divert resources from others, and to disapprove if their child wanted to marry someone different from them.

What unites African Americans and whites in this cluster, and separates them from their racial cohorts in the other clusters, is a general critical orientation to diversity and multiculturalism. In particular, whites and African American members of this cluster are more negative in their evaluation of diversity than members of the other two groups, they are more likely than

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members of the other two groups to believe that racial and religious differences divide Americans a lot, and they are more likely to report experiencing racial or religious discrimination (although African Americans are nearly twice as like to have experienced racial discrimination as whites in this cluster). The results of this analysis appear to indicate that African American and white members of this cluster come to their views via negative perceptions and experiences with members of the other racial group.

Discussion

We did not find "one America," or two, or many fragmented ones. Rather we found three different ways of imagining America, or three different ways of drawing the symbolic boundaries that identify others as sharing, or not sharing, one's vision of America. Previous theory and research have pointed to the drawing of symbolic boundaries along the lines of religious and racial/ethnic identity.

We found religion to be a basis for symbolic boundaries for some Americans. Cultural preservationists are comfortable with diversity as long as it does not threaten a Judeo-Christian cultural core. For this group, religion matters, and Muslims, atheists, and homosexuals are particularly problematic. Historically, the understanding of America as a Christian nation has been associated with white evangelicalism (Emerson and Smith 2000), a culture that has promoted both heteronormativity and traditional attitudes toward gender and family while linking these to a widely shared cultural model of citizenship (Christiano 2000; Cott 2002; Hull 2001, 2006; Lakoff 1996). The cultural preservationist vision is distinguished by a commitment to the white Christian cultural heritage that is imagined as still being central to American identity.

In previous work, we explored why atheists are understood by many Americans to be outside the covenant that undergirds their vision of the good society (Edgell et al. 2006). This analysis helps us to clarify and expand on how we interpret that finding, demonstrating that the same Americans who do not accept atheists also do not accept Muslims as worthy members of the American covenant (Williams 1995) and consider homosexuals to be outsiders. The cultural preservationist vision of America, and the willingness to draw symbolic boundaries based upon it, expands well beyond the white evangelical subculture. This makes sense in light of the broad cultural consensus around the importance of religion as a basis for civic identity and national identity (Caplow et al. 1983; Hout and Fischer 2001). Our analyses suggest that, beyond the evangelical subculture (Smith 1998), regular church attenders and the more religiously involved, in general, and members of the Republican Party support this vision.

For other Americans it is the social fact of diversity itself that shapes how they draw symbolic boundaries. Critics of multiculturalism, the largest group of Americans, are cautious about diversity in general, saying that members of all the ten groups about which we asked "only somewhat share" their vision of America. This does not seem to be rooted in a rejection of the relevance of group-based identities, but rather stems from a sense that all group-based identities are potentially problematic when it comes to cultural membership and national identity. There is some indication that African American and white members of this cluster come to their views via perceptions and experiences with members of the other group.

Optimistic pluralists take a classic liberal approach to public life; they recognize multiculturalism but they do not believe that group-based differences have an implication for cultural membership or form a barrier to a shared national identity. They believe that procedural democracy works as long as we all get to know each other and play by the same rules. We believe it makes sense to understand optimistic pluralism as a vision rooted in experiences of the expansion of opportunity associated with a higher social class position (education, income). The relationship between gender and optimistic pluralism may also be due to a sense of women's

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expanding economic and political opportunities in the previous decades; conversely, the larger number of men in the critics of multiculturalism cluster may correspond to a sense of shrinking opportunity among (especially working class) men (cf. Schor 1991).

When it comes to thinking about whether racial or religious others share your vision of America, one group of Americans finds *all* such group-based identities to be a potential source of difference and division, while another group of Americans does not. This may be due to a conjunction of historical trends in which the recent politicization of religious differences has coincided with a move toward more indirect and subtle forms of symbolic racism; this may have increased the saliency of religious identities relative to racial ones in public life. Of course, some might argue that widespread symbolic racism simply made our white respondents less willing to say that African Americans do not share their vision of American society, but we have some confidence this is not the case based on the fact that our white respondents are more willing to give negative answers to our racial stereotyping and racial inequality items. Moreover, it is not obvious that a question about whether members of other groups "share your vision of America" has a "right" answer in the way that questions about group-based stereotypes have a "right" answer. Finally, the fact that whites and African Americans fall into the same three clusters, when we run the analysis separately, gives us confidence in the robustness of our findings.

This does not at all mean that race has ceased to matter in American public life. For example, one's own racial identity has a direct influence on attitudes toward African Americans and on assessments of the causes of and solutions for racial inequality (Edgell and Tranby 2007). We see the influences of race in our own analysis, as well, for example in the differences between how white and African American members of the critics of multiculturalism cluster respond to questions about African American inequality and racial stereotypes. We also see it in the relatively high percentage of white evangelical Protestants in the cultural preservationist cluster. What our analysis shows is that members of different racial groups—whites, African Americans, and Hispanic Americans—respond to diversity itself as a social fact in addition to having specific views of specific groups.

Conclusion

By looking at how Americans draw symbolic boundaries that include or exclude specific racial, ethnic, and other minority groups that have been at the heart of theories of multiculturalism and the culture wars, we found two different dimensions of boundary drawing that, we believe, form the bases for three different "imagined Americas." The first dimension is how one evaluates the Judeo-Christian cultural "core" and its centrality to American identity. Cultural preservationists find it essential; optimistic pluralists find it problematic and say that conservative Christians have too much power, while critics of multiculturalism find it irrelevant. In other words, cultural preservationists see America in the way that the "culture wars" scholarship predicts (Hunter 1991), and pluralists see that position as problematic.

The second dimension along which Americans draw symbolic boundaries is how they understand diversity as a social fact (Hartmann and Gerteis 2005). Optimistic pluralists and critics of multiculturalism, taken together, are 73 percent of our sample, and they are responding most directly, we believe, to the multiculturalist project. Optimistic pluralists perceive no conflict between multiculturalism and a shared vision of American life. Critics of multiculturalism are more aware of the potentially divisive and conflictual implications of multiculturalism, and their responses to the shared visions questions indicate they believe that group-based identities are at best orthogonal to, and at worst undermining of, a common American identity and vision.

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Nathan Glazer (1998) has argued that "we are all multiculturalists now," and we believe he captured an important truth. The increasing "diversity talk" in American public discourse is creating a situation in which ordinary Americans, not just elites, respond to the idea and experience of diversity in general, as a good thing or a bad thing. But they evaluate diversity very differently. Cultural preservationists say they value diversity in their own networks and hold fewer traditionally negative stereotypes. However, their insistence on the importance of a white Chrisitan heritage as underpinning their imagined American community suggests that they are assimilationists (Eck 2001). It also suggests that, for this group, talk about diversity may be a kind of "happy talk," a way to talk about public issues that have real implications for racial discrimination and inequality without invoking an explicit language of race (Bell and Hartmann 2007; Edgell and Tranby 2007; Emerson and Smith 2000).

Our broader purpose was to address concerns about fragmentation, division, and the erosion of solidarity. Regarding this broader issue, our conclusion is mixed. We are not in a "culture war," although it is perhaps the case that cultural preservationists believe us to be. We are also not in the highly fragmented state that some fear. On the other hand, we are not "one nation," either. We do share core values; members of all three clusters highly value democracy, economic opportunity, and individual freedom. But a significant number of Americans (the one-quarter who are cultural preservationists) believe that differing from a Judeo-Christian cultural heritage endangers that vision. And the 43 percent of Americans who are critics of multiculturalism find all group-based identities to be a potential threat to having a shared vision. Social location influences these patterns—optimistic pluralism and critical multiculturalism are influenced by gender, social class, and race in ways that lead us to believe that experiences of expanding or shrinking opportunities have an effect on evaluations of diversity.

Social location, we believe, is important because it captures differences in economic or political interest, while also encompassing different institutional repertoires of action (Lareau 2003; Lichterman 2005) and different discursive frameworks for understanding public life (Alexander 2006). To take the most salient example from our analysis, cultural preservationists are not traditionalists in general; they want to preserve a *particular* culture, for reasons that have to do with history, culture, institutions, and experience. Further work should be done to understand how particular experiences with diversity shape the views of those in the optimistic pluralist and critics of multiculturalism clusters, since our data do not provide adequate detail to analyze this in more than a cursory way. We think it is important to emphasize that most theoretical frameworks for understanding cultural diversity in American life—theories of the culture wars or of multiculturalism—assume that Americans have some vision of the public good and how that does or might *work* (Williams 1995). But what about those who are characterized by unease or ambivalence? We need to do a great deal more to understand the imagined America of critics of multiculturalism, the largest cluster in our sample, and the vision about which elite discourse—including the discourse of social theory—has been too quiet (Hartmann and Gerteis 2005)

We believe that part of our contribution is to illustrate the possibilities of using survey data to generate this kind of "map" of American's symbolic boundaries by showing the patterns of responses to questions about cultural categorization in a large, nationally representative sample (cf. Bail 2008). We have taken a first step in generating an empirically grounded understanding of the symbolic boundaries and categories through which Americans experience and construct collective identity and common purpose (Abbott 1988; Lamont and Molnar 2002; Pachucki et. al. 2007). Generating a better conceptual map is a necessary step in a more nuanced analysis of how symbolic boundaries are constructed, maintained, and contested. Our mapping enterprise was greatly aided by the construction of unique survey questions designed to measure perceptions of solidarity directly, instead of using proxies such as shared values. Examining how ordinary Americans draw symbolic boundaries that include or exclude specific others, using language that expresses solidarity and similarity instead of tolerance or values, has helped us to gain a new perspective on whether we are "one nation, after all" (Wolfe 1998).

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To summarize, we argue that there are three imagined Americas, not because of differences in values, but because of differences in how Americans evaluate the group-based differences that have become so salient in contemporary social and political discourse, and the degree to which they perceive commonality or distance across these social boundaries. The use of survey data has the advantage of allowing us to explore these issues using a representative sample of ordinary Americans. But it does not allow us to explore other equally important questions. In particular, we believe there is much work to be done in examining how cultural preservationists, optimistic pluralists, and critics of multiculturalism draw upon or reject specific discourses about rights, justice, and diversity as espoused by elites and embedded in the media, institutions, and subcultures. Our data yields valuable insights into how ordinary Americans understand the similarities and differences between the groups comprising our complicated American mosaic, but the origins of these understandings, and their implications for the future, await further research.

Appendix A: Comparison of Response Rates & Tests for Systematic Nonresponse Bias

The response rate of 36 percent achieved in this survey compares favorably with the response rates that most national RDD surveys currently achieve. The Council on Market and Opinion Research (CMOR), which monitors survey response rates on an ongoing basis, reports that the mean response rate for RDD telephone surveys in 2003 was 10.16 percent (CMOR 2003). The RDD component of the 2002 American National Election Study (ANES), which compensated respondents, had a response rate of about 35 percent (National Election Studies 2002).[15]

While our response rate of 36 percent compares favorably with the response rates that most national RDD surveys currently achieve, the most important consideration in deciding on an acceptable response rate is the potential for nonresponse bias. The few available systematic treatments of this issue reveal few differences between higher response rate (51 to 60 percent) and lower response rate (27 to 36 percent) RDD surveys on key demographic, attitudinal, and behavioral measures when standard sampling and survey techniques are employed. Moreover, RDD surveys, conducted with standard sampling and survey techniques, yield samples not significantly different from high response rate government surveys, such as the Current Population Survey (CPS) (Keeter et al. 2000; Pew Research Center for People and the Press 2004).

To test for nonresponse bias, we compare our sample with the General Social Survey (GSS) (Davis, Smith, and Marsden 2000) and the CPS (Labor Statistics Bureau 2003); the results for a selection of demographic, belief, and behavioral measures are detailed in Table A1. This table demonstrates that our sample is similar to these other national samples. For example, about 52 percent of our sample is female, while the comparable CPS figure is 53 percent. The racial breakdown in our sample is about 77 percent white, 12 percent black, and 12 percent Hispanic, while the comparable CPS figures are 76 percent white, 13 percent black, and 12 percent Hispanic. According to the 2000 GSS estimates, 24.1 percent of the nation is Catholic, while in our sample about 25 percent consider themselves Catholic. Regarding education, 23.9 percent of our sample have a college degree, while 24.3 percent of the nation has attained a college degree, according to 2002 CPS data. Where there are differences in samples, our sample generally comes closer to the CPS, a much larger sample then either the GSS or the AMP. These comparisons do not show substantial differences between these surveys, leading us to conclude that there is no evidence of systematic nonresponse bias in the sample.

15. Figures for the CMOR-reported mean response rate, the ANES computed rate, and the AMP response rate are identically calculated. We did not compensate respondents.

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Table A1 • *Comparisons Between American Mosaic Project Sample and Other National Samples on Key Demographic, Belief, and Behavior Measures*

Measure	*AMP*	*GSS*	*CPS*
Average age (in years)	44.4	45.6	44.2
Female	51.6%	56.5%	52.6%
Married	58.9%	45.4%	58.8%
White	77.4%	78.6%	76.4%
Black	12.0%	14.3%	12.8%
Hispanic	11.8%	—	12.3%
Republican	35.1%	33.7%	*NA*
Attained college degree	23.9%	15.4%	24.3%
Catholic	25.5%	24.1%	*NA*
Attends church every week	22.3%	17.8%	*NA*
Thinks the Bible is the actual word of God	32.4%	34.8%	*NA*

Notes: AMP Data are weighted to match the gender by age distribution of the United States and to account for survey design characteristics, including nonresponse. In the AMP, race is defined by answers on three questions regarding the best single category that describes the respondents background. In the GSS, race is defined by the interviewer for white, black, or other only. In the CPS, race is defined by two variables measuring race and Hispanic origin with whites coded as non-Hispanic whites, blacks as non-Hispanic blacks, and Hispanics as having an Hispanic origin.

Sources: American Mosaic Project (Edgell et al. 2003); General Social Survey (Davis et al. 2000); Current Population Survey (Labor Statistics Bureau 2003).

Appendix B

Table B1 • *Complete K-Means Cluster Solution for Various Demographic and Religious Subgroups*

Panel 1. Men

	Critics of Multiculturalism	*Optimistic Pluralists*
Variable	*Mode*	*Mode*
African Americans	3	2
Hispanics	3	2
Asian Americans	3	2
Recent immigrants	3	2
White Americans	3	2
Jews	3	2
Muslims	3	2
Conservative Christians	3	2
Atheists	3	2
Homosexuals	3	2
N	589	388

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Table B1 • (*continued*)

Panel 2. Women

Variable	*Critics of Multiculturalism* Mode	*Optimistic Pluralists* Mode	*Cultural Preservationists* Mode
African Americans	3	2	2
Hispanics	3	2	2
Asian Americans	3	2	2
Recent immigrants	3	2	2
White Americans	2	1	2
Jews	3	2	2
Muslims	3	2	3
Conservative Christians	2	2	3
Atheists	4	3	3
Homosexuals	3	2	2
N	588	262	261

Panel 3. Whites

Variable	*Critics of Multiculturalism* Mode	*Optimistic Pluralists* Mode	*Cultural Preservationists* Mode
African Americans	3	2	2
Hispanics	3	2	2
Asian Americans	3	2	2
Recent immigrants	3	2	2
White Americans	3	2	2
Jews	3	2	2
Muslims	3	2	3
Conservative Christians	3	3	2
Atheists	3	2	4
Homosexuals	3	2	3
N	500	349	261

Panel 4. African Americans

Variable	*Critics of Multiculturalism* Mode	*Optimistic Pluralists* Mode	*Cultural Preservationists* Mode
African Americans	3	2	1
Hispanics	3	2	2
Asian Americans	3	2	3
Recent immigrants	3	2	3
White Americans	3	2	3
Jews	3	2	3
Muslims	3	3	3
Conservative Christians	3	2	3
Atheists	3	3	4
Homosexuals	3	2	3
N	189	121	111

(*continued*)

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Table B1 • (*continued*)

Panel 5. Hispanics

	Critics of Multiculturalism	*Optimistic Pluralists*	*Cultural Preservationists*
Variable	*Mode*	*Mode*	*Mode*
African Americans	3	2	2
Hispanics	3	2	2
Asian Americans	3	2	2
Recent immigrants	3	2	2
White Americans	3	2	2
Jews	3	2	3
Muslims	3	2	3
Conservative Christians	3	2	2
Atheists	3	2	3
Homosexuals	3	2	3
N	142	94	158

Panel 6. Church Attenders

	Critics of Multiculturalism/ Cultural Preservationists	*Optimistic Pluralists*
Variable	*Mode*	*Mode*
African Americans	3	2
Hispanics	3	2
Asian Americans	3	2
Recent immigrants	3	2
White Americans	2	2
Jews	3	2
Muslims	3	2
Conservative Christians	3	2
Atheists	4	3
Homosexuals	3	2
N	1045	706

Panel 7. Nonchurch Attenders

	Critics of Multiculturalism	*Optimistic Pluralists*	*Cultural Preservationists*
Variable	*Mode*	*Mode*	*Mode*
African Americans	3	2	2
Hispanics	3	2	3
Asian Americans	3	2	2
Recent immigrants	3	2	2
White Americans	3	2	2
Jews	3	2	2
Muslims	3	2	3
Conservative Christians	3	3	3
Atheists	3	2	3
Homosexuals	3	2	3
N	138	76	83

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Table B1 • (*continued*)

Panel 8. Catholics

Variable	*Critics of Multiculturalism*	*Optimistic Pluralists*	*Cultural Preservationists*
	Mode	*Mode*	*Mode*
African Americans	3	1	2
Hispanics	3	2	2
Asian Americans	3	2	2
Recent immigrants	3	2	2
White Americans	3	2	2
Jews	3	2	2
Muslims	3	2	3
Conservative Christians	3	2	3
Atheists	4	3	3
Homosexuals	3	2	3
N	228	120	187

Panel 9. Liberal Protestants

Variable	*Critics of Multiculturalism*	*Optimistic Pluralists*	*Cultural Preservationists*
	Mode	*Mode*	*Mode*
African Americans	3	2	3
Hispanics	3	2	2
Asian Americans	3	2	2
Recent immigrants	3	2	2
White Americans	3	2	2
Jews	3	2	2
Muslims	3	2	3
Conservative Christians	3	3	2
Atheists	3	2	4
Homosexuals	3	2	3
N	85	62	48

Panel 10. Conservative Protestants

Variable	*Critics of Multiculturalism/ Cultural Preservationists*	*Optimistic Pluralists*
	Mode	*Mode*
African Americans	3	2
Hispanics	3	2
Asian Americans	3	2
Recent immigrants	3	2
White Americans	2	2
Jews	3	2
Muslims	3	3
Conservative Christians	2	2
Atheists	4	3
Homosexuals	3	2
N	381	226

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