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The Unbearable Lightness of the Cosmopolitan Canopy: Accomplishment of Diversity at an Urban Farmers Market

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This article provides a critique of work on urban public space that touts its potential as a haven from racial and class conflicts and inequalities. I argue that social structures and hierarchies embedded in the capitalist system and the state's social control over the racialized poor are not suspended even in places that appear governed by civility and tolerance, such as those under Anderson's "cosmopolitan canopy." Durable inequality, residential segregation, nativism, and racism inevitably shape what happens in diverse public spaces. Using an ethnographic study of an urban farmers' market in New York City, I show that appearances of everyday cosmopolitanism, tolerance, and pleasure in difference coexist with conflict and reproduction of inequalities that are inextricable because the space is embedded within larger structures, institutions, and cultural paradigms. By focusing on meaning-making in interaction, I analyze situated accomplishment of diversity and consider the implications for other types of urban spaces.

Despite the continuing salience of racial segregation and racist housing practices, multiracial urban neighborhoods have become more prevalent in the United States (Farrell and Lee 2011; Fong and Shibuya 2005; Logan and Zhang 2011). Many of these neighborhoods are also home to unprecedented numbers of immigrants from across the globe. At the same time, race- and class-based conflict in diverse cities continues to concern scholars and the public alike. Urban researchers argue about the role of public space in fostering tolerance, and opinions range from those who question its potential (Amin 2002; Lofland 2000) to those who find that some diverse public spaces promote learning about and acceptance of difference (Anderson 2011). In this article, I critique the more optimistic views of diverse public space as safe haven from racial and other conflict through an ethnographic case study of an urban farmers' market. I show that appearances of everyday cosmopolitanism, tolerance, and pleasure in difference coexist with conflict and reproduction of inequalities that are inextricable because the space is embedded within larger structures, institutions, and cultural paradigms.

People make sense of and perform diversity in public space in a complex way that may include tolerance and cosmopolitanism, while also necessarily engaging with structures of inequality beyond the particular island of diverse civility. Congenial and even convivial interactions across lines of difference exist within landscapes of threat and competition

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that make these public places inextricably connected to power hierarchies beyond their boundaries. Even when everyone gets along, social hierarchies such as race and class continue to shape everyday interactions. In examining everyday interactions at an urban farmers' market, I show how people make sense of their social location and interpret the actions of others. In what appears to be an island of cosmopolitan civility, I find a social space embedded in the reproduction of larger structures of inequality. The structural positions of urban actors interacting in this farmers' market are not necessarily backgrounded when they step under the cosmopolitan canopy, but rather shape how they grapple with difference and diversity.

I approach the study of diversity in public space through a focus on everyday meaning-making and interaction. Following the theoretical lens of scholars who argue for studying how people do gender (West and Zimmerman 1987), race (Flores-Gonzalez et al. 2014), and difference, in general (West and Fenstermaker 1995), I examine how difference is accomplished in routine interaction, in ways that are situated in a particular social setting but are inextricably connected to and legitimate structures beyond the setting. In this way, I contribute to a critical analysis of public spaces that appear as cosmopolitan havens in divided cities (Valentine 2008; Wise 2010). In cities riven by skyrocketing inequality, racial segregation, criminalization of poverty and immigration, and police brutality, it is tempting to hope that multicultural spaces like parks and markets will help build peace and tolerance. But is the idea of cosmopolitan canopy theoretically and empirically appropriate? I argue that the social patterns in the city cannot be bracketed out of even the most tolerant and convivial seeming space, although the explicit interactional engagement with racial and ethnic categories does not in itself preclude tolerance and cosmopolitanism.

In the following sections, I present an overview of existing research on interactions in diverse public places. I describe the neighborhood context and the farmers' market case study, as well as the ethnographic methodology used. I present evidence that the farmers' market is a cosmopolitan canopy, although this does not mean that people do not talk about race and ethnicity or use stereotypes. At the same time, I show that under the canopy are tensions and conflict over cultural and linguistic differences that reinforce dominant hierarchies. In addition, this research site is inextricably shaped by structural inequalities embedded in the capitalist system and by social control over the racialized poor exercised by the state. Far from being a place of symmetrical relationships, the market could be a site of enforced performance of racialized poverty and marginality that coexisted with civility. I conclude by examining the implications for the study of public spaces in diverse and unequal cities.

DIVERSITY, CONFLICT, AND URBAN PUBLIC SPACE

Detailed census data show that urban neighborhoods in the United States have become more racially diverse in the past two decades. In major metropolitan regions, especially, neighborhoods have become more racially integrated, with a rise of racially mixed, or "global" neighborhoods, which remain relatively stable over time (Fong and Shibuya 2005; Logan and Zhang 2011). At the same time, racial segregation persists, and whites continue to exhibit preferences for mostly white neighborhoods and move out of some diverse neighborhoods (Farrell and Lee 2011; Logan and Zhang 2011). The story told

through census measures of residential addresses is an incomplete picture of lived diversity. Ethnographic studies of urban neighborhoods have uncovered a disjuncture between statistical diversity and experiences of diversity. They point to the need to look beyond measures of residence to understand social dynamics of places (Berrey 2005; Mayorga-Gallo 2014).

Qualitative studies of diverse neighborhoods have often focused on public space, which is thought to promise equal access and provide opportunities for interaction with diverse others (Langegger 2013; Low et al. 2009). The focus on public space is accentuated by its connection to the idea of a shared public sphere essential to the building of democracy and tolerance (Anderson 2011; Kohn 2004; Oldenburg 1999; Young 1986). Scholars decry the increasing surveillance and regulation of public space in the neoliberal city as curtailing its potential to foster encounters with difference and create equitable access to public resources (Kohn 2004; Shepard and Smithsimon 2011; Watson 2006). While there are many of studies of public parks, others have also considered commercial spaces, such as street markets, shopping streets and plazas, and indoor shopping arcades, where access may or may not be as open.

In his multisited ethnography of public spaces, Anderson (2011) includes the Reading Terminal Market, a large indoor shopping area comprised of tightly packed small food stalls. Reading Terminal epitomizes Anderson's cosmopolitan canopy, where people of different race and class interact convivially in a relaxed atmosphere that is markedly different from the normal racial tensions of city life. Not only do people seek out difference in "a calm environment of equivalent, symmetrical relations" (Anderson 2011:33), but they learn to practice civility and share space with diverse others, nurturing tolerance citywide. While arguing that racial and ethnic identities are "put on the back burner" under the cosmopolitan canopy (p. 164), Anderson acknowledges the tears in the canopy that can occur when the color line is drawn, particularly in the stigmatization and exclusion of black men. In his ethnography, Anderson (2011) points out the important role of food in bridging barriers, such as when people from different cultures eat each other's food. In developing the concept of the "third place," Oldenburg (1999) also emphasizes food. More broadly, third places are informal gathering places such as coffee shops, distinct from home and work. They foster playful gatherings that level social differences and promote equity, democracy, and community.

Oldenburg's (1999) positive and Anderson's (2011) mostly positive accounts of the role of certain public places in fostering tolerance and community exist within a larger literature. Many other scholars have written about the role public places, especially markets and shopping streets, can play in encouraging tolerant connections among diverse people (Hiebert et al. 2015; Watson 2009; Zukin et al. 2015). Many studies of farmers' markets, in particular, highlight them as spaces of sociability and community (Alia et al. 2014; Alkon and Vang 2016; Alonso and O'Neill 2011; Feagan and Morris 2009; Slocum 2008), and even specifically as examples of Oldenburg's third places (Gagné 2011; Tiemann 2008). At the same time, Oldenburg's argument for the inclusiveness of the third place and its equalizing function has been criticized for ignoring the reality of inequality and exclusion along race, ethnicity, gender, and class lines, and for the role these places can serve in replicating structures of inequality (Grazian 2009). Although not always explicitly acknowledged, some of the more positive analyses of public space are connected to classic contact theory, which predicts increased tolerance with increased contact between members of different groups (Allport 1979; Hewstone 2009).

Other scholars have found civility and tolerance alongside exclusion and conflict in marketplaces. In her analysis of a diverse shopping street in London, Hall (2012) shows that there is both tension and conviviality as people make sense of their identities and experience belonging and marginalization through routine encounters. Watson's (2006) ethnographic book on public space in London profiles a street market in a diversifying working class neighborhood where emerging solidarities contrast with festering resentment over demographic change and socioeconomic decline. And Slocum (2008) finds that pleasurable encounters at a diverse Minneapolis farmers' market coexist with less obvious structural violence, particularly through processes of racialization. Thus, contact with diverse others leads to complex patterns of social relations that encompass fleeting as well as more enduring civility as well as entrenched conflict.

Another group of scholars are pessimistic about the potential for real engagement with difference in public space. Zukin (2010) notes that diversity complicates everyday negotiation over scarce public space in cities, because of the presence of multiple conflicting visions and obstacles to communication. The nature of public space itself, where encounters are fleeting, may reinforce prejudices or lead to parallel existences without much engagement (Amin 2002; Lofland 2000). Amin (2002) argues that public space rarely provides the type of engagement necessary for building integration and solidarity. For the latter to take place, we need places where people engage with each other beyond fleeting interactions, and where it is not civility but conflictual and difficult engagement that leads to building bridges across social groups. There is also a body of research that specifically examines market-place conflicts between middleman minority merchants, such as Korean immigrants in U.S. cities, and native-born minority populations (e.g., Lee 2002; Yoon 1997). As I show below, this literature points to the importance of considering social relations in any analysis of markets.

Even in the absence of outright conflict between ethnoracial groups or merchants and customers, diversity and seeming integration does not necessarily translate into friendship or even tolerance (Mayorga-Gallo 2014; Zelner 2015). Diverse neighborhoods may play host to routine cosmopolitan behaviors, yet reproduce socioeconomic and racial inequalities through daily encounters (Talen 2010; Tissot 2015). These more negative assessments of the role of diverse public spaces center analysis of structural inequalities as they shape everyday negotiation over space. In this article, I analyze everyday interactions in a diverse market that appears to be characterized by conviviality and tolerance, but that is fundamentally shaped by structural inequalities that cannot be bracketed out of its cosmopolitan canopy.

SETTING

The farmers' market is located in Queens, New York, in a neighborhood with high levels of racial and ethnic diversity, a recent immigrant population, and socioeconomic disparities. According to the latest Census data, the population in the two zip codes surrounding the market was 41 percent non-Hispanic white, 31 percent Latino, 9 percent black, 16 percent Asian, and 13 percent some other race. More than a third of the over-25 population was high school graduates or dropouts, while almost half had some college education or a bachelor's degree. Median household income in 2015 dollars was around $53,000, with drastic variation by race (ranging from $30,000 for blacks to $59,000 for whites). The

foreign born comprised 42 percent of the population, mostly entering the United States after 1990 from countries across the world (Social Explorer 2017). The neighborhood is a mix of small industry, multifamily homes, small apartment buildings, and a large public housing development that continues to be isolated and predominantly African American and Latino.

The farmers' market was set up on a sidewalk next to a playground and a public health center once a week on a weekday. It was located on a low-traffic street with several bodegas/delis, a pizza restaurant, and small industrial and car repair shops. The farmers' market had two stalls with produce. The larger stall was operated by three male Tibetan immigrants, hired by an area farm to sell fruits and vegetables. The smaller stall was operated by a family of Mexican immigrant farmers who sold herbs and vegetables they grew on their own farm. Between the two stalls was a small tent of the market manager, who oversaw market operations, enforced city rules, and disseminated information about healthy nutrition. The manager also put together food samples and facilitated payments with Electronic Benefit Transfer (EBT) cards containing welfare benefits, or credit cards. The weekly market lasted from 8 in the morning until 2:30 or 3 in the afternoon from July until November.

This market was part of a large network of farmers' markets overseen by the city government and an affiliated nonprofit organization. The organization has two missions: promoting local agriculture and small farmers, and giving New Yorkers access to fresh and healthy local food. The location near a public health center was selected to provide fresh produce to low-income residents, particularly women and children receiving food vouchers. For much of the research period, these vouchers could be doubled in value if redeemed at city farmers' markets. Most New York farmers' markets accept EBT cards as payment, but they generally not only cater to the cultural consumption preferences of the affluent but also signal through products available, modes of display, and physical layout that it is a space for that segment of the population. The large number of immigrant and working-class customers disrupted this more typical habitus of farmers' markets and their image as affluent white spaces or spaces of food tourism and politically minded consumption (Alkon 2008; Alkon and Vang 2016; Gagné 2011; Slocum 2008; Zukin 2010). I found concern about freshness, sustainability, and food safety among some low-income and immigrant customers, as well as among middle-class whites. Others looked for convenience in location, particular varieties of produce, or the redemption of vouchers. Some people came to the market to chat and hang out, whether or not the market was their destination or a spontaneous stop on a walk.

METHODOLOGY

This article is based on ethnographic fieldwork conducted from the summer of 2011 through the summer of 2013. It was part of a larger project that investigated the dynamics of diversity in several nearby public spaces. I spent over 100 hours as a participant observer at this market. For most of the research period, I served as an informal volunteer, performing such tasks as English-Spanish translation, helping elderly customers, and sharing market information. Serving in this capacity, as well as regularly shopping at the market myself, allowed me to form relationships with the vendors and managers, connect with informants I knew from nearby sites, and recognize and interact with regulars. I was

able to witness exchanges over time, and also talk to key participants about their interpretations. As a middle-class white immigrant woman in my mid-30s, I was perceived by many customers as being associated with the market manager, a younger white woman, who often worked with other white female volunteers. This often meant that people expected me to be helpful, friendly, and provide information. My identity as an immigrant who grew up in New York and my linguistic flexibility helped me build relationships with the vendors. However, my multilingualism did not extend far enough to understand, let alone communicate with, many people in the market, truncating my insight. I took notes in a small notebook, which I expanded into detailed fieldnotes.

My ethnographic approach was informed by an ethnomethodological and symbolic interactionist lens. I focused on analyzing interactions and meaning-making practices in the farmers' market, with the goal of understanding the reproduction of inequalities (Zimmerman 1978). In particular, I was interested in how people do or accomplish difference (West and Fenstermaker 1995; West and Zimmerman 1987), or how difference and diversity are constructed in interaction. Rather than taking for granted dominant social categories, I analyzed how people make sense of categories and use them to accomplish their goals. I approached the study of the market through an interactionist lens, viewing people as social actors who interact with each other, perform roles, and creatively interpret social situations, with difference produced rather than simply expressed in interaction (Anderson and Snow 2001; Goffman 1971).

In analyzing the data, I reviewed my fieldnotes, identifying interactions and discursive constructions relevant to understanding how people do diversity in everyday encounters. This process was ongoing, as I turned to fieldwork to test evolving explanations arising from reviewing and analyzing my fieldnotes and other materials. In doing so, I followed an abductive approach, moving recursively between data, theoretical explanations, and the field (Tavory and Timmermans 2014). In analyzing civility, I drew particularly on Lofland's (1998) conceptualization of civility toward diversity, which encompasses acting in a civil manner or "decently" toward visible human variation (p. 32). I used Anderson's (2011) definition of *emplaced* cosmopolitanism as "acceptance of the space as belonging to all kinds of people" (p. 22). Below, I present my findings, starting by describing the cosmopolitan canopy, albeit one where explicit use of racial and ethnic categories and stereotypes did not preclude tolerance. Then, I show how tensions and conflicts over cultural and linguistic differences are embedded in larger structures of inequality, and the ways in which market relations and state management of the poor shape interactions under the cosmopolitan canopy.

THE FARMERS' MARKET AS A COSMOPOLITAN CANOPY

The Queens farmers' market examined in this article could be characterized as a cosmopolitan canopy. Like The Reading Terminal Market, albeit on a much smaller scale, it played host to people sampling foods from each other's cultures, interacting civilly in physical proximity, and occasionally initiating friendly exchanges with strangers (Anderson 2011). In one half-hour period on an unremarkable fall morning, I observed four white, one black, four Middle Eastern/North African, three South Asian, and 21 Latino customers, mostly female, and not counting children. This was in addition to the usual composition of the staff of one white woman, three Tibetan men, and two to four

members of a Mexican family. Demographic diversity in itself does not make a cosmopolitan canopy. Rather, it is the prevailing attitude toward equally shared space, civility, and pleasure in the company of diverse others. Many of the customers appeared to enjoy people watching, exploring produce, and exchanging small talk with diverse others. Striking up brief and pleasurable conversations with strangers was common, albeit complicated by the linguistic diversity. For example, I observed two middle-aged African American women spontaneously chat with an elderly Asian immigrant woman about the best way to wash pears, conducted partly with gestures due to the language barrier.

For the most part, interactions were characterized by civility and even friendly humor. One could spend hours at the market without seeing any evidence that there was not an "acceptance of the space as belonging to all kinds of people" (Anderson 2011:22), although, as I detail below, this could be a superficial impression. The space was clearly governed by principles of restrained helpfulness and civility toward diversity identified by Lofland (1998) as emblematic of public space interactional order. People helped strangers with bags, carts, and strollers in the physically crowded space and the vast majority of inevitable collisions and passageway blocking were handled with patience and grace. Similarly to Anderson's (2011) observations in Rittenhouse Square, public parenting played a key role in creating an atmosphere of safety. Parents taught preschoolers the names of produce as they shopped. Strangers kept unruly toddlers from running out into the street. One set of vendors would let preschoolers spray the produce with water to keep them entertained. Many customers came with young children, who served as foci for striking up conversation. For instance, a young African American woman rocking a newborn in a carriage was approached by two elderly white women from a nearby senior center who told her that her baby was adorable. One reached right into the baby carriage to move the blanket away from the baby's face. The mother did not seem to mind, smiling broadly and thanking the two women for the compliment.

The market may have been more transitory than Oldenburg's (1999) coffee shops, bars, and post offices, yet it had many of the characteristics of a third place. One could spend little—or nothing at all—to be there. It was common for visitors to linger, not least due to the pleasurable affective environment. Even though there were only two small stalls, some people stayed for as long as an hour, chatting with acquaintances and strangers and people watching. It was in the middle of a dense urban neighborhood and centered on food. Its location next to the public health clinic and resulting socioeconomic profile of the customers facilitated a nonelitist feel. There were regulars, and people seemed to take pleasure in planned and unplanned meetings with familiar others.

Neither Oldenburg (1999) nor Anderson (2011) deals with linguistic diversity, which was an important factor at the Queens farmers' market. Hiebert et al. (2015) argue that discursive practices that are routinized or engage linguistic skills, such as changing languages and code-switching, help bridge differences. Despite the fact that vendors at this market were multilingual, as were many customers, there were many instances of difficulties in communication, most of which were resolved creatively and even playfully. One of the farmers' market stalls was run by farmers who were bilingual in English and Spanish, and the other by vendors who were native speakers of Tibetan, fluent in English, and reasonably conversant in Japanese, Mandarin, Spanish, and Hindi. I observed vendors make occasional mistakes, addressing customers in a language they turned out not to know. Customers, too, addressed vendors in languages they did not always understand, as when

one of the Tibetan vendors who did not speak Spanish was addressed by a Latina woman in Spanish. Neither scenario resulted in conflict, but was either corrected matter-of-factly, or became a source of humor. Vendors recruited customers as assistants in translating, and the market manager asked vendors, customers, and the researcher for similar help. For the most part, the market seemed to operate under a collective spirit of patience for language differences and a collaborative approach to communication.

The farmers' market appeared to be characterized by people of different race and class getting along, friendly communication, and even helpfulness. But does observing these types of encounters mean that the farmers' market necessarily taught tolerance and civility (Anderson 2011) or promoted social equity, democracy, and community vitality (Oldenburg 1999)? In fact, analyzing how people made sense of and performed diversity revealed tensions, reproduction of inequality, and use of cosmopolitanism and diversity for instrumental ends, such as making a profit. Interestingly, explicit engagement with racial and ethnic categories and stereotypes did not in itself mean the dearth of tolerance or cosmopolitanism, as I describe in the following section.

RACE AND ETHNICITY: NOT ON THE BACK BURNER

Although small, the farmers' market was a space of visual diversity, both human diversity and diversity of produce. It appeared to embody Anderson's (2011) concept of a cosmopolitan canopy, as diverse people spent time alongside each other in what was often a friendly and seemingly pleasurable manner. At the same time, analysis of how people accomplished difference revealed complex processes of learning about categorical others and grappling with stereotypes and conflicting ideologies of difference that went beyond appearances of tolerance and cosmopolitanism.

Although Anderson (2011) observes that race is "on the back burner" under the cosmopolitan canopy, he does provide a poignant analysis of the rift in the canopy occasioned by exclusion of and racism towards black men—or "anyone with provisional status" (p. 291). In my research site, I found that social categories, such as race and ethnicity, were what West and Fenstermaker (1995) call "omnirelevant" (p. 18), serving as a ready resource for interpreting the actions of others. The use of race, ethnicity, and attendant stereotypes was widespread, but this was not necessarily a sign of intolerance or exclusion. Instead of downplaying race and ethnicity, people used these categories to make sense of actions and reactions of those different from them. In this excerpt from my fieldnotes, vendors and the market manager navigate conflicting cultural schema governing stereotypes and their use:

> I go over to stand near Marta (Mexican immigrant vendor) at her stand. Amy (white market manager) and Palden (Tibetan immigrant vendor) are there as well.... Marta tells Palden that he is a very nice man, and asks Amy to back her up. The conversation is in English. Marta says that she knows another man from a place like China — at this point, Amy looks at me and widens her eyes — who was very bad, rude, and knew very few Spanish words but they were all bad words. Palden does not have a chance to respond, as Marta now turns to an elderly man looking at the corn, asking him if he needs help. The man shows her a partially peeled corn, and Marta begins to complain about peeling corn (this is not allowed for hygiene reasons). Marta says she does not let people peel corn. It is cheap and you get what you get. Palden, who has sold out his corn already, says that the peeling corn problem is much worse with

> Chinese people at the F- market (a much larger market in one of New York's Chinatowns). He says that people would argue that they have a right to peel the corn to see what they were getting. He says that he learned how to explain it in Chinese and then it was fine.

Here, Marta is placing Palden, who is Tibetan, into the same category as people who are from "places like China." In fact, Marta regularly and openly referred to the Tibetan vendors as *chinos*. She is contrasting Palden's niceness with the nonniceness of this other man. In doing so, she is making sense of the ethnoracial diversity by incorporating new information from the people she is meeting at the market. Palden does not correct her to say he is not Chinese. He does not exhibit discomfort at Marta's statement, unlike Amy, a young college-educated white woman. However, later in the conversation, Palden distances himself from Chinese people by providing an example where he was opposed to the same corn-peeling behavior that so incenses Marta, and neutralizes the negative stereotype of the category by showing that he solved it by learning more Chinese. In a way, he is performing a multicultural, tolerant ideology that centers culturally sensitive communication as a solution to conflict, rejects the possibility of entrenched cultural differences, and brings inclusiveness into the frame. His statements show that there are not fundamental differences between people like Palden and Marta on the one hand, and people like the Chinese on the other, which would compel the latter to break rules established and accepted by the former. At the same time, he does not seem to have a problem with using explicit racial and ethnic categories in identifying people.

In this discussion of rogue Chinese customers, there is some evidence of negotiation, resolution, and learning, which fits Anderson's (2011) characterization of cosmopolitan canopies as spaces of learning about diverse others and civility. But this example illustrates that this learning takes place when racial and ethnic categories are foregrounded and actively engaged. At times, ethnic and linguistic differences even served as fodder for humor. One of the Tibetan vendors drew on his racial ambiguity to jokingly pretend he was Mexican with Spanish speakers. People often played along with him, with one Mexican immigrant couple who were regulars coming to greet him as *mexicano*, demonstrating a playfulness with race, ethnicity, and language. Thokmay was performing racial and cultural identities in a fluid and flexible way that maximized his connection with customers in a diverse setting.

Vendors used the selling and buying of food to construct social categories. As a result of their constant interaction with diverse customers, they amassed information about consumer preferences, categorized into social categories of race and ethnicity: "Asians want broccoli raab, they call it *saag*. Moroccans all want the little squash. They spend their checks on big bags of this squash. African Americans want the greens, like kale. Beets are for healthy people to make juice" (Pongal).[1] Vendors placed customers into these categories and suggested corresponding varieties of produce. When customers hesitated over multiple varieties of pumpkin, both sets of vendors would say things like: "Your people like this." Usually, the customer gratefully accepted this advice. Thus, people at the market used food as cultural material to continually construct social categories and negotiate their shifting meanings. In many instances, the active reference to racial and ethnic categories in interaction was compatible with tolerance and cosmopolitanism, although it may have violated social norms stemming from the dominant ideology of colorblindness (Bonilla-Silva 2013).

TENSION AND CONFLICT OVER CULTURAL AND LINGUISTIC DIFFERENCES

Explicit negotiation and use of racial and ethnic categories at the farmers' market could be routine, purposeful, exploratory, and even playful. But not everyone was comfortable with it. Amy, the white manager recently educated at an elite college, often appeared distressed when she encountered the use of racial and ethnic categories by the vendors and customers—mostly working-class people of color and immigrants—even in the context of selling produce or humor. Amy's unease was emblematic of colorblind ideology, including the belief that mentioning racial difference is racist, which is widespread among white Americans (Bonilla-Silva 2013). For instance, she visibly cringed during a conversation with a Guyanese customer who identified her abusive employers matter-of-factly as "those Arabs."

While Amy may have been uncomfortable with the free use of racial and ethnic categories, she used some stereotypes herself. On one occasion, a South Asian man in his 40s stood in line to talk to her. Struggling to express himself in English, he asked how to use the Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) checks he was holding (a federally supported supplementary nutrition program for low-income families). Amy quickly said: "Just use them in either stand to buy fruits and vegetables." The man seemed uncertain and hovered around the table, but Amy ignored him. Eventually he figured out how to use his WIC checks by watching others shop. Amy then told me that she knew he wanted her to walk him over and show him how to do it, but she did not have the patience for "East Indian" men who act helpless at the market. An avowed feminist, Amy interpreted the man's need through the lens of patriarchy and stereotypes of Asian men. But these stereotypes fit within discourse acceptable in Amy's more elite and white milieu, the way Thokmay's clowning around and pretending to be a Mexican did not.

Other tensions emerged over cultural differences. Part of the job of the market manager was to promote a program through which low-income women could double their WIC checks at the market. Amy was excited about this program, but frustrated when Marta (the Mexican immigrant vendor) wanted an official sign for her stand to explain it, and was reluctant to promise that she would watch for the right kind of checks and let the customers know they could go double them at the manager's table. In a conversation with me, Marta explained that "Spanish people" get nervous about getting free stuff because they think they are going to have to pay later. Amy was exasperated with Marta for not helping with a program that she viewed as good. Marta, positioning herself as an in-group expert, pointed out that Amy did not understand how the experience of Latinas can lead them to suspect schemes like doubling coupons. Marta did not explain this to Amy, however, and both were left with resentment toward each other. This entrenched their structural conflict as vendor and market manager, and reflected their embeddedness and contrasting experiences in a larger set of institutions patterned by race, class, and gender.

In a related and recurrent episode, Amy prepared free samples of healthy dishes, and was puzzled when many customers hesitated to take the samples, or rejected them altogether. As a volunteer, I was often involved in distributing the samples, and I found that saying "it's free" was much more effective than Amy's "would you like some squash?" Free samples, common in affluent settings, neighborhoods, and commercial spaces, are

far less common of an experience for working class people (Gagné 2011; McClain and Mears 2012). There was a gulf in understanding around the cultural practice of handing out free samples, and the paternalistic intent to educate locals about healthy cooking did not always work. From listening to those who did approach the manager's table, I learned that many were puzzled by how this food could be prepared on the street, were concerned about its safety (especially with children who are taught not to take food from strangers), as well as not being sure the samples were free. Conflicting scripts about appropriate behavior led to tensions and misunderstandings.

Not all tension stemmed from differences in cultural norms between the white middle-class manager and working-class people of color and/or immigrants. The spectacle of diversity—an attractive feature for many urban middle-class consumers (Zukin 2010)—itself rubbed some people the wrong way. Although food is often hailed as bringing together diverse others, the variety of produce on sale caused ire among some. One time, a white man became offended when he could not find arugula at the stand run by the Tibetan vendors. He picked up a bunch of bok choy and asked the vendor whether it was lettuce. Thokmay responded that it was bok choy, and the man said, irritated: "What the hell is bok choy?! Where is arugula, regular arugula?" Later the same day, a Latina woman wished for more "American" products at the market. In both examples, the diversity of the produce is connected to the diversity of the customers who buy this produce, as well as to the diversity of the vendors who are assumed to have selected and grown this produce. Expressing frustration about the selection of products is partly about contestation over moral ownership of the neighborhood and claims made on it by those who are seen as outsiders. The small but bustling farmers' market makes visible the new racial, ethnic, and immigrant diversity of the neighborhood.

Languages, like produce, signal difference that can be stigmatized and feared, reinforcing the marginalized position of immigrants. At one point, a white woman became upset that the market manager provided recipes in Spanish, as well as in English. She objected to the legitimation of Spanish by the market and the claim of Spanish speakers on the space. White seniors visiting the market from nearby senior housing complained about the Spanish spoken at one of the stands, sometimes interrupting Spanish-language exchanges between vendors and customers or signaling for them to be quieter. These examples point to the disruption posed by the globalized habitus (Zukin et al. 2015) of the farmers' market to some local residents for whom the presence of languages other than English, and the validation of Spanish, in particular, unsettles their sense of local social order. The appearance of multilingual harmony is punctuated by linguistic hierarchies and xenophobia, particularly aimed at Spanish, which is the second most common language of the city and is legitimated by local authorities through the provision of benefit and market information in English and Spanish.

While the farmers' market appears to represent a cosmopolitan canopy in several ways, it is also a space of tension, conflict, and negotiation over culture and identity. Various social categories are highlighted and muted as difference is accomplished situationally. Contact and learning are not out of the question, but macro structures of inequality are continuously engaged on the microlevel as people make sense of difference (West and Fenstermaker 1995). In other words, in their encounters with diverse others at the market, people draw on systems of racial meaning and racial ideologies as material. This makes it difficult to level social differences or bracket out social categories comprising hierarchies entrenched well beyond the market itself.

CIVILITY IN THE MARKETPLACE AND THE MARGINALIZATION OF THE POOR

Unlike other public spaces, such as parks or sidewalks, a farmers' market features established structural positions which carry inherent tensions, albeit underanalyzed in much of the literature that focuses on interactions among customers only. Particularly in the context of this farmers' market serving a large number of people on public assistance, customers were trying to save money. Vendors were precarious workers struggling to make a profit or even just to cut their losses. The city and its nonprofit arm regulated what types of products were sold by whom and how, and mandated that certain forms of payment, such as EBT and WIC, be accepted. Given the imperative to maximize sales in a setting where produce could be obtained elsewhere, it is not surprising that the vendors were usually civil to the customers, sometimes drawing on what seemed like unlimited reserves of patience. This is not to say that pleasurable interactions with customers were out of the question, just that these were inextricable from market relations, and, in fact, often constituted emotional labor on the part of the vendors. In addition, customers who paid with government-issued vouchers were sometimes marginalized further when their poverty was made visible at the market.

The interactions between vendors and customers were full of scripted exchanges, such as questions about price and stock, performance of giving the correct change, and routine greetings that could grow in exuberance with regulars (see Hiebert et al. 2015). Because so many people paid with government vouchers, there was the added complication of trying to spend all of the checks, which came in $4 increments, since change was not possible. Sometimes, customers got upset when the vendors refused them change. One man even emptied his bag of produce on Marta's scale, prompting her to say: "I didn't make the checks. The government made the checks." The Tibetan vendors faced off angry customers who argued about items adding up to $4 by letting them take more than they should, trying to avoid creating a scene and undermining sales. The market manager came into conflict with both customers and the vendors as she tried to enforce city regulations on the use of sidewalk space and government vouchers.

The civil, cosmopolitan, and convivial interactions between vendors and customers were, from the vendors' perspective, a way to increase returns. As one of the Tibetan vendors explained, however, conviviality, switching between multiple languages, and engaging with customers' young children could also create situations where customers expected to get discounts, leading to tension. After an extended altercation with a group of immigrant women who tried to bargain and told him it was not a real store, Pangal told me: "If you speak their language to be nice, they think they can get a discount." There were also occasional arguments over prices, which are not as high as the more upscale farmers' market in the city, but higher than local supermarkets. Customers' frustration over what was available for sale was a constant source of irritation for the vendors and manager. Occasionally, they joked about it, as when another one of the Tibetan vendors, Thokmay, came over to the manager and said: "Table number seven would like spinach and cucumbers," which were not in season at the time.

In addition to the tensions between customers and vendors, customers using government vouchers were further marginalized through the shopping experience. Knowing how to use WIC checks or EBT cards to shop at the farmers' market is not obvious,

and is a cause of discomfort for many recipients who are already in a supplicant position and having to navigate a new institutional setting in a space that exposes their poverty. As explained above, the manager could increase the barriers to using benefits. The diversity of the farmers' market is not a neutral, horizontal set of cultural differences, but is intertwined with hierarchies of power in society. The spectacle of people of color, mostly women, and racialized religious minorities, such as Muslims, paying for produce with government vouchers could incite outrage about immigrant freeloaders from passersby and other customers. A white man walking by the market slowed down by the manager's table, looking down at the flyers about public assistance and the South Asian woman with a headscarf who was standing there, waiting to process her EBT payment. Sounding angry and loud, he said: "I work here thirty-five years and I can't get no food stamps, and these people get it right away. This is a fucked up country!" He continued to walk, now past the Mexican immigrants' stall, repeating "fucked up country!" On another, less overtly hostile, occasion, a middle-aged Latina woman pointedly asked if you could pay in cash: "Everyone is paying with checks." These reactions may in part be about what Zukin et al. (2015) identify as a sense of loss of moral ownership of the street and a changed habitus, but they also draw on understandings of how the society at large works and who benefits and does not. Racialized and marginalized groups bear the brunt in reproduction of difference and hierarchy in public.

In an example that unfolded over repeated weekly observations, a regular shopper expressed a feeling of unfairness as she struggled to make sense of WIC checks and food stamps. Celena was a Greek immigrant woman who came every week with her friend and their young children. Early in the season, Celena asked the market manager, Amy, about eligibility for WIC and EBT, and whether her husband's income would be counted, becoming indignant upon learning that it would. Amy remained patient and civil through her many questions, and suggested calling the information hotline. When Celena left, Amy remarked that she did not think the woman knew how poor "these people" were. Notably, as a regular who bought a lot using cash, Celena was treated as a guest of honor, particularly by the Tibetan vendors, who played with her children and gave her discounts. In the weeks that followed, Celena and her friend complained that they were poor too but did not get food stamps. The manager and vendors did not engage with them on this issue, steering conversations to food and children. Out of earshot, however, they remarked on the size of Celena's house (which they saw while delivering a pet rabbit) and her friend's new SUV.

Paying attention to built-in inequalities characteristic of a market setting, as well to the way societal hierarchies that marginalize the racialized poor make their presence felt in the market, belies first impressions of civility and tolerance. Underneath the cosmopolitan canopy may not be the "equivalent, symmetrical relationships" Anderson (2011:33) describes, even when interactions do appear to be friendly. They are certainly not symmetrical when structural inequalities are reproduced through the enforced performance of poverty, and marginalized people have to shop in a way that outs their reliance on public assistance. Civility itself, when not simply due to the powerful norms of interactional order, can be a sign of unequal structural relations.

CONCLUSION

Based on the types of interactions at the farmers' market, it could be defined as a cosmopolitan canopy. People of different racial and class characteristics shared the space and interacted peacefully, civilly, and often convivially. Customers and vendors actively engaged with the categories of race and ethnicity, in ways that did not necessarily signal intolerance or exclusion, even if this explicit use contradicted the colorblind ideology widespread among the white middle class. At the same time, extended analysis of everyday interactions revealed routine reproduction of race and class hierarchies in the farmers' market. Situated accomplishment of difference was connected to inequalities in the macro context of the neighborhood, city, and even the nation, from the marginalization of immigrants and the racialized poor to growing class inequality and erosion of the social safety net. In this way, not everyone had equal access to and claim on the physical and symbolic space of the market. The spectacle of diversity itself could elicit fear and stigmatization of Spanish speakers, the immigrant poor, and other vulnerable groups. Key to analyzing this site was full consideration of tensions embedded in market relationships themselves, which can be overlooked if the focus is primarily on customers, and not all social actors, including vendors and agents of the state.

Even a small farmers' market is a space of commerce, and features established structural positions, including vendors, customers, and managers, which carry inherent tensions—as well as instrumental uses of diversity. In this context, accomplishment of diversity is not simply about enjoyment of difference and tolerance, but a tool for precarious market workers to make a profit (or even just minimize losses) and for the managers and the city they work for to exercise social control over marginalized populations by shaping their consumption and health-related habits. This analysis of everyday interactions at one farmers' market in New York City shows that diverse public spaces that appear civil and cosmopolitan are embedded in larger hierarchies and systems of domination. The cosmopolitan canopies they create cannot be bracketed as calm spaces away from the conflicts and travails of the city at large (Anderson 2011). The impression of the cosmopolitan canopy splinters when we consider how even civil interactions help reproduce inequality, let alone take into account the role of the structural positions of different actors in how they deal with diversity. As "third places," the potential of coffee shops, beer gardens, etc., for leveling social differences must be evaluated in light of the implausibility of such leveling in the midst of a capitalist marketplace (Oldenburg 1999). Like the farmers' market, these places are coproduced by workers, bosses, and state regulators, as well as by visitors who may or may not seek an informal place to engage with others on a level playing field. Anderson's (2011) claim that cosmopolitan canopies are "neutral settings, which no one group expressly owns" (p. 66) is incongruous when applied to a marketplace where there are most certainly owners and workers. Without determining it, the context of capitalist exchange and state regulation underlies encounters and interactions among diverse actors and structures how people accomplish difference, as well as how they may consolidate their advantages or resist power hierarchies.

At first glance, spaces like public parks, playgrounds, recreational centers, and libraries seem like better candidates for building oases of tolerance and social equity, as market relations are more peripheral there than at farmers' markets, in coffee shops, or on shopping streets. Yet, even there, we can expect larger structural inequalities to shape the

situated accomplishment of difference. The mechanisms present at this farmers' market are applicable to many other public settings, even those not dominated by commerce. For one, interactions in public parks, libraries, etc., are shaped by imperatives of social control by the state, if not by the market (Shepard and Smithsimon 2011). In today's neoliberal cities, there is scarcely any space that is not owned, controlled, and dominated by some powerful party, however invisible it may first appear to an observer. In addition, a key insight that the public nature of the farmers' market showcased diversity in a way that elicited intergroup resentment could very well work in diverse public parks or any public setting that concentrates and makes visible neighborhood change. More generally, it is not difficult to imagine that in diverse urban spaces, norms of public interaction create impressions of a cosmopolitan canopy that nonetheless coexists with tensions over difference and inequality, to be revealed through a methodological lens that centers how people make meaning of social categories and space.

The situated interactions at the farmers' market are inextricably connected to larger patterns of stratification. Skyrocketing inequality, crushing poverty, gentrification and displacement, persistent residential and school segregation, criminalization and war on immigrants are durable features of most U.S. cities. There are plenty of examples of how diverse people do not get along: how rage over centuries of injustice explodes in uprisings, state surveillance instills fear in marginalized populations, and the consumption preferences of elites appropriate cultures of the less powerful while pushing out these same people from their homes. It is tempting to turn to public spaces with hope that in parks, on sidewalks, and street markets, people can "rub along" (Watson 2009), savor their common humanity across gulfs of race, ethnicity, and class, and plant a seed of tolerance that spreads to the rest of the city. Places are socially produced rather than simply containing social action. Neutrality of space becomes doubtful when it is constituted by social actors embedded in institutions patterned by race, class, and gender and drawing on omnirelevant categories like race to interpret their social world (West and Fenstermaker 1995).

Scholars must remain critical of claims that contact between diverse strangers results in better getting along (Lofland 2000) and be realistic about the potential of public space to foster a safe space of cosmopolitanism. Special skepticism should be exercised when evaluating romanticized notions of food consumption as breaking down social boundaries. More insidiously, claims about learning tolerance under the cosmopolitan canopy elide the inequalities that shape this process, which Anderson (2011) himself points out in his analysis of "the nigger moment." We are better served by considering public parks, playgrounds, and markets as places to discipline and socialize marginalized populations. Or, to consider the interactional work that goes into misrepresenting hierarchies as horizontal difference and the consequences of diversity discourse on perpetuation of inequality (Berrey 2005). We might also examine the role of public space in managing rage and resistance of marginalized populations, or in constructing safe access for the consumption of difference by the affluent, predicated on making privilege invisible. In investigating social relations in diverse urban public space, it is vital to keep in mind that dominant social categories like race, class, and sex always serve as resources for everyday interpretation of action, even as multiple identities wax and wane situationally. The differences are stratified and cannot be suspended upon entering under the "protective umbrella" of "a special type of urban space" (Anderson 2011:66). However, this need not mean a pessimistic acquiescence to the status quo. Rather, acknowledgement and study of the

dynamics of inequality through diverse interactions in public space lays the foundation for charting the possibilities for neighborhoods and cities that are as distinguished by equity as they are by diversity. It allows us to analyze existing resistance and strategize new interventions in the messy, everyday lived experience of diversity among urban strangers.

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Note

[1]It is possible that by "healthy people," Pongal meant white people, but preferred not to use the term when talking to me, a white woman.

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