

**AMERICANS' ATTITUDES TOWARDS CULTURAL DIVERSITY AND
CULTURAL AUTHORITY: CULTURE WARS, SOCIAL CLOSURE, OR
MULTIPLE DIMENSIONS?**

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Abstract

Despite extensive public controversy over issues of cultural authority and diversity in the arts and education, little research has analyzed the nature and causes of relevant public attitudes. Using data from the GSS's 1993 "culture" module, we analyze responses to a set of questions dealing with such matters as confidence in educators' judgment in creating curricula, the appropriate role in curricula of the classics and multicultural works, and the value of modern art. Patterns of responses for both full and college-educated samples are inconsistent with the view that a "culture war" divides the American public; with predictions drawn from social-closure theory; and with hypotheses about generational change based on recent critiques of higher education. Results are more consistent with a view of attitudes towards high culture, multiculturalism, and elite cultural authority as separate dimensions, shaped by different causal antecedents. Support for high culture is positively associated with educational attainment, participation in the arts, and political tolerance; sympathy with cultural pluralism is greater among the well educated, women, and the young, and weaker among political conservatives and those who support racial separation. Skepticism about elite cultural judgments is associated positively with education and negatively with confidence in professionals. Our findings suggest that certain premises that have shaped public debates about the arts and higher education have been misleading.

AMERICANS' ATTITUDES TOWARDS CULTURAL DIVERSITY AND CULTURAL AUTHORITY: CULTURE WARS, SOCIAL CLOSURE, OR MULTIPLE DIMENSIONS?

Since the 1980s, controversy has rocked America's universities and other cultural institutions. Within the arts, well-publicized battles over controversial photographs and performances pieces have pitted defenders of modernism and artistic freedom against champions of traditional values and public decorum (Bolton 1992; Dubin 1992; Heins 1993; Wyszomirski 1994). Within higher education, universities have been subject to a campaign of criticism suggesting that they are run by "politically-correct" tenured radicals, dedicated to replacing traditional western humanistic culture with an ill-formed goulash of special studies reflecting the preferences and identities of women and members of ethnic, racial, and lifestyle minority groups (Bloom 1987; Kimball 1990; D'Souza 1991).

The quality of most of this debate has not been outstanding, as many observers have noted (Graff 1992; Hughes 1993; Hunter 1994). The most widely broadcast and read critics have relied less on reasoned argument than on passionate accounts (the specifics of which have often turned out to be distorted [Jacoby 1994, ch. 2]) of apparently lurid cases of artistic license or political excess. Most defenders have responded piecemeal to the particulars of specific attacks or have dispensed abstract pieties about artistic or academic freedom that are largely orthogonal to the critics' concerns.

Yet if the rhetoric has been superficial, the issues behind the rhetoric could not be more important. For the conflicts over the universities and the arts bear directly upon the nature of cultural authority, especially religious and professional

authority, in U.S. society; upon the receptivity of the native-born to the new immigration of the late twentieth century and the likely effect of population change on American institutions; and upon the effects of changes in both cultural authority and cultural diversity on the nature and extent of cultural reproduction.¹

Given the centrality of these issues to the core concerns of sociology, it is disappointing that sociologists have not been more active in bringing empirical data and analytic rigor to a debate in acute need of both. In this paper, we add to the discussion an analysis of patterns of public opinion towards issues of cultural authority and cultural diversity in education and the arts. To do so, we use a new resource, the sociology of culture module of the 1993 General Social Survey, the first systematic national survey to address such issues.

After introducing data and measures, we address three sets of questions in turn. The first is relevant to the culture-wars perspective: How *polarized* are Americans' attitudes towards cultural authority and cultural diversity in education and the arts? The second asks how *coherent* are Americans' attitudes on these matters, in order to test both the culture-wars perspective that cultural attitudes are structured by diametrically opposed moral ideologies and a neo-Weberian social-closure argument that views attitudes as driven by conventionally educated people's interest in the prestige and legitimacy of the culture in which they have invested.² Third, after finding that neither of these positions receives much support, we ask what factors *do* structure the responses we describe?

Culture Wars? Questions and Evidence

In recent years, some political figures, journalists, and scholars have suggested that the United States is in the midst of a "culture war," in which supporters of traditional moral values vie with secular relativists for control of American institutions. Supporters of this view have argued that the American polity has become increasingly polarized around moral and political positions driven by differences in fundamental values about the nature of the world and the appropriate location of moral authority. Issues of cultural authority and cultural diversity in universities and the arts have loomed large in popular discourse, commanding ample attention from the working press, authors of best-selling screeds, and engineers of direct-mail lobbying and fund-raising campaigns. Because the scope of the issue arenas in which the "culture war" has been invoked ranges far beyond the arts and higher education to abortion, sex education, gays in the military, gun control, and many others, we do not propose to "test" the validity of this perspective as a whole. Given the prominence of the arts and higher education in the culture wars debate, however, the perspective should be helpful in accomplishing the purpose of this paper, which is to understand patterns of public opinion on matters of cultural authority and cultural diversity in these two institutional spheres.³

There are two distinct elements to the argument implicit in most of the "culture wars" literature: *polarization of opinion* and *ideological crystallization*. Opinion is polarized in so far as respondents tend to choose polar response categories, rather than categories indicating ambivalence or moderation. Opinion is

ideologically crystallized in so far as patterns of correlation among items are strong and consistent with a coherent ideological perspective.

Certainly the polemical literature provides much reason to expect such patterns to emerge. Conservative critics, often academics themselves, portray universities and cultural institutions as dominated by extreme liberals who seek to replace traditional evaluative hierarchies with new ones lacking in proven merit, inconsistent with traditional values, and often oriented towards the perspectives of activists who claim to speak for women, lesbians and gay men, and people of color.⁴ Liberals in turn accuse the critics of stolidity, elitism, inability to recognize merit in new works, and, often, racism, sexism, and/or xenophobia. If one believes the rhetoric, one might envision a horde of anti-traditional academic leftists, championing contemporary art and the culture of the excluded, arrayed against an army of traditionalists, defending the classics, English literature, and western culture. By this logic, supporters of the classics, applying a single universal standard in evaluating all art and literature, instruction in English, and the proposition that only a few can judge excellence in art should be lined up on one side against supporters of women's and minority literatures, modern painting, and cultural relativism (see Guinness 1993, ch. 9; Hunter 1991, chs. 8 and 9; Wuthnow 1988, chs. 5-9; Wuthnow 1989; and Kurtz 1994, ch. 6 for illuminating discussions of these opposing views and of the broader context of institutional change in religion).

The expectation that those who value high culture would devalue popular culture is consistent, as well, with a quite different perspective, that of neo-Weber-

ian social-closure theory (see Parkin 1979; Murphy 1988 for overviews). People who have invested in learning about traditionally prestigious culture have an interest in the culture they have mastered remaining prestigious. Because those with the most education should share their judgments, they should support traditional centers of cultural authority; and, following Bourdieu and Passeron (1977), they should believe that the cultured taste with which training has imbued them is a gift of nature, scarce and valuable. Finally, because multiculturalism legitimates forms of culture which they are unlikely to have mastered, the highly educated should by this logic oppose initiatives that celebrate non-Euro-American cultural traditions.

Indeed, the social-closure perspective differs from the culture-wars approach with respect to only two of the attitudes about which the GSS inquired. First, whereas conservative critics see professional educators as part of the problem, and therefore would expect defenders of Euro-American high culture to have lost faith in professional educators, social-closure theory would portray faith in traditional bases of cultural authority as tightly linked to support for high culture and opposition to multiculturalism. Second, conservatives view modern art as part of the problem, whereas social-closure theory would acknowledge its status as part of the prestigious high culture with which formal education inculcates familiarity.

The polarization and social-closure perspectives differ less in their expectations about how attitudes cohere, however, than in the role of religious and political perspectives and educational attainment, respectively, in structuring these opinions. Conservative culture critics emphasize the role of fundamentalist religious

faith and conservative political views in distinguishing the putatively warring camps, and suggest that the highly educated have, if anything, forsaken western cultural values. By contrast, social-closure theory points to the highly educated as the core constituency for traditional cultural values, and the group with the most to lose from efforts to effect cultural change.⁵

Note the centrality to both views of the proposition that there must be an opposition between traditional high culture and its supporters, and multicultural studies and theirs. "Multiculturalists," writes Hunter (1994:191), "wish to increase the recognition, power, and legitimacy of various minority groups, in part *through a delegitimation of an 'oppressive' mainstream American culture*" [italics added]. For this and other reasons, "multiculturalism undermines the authority of cultural norms and cultural institutions..." (208).⁶ By the same token, social closure theory posits that investors in each type of culture have material and ideal interests in the devaluation of the alternatives.

To date there has been little scholarly research testing the culture-wars or social-closure interpretations of university and art-world culture conflict against data on public attitudes (Lang and Lang's review of press reports of polling data on conflicts over the National Endowment for the Arts [1991] is the one exception). Indeed, James Hunter, whose books (1991; 1994) popularized the term "culture wars" within academia, has resisted the notion that cultural conflict is discernable through attitude research. In analysis of public opinions towards abortion (the empirical focus of his 1994 volume), Hunter notes the complexity of responses to

opinion surveys, and argues that "the culture war of which I speak" must be sought not in "ordinary people's attitudes about public issues" but in "moral visions" that are "institutionalized and articulated in public life" and "acquire something of a life of their own" (1994: vi-vii). Yet he also notes "polarizing tendencies" in public opinion (120-21), and implies that the superficiality of public opinion research should tend to *overstate* "sharp contrasts" and *underestimate* nuance and ambivalence (169).

Because these arguments appear to be inconsistent in their implications, we are uncertain as to where Hunter stands. But if, as he argues, the U.S. polity faces profound polarization in publicly "institutionalized and articulated ...moral visions," and such "deep and abiding cultural fragmentation" (1994:viii) as to herald the possible approach of "civil strife and open violence" (4-5), could attitude surveys fail to register at least a modest blip? We think not. Consequently, although Hunter contends that opinion data cannot be used to evaluate his argument, we believe such data bear directly upon the issues his work has raised so effectively.

What little research exists has provided, at best, mixed support for the culture-wars perspective. Evans (1994) found significant effects on attitudes towards such politicized social issues as abortion, gender roles, and sexual behavior of an indicator of worldview based upon the arguments in Hunter (1991), although conventional status-group indicators accounted for most of the variation explained. In an illuminating study of eighteen Southern Baptist congregations, Ammerman (1994) found relatively little activism around social issues. Moreover, at the indiv-

idual level, she found no significant negative correlations (in her whole sample or in particular congregations) between adherence to "evangelical" or "liberal" perspectives. Olson and Carroll (1992), focussing upon religious elites, likewise found little support for the notion that a culture war is in progress. Lang and Lang (1991) report that high proportions of respondents to survey questions about the debates over Arts Endowment grants were unfamiliar with the conflict, and that responses among those who were betrayed little polarization, with most of those who held strong opinions reporting pro-arts sentiment and even respondents identified as "white fundamentalists" being relatively uninformed and expressing opposition to censorship (albeit by smaller margins than other groups).

The only paper of which we are aware that focusses upon any of the cultural items used here is Verter (1994), which analyzed the items tapping opposition to multicultural and classical materials in school and university curricula. Verter notes that only 51 percent responded in a "consistent manner" (i.e., support for one type, opposition to the other), and concludes that a predictive model based on the "culture wars" literature "adds nothing towards explaining the curriculum debate." Except for the Langs' paper and Verter's, we know of no other studies that address the issues of cultural diversity and cultural authority that concern us here.

Data and Measures

Data are from the 1993 NORC General Social Survey, a regular personal-interview sample survey of U.S. households (see Davis and Smith 1992 for details). The

1606 respondents to the 1993 survey were representative of noninstitutionalized American aged 18 or older. The 1993 GSS contained a special "module" of questions germane to the interests of sociologists of culture (described by Marsden and Swingle 1994).

Our analyses focus on eight items, asked for the first time in 1993, which explored public attitudes towards controversial issues of cultural authority and cultural diversity. Each item presents an assertion and asks the respondent to indicate "whether you strongly agree, agree, disagree, or strongly disagree with it." These responses were coded from "1" through "4," with higher values indicating more *disagreement* with the stimulus statement. ("Don't know" and "No answer" responses were treated as missing.)

Five of the items dealt with attitudes towards cultural diversity and cultural authority in the context of university and secondary-school policies towards the arts and humanities. These items, and their NORC-generated variables labels, are:

TRSTPROF. I trust the judgment of the teachers and professors who decide what high school and college students should be reading.

CLASSICS. High schools and colleges make students spend too much time reading "classics" that have little relevance in today's world.

GRTBOOKS. The great books are universal in their appeal: There is no "white literature," "black literature," or "Asian literature," there is only human literature.

ENGLISH. It is better for everyone if English is the only language used in the public schools.

PCLIT. It is a shame when traditional American literature is ignored while other works are promoted because they are by women or by members of minority groups.

Three other items concerned cultural authority and diversity in the arts:

JUDGEART. Only a few people have the knowledge and ability to judge excellence in the arts.

MODPAINT. Modern painting is just slapped on: a child could do it.

EXCELART. Artistic excellence can be found in popular and folk culture just as much as in the fine arts.

Additional GSS items employed in models explaining responses to the attitude items are:

AGE. Age in years.

BLACK. Dummy variable, 1 if African-American, recoded from race. Originally coded by interviewer if no doubt, otherwise asked of respondent.

HISPLAT. Dummy variable, coded from GSS national-background question. 1 if Hispanic origin.⁷

FEMALE. Dummy variable, 1 if female, 0 if male.

EDUC. Respondent's years of formal education, 0-20.

SOUTH. Dummy variable. 1 if region of interview South Atlantic, East South Central or West South Central.

RURAL. Dummy variable, 1 if residing outside SMSA in a place with fewer than 10,000 inhabitants, according to NORC size-of-place code.

INCOME. Family income (collected by GSS in 21 categories, recoded to midpoint of range).

FUND. Dummy variable, 1 if conservative Protestant religious denomination. Originally coded by GSS from denominational affiliation (see Smith, 1986, for details).

POLVIEWS. Seven-point scale, ranging from extremely liberal to extremely conservative.

We constructed four scales from several other GSS measures. The first, **RACISM**, varies from 0 to 3 and is the sum of three items tapping support for legally sustained racial separation, each recoded to make higher values indicative of

racist views and rescaled to range from 0 to 1, the latter representing support, respectively, for the right of Euro-Americans to keep African-Americans out of their neighborhood, legal establishment of a homeowner's right to discriminate by race when selling or renting, and laws against racial intermarriage.⁸ The second, **TOLERANCE**, is based on responses to fifteen questions about the willingness of the respondent to support the right to speak, the right to teach in a college, or the removal of a book by, respectively, an atheist, communist, a gay man, a militarist or a racist.⁹ Each of these was recoded so that 1 represented an intolerant response and 2 represented a tolerant response, and they were summed, yielding a scale value ranging from 15 (less tolerant) to 30 (more tolerant). The third, **CONFIDEN** taps the respondent's confidence in professionals and is the sum of measures based on four items, ranging in value (after recoding) from 1 to 3 and indicating confidence, in, respectively, education, the press, medicine, and the scientific community. Scale values range from 4 to 12. The fourth, **ARTORIEN**, is a measure of the respondent's participation in and orientation towards the high arts: attendance at classical music performances, dance concerts, or art museums (three items); attitudes towards classical music and opera (two items); and the importance of being "cultured" as an attribute of one's friends. Each item was recoded to make higher responses indicative of a high-culture orientation and then rescaled from zero to one, yielding a scale range of 0 to 6.¹⁰

Finally, three pairs of cultural attitude items were combined to create three composite measures. **ANTINOM**, a composite of TRSTPROF and JUDGEART,

reflects respondents' faith in conventional warrants of cultural authority (with high values reflecting an antinomian rejection of such authority). **HICULT**, a composite of **CLASSICS** and **MODPAINT**, is a measure of attitudes towards high culture. **PLURAL**, the sum of **ENGLISH** and **PCLIT**, reflects support for or resistance to the institutionalization of non-Euro-American cultures. The rationale for these variables is provided below. Descriptive statistics are presented in Appendix Table 1.

Are Attitudes Polarized?

Because the GSS data enable us to take a first look at public opinion towards cultural authority and cultural diversity, simple response frequencies warrant our close attention.

Responses to the items dealing with education suggest that Americans are more uncertain than sharply divided with respect to the authority of the classics, the desirability of expanding the canon to admit representatives of relatively excluded groups, faith in educators' right to control the curriculum, and even the contentious issue of English instruction in the public schools. Most respondents were willing to "trust the judgment of the teachers and professors who decide what...students should be reading," but very few felt strongly about this and more than one third withheld their trust, again, however, with little passion. Asked to respond to a provocatively worded assertion that students waste too much time reading the classics, just over one third rose to the bait, with most respondents disagreeing. Again, strong opinions were notable for their rarity. Respondents

were more willing to agree with a statement, also provocatively phrased, bemoaning the substitution of works "promoted because they are by women or by members of minority groups" for "traditional American literature." Yet, even though the wording was calculated to maximize the proportion of sympathetic responses, fewer than one in twelve respondents strongly agreed, and more than one in three disagreed.¹¹ Americans appear more comfortable with the notion of literary universalism, with more than three quarters agreeing that "there is no 'white literature,' 'black literature,' or 'Asian literature,'..." but that "the greatest books are universal in their appeal." Just over one in ten endorsed this view "strongly," the largest percentage taking a "strong" position on any of the items. With respect

Table 1 about here

to the exclusive use of English in public schools, responses were split almost evenly between those who favored at least some bilingual instruction and those who favored English only. Approximately 10 percent of respondents took strong positions on each side, more than for other questions, but still surprisingly few for an issue that has been hotly debated, is linked tightly to feelings about immigration, and has appeared on ballots in several state elections.

Questions dealing with the arts also revealed much diversity of opinion, and relatively few strongly held positions. Respondents were about evenly split between those who agreed with the classically elitist position that "only a few people

have the knowledge and ability to judge excellence in the arts" and those who disagreed. Fewer than 6 percent were willing to endorse the statement, and fewer than 10 percent to oppose it, strongly, however. A plurality of respondents disagreed with the statement denigrating the work of modern painters, though two of five agreed; fewer than 5 percent strongly endorsed this view, however.¹² Responses to the statement that "Artistic excellence can be found in popular and folk culture just as much as in the fine arts" were the most lopsided, reflecting an almost complete desertion of the aesthetic ideology that sharply privileged high culture in relation to folk or popular expression. Fully 95 percent of respondents agreed, and only six of the 1463 respondents took vigorous exception to an assertion that most educated Americans would have been deemed philistine just a few decades earlier. Nonetheless, even here, respondents were reluctant to express strong opinions, with just over 10 percent agreeing "strongly" with the popular stance.

Overall, responses demonstrate that Americans share a fairly broad consensus in favor of universalism and an even broader rejection of a narrowly highbrow definition of aesthetic merit, but that they hold divergent opinions about virtually everything else. Large minorities of respondents don't trust educators to create curricula, think that students are required to read too many "classics" in school, want English to be the only language of instruction in the public schools, are sympathetic to the substitution of works by women and people of color for "traditional American literature," believe that one must have special skills or

abilities to judge excellence in art, and agree that "even a child" could produce modern painting -- with small majorities taking the opposite positions. The pattern of responses implies uncertainty and tentativeness more than polarization, however. Only the hot-button issue of English in the public schools causes even one in five respondents to take polar positions. For all other items, the ratio of moderate to extreme responses ranges from 5.5:1 (the greatest books are universal) to 7.2:1 (substituting works by women and minority-group members for "traditional American literature"). Most Americans, it seems, have either thought too little about these issues to feel comfortable with extreme positions or, if they *have* considered them, see enough merit on each side to find the extremes unappealing.

To give the culture-wars hypothesis the strongest possible hearing, we looked separately at respondents who had completed college, the group for whom issues concerning higher education and the arts are likely to be most salient. Among this group, there are more polar responses than among the population as a whole, especially indications of strong disagreement. The differences, though not substantively large, are statistically significant at $p \leq .05$ for all items except the ones on English instruction in the schools and trusting professors to decide what students should learn. Most respondents, even among the college graduates, however, gave moderate responses: the largest proportion taking extreme positions are the 23 percent who agreed or disagreed strongly with the view that only English should be used in the public school. Other relatively high percentages of extreme responses represent not polarization, but consensus: for the four other items for

which extreme responses averaged a fifth of the total, almost all of the college-educated respondents who chose such responses are on the same side. Thus 20 percent disagree strongly with the proposition that students have to read too many classics (compared to 3 percent who agreed); and almost 20 percent strongly agree that excellence can be found in folk and popular culture, compared to just over half of 1 percent who strongly demurred from this view. In other words, college-educated respondents *are* more willing to take strong stands on these items, but, except on the subject of bilingual education, not in a way that indicates that their opinions are polarized.¹³

Is Opinion Ideologically Crystallized?

We have seen that on the first dimension, polarization *per se*, the notion that Americans are engaged in a crystallized cultural conflict is inconsistent with these data. It is possible, however, that the second dimension of the culture-wars perspective, which is largely consistent with the social-closure view, might still receive support, and that attitudes cluster into coherent ideological packages that provide a matrix along which polarization might yet occur.

Evidence for cohesion of any kind is mixed, at best. The part of Table 2a below the diagonal contains a matrix of correlations (Kendall's *tau--b*) among the indicators with which we are concerned. Above the diagonal is a schematic representation of expected relationships (positive or negative) amongst the components. Where a significant correlation supports the expectation of the culture-wars per-

spective, a Y (for "yes") appears in the cell, next to the plus or minus sign. When a significant correlation runs counter to the predictions of this perspective, a N (for "no") appears. The absence of a Y or N indicates that the correlation was not significant.

Table 2 about here

The first thing to note is the rather low level of correlation among these items: the highest (between CLASSICS and MODPAINT) is .24, only two of twenty-seven others exceed .2, and just eleven of twenty-eight have absolute values of .10 or more. This level of correlation, whatever the significance and direction of the associations, is inconsistent with a high level of ideological crystallization.¹⁴

Moreover, of the twenty-eight correlations, only ten significantly support the culture-wars position, whereas eight significantly contradict it (and ten other coefficients fail to reach significance). In other words, the notion that solid blocks of ideologically coherent traditionalists and progressives struggle for control of our cultural institutions, while quite possibly correct as a characterization of mobilized interest groups, provides no purchase in understanding patterns of response among this cross-section of the U.S. population. If a culture war is in progress, clearly much of the population has not enlisted in either side.

Recall that the culture-wars and social-closure versions of crystallization differed in their expectations about attitudes towards the credibility of professional

educators and the legitimacy of modern art. These results give no more credence to the social-closure view than to the culture-wars position. Again, ten correlations support the social-closure perspective, seven contradict it, and eleven are insignificant.

One could argue, however, that ideological coherence, especially among positions on issues related to education and the arts, is unlikely to be found in the general public, and more likely to appear in the opinions of well educated men and women (Converse 1964). Table 2b displays the correlation matrix based on responses of men and women who have completed college.¹⁵ We see that, indeed, more pairs are significantly associated, as one would expect, and both the culture-wars and social-closure hypotheses receive more, although still mixed, support. Significant correlations consistent with the culture-wars view now number thirteen, compared to seven that contradict it (with eight coefficients still insignificant). Fourteen correlations are consistent with and six are inconsistent with the social-closure account. The highest correlation (still between support for teaching the classics and viewing modern painting as serious art) rises slightly to .28. Although only two correlations are higher than .2, the absolute values of eighteen are now higher than .1. These are still very modest levels of association, but they do indicate somewhat greater ideological coherence in the opinions of the more educated respondents.

For the most part, this coherence reflects significant associations among responses to five of the eight items: bilingual instruction in the schools, expansion of

the canon to include works by women and minorities, how many people are qualified to judge excellence, whether excellence is as likely to be found in popular and folk as in high culture and (from the culture-wars perspective) attitudes towards modern painting. The major contradictory findings can be found in the association of support for the classics with an expansive view of how many people are qualified to judge art, the existence of excellence in folk and popular culture, and (for the culture-wars approach) with support for modern art. In addition, the culture-wars perspective is belied by the tendency for supporters of universalism and the belief that few are qualified to judge art to express confidence in professional educators. The social-closure perspective is belied by the association of positive regard for modern painting with support for bilingualism, multiculturalism and the ability of many to judge art.

That correlations are higher among college graduates than for the entire sample could mean either that patterns are less crystallized among less educated respondents or, alternately, that they are crystallized in different ways. We tested this possibility by inspecting correlations for respondents with no more than a high school education. Most correlations were weaker than for the college-educated subsample: only two coefficients exceeded .2 and the absolute value of only twelve exceeded even .1. Eight of twenty-eight coefficients were significantly consistent with the culture-wars view, nine contradicted it significantly, and eleven were insignificant. For the social-closure perspective, nine correlations were consistent and eight contradictory.¹⁶

Although no alternative ideological structure emerged from the responses of the less-educated subsample, some striking differences in particular coefficients were revealing. College graduates who deplored replacing traditional American works with multicultural fare were significantly *less* likely to believe that excellence could be found in popular and folk culture as easily as in the high arts. By contrast, less educated respondents who held the same view were significantly *more* likely to believe that excellence could be found outside of high culture. And college graduates who believed that excellence could be found in folk and popular art were more likely to reject the notion that modern painters lack skill; but less-educated respondents were *more likely* to reject modern painting if they believed in the value of folk and popular art. For the latter, the emphasis in agreeing that artistic excellence can be found outside the high arts appears to be on the rejection of cultural authority implicit in that statement: those who accept it would also reject the authority of elites who champion modern art and multicultural curricula. For the college educated, endorsement of that item appears to be part of a general inclination to expand the canon and to adopt a more inclusive definition of aesthetic merit, but not to reject cultural authority *per se*. Consistent with this interpretation, among college graduates, but *not* among respondents with no college training, a belief in the virtue of popular and folk culture is associated with a rejection of the notion that students have to spend too much time reading the classics.

To summarize, we examined responses to GSS questions about cultural authority and cultural diversity to see if responses are consistent with the culture-

wars perspective espoused by critics on the cultural right and echoed, with nuance, balance, and qualification, from a sociological perspective by Hunter (1991; 1994); or with a social-closure perspective based upon neo-Weberian conflict theory. We found no support for either view among the population at large: opinions were anything but polarized, and patterns of association among items were both weak and, when significant, almost as likely to contradict as to support the expectations of the culture-wars and social-closure perspectives. Opinions of college graduates on these matters were somewhat more strongly defined (though far from polarized) and demonstrate more ideological cohesion (albeit at relatively low levels of association) than those of the full sample. But the failure of a basic tenet of both the culture-wars and the social-closure interpretations -- an opposition between traditional culture and multiculturalism -- to appear for either the full sample or the separate subsamples, indicates that neither successfully accounts for the observed patterns. Clearly, no single-dimensional explanation will suffice to explain the pattern of opinions on issues of cultural authority and diversity in the contemporary U.S., even among the well educated. In the next section we develop and test a multidimensional approach to understanding public attitudes on these matters.

Beyond Culture Wars and Social Closure: A Multidimensional Analysis

If the views of ordinary Americans are not, as conservative critics or social-closure theory would have it, structured by an opposition of traditional cultural values ver-

sus multicultural liberalism, then what does explain variation in responses to the GSS culture items? In what follows, we test our expectation that these questions tap at least three distinct attitudinal dimensions and that the items vary in the extent to which they reflect each. We begin by dividing the items themselves into meaningful subsets, and then develop and test hypotheses about the predictors of responses to each.

Item Substructure

For purposes of scaling, we discarded two of the eight items: EXCELART, because responses exhibited so little variance; and GRTBOOKS, because the wording made responses difficult to interpret.¹⁷ The remaining six items, we believed, divided naturally into three pairs. TRSTPROF and JUDGEART tap attitudes towards cultural authority: Responses reflect the willingness of the respondent to defer to experts in defining cultural value. Responses to ENGLISH and PCLIT both reflect resistance to cultural change and to the incorporation of minority and immigrant subcultures into educational institutions. Finally, CLASSICS and MODPAINT each taps attitudes towards legitimate cultural forms. We believed that responses to items dealing, respectively, with judgments about high culture, about multiculturalism, and about who has the right to judge, were likely to be driven by different types of respondent experiences and attitudes.

In order to see if we could simplify the analyses by combining responses to each pair of items into a single subscale, we subjected responses to these six items to a principal-components factor analysis with varimax rotation. The analy-

ses yielded three meaningful factors with eigenvalues of greater than 1.0, each dominated by one of the pairs of variables that we anticipated would load together, and interpretable in terms of our expectations. On the basis of these results we felt justified in following our theoretical intuitions and combining the items for further analysis.¹⁸

Table 3 about here

Attitudinal Dimensions Shaping Responses

We suspect that the GSS cultural attitudes items are tapping three rather different orientations: 1) attitudes towards high culture; 2) attitudes towards cultural authority; and 3) attitudes towards cultural diversity. (Details of the scales used to measure these orientations -- ARTORIEN, CONFIDEN, TOLERAN, and RACISM -- appear on pages 10 and 11, above.)

Orientation towards the arts. People vary substantially in the extent to which they are oriented to and participate in high-culture arts activities. Although such orientations are strongly shaped by social position, especially educational attainment, they are not entirely determined by it. Therefore, we anticipate that participation in and tastes for the high-culture arts may have some independent effect on people's attitudes towards cultural authority and cultural diversity.

We expect that people who value high culture are less likely to think that students read too many classics and less likely to put down modern painting.

(Note that the orientation scale includes reports of attendance and of attitudes towards music, but not tastes for the visual arts, or attitudes on issues related to cultural authority or cultural diversity; therefore the posited relationship is non-tautological.) This is not a surprising conjecture, but it does explain why attitudes towards modern art and the classics are -- in contrast to the expectations of cultural conservatives -- positively associated.

Hypothesis 1: The greater one's orientation to the arts (as measured by ARTORIEN), the greater one's support for high culture (HICULT).

Research has demonstrated that interest or participation in the high-culture arts is positively related to interest or participation in a wide variety of other cultural forms. Therefore, we would expect orientation to high culture to be positively related or (given the contentious wording of PCLIT) unrelated to measures of cultural pluralism (Robinson et al. 1985; Peterson 1992). This expectation contrasts with the view that cultural discourse has become so polarized that support for "classic" or "Eurocentric" (depending on one's political perspective) high culture stands in opposition to multiculturalism.

Antinomianism. A prominent subtheme in American ideology has been the populist rejection of cultural authority, a rejection that has both cross-cut the distinction between left and right and, at the same time, divided conservatives among themselves. For most conservative intellectuals, opposition to modern art or multicultural curricula constitutes a defense of what they perceive to be "traditional standards"; for populist conservatives, such opposition may be but one instance of

a more general rejection of the authority of educated elites, whatever their cultural orientation. We suspect that the populist rejection of elite authority is particularly influential in shaping the attitudes of some respondents towards questions about cultural authority, and that the split between populist and traditionalist conservatism may account for weak zero-order relationships (not reported) between self-reported political views and responses to most of the GSS culture items.

Although we cannot measure populism directly, the GSS does measure respondents' confidence in several kinds of cultural institutions (the press, educators, medicine and science), which we combined into a single scale. We chose items for this scale that tapped trust in cultural professionals (broadly defined) whose authority resides in some combination of training and claims to specialized expertise and disinterested values, as distinct from questions about trust in such political or economic institutions as business, government or the military.

Hypothesis 2: The less one's confidence in cultural institutions (CONFIDEN), the greater one's skepticism about conventional forms of cultural authority (ANTINOM).

We make no assumption that the effects of antinomianism should generalize from the specific issue of cultural authority to evaluations of specific forms of culture, either conventional high culture or multiculturalism.

Xenophobia. A final attitudinal dimension that we suspect our questions may tap is an underlying antipathy for people who are different from the respondents. Many opponents of rightwing cultural critics (e.g., Reed 1988: 157) have

suggested that assertions of the superiority of western culture reflect a thinly veiled opposition to the rights and aspirations of people of color. We suspect that they, like their conservative opponents, err if they overgeneralize: as hypothesis 1 suggests, one can be a partisan of Euro-American high culture because one likes it, not because one dislikes people who are not Euro-American.

On the other hand, research on symbolic racism suggests that cultural attitudes may be extensions or displacements of intergroup antipathies (Kinder and Sears 1981; Bryson 1994; Halle 1994: 154). Ideally, one would want to test this view with direct measures of xenophobia (see, e.g., Ho 1990). In the absence of such measures, we employ two different proxies, one reflecting support for legally sanctioned racial separation and one reflecting a general disposition towards tolerance of free expression.

Hypothesis 3: The greater one's support for racist legislation (RACISM) the greater one's opposition to public and private policies that promote cultural pluralism (and thus the lower one's score on PLURAL).

Hypothesis 4: The greater one's level of political tolerance, the greater one's support for multicultural policies (PLURAL).

We would not expect either racist attitudes or tolerance to influence reverence for high culture. We do not expect the former to influence faith in established cultural authority. Tolerance of political deviance may reflect a belief in free speech for its own sake or a distrust of those established authorities who would seek to limit free speech. If the latter, it might be related to antinomianism. This

possibility is sufficiently speculative, however, that we do not present it as a formal hypothesis.

Other influences on responses

We expect several individual attributes to influence one or more of the cultural attitude measures. Because we regard the measures as reflecting analytically and empirically distinct aspects of attitudes towards cultural authority and cultural diversity, we expect such variables to have different effects on different indicators.

Education is the best predictor of participation in and attitudes towards the high-culture arts (DiMaggio and Ostrower 1990). We expect education to increase HICULT both directly and also indirectly through ARTORIEN. Education could increase support for multiculturalism either because, as the culture-wars perspective holds, colleges and universities impart multicultural ideology or, alternatively, because formal education increases cognitive complexity and therefore openness to diversity (see Bobo and Licari 1989). Education has been found to decrease cultural exclusiveness both directly and indirectly through its effect on political tolerance (Bryson 1994). Therefore we expect both direct and indirect positive effects of education upon PLURAL. By contrast, the social-closure approach suggests that education should have a negative effect upon pluralism. The effect of education on ANTINOM is less predictable. On the one hand, educated respondents are more likely to identify with professionals as members of the same status group (Collins 1979) and share an interest in maintaining legitimate control of prestigious cultural capital (thus supporting the notion that only a few people can

understand the arts and that they can be trusted to do it well) (Bourdieu 1979). On the other hand, part of the status culture of the educated is what Gouldner (1979) called the "culture of critical discourse," which includes an inclination and sense of entitlement to question authority in all its forms.

Religiously Conservative Protestantism (FUNDY, a rough-cut measure that tends to conflate different degrees of fundamentalism, evangelicalism and other forms of religious conservatism) may reduce the value of ANTINOM in so far as religiously conservative Protestants tend to respect authority, or increase its value, to the extent that their attitudes towards specifically cultural authority have been shaped by conservative culture critics. Similarly, religious conservatism may reduce support for HICULT because that measure includes attitudes towards modern art, against which well-known conservative clergymen have inveighed. We expect religiously conservative Protestants to support pluralism less than others, though we do not know whether the anticipated relationship is direct or, instead, driven by correlations between membership in conservative faith communities and more proximate causes (e.g., southern residence).

Note that these two variables, education and religiously conservative Protestantism, are those most directly relevant to the social-closure and culture-wars hypotheses, and thus the two most likely to influence all three cultural measures in the same way (liberal or progressive for education, conservative or traditionalist for religious conservatism in the culture-wars view; conservative for education in the social-closure perspective). By contrast, our multidimensional

model suggests that the effect of each will vary from indicator to indicator.

Race and *Hispanic origin* are expected to influence PLURAL, with non-Euro-Americans being more supportive of multiculturalism than Euro-Americans. (The effect for African-Americans may be diluted because one of the two items the measure comprises is support for Spanish-English bilingualism, which is not particularly strong in African-American communities.) Other things equal, we would also expect African-Americans, and perhaps other non-Euro-American respondents, to be less willing to accept traditional forms of cultural authority, therefore increasing their scores on ANTINOM. In contrast to the zero-sum imagery of conservative culture criticism, and consistent with the findings of previous research on participation (DiMaggio and Ostrower 1990), we do not expect the positive effect of minority status on PLURAL to be accompanied by any negative effect on HICULT.

We expect *Age* to be negatively associated with ANTINOM, reflecting a decline in cultural authority over time (see DiMaggio 1991), and to have an indirect negative effect on PLURAL through tolerance and racism. We expect no effect of age on HICULT.

We anticipate that residents of the southeastern U.S. will have more conservative cultural attitudes than others, especially with respect to race, and that they will therefore be less supportive of pluralist social policies (Reed 1993). Given the much replicated finding that women participate more in the arts than men, we expect female gender to increase HICULT both directly and indirectly through its effect on ARTORIEN. We expect ideological self-identification (POLVIEWS) to

influence attitudes towards multiculturalism, an issue which has been heavily politicized, but not to affect other cultural attitudes. We also include measures of income and rural residence as controls, without clear expectations of their effects.

Results

We use OLS multiple regression analysis to test our hypotheses. We first regress each of the three dependent variables against demographic and other indicators of individual attributes. Next we regress each against the attitude scales. Finally we combine influential attribute and attitude measures into a single model.

Table 4 About Here

Support for high culture. As expected, the most significant demographic predictor of HICULT is educational attainment, thus indicating that education shapes not only behavioral participation in the arts but dispositions towards the high-culture arts as well. This finding is consistent with the social-closure perspective, and less so with polemical versions of the culture-wars view. The beta for educational attainment is more than three times as great as the next strongest predictor, female gender, which, also as expected, has a positive effect. African-Americans were slightly less likely to express support for high culture than others. The small but significant negative effect of rural residence is not surprising, given the lack of high-cultural venues in most areas outside of SMSAs with populations

of less than 10,000 (Blau 1989).

More surprising is the significant negative effect of membership in a conservative Protestant denomination on HICULT.¹⁹ We guessed at first that this result was driven by the inclusion of an item tapping sentiment towards modern painting, a target of some politically oriented evangelicals, in the composite measure. When we tested this expectation by analyzing the two component items separately (in regression models, not reported here, using the same predictors as model 1 in Table 4), we discovered this was *not* the case. Religious conservatism has small significant negative effects, with almost identical coefficients, on sentiment towards modern art *and* towards the classics in the curriculum. The latter is inconsistent with the expectations of conservative culture critics.

Other surprises lay in store in model 2, which uses primarily attitudinal scales to predict HICULT. As expected, supporting hypothesis 1, respondents who attend arts events, like fine-arts music and value cultured friends also hold more benign views of high culture. Unexpectedly, the tolerance scale predicts HICULT almost as well and, even more surprisingly, the racism scale is a significant negative predictor. Indeed, these three variables (and the insignificant confidence-in-professionals scale) explain more than 20 percent of the variance in HICULT.

In the full model (number 3), race, gender, rural residence, and religiously conservative Protestantism lose their significance, indicating that their effects are indirect, mediated by high-art orientation and tolerance, which remain significantly positive, and by racism, which falls just below the .05 significance level. Educat-

ion remains the strongest predictor of HICULT, edging out arts-orientation. Because education is by far the strongest predictor of the latter and of tolerance, it exerts a strong indirect effect on HICULT in addition to its direct effect (see Appendix Table 2). Rural residence and religious conservatism exert small indirect negative effects through significant impacts on both tolerance and art orientation.

Antinomianism. Our models were far less effective in predicting antinomianism than in predicting support for high culture and multiculturalism. As expected, older people and southerners are more accepting of authority than younger people and persons residing outside the southeast. Consistent with the culture-wars perspective and inconsistent with the social-closure view, the effect of educational attainment is positive. But the aggregate effect of all these predictors is very small.

Nor are the effects of the attitude scales much greater than those of the demographic or behavioral predictors. Confidence in professionals is significantly and negatively associated with antinomian views, consistent with hypothesis 2. And political tolerance is significantly and positively associated with skepticism about cultural authority. In the combined model 3, however, only confidence in professionals and formal education remain significant.

Pluralism. As expected, model 1 demonstrates that the elderly are less approving of multiculturalism, whereas African-Americans and the well educated are more supportive. The latter finding is consistent with the culture-wars account and inconsistent with the social-closure view. Consistent with research on racial attitudes (and thus tending to support the symbolic-racism interpretation), family

income is significantly associated with disapproval of multicultural initiatives, and women are significantly more supportive of cultural pluralism than men (Steeh and Schuman 1992). To ensure that the latter result was not driven by the component of the multiculturalism question that addresses the role of women's literature in the curriculum, we ran separate models with each component item as a dependent variable. The gap between women and men was even greater in support for bilingualism (with women more supportive) than in support for a more inclusive canon.

Model 2 demonstrates a strong relationship between self-described political conservatism and opposition to multiculturalism. Moreover, supporting hypothesis 3 and the symbolic-racism view, support for racist legislation is positively associated with opposition to multicultural initiatives. By contrast, hypothesis 4 is disconfirmed: with conservatism included in the model, tolerance of political deviance is unrelated to support for cultural pluralism.

When the two models are combined, only family income, the effect of which is partially mediated by political conservatism, and African-American identity, the effect of which is mediated by its negative impact on racism and political conservatism, lose their significance. A significant interaction between education and conservatism indicates that, rather than liberalizing everyone's views, formal education may actually polarize attitudes towards multiculturalism, with educated conservatives more opposed to it than their less educated peers. Membership in conservative Protestant denominations exerts a small indirect negative effect on pluralist views through its positive impact on political conservatism, as does age

through its modest effect on political conservatism and its stronger association with support for racial separation.

Generational effects? The conservative popular literature both alleges generational trends towards civilizational decline (defined as rejection of high culture, rejection of cultural authority, and support for multiculturalism) and lays the blame for these putative trends at the door of higher education. We operationalized these concerns by replacing our age variable with a series of cohort dummy variables that divide the population into pre-baby-boomers (born before 1947), baby boomers (born 1947-1960), and post-boomers (born between 1961 and 1975).

Two versions of the conservative story require testing. What might be called the *theory of boomer exceptionalism* (Bloom 1987) suggests that things began to go wrong in the 1960s, when the baby boom generation seized control of America's campuses, laying waste traditional educational values as cowardly liberal administrators capitulated to their demands. If this is the case, we would expect to see a sharp decline in HICULT and sharp increases in Antinomianism and Pluralism with the baby boomers. By contrast, the *tenured radical theory* (Kimball 1990) sees the diffusion of barbarism awaiting the elevation of the boomers to the tenured professoriat, just in time to corrupt the values of "Generation X." If this is the case, we would expect to see a particularly sharp decline in HICULT and sharp increases in Antinomianism and Pluralism with the post-boomer cohort.

We subject these arguments to an easy and a more rigorous test. For the former, we simply replace age with the boomer and post-boomer cohorts as dum-

my variables (omitting the pre-boomer category for contrast). In analyses (not reported here) employing models otherwise identical to those in Table 4, we found no evidence of generational change in attitudes towards high culture or antinomianism. Consistent with the boomer theory, we did find a modest, significant increase (betas = .122 for the boomer cohort and .114 for the post-boomers) in support for cultural pluralism, consistent with the coefficient for age in the model in Table 4, but revealing a discontinuity in the effect not evident therein.

Note, however, that critics of the right allege that the purported shifts reflect changes in higher education. Thus our "easy" test is liable to both type 1 and type 2 error. If the predicted changes occur within the college-educated portion of the sample, this would tend to support their arguments, even if such changes are not visible in the public at large. And if observed changes are no more evident among the college-educated than among others, the universities cannot be blamed. Therefore, for each dependent variable, we tested an additional model (not reported here) that contained an interaction term for each of the two included cohort dummies with educational attainment.

The results indicate that the intercohort increase in support for cultural pluralism is unaffected by educational attainment, contradicting arguments that attribute cultural change to the influence of higher education.²⁰ Nor is there support for conservative fears in results of the HICULT model. (The positive slope of education was actually steeper for boomers, but the coefficient was not significant.) Only for antinomianism did interaction effects induce a change, making the positive

coefficient for the boomer dummy significant. This effect is consistent with the theory of boomer exceptionalism; but, again in contrast to conservative fears, the (nonsignificant) interaction term indicates that higher education, far from accounting for boomers' disrespect for authority, actually served as an antidote.

Discussion

These findings resolve certain issues and clarify the structure of public opinion on matters of cultural authority and cultural diversity as these touch upon the areas of education and the arts.

First, they refute the culture-wars perspective, which sees in debates between conservative culture critics and liberal multiculturalists a clash of coherent ideologies and an instantiation of an even broader struggle between traditionalist and progressivist forces. Such polarization may characterize the views of the most highly mobilized contestants, but it has not trickled down to the general public. We created three composite dependent variables, representing, respectively, devotion to high culture, opposition to traditional bases of cultural authority, and support for multiculturalism. If these were all aspects of the same polarity, we would expect explanatory variables to act similarly upon each of them. Instead, in the full models, six of eight significant predictors influenced only one of the three dependent variables. Both exceptions, racism and formal education, behaved inconsistently (in terms of the received wisdom). The latter was significantly and positively associated with two "liberal" positions (antinomianism and pluralism) and one "conservative" stance (devotion to high culture). The former was significantly

and negatively associated with one liberal position (pluralism) and one conservative view (support for high culture). These results support our contention that cultural conflict in our universities, schools and arts institutions represents not a struggle between two well defined sets of values, but rather a set of loosely related contests knit together more by strategy and convenience than by common ideology.²¹

Second, our results refute the social-closure view that interprets cultural conflict as reflecting the interests of the highly educated in maintaining the value of their investments in a prestigious Euro-American high culture to which they have monopolized access. To be sure, the college educated are the core constituency for high culture. But, inconsistent with the social-closure view, educational attainment is also a strong predictor of support for cultural pluralism and is positively associated with skepticism towards elite cultural authority.²²

Third, our results indicate that the worst fears of both liberals and conservatives are therefore largely imaginary (with respect to public opinion, but of course not necessarily with respect to organized social movements). Liberals may take cheer in the fact that the religiously conservative are no less sympathetic to multiculturalism than anyone else, once one controls for such factors as age and educational attainment. And supporters of high culture (though not opponents of multiculturalism) are likely to be less, rather than more, racist in orientation than opponents of the classics and modern art. For their part, conservatives may be pleased to learn that university education and generational change have not had the radicalizing impact attributed to them. Younger generations are no more an-

tinomian and no less approving of high culture than their elders (other things equal). They are more strongly in favor of pluralism, but this is because they are less racist rather than less supportive of high culture; and, in any case, the change appears unconnected to higher education.

Fourth, we identified attitudinal dimensions most directly related to three kinds of cultural stance. Support for traditionally privileged forms of high culture is driven by formal education and a behavioral and attitudinal orientation to the arts. There is no evidence that people who want the classics taught in schools are motivated by anything more insidious than respect for and appreciation of the products of high culture. Far from representing a form of symbolic racism, belief in the value of high culture is negatively associated with racism and positively associated with political tolerance.

By contrast, opposition to cultural pluralism does reflect, to some extent, symbolic racism, as well as a more general political conservatism. Despite the efforts of critics of the cultural-diversity movement to construct an opposition between traditional high culture and cultural pluralism, support for both is associated with high levels of formal education and in no case does a positive predictor of one attitude negatively affect the other.

Finally, antinomianism is explicable (to the limited extent it can be explained) as a function of confidence in professionals and formal education: People who have faith in professional authority are more willing than others to vest responsibility for curricular decision-making in educational specialists and to defer to the aes-

thetic judgments of an elite. Formal education makes people *less* willing to defer to the tastes and judgments of others. More generally, people's attitudes towards cultural authority -- their judgments about who should have the right to judge -- are driven by different attitudes than their own evaluations of particular cultural forms.

In sum, public attitudes towards the arts and higher education are not polarized. Nor do they cohere in the manner suggested by conservative culture critics or by social-closure theory. Instead, a multidimensional interpretation, that the culture wars of higher education and the arts revolve around three analytically distinct and weakly correlated sets of attitudes (support for Euro-American high culture, rejection of cultural authority, and multiculturalism, respectively), shaped by different attitudinal orientations and life experiences, is more consistent with these data.

None of this is to deny that cultural conflict exists, that activists form alliances across many different issues, and that social-movement elites form more coherent ideological understandings of disparate issues than ordinary noncombatants.

Nor is it to say that rhetoric about "culture wars," or recitation of discourses that link previously disparate issues, cannot over time contribute to creating the very conditions they purport to describe. Rather, it suggests that explanations for conflict over education and the arts must be sought not in the structure of public opinion, but in the specific institutional logics of these fields and in the strategies and tactics of mobilized social movements.

Indeed, given the energy that movement elites have poured into struggles over education and the arts, it is surprising that Americans' attitudes are as *unpola-*

ried as they are. We suspect that our findings provide a clue as to why efforts to foment broad-based conflict over the arts and education have not been more successful. To blossom into a culture war, differences in opinion should both pit one form of culture against another at the symbolic level and be rooted in structural cleavages that permit identities to crystallize around the symbolic struggles. Instead, we find that the strongest supporters of the traditional canon and the alternative to it come from the ranks of the highly educated, and that those who support one are also likely to support the other (see also Verter 1994). Moreover, perhaps reflecting the victory of the celebrated American faith in cultural democracy with the rise of mass higher education, the college-educated steadfastly refuse to play the role of "cultural elite" into which some have tried to cast them. Instead, higher education is associated not only with support for traditional culture and multiculturalism, but also with democratic attitudes towards cultural authority and a broad definition of aesthetic value.

These findings complement the results of earlier work on patterns of participation in the arts. Using data from the Detroit Area Study, Wilensky (1964) first noted that, counter to the stereotypes, most men and women who attended high-cultural events consumed a lot of popular culture, as well. Analyzing national data, Robinson et al. (1985) documented the "more-more" principle: Virtually every form of cultural participation is associated with every other. Peterson (1992) reported that members of well-educated occupational status groups most likely to report liking highbrow forms of music were "omnivores" who expressed enthusiasm for a

wide range of musical forms; and Bryson (1994), analyzing *dislike* of musical forms, found that highly educated respondents disliked fewer, while liking more, musical genres.

Our analyses demonstrate that these behavioral dispositions and specific tastes are reflected in cultural attitudes, and that educational attainment is related not only to catholicism of taste and behavior, but to open and anti-elitist attitudinal dispositions. The absence of a large constituency for cultural hierarchy would seem to indicate a sea change in educated opinion, given the cultural and institutional dominance of such hierarchy at least through the 1950s (Levine 1988; DiMaggio 1991; Rubin 1992).²³ Whereas in past generations, prestige was mapped hierarchically onto cultural forms in a manner that reflected the stratification of their audiences, contemporary education may impart, instead, a standardized ability to display "individualized" tastes that enact identity and defie categorization. If so, the ranks of the highly educated may yield few willing conscripts to culture wars in higher education and the arts; and, as the stakes of such wars ultimately matter the most to the highly educated, even the most bellicose generals may find it difficult to raise mass armies.

These observations are limited, of course, to the sphere of public opinion. As Hodson et al. (1994) have noted, social changes that produce tolerance among individuals may generate conflict at the community level. Our findings therefore provide little basis in themselves for predictions about the incidence of episodes of conflict over issues of diversity and authority in the arts and education. But they

indicate the need to distinguish clearly between the roles of mass attitudes, on the one hand, and organizational or ecological factors, on the other, in explaining such conflicts, and remind us that one cannot make inferences about changes in public attitudes from apparent changes in the incidence of public conflict.

NOTES

1. By "cultural authority" we refer to the acknowledged legitimate authority of a set of social agents to evaluate objects, ideas or actions with reference to some sphere of collective responsibility. Societies vary in the extent to which such authority is vested in any agents, in the degree of consensus about what agents should possess it, in the extent to which authority is functionally differentiated vs. concentrated in one or a few elites, and in the extent to which its exercise is embedded in the state, in private organizations, or in more general discursive formations.
2. By coherence, we refer to the scope and extent of patterns indicated by the strength of correlations among related items.
3. Indeed, higher education and the arts are the locus classicus of the culture-wars debate, which sprang into public consciousness with conservative attacks on the National Endowment for the Arts and on campus "political correctness" in the late 1980s. A review of articles or reviews in U.S. daily newspapers or press services archived in the Nexis information system that used the term "culture war" or "culture wars" revealed that 35 percent of 43 entries in 1990 and 1991, 38 percent of 94 entries in 1992, and 31 percent of 191 entries in 1993 referred primarily or exclusively to conflicts in the arts or higher education. (Including cases that dealt with culture wars in the commercial media, e.g. Hollywood films, commercial television or pop music, would have made the percentages even higher.) No less a combatant than William Bennett, former chair of the National Endowment for the Humanities, has described the culture war as a battle "about music, art, poetry, literature, television programming, and movies; the modes of expression and conversation, official and unofficial, that express who and what we are, what we believe and how we act" (1992: 25).

4. A typical example of a large genre of press treatments of the academic side is Page, 1990: 3, from the *Chicago Tribune*, who cites cases of students shouting down conservative speakers and then writes of a "culture war over the value of traditional Western civilization versus the works of Third World authors and thinkers."
5. Hunter's (1991; 1994) view of causation is more complex in that he portrays the division as rooted in fundamental differences in worldview between traditionalists and progressives, which are reflected in religious and political discourse; and because he is alert to the heterogeneity of opinion among the highly educated and sensitive to the connection between culture, power, and self-interest that social-closure theory highlights. See Evans (1994) for a more thorough discussion.
6. The irony in this is that by almost any definition *multiculturalists* include the Euro-American tradition among the cultures about which they believe students should learn. As Hughes (1993: 133) has pointed out, the conservative cultural critics' position rests of a fallacious conflation of multiculturalism with Afrocentrism or other forms of cultural separatism that reject multiculturalism's central tenets.
7. A respondent was coded "1" if he or she reported his or her national background as Spanish, a Latin American national group (excluding Portuguese-speaking Brazil) or Phillipino. Because approximately one quarter of GSS respondents either do not know their ancestry or report more than two national origins, it is likely that some respondents of Hispanic ancestry are not included.
8. We would have preferred to employ a broader range of racial attitude measures, including ones that had greater variance and reflected less overtly racist beliefs. Unfortunately, because not all questions are asked to all GSS respondents, only the questions included in this scale were available for use in conjunction with the tolerance and confidence scales.

9. The combination of categories that are ordinarily perceived to be inconsistent (e.g. militarist and communist, racist and homosexual) is calculated to ensure that the scale reflects support for civil liberties and first-amendment rights rather than simply acting as a proxy for any particular political ideology.

10. We also created separate RACISM and HIGHART scales by first converting the component items to z-scores and then summing, but these z-score-based scales were correlated at more than .99 with the scales used here, so our choice of the latter had no substantive implications.

11. Question phrasings were intended to maximize variation in response. Because of the novelty of the topic area, however, it was difficult to anticipate the phrasings that would do this most effectively. In the case of this item, a more even break -- perhaps with a plurality in the opposite direction -- might have been achieved by changing "is ignored while other works are promoted because they are" to "receive less attention in order to make room for works."

12. The item was taken from Bourdieu and Darbel (1990), which reports results of a survey of French respondents in the late 1960s. One might argue that the wording was more appropriate at a point when modern art was still often popularly identified with abstract expressionism; but agreement was sufficiently high to suggest that negative stereotypes from that era are alive in popular culture even if the styles on which they were based are no longer fashionable.

13. Patterns of nonresponse ("don't knows" and "no answers") cast additional, if indirect, light on this matter. Although interpreting nonresponses is hardly straightforward -- a respondent can say "don't know" because he or she does not understand the question, doesn't care, or simply cannot make up his or her mind -- it stands to reason that, where

issue mobilization is high (as it would be in the culture-wars view), such responses would be relatively rare. In fact, as the third panel in appendix table 1 indicates, nonresponse to these items was high, ranging from 4.42 percent (English in the schools) to 11.64 percent (works by women and people of color in the college curriculum), with a median of approximately 9 percent. Although such levels of nonresponse are not unprecedented in the GSS -- more than 11 percent of those queried said "don't know" or did not answer questions tapping attitudes towards labor unions in the 1991 module on work organizations, for example -- nonresponse to GSS questions with the same or very similar response categories typically ranges from 3 to 4 percent.

14. Although locating trust in professional educators on the left or anti-traditional side of the spectrum, as we have done in generating predictions, is fully consistent with the assertions of right-wing critics of universities and teachers' associations (see Robbins [1991] on the tendency of such critics to identify academic professionalism and multiculturalism), we were somewhat skeptical, and initially assumed that the low and unexpected correlations of TRSTPROF with the other measures might disguise different patterns of association for liberal and conservative respondents (such that those on the left who distrust the professoriat are likely to be especially radical, while those on the right who distrust educators are likely to be more ideologically conservative). We explored the correlations between TRUSTPROF and the other measures separately for GSS subsamples who characterized themselves, respectively, as liberal and conservative. No systematic differences between the groups emerged, thus leading us to discard our initial interpretation and reinforcing our faith in the prediction.

15. We performed a similar analysis for respondents who had completed college and who had voted in the 1992 presidential election, to see if opinion crystallization was stronger

among the politically active. The results were substantively almost identical to those in Table 2b, so they are not reported here.

16. We also generated a correlation matrix for respondents with one to three years of college. The coefficients for this group tended to lie between those for the less and more educated groups, as one would expect.

17. The item combined two distinct assertions, each at a fairly abstract level of generality: first, that great books are universal; and, second, that there is no "black literature" or "white literature" or "Asian literature," i.e., that these are illegitimate categories. One's response could be determined by one's reaction to either of the propositions or to both taken together. Consistent with our concerns, when we included this variable in the factor analysis, it loaded with equal strength on two different factors.

18. We also explored the possibility that underlying factors were correlated by performing a factor analysis with oblique rotation, but the results were substantively unchanged.

19. Because we were concerned that the effect of "fundamentalism" might be depressed if many respondents who claimed membership in fundamentalist faiths were in fact inactive members, we created a new "fundamentalism" variable that only included respondents who both claimed membership in a conservative religious denomination and also reported regular church attendance. We substituted this variable for the fundamentalism measure in additional analyses (not reported here), and in no case did it affect the results.

20. This mirrors the findings of research on trends in white Americans' racial attitudes and increases in political tolerance (Bobo and Licari 1989; Steeh and Schuman 1992). To give this view the fairest possible test, we explored the possibility that the alleged changes in higher education only affected students who majored in the humanities, the social sciences, or education by creating a dummy variable indicating that the respondent

reported attending college and majoring in one of these fields, and inspected interactions terms including this variable with the boomer and post-boomer cohorts respectively. None of the effects even approached significance.

21. Our results address only the "culture-wars" arguments that apply to the domain that we have studied here. Hunter's broader argument about cultural conflict may accurately describe attitudes towards politicized social issues like abortion or lesbian and gay rights, though his own analysis of abortion attitudes (1994) and analyses by Evans of a broad range of GSS data (1994) suggest that the approach may be of limited value in explaining public attitudes.

22. Because we know of no formal attempt to develop a social-closure theory of contemporary U.S. cultural conflict, we were forced to construct our own version of such a theory, and it is this, of course, that we have refuted. We do not regard our findings as refuting the perspective as a whole, which can certainly be amended to demonstrate the status payoffs to the highly educated of an ability to appropriate a wide range of cultural styles and genres. But our argument does suggest that social-closure theory is limited if it cannot specify the conditions under which the highly educated will adopt different strategies of cultural domination (e.g. support for cultural hierarchy vs. espousal of multiculturalism).

23. Without over-time data, we cannot locate the change precisely. But it would appear that at some point higher education stopped inculcating a particular version of cultural hierarchy, and began, instead, to produce an openness to and appreciation of a wide range of cultural forms. Such a change seems to have coincided both with a shift in the social meaning of the arts, as reflected in patterns of correlation in opinion data, into an attitude complex including tolerance, social liberalism, and skepticism towards authority. It may

also have marked a shift in the form of cultural reproduction from intergenerational transmission of a fixed hierarchy to transmission of a capacity for cultural adaptation and flexibility. For a discussion of the timing of the shift and a suggestion that it was under way by the early 1960s, see Mohr and DiMaggio (1994).

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Table 1: GSS Items on Cultural Authority and Cultural Diversity

	Strongly Agree(%)	Agree(%)	Disagree (%)	Strongly Disagree (%)	Ratio: Moderate/ Polar	N
TRSTPROF -						
All	4.56	58.60	31.88	4.97	9.51	1482
College grads	4.70	60.84	28.98	5.48	8.82	383
CLASSICS -						
All	4.12	33.75	53.18	8.94	6.57	1431
College grads	2.92	14.85	62.33	19.89	3.38	377
GRTBOOKS						
All	12.98	64.42	20.26	2.34	5.53	1456
College grads	19.47	56.05	22.11	2.37	3.58	380
ENGLISH						
All	11.32	36.89	42.62	9.17	3.88	1537
College grads	10.49	35.81	41.18	12.53	3.34	391
PCLIT						
All	8.10	58.77	29.03	4.09	7.20	1419
College grads	9.33	52.00	32.27	6.40	5.36	375
JUDGEART						
All	5.87	43.32	41.43	9.38	5.56	1482
College grads	4.35	31.46	49.10	15.09	4.14	391
MODPAINT						
All	4.89	35.85	48.88	10.39	5.55	1473
College grads	3.43	23.22	55.15	18.21	3.62	379
EXCELART						
All	12.44	82.57	4.58	0.41	6.78	1463
College grads	19.43	76.17	3.89	0.52	4.01	386

Source . 1993 General Social Survey, National Opinion Research Center. "Don't knows" not included. Wording of items can be found in the text of this paper, above.

**Table 2: Patterns of Association Among GSS Culture Items:
Kendall's Tau-b**

Table 2a: Correlation matrix of GSS culture items for full sample

	<u>1</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>5</u>	<u>6</u>	<u>7</u>	<u>8</u>
1) TRSTPROF	1.000	+	-/N	-	-	-/N	-/Y	+
2) CLASSICS	-.042	1.000	-/Y	-/N	-	-/N	-/N	+/N
3) GRTBOOKS	.075**	-.081**	1.000	+	+/Y	+	+	-/N
4) ENGLISH	.027	.080**	.019	1.000	+/Y	+/Y	+/Y	-
5) PCLIT	-.039	.006	.124**	.201**	1.000	+/Y	+/Y	-/N
6) JUDGEART	.151**	.182**	-.049	.127**	.066*	1.000	+/Y	-/Y
7) MODPAINT	-.110**	.238**	-.051	.201**	.170**	.113**	1.000	-
8) EXCELART	-.014	-.071*	.149**	-.008	.043*	-.088**	-.036	1.000

Table 2b: Correlation matrix of GSS culture items for college graduates

	<u>1</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>5</u>	<u>6</u>	<u>7</u>	<u>8</u>
1) TRSTPROF	1.000	+	-/N	-	-	-/N	-/Y	+
2) CLASSICS	-.079	1.000	-/Y	-	-	-/N	-/N	+/N
3) GRTBOOKS	.099*	-.197**	1.000	+	+/Y	+	+/N	-/N
4) ENGLISH	-.010	-.032	-.045	1.000	+/Y	+/Y	+/Y	-/Y
5) PCLIT	.023	-.018	.117*	.278**	1.000	+/Y	+/Y	-/Y
6) JUDGEART	.151**	.157**	-.054	.165**	.090*	1.000	+/Y	-/Y
7) MODPAINT	-.156**	.280**	-.136*	.169**	.168**	.131*	1.000	-/Y
8) EXCELART	.050	-.162**	.178**	-.133*	-.124*	-.165**	-.164**	1.000

Table 2c: Correlation matrix of GSS culture items for respondents with no more than a high-school education

	<u>1</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>5</u>	<u>6</u>	<u>7</u>	<u>8</u>
1) TRSTPROF	1.000	+	-	-/N	-	-/N	-/Y	+
2) CLASSICS	.024	1.000	-/Y	-/N	-	-/N	-/N	+
3) GRTBOOKS	.037	-.070*	1.000	+	+/Y	+	+	-/N
4) ENGLISH	.059*	.119**	.011	1.000	+/Y	+/Y	+/Y	-/N
5) PCLIT	-.040	.004	.163**	.138**	1.000	+	+/Y	-/N
6) JUDGEART	.165**	.145**	-.042	.129**	.058	1.000	+/Y	-
7) MODPAINT	-.102*	.162**	-.004	.201**	.142**	.090*	1.000	-/N
8) EXCELART	-.009	.018	.152**	.065*	.230**	.027	.064*	1.000

Source . 1993 General Social Survey, National Opinion Research Center. "Don't knows" not included. Wording of items can be found in the text of this paper, above. * = $p < .05$ ** = $p < .001$. Cell entries above diagonal indicate predicted relationship from standpoint of polarization perspective. A Y next to the sign indicates support for the predicted relationship; an N indicates a significant correlation in the opposite direction.

Table 3: Factor Analysis of Cultural Diversity and Cultural Authority Items

Rotated Loadings	Factor 1	Factor 2	Factor 3
JUDGEART	.442	.631	.136
TRSTPROF	-.207	.834	-.014
CLASSICS	.845	.072	-.100
MODPAINT	.620	-.227	.414
ENGLISH	.129	.241	.691
PCLIT	-.048	-.101	.802
Eigenvalue	1.642	1.203	1.052

Principal components factor analysis with varimax rotation (SYSTAT/PC Statistics Package). *Source* . 1993 General Social Survey, National Opinion Research Center.

Table 4: OLS Coefficients for Predictors of GSS Cultural Attitude Measures

Independent Variable	HICULT			ANTINOMIANISM			PLURALISM		
	1	2	3	1	2	3	1	2	3
Age	-.009			-.074*		-.048	-.127**		-.116*
Black	-.058*		-.034	-.007			.140**		.068
Female	.091**		.049	.011			.116**		.121*
Rural	-.056*		.023	-.052			-.007		
Hispanic	-.015			-.026			.065		
South	.015			-.065*		-.002	-.049		
Income	.039			-.011			-.091*		-.097
Religiously Conservative Denomination	-.062*		-.039	.007			.004		
Education	.286**		.218**	.139**		.184**	.101**		.509**
Political Conservatism		-.083			.029			-.253**	.340
Art Orientation		.259**	.181*		.064			.099	
Tolerance		.226**	.140*		.143*	.104		.031	
Confidence		.035			-.159*	-.132*		-.034	
Racism		-.122*	-.107*		-.087			-.178**	-.113*
EducationX Political Conservatism									-.637*
Adj. R ²	.119	.221	.221	.033	.047	.065	.066	.136	.147
N	1221	328	331	1284	332	371	1256	338	402

Source . 1993 General Social Survey, National Opinion Research Center For each dependent variable, model 1 includes demographic and attribute predictors, model 2 includes attitudinal scales and arts orientation only, and model 3 combines significant or near-significant variables from both models. Ns vary because some questions appeared only on two ballots of the GSS, and some combinations of variables restricted the sample to one of three GSS ballots. * = significant at .05 or less; ** = significant at .001 or less. .

Table A-1: Descriptive Statistics for Variables Used in Paper*

1. Demographic Indicators

	Mean	N
Race: Black	.1115	1606
Gender: Female	.5735	1606
Religion: Liberal	.2677	1544
Moderate	.3580	1544
Conservative	.3356	1544
Ethnicity: Hispanic	.0361	1606
Cohort: before 1947	.3842	1601
1947-1960	.3599	1601
after 1960	.2528	1601
Rural	.1146	1606
South	.1650	1606
Age	46.05	1601
Educational Attainment	13.05	1602
Family Income	35431	1467

2. Attitude Scales

	Mean	s.d.	N
High Culture	5.331	1.128	1356
Antinomianism	4.922	1.078	1432
Pluralism	4.794	1.167	1396
Confidence	8.406	1.631	949
Art Orientation	2.220	1.337	1446
Racism	0.632	0.804	486
Tolerance	25.108	4.691	850
Political Conservatism (single item)	4.158	1.348	1548

3. Percentage of "Don't Knows" or "No Answer" for GSS Culture Items

TRSTPROF	5.85
CLASSICS	10.90
GRTBOOKS	9.34
ENGLISH	4.42
PCLIT	11.64
JUDGEART	9.15
MODPAINT	8.28
EXCELART	8.90

*For GSS culture attitude items, see text for wording and Table 1 for distributions. *Source* . 1993 General Social Survey, National Opinion Research Center

Table A-2: OLS Standardized Coefficients for Predictors of Other Attitude Scales

Independent Variable	Tolerance	Confidence	Art Orientation	Racism	Political Conservatism
Age	-.182**	-.065	.136**	.301**	.112**
Black	-.075*	-.027	.011	-.155**	-.082*
Female	-.013	-.064	.156**	-.090*	-.051
Rural	-.124**	-.022	-.073*	.119*	.058*
South	-.022	-.002	-.038	.083	.089**
Income	.032	-.082*	.154**	-.079	.055
Conservative Religious Denomination	-.113**	-.077*	-.052*	.057	.204**
Education	.327**	.030	.396**	-.181**	-.011
Adj. R ²	.246	.011	.268	.235	.076
N	769	836	1289	436	1376

Source . 1993 General Social Survey, National Opinion Research CenterNs vary because some questions appeared only on two ballots of the GSS, and some combinations of variables restricted the sample to one of three GSS ballots. * = significant at .05 or less; ** = significant at .001 or less.