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Source: *International Review of Modern Sociology*, Vol. 5, No. 2 (AUTUMN, 1975), pp. 164-172

Published by: International Journals

Stable URL: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/41421527>

Accessed: 07-05-2018 07:34 UTC

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## STRESS, THREAT PERCEPTION AND SIEGE CULTURE RESPONSES IN ANGLO FRAGMENT SOCIETIES\*

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*Within four of the major Anglo fragment societies (the United States, Canada, South Africa and Rhodesia), there have emerged what may be termed siege cultures, subordinate groups whose cultural survival has been threatened by the dominant power or group. The four groups traced here include White Southerners (in the U. S.), Afrikaners, White Rhodesians, and French Canadians. Fearing their cultural extinction (whatever the factors contributing to this), these groups, in the mobilization of their resources, their development of leadership, and their articulation of a defensive belief system or ideology, have been transformed by events into what Smelser terms "value-oriented movements". As such, their development closely parallels Smelser's analysis of the determinants, processes and sequences of collective group behavior. Viewing themselves as cultures under siege, these groups come to envision a "new society" based on their beliefs and values. Dependent upon situational factors, societal structures and the power differentials of the siege and dominant groups, the siege cultures will pursue diverse strategies (among others, those of separatism, withdrawal, accommodation, or the complete takeover of society) aimed at the preservation of their belief systems. What appears most significant as a determinant of these intergroup relations are the power capabilities and power differentials of the siege and dominant groups.*

**I**NCREASINGLY, in nations both old and new, the presence of diverse ethnic, racial and cultural groups precipitates cleavages and conflicts, brings into question political authority (or, in the extreme, questions the legitimacy of the political system itself) and severely tests the preservation of a national loyalty again surging subnational group loyalties (Enloe, 1973; Rabushka and Shepsle, 1972). It is the fear of cultural extinction (whether defined in ethnic, racial or broader—including language, beliefs or behavioral—terms) that prompts the emergence of what may be identified as siege groups or cultures.

In societies composed of diverse groups (ethnic, racial, cultural), inter-

group encounters, whatever the factors which brought those groups together (Lieberson, 1961), get translated into group power contests, those groups contesting for power, privilege, resources and control or influence over societal structures (Lenski, 1966). The reason is obvious: it is within those structures (political, economic and social) that the two key decisions of the society are made: first, decisions concerning the allocation and distribution of power, resources and privilege to particular groups (Katznelson, 1972); and, second, decisions concerning the forms which cultural or national integration will take, be those forms some type of cultural pluralism or the destruction of subgroup cultural beliefs and behaviour by a "national culture" which is usually the culture of the dominant group (Weiner, 1965).

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\*This is a revised version of a paper presented in the session on Ethnic and Racial Cleavages and National Integration at the VIIth World Congress of Sociology, Toronto, August, 1974.

Group power differentials are a major determinant of structural control and policy decisions. Usually the dominant group utilizes its power to control structures and make the key decisions which affect other groups in society (Katznelson, 1972; Wilson, 1973). The extent to which (as well as how) subordinate groups are incorporated within societal structures reflects the differential rates of group power. In some instances, it is the restricted access to or limited incorporation within those structures which heightens a subordinate group's recognition of its group identity (as well as its disadvantaged position in society), but more often it is the dominant group's efforts to eliminate or destroy the culture of the subordinate group which heightens the latter's perception and awareness of itself as a threatened cultural group (DeVos, 1972). This fear for its cultural survival transforms the threatened group into a siege culture or group. Fearing cultural extinction, the group develops a defensive posture which it utilizes to strengthen group solidarity while it wards off threats to its existence. The siege group articulates an ideology or belief system which sharply differentiates it from other groups (and defines the "we" from the "they"), sharpening, in the process, group contrast conceptions (Blumer, 1958; Copeland, 1939). Increasingly fearing the destruction of its cultural identity, the siege group assumes the characteristics of what Smelser has termed a "value-oriented movement" (Smelser, 1963). Dependent upon situational factors and group power differentials, siege groups adopt diverse strategies (whether of separatism, withdrawal, accommodation, or even the complete takeover of the society) geared toward the preservation of their cultural identity.

#### COMMON CHARACTERISTICS OF FOUR SIEGE CULTURES

At various historical periods there have

emerged within four of the Anglo fragment societies (Canada, the United States, South Africa and Rhodesia) siege groups: namely, French Canadians, White Southerners, Afrikaners and more recently, White Rhodesians. Although there are sharp differences (in some respects) in the beliefs of these siege groups, the determinants of their emergence and the sequences or processes of their development as siege groups closely approximate the characteristics which identify collective group behaviour (Smelser, 1963). In all four countries the policies of the dominant group or power (Anglos in South Africa and Canada; Northerners in the U.S.; and the metropolitan British government in the colony of Rhodesia) exacerbated tensions and transformed threatened groups into siege cultures. For example, conquest (though at different historical periods) by the dominant group prompted or reaffirmed the fears of White Southerners, Afrikaners and French Canadians that their culture was threatened. This fear was reinforced by dominant group actions at two levels: first, by the ways in which the dominant group restricted the structural incorporation of the subordinate siege groups; and second, by the cultural policies, both overt and covert, by which the dominant cultural group tried to destroy subordinate group cultures.

At various historical periods White Southerners, Afrikaners and White Rhodesians were acutely aware that their cultural beliefs in White supremacy were threatened by the dominant group (northerners in the U.S.; English settlers and the metropolitan British Government in South Africa; and the metropolitan British Government in Rhodesia). These threatening actions included the abolition of slavery, subsequent wars (the American Civil War and the two British-Boer Wars in South Africa, in all of which the sharply differing racial policies of dominant and siege groups were a major

factor), and other efforts by the metropolitan government (the federal government in the United States; the metropolitan British government in South Africa and Rhodesia) to destroy siege-group racial beliefs by incorporating (or threatening to incorporate) non-White groups especially into economic and political structures.

Each of the four siege groups viewed its own as the legitimate culture, and dominant group efforts to destroy that siege culture were rebuffed. The Dutch and French, for instance, resented the conquest and intrusion of the British government and English settlers, and they struggled thereafter (the forms which those struggles took depended upon power differentials of dominant and siege groups) to assure their cultural survival. White Southerners, for example, feared for their cultural survival: they opted for war, lost, then modified their strategies to mute metropolitan efforts to grant Black citizens equal rights and opportunities. The Dutch (later called Boers, and now Afrikaners) responded in somewhat comparable fashion: fleeing first (the Great Trek) to escape British racial policies and the freeing of slaves, opting later for war, losing, and then over a period of decades, capturing control of political structures (1948) to re-establish their racial policies based on White supremacy. More recently, White Rhodesians, their country still a colony of the British Crown, opted for secession (1965) to prevent the mother country from turning over political power to Black Rhodesians, a policy which would quickly end White supremacy. In Canada French Canadians turned inward, toward an agrarian way of life (as did the Boers and White Southerners) to escape both "contamination" from the dominant group's cultural beliefs and the sometimes coercive efforts of English Canadians (with intermittent approval from the metropolitan British government) to anglicize the French and thereby eliminate

the French/Canadian culture. Each of the four groups, then, struggling to protect its cultural identity, accepted the legitimacy of its own culture and control over the land, and each mobilized, developed a defensive ideology, and transformed itself into a siege culture.

In three of the countries (the United States, Canada and South Africa) the dominant cultural group (Northerners in the United States, English in the other two) utilized its control over political, economic and social structures to shape cultural policy. That control also provided it with the power to allocate resources, power and privilege within society, and often that power was systematically used to eliminate subordinate group cultures, the process being called assimilation or anglicization. Those siege group members who discarded their own culture and were assimilated were accorded structural access and opportunity; those who resisted assimilation and held to their own culture usually found their structural incorporation restricted or limited. In these same three countries the dominant cultural group evolved historically toward a business, industrial, urban-oriented type society, and it assumed its cultural superiority. Historically, too, the siege groups turned inward, apotheosizing the "agrarian way of life", adhering to it as the best means for protecting their members from the assimilationist efforts of the dominant cultural group. Increasingly, as a consequence, cultural differences surfaced in the political arena, and cultural group conflicts became the most salient feature of political conflict (Enloe, 1973; Rabushka and Shelsle, 1972).

#### THE SIEGE CULTURE OF WHITE SOUTHERNERS IN THE UNITED STATES

Power capabilities and structures determined the variable responses of these siege cultures to the perceived threats.

This is evident in a brief examination of each of the cases. In what later became the United States, the early American colonies were settled mostly by English. Economic and other developmental factors, though, prompted a cultural bifurcation. Southern culture was based on agrarianism and slavery; Northern, on commerce, industry, urbanism and free labor. Anti-slavery and abolitionist criticisms heightened the South's awareness of its cultural differences, and the North's increasing economic and political power sharpened the South's awareness of its dependency and quasi-colonial position. The Tariff of 1828 clearly revealed the South's dependency position, and President Jackson's threat to use military force to quell Southern protests frightened White Southerners. As Northern abolitionist sentiments intensified, the South grew more restive. It saw itself as a culture under siege, and it sought to justify its agrarian-slavery society. It espoused an ideology of White supremacy. Unless it retained a power parity with the North within the existing political framework, it realised that its culture would be destroyed. Consequently, the South articulated a state's rights doctrine (which would protect it from metropolitan federal government legislation) and it supported Calhoun's proposals for restructuring the political system (his proposal for concurrent majorities, which would preserve a North-South power parity). When these efforts failed, the South opted for secession: the siege culture risked war to preserve its belief system and way of life.

The South lost the war and lived under an imposed military rule, but these events simply heightened its stress and solidified its siege culture mentality (and its belief in White supremacy). Its political power thereafter circumscribed, the white South devised new strategies, legal and otherwise, for reconstructing (though

in modified form) a White dominance system. The siege group regained control of political structures; it supported a one-party political system that assured it enough power in Congress to thwart legislation aimed at protecting Black citizens in the South; and it pursued an ideological campaign aimed at convincing Northerners that Black men were inferior. In all of these efforts the White Southerners were successful; and, by World War I, Black advancements and opportunities in economic and political structures, both in South and North, had been arrested.

By perpetuating a basically agrarian society, the South managed to preserve its White dominance system until the 1960s when a series of factors (industrialization, the civil rights movement, and federal government interventions to assure Black incorporation within societal structures), including especially the mobilization of Black Americans and their resources, forced changes in the system. For instance, federal pressures were exerted for assuring Black access and incorporation within all structures, economic (job opportunities), political (voting and civil rights), and social (school desegregation). Had it not been for metropolitan (federal) government pressures, the White siege group could have persisted in maintaining its White dominance system. Viewed historically, had the White siege group succeeded earlier in its secession attempt, the South's subsequent development might have paralleled somewhat that of South Africa (Wilson, 1973; van den Berghe, 1967; Himes, 1973; Blauner, 1972; Lacy, 1972).

#### THE SIEGE CULTURE OF AFRIKANERS

The Dutch settlers, mostly farmers, early felt threatened by the intrusion of the British who annexed the Cape Colony in 1806. The Dutch relied primarily on

slavery and cheap Black labour, and the English, particularly in their missionary efforts, moved to accord Blacks equal rights with Whites. The Dutch, already perceiving their cultural beliefs threatened rebelled on 1815. Although the rebellion was quickly suppressed, Dutch resentment persisted because of English racial policies. When the British abolished slavery in 1834, the Dutch fled inland (the Great Trek) to escape both the English settlers and British government control and policies. On the frontier the Dutch, or Boers, clashed with African groups, and the on going clashes prompted intermittent British troop intervention. Whether protecting African or Boer, the British were attempting to stabilize the situation. This prompted Boer resentments, leading ultimately to Boer-British wars of 1880-1881 and 1899-1902. Other factors contributed to these conflicts. With the discovery of gold in the Transvaal in 1886, British and other goldseekers swarmed into the region. Their demands for the political franchise would have usurped Boer control, and the Boers resisted. Added to this were Anglo attitudes towards the Boer culture. What particularly frightened the Boers was the High Commissioner who, in a report reminiscent of Lord Durham's appraisal of French-Anglo conflicts in Canada, concluded that tensions could only be resolved by anglicizing the Boers and destroying their language and culture.

Their cultural survival at stake, the Boers opted for war in 1899. That war, as the American Civil War, created bitter memories for the defeated group. Though badly beaten, the Boers persisted, resorting to guerrilla warfare, then finally agreeing to a peace treaty. But the war became a symbol for Afrikaner nationalism; and the emergent Afrikaner ideology, based on agrarianism and White supremacy, served to rally and solidify the Afrikaners against an Anglo culture based

on commerce, industry and the limited incorporation of Blacks within political structures.

Finally, to resolve Boer (or Afrikaner)-British settler tensions, the British government established the Union (1909) in which Afrikaners were conceded their language and cultural rights. Moreover, the unitary political system established assured the Boers of eventual political power, for they constituted a majority of the White population (only in the Cape Province were Africans accorded even limited political rights). However, the British controlled the economic structures; the British government continued to exercise considerable influence over the society; and British attitudes clearly left the Afrikaner resentful of Anglo influence and fearful that this Afrikaner culture would not survive.

Subsequent events exacerbated Afrikaners resentment and fear. Britain pressured South Africa into supporting the British in the two world wars, a move which many Afrikaners vehemently opposed. The 1922 Rand strike was precipitated by British industrialists attempting to use cheap Black labor to compete with White labor; the Afrikaners, limited mostly to unskilled and semi-skilled jobs, were particularly threatened by these efforts. These, as well as Anglo racial policies which early contradicted Afrikaners white supremacy beliefs, heaped the fires of an intensifying Afrikaner nationalism (van den Berghe, 1970; Vatcher, 1965; MacCrone, 1957).

Postwar efforts by the British to incorporate more Africans in the political system became the major issue of the 1948 election. The fear of ultimate African control resulted in the electoral victory of the Nationalist-Afrikaner party, and it moved swiftly thereafter to implement its apartheid policy of complete separation of races and the perpetuation of white power. The Afrikaners quickly implemented their separate development policies. suppressed

critics of apartheid, and broke from the British Commonwealth in 1961. In so doing, the Afrikaners established themselves as a new society. Where earlier its siege group or laager mentality had been prompted by the fear of English cultural hegemony, the Afrikaners later came to fear for their cultural survival if the vast African majority were granted political power. This fear prompted the postwar political restructuring, the establishment of Bantustans and separate development policies, and the modernization of racial domination (van den Berghe, 1970; Rhodie, 1969; Carter, 1962; Adam, 1972). Having gained control of the political structures, Afrikaners were able to reshape the society in terms of their siege culture beliefs based on White supremacy.

#### THE SIEGE CULTURE OF WHITE RHODESIANS

Events, still basically racial though somewhat different, accounted for White Rhodesian siege culture developments and that country's secession from the British Commonwealth. Rhodesia's Unilateral Declaration of Independence in 1965 was reminiscent of the American South's efforts to assure its cultural survival. White Southerners and White Rhodesians alike considered the metropolitan government's actions as threatening their White privilege and power. In the Rhodesian case, events since World War II especially created the circumstances leading to the transformation of White Rhodesians into a siege group.

Southern Rhodesia evolved from a charter granted to the British South Africa Company in 1889. English settlers later protested the Company's continued control, and in 1923 the British Parliament accorded Southern Rhodesia colony status. Although White settlers composed only 5% of the population, Parliament granted the Whites consider-

able internal autonomy. However, it retained control over "Native affairs," a fact which settlers resented. Black-White tensions emerged early, especially in farming and mining, where the two groups vied for jobs. Although legislation reserved some jobs for Whites, labor competition persisted. Black-White conflicts continued, and that, in addition to the frontier-type conditions which prevailed, led many Whites to view themselves as living "virtually in a state of siege" (Leys, 1959, p. 7). Postwar strikes and organizational efforts by Africans, when taken in conjunction with increasing British government pressures for incorporating Africans in political structures, clearly indicated to the White siege group that the days of White rule were numbered. Southern Rhodesia joined the Central African Federation (including Northern Rhodesia and Nyasaland) in 1953. British acceptance of Black rule in those two former colonies prompted the withdrawal of Southern Rhodesia in 1962, after the Rhodesian Front Party had won the elections. Incensed by continued British pressures to grant Blacks the franchise, White Rhodesians declared their independence. White Rhodesians, as earlier white Southerners and Afrikaners, perceived themselves as the last bastion of western civilization. Secession, they were convinced, was essential to preserve their culture heritage (Bull, 1968; Clemens, 1969; Ransford, 1969; Barber, 1969; Rogers and Frantz, 1962).

In power, White Rhodesians moved to solidify their control. The greater the perceived threat (whether from African nationalists, the British government, or world opinion), the more rigid and dogmatic became the policies of the siege group. As long as it had the military and other means of power at its disposal, and as long as it enjoyed the military and political support of South Africa, the White Rhodesian siege group could move

forward relentlessly in establishing a White dominance system comparable to that in South Africa (Hodder-Williams, 1970; Palley, 1966 and 1970).

### THE SIEGE CULTURE OF FRENCH CANADIANS

Quebec separatist movements of recent years represent the most recent stage in the French-English rivalry that has plagued Canada since France ceded that country to Britain in 1763. Abandoned, the French settlers, as a consequence of both British government and English settlers actions, evolved into a siege culture, mobilizing their resources and adopting diverse strategies at different historical periods to preserve their culture. Recent secessionist efforts of the separatist movement represent only one of the options of French-Canadian groups fearing for their cultural survival.

After the 1763 cession, most upper-class French returned to the mother country, leaving behind trappers, farmers and clergy. The church and clergy became the nucleus for preserving the French cultural identity against Anglo efforts to destroy it. Early British assurances (in the Quebec Act of 1774) to protect French language, law and religion were later undermined by Anglo assimilationist pressures, and these exacerbated group tensions and prompted the 1837 rebellion. Appointed to determine the cause of that rebellion, Lord Durham concluded that the two cultures could not co-exist: the French should be anglicized, their language should be prohibited, and their culture replaced by the British culture. Durham's proposals were not fully implemented, but they played a key role in solidifying the emergent French-Canadian siege culture. The French-Canadians responded defensively, turning to agrarianism as a way of life to protect their people from the inducements of an Anglo culture based on commercialism, industry and materialism.

Under the British North American Act of 1867 powers were divided between the federal and provincial governments. Jurisdictional disputes over federal-provincial powers have always created tensions, particularly within Quebec which increasingly views federal powers as threatening Quebec culture and provincial powers. Though muted, French-English tensions persisted following Confederation in 1867, sharpened by the execution of Louis Riel, the abolition of the French-language education in the provinces of Ontario and Manitoba, French-Canadians' opposition to Canada's support of the British Crown in the Boer War (the French Canadians perceiving the Boers' position as closely paralleling their own), and the conscription crises of the two world wars. Late 19th century Canadian nationalism pressured for the anglicizing of French; and, "its survival openly threatened, French Canada resorted to every defensive measure at its disposal", including proposals for secession (Careless and Brown, 1968, p. 121; McRae, 1964; Cook, 1967; Morchain, 1967; Ossenberg, 1967 and 1971).

French-Canadian reactions, including agrarianism, were essentially defensive. But agrarianism had another effect, one similar to that on White Southerners and Afrikaners. Agrarianism isolated these groups from industrialization and dominant economic structures. Indeed, a siege culture based on agrarianism left individuals ill-equipped to compete in an industrial environment. The dominant culture, as a means of pressuring for assimilation of siege groups predicated structural incorporation on assimilation. But more important in some instances was the fact that siege culture values severely hampered members' movements into or ability to adapt to those structures. Whatever the reason, the end result was the same: siege groups, recognizing the differential rates of structural incorpora-



tion, saw structural incorporation as an assimilative weapon. This has clearly been the case in Canada. Moreover, increasing federal control over provinces has been seen by the French-Canadians as a device for destroying their culture, and Quebec's struggle for "provincial rights" is highly reminiscent of the South's "state's rights" arguments preceding the Civil War. Thus, the cultural struggle in Canada has assumed numerous guises, ranging from French-Canadian proposals for biculturalism (and bilingualism) to privileged status for Quebec to the outright advocacy of secession as the only means for protecting French language, culture and rights (Corbett, 1967; Jones, 1972; Smiley, 1968 and 1972).

### CONCLUSION

Thus the four siege groups in these four countries (White Southerners, Afrikaners, White Rhodesians, French Canadians) have, historically and more recently, pursued diverse strategies to assure their cultural survival. Differential power capabilities of siege and dominant group cultures, as well as the parameters of action determined by existing structures, have usually determined the behaviour of these groups. Differential rates of structural incorporation clearly angered white Southerners, Afrikaners and French Canadians, but what mainly precipitated their developments as siege cultures (and the same holds true for White Rhodesians) were fears for their cultural survival.

Dominant group efforts to assimilate these groups provided the major impetus for defensive measures. Included among these measures were the development and articulation of an ideology, the formation or development of organizations or groups for building solidarity and cohesion within the siege group, and the transformation of these organizational structures (whether religious or secular) into action groups which mobilized group resources for the

preservation or restoration of the group's values or goals. In this sense, siege groups were transformed into value-oriented movements. These processes can be traced in the development of all four groups. All four siege cultures, dependent upon their power and the characteristics of the existing political structures, pursued strategies which would, to the extent possible, allow them to preserve their cultural beliefs. Where and when necessary, they regrouped their resources and modified their strategies to fit changing situations, but their goal always remained the same: the preservation of their siege group culture.

White Southerners, defeated in a Civil War, had to modify their goals somewhat to offset metropolitan (federal) power. Afrikaners, although defeated in war, succeeded subsequently in gaining control of the government and, by ousting that metropolitan (British government) power, established their new society. White Rhodesians, too, in ousting that same metropolitan power were able to reaffirm their siege culture. And French Canadians, fearful of their cultural extinction, still search for solutions that will assure their cultural survival. Occupying, at least in earlier periods, a subordinate position in these plural societies, these four groups, their cultural survival threatened and their structural incorporation limited (or threatened), emerged as siege cultures. The paths they have pursued as siege groups struggling for their cultural survival have been determined by situational, structural and power factors.

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