Cities, Polities, and Ethnic Communities in Nelson's Civilization-Analytic Perspective

Donald A. Nielsen
The City College of the City University of New York

Dr. Benjamin Nelson's essay on "Civilizational Complexes and Intercivilizational Encounters" (1973a), as well as his other writings, offers broader analytical horizons than those presently available and provides truly new starting points for soundings in the forgotten or previously neglected civilizational and intercivilizational settings in the comparative, historical and systematic study of sociocultural process. Two points of departure outlined by Dr. Nelson appear especially promising for contemporary research.

(1) First is the study of test cases of *intercivilizational encounters* as they occur across the multiple histories of peoples, nations, and societies. Here, the method of indirect study of civilizational complexes, as they present themselves in and through frequently abrasive contacts of persons and groups in the strife over crucial civilizational ascendencies, avoids the pitfalls in earlier efforts at the study of the history of civilizations as unitary, or organic wholes. Such crucial "experiments" illuminate the key issues at stake in sociocultural process at the civilizational and intercivilizational levels and can be "controlled" with precision by analysts versed in the evidences left by the contacts of societies across centuries.

What Nelson has called the "forensic contexts" of intercivilizational encounter are especially central. They enable us to see civilizational complexes at their maximum points of visibility, under challenge and undergoing modification. Nelson's program promises a double dividend: (a) it will deepen our understandings of the decisive episodes of intercivilizational encounter themselves by placing them at the center of historical societal composition and resolution, by seeing them as phases in the on-going struggles over competing definitions of world, group and self; (b) it will provide more direct access to the constitutive structures of civilizations in process, as they are manifested in contexts of encounter.

(2) A second aspect of Nelson's program is the study of the social and cultural structures and institutions of complex societies in *civilization-analytic* perspective. Cities, law courts, religious structures, sciences, technologies, schools, universities, families, sociocultural groupings, economic institutions—all the central areas of interest to contemporary sociologists—could and should be studied in civilizational perspective. Without reference to the variable constitutive civilizational complexes which define the worlds in which crucial institutions function and have meaning, there is little understanding of their differential appearances and workings in complex societies.

Indeed, the studies which currently occupy sociologists would be redefined and carried forth in comparative, historical, civilizational terms if their larger meanings and locations within more comprehensive mappings were to be established.

Truly cumulative studies of axial institutions in civilization-analytic perspective could begin to define the sociocultural landscape with a greater precision and systematic scope. Contemporary studies of institutional interchange within a social systems framework or the micro-processes occuring within institutional contexts at the level of social interaction, social role, and the small group fail to give adequate account of sociocultural processes which involve the location of institutions within wider historical civilizational processes. The perennial relevance of historical civilizational settings of all social structures helps one to overcome the trait-atomism of excessively non-processual and contemporaneously rooted institutional studies.

Of the two dimensions of civilizational analysis mentioned above, I am concerned especially with the second horizon of the *civilization-analytic* perspective and intend to offer some illustrations of its utility in actual research contexts. In particular, I will examine the civilization-analytic perspective in the study of cities, polities, and ethnic communities.

I

Fustel de Coulanges (1873:134) once distinguished between *urbs* and *civitas*, both of which we now freely translate as "city." *Urbs* refers to the place, the spatial dimensions and material organization, as well as the demographic, morphological and ecological characteristics of urban areas. *Civitas*, on the other hand, refers to the associational and constitutional features of the city and its fundamental sociocultural structure as a community or polity.

Much work in contemporary "urban sociology" identifies the *urbs* rather than the *civitas* as the proper object of investigation. Urban demography, distributions of populations in cities, the economic forces which result in given urban ecological structures, the physical spaces and areas of the city, their "natural growth" and developmental history, the communications networks in and among urban and suburban areas, technological changes in their impact on urban organization, the territorial distribution and consequent relations of social groupings in the city—these subjects have received all manner of attention from sociologists (Halebsky, 1973). Moreover, the city as *urbs* is often seen as the basis of the city as a *civitas*. The constitutive structures of the city are thus viewed as emergent from its material, physical, morphological and ecological foundations.

However, confusion results from the assumption of *urbs* as the primary and *civitas* as a secondary feature of cities. As Fustel de Coulanges (1873:376) noted, the *urbs* can remain while the constitutive social and cultural structures of a city as a *civitas* have been dissolved or reconstituted. From the perspective of the city as *urbs*, various ways in which cities represent cultural or civilizational fabrics and focalize intercivilizational encounters are often overlooked in favor of the seemingly more tangible and visible manifestations of "urbanization." Similarly, from the perspective of the city as *urbs*, little is said of the stratigraphy of the varied structures of consciousness within cities and the ways in which they effect the character of the city as a *civitas* (Nelson, 1973a:95).

In a comparative, historical, civilizational perspective at least three dimensions of the problem of the city as *civitas* emerge: (1) cities as political communities in relation to more comprehensive civilizational definitions of polity, and their place

within larger functioning political-administrative institutions; (2) the associational structures and symbolic forms within cities, both their historical foundations and their significance for the histories of larger civilizational complexes; (3) the composition of cities as containers of complex religious, ethnic, national, linguistic and other cultural differentiations and the ways in which these differentiations are resolved—if at all—into some working arrangement.

II

. . . The status of the citizen and the problem of citizenship need to be a central focus for any discussion of cities and polities. As Max Weber (1950:315-317) noted, the notions of citizenship and an urban citizenry first developed in the cities of Greek and Roman classical antiquity and in the European medieval period. Elsewhere, other sociocultural and political arrangements prevailed.

The status of the citizen was developed first among the Greeks. From there it has had a long and varied history. The consensual association and merger of multiple tribal and kinship groupings into a *polis*, a city-state with a religious cultic constitution, and a rule of rights and law for its citizenry, resulted in a major step towards the gestation of potentially wider foundations for political community in the West as a whole (Glotz, 1929:1-5). Once the idea of citizenship and the status of the citizen had been set forth as a basic rationale of political life, it was not easy or ultimately possible for patrician aristocracies of birth, religious status or wealth to continue in an exclusive position of dominance (Maine, 1861:15-17). The rights and status of citizenship proved a double-edged sword and came to be the central reference point for claims of the disenfranchised of every sort. Indeed, the inability of the Greek cities to reach a workable solution to the problems arising from the incongruity between rights of citizenship and actual social, cultural and economic circumstances resulted in continued and renewed civil strife.

Among the Greeks the notion of citizenship emerged in a limited context and only later came to be universalized through its connection, first, with the Roman Empire and later with modern European states. The Greeks limited the application of the notion of citizenship and excluded slaves, women, youths under paternal domination, and, finally, strangers or foreigners . . .

The Romans avoided some of the agonies of the Greek situation. The conflict of the orders at Rome was resolved in favor of an expansion of the number of persons with the rights of participation and share in the governing structures of the community (Jolowicz, 1967:7-16). Indeed, the Romans continuously responded to the challenge of new populations and classes through the slow and progressive extension of the boundaries of the moral and political community and the rights of citizenship.

The *ius gentium*, the law of peoples or nations—as distinct from the *ius civile*, or the civil law applicable only to Roman citizens—was progressively ramified along with the expansion of the Empire itself. It brought increasingly large numbers of persons into regularized, juridically constituted connections with Roman citizens and generally reduced the significance of the distinction between citizens and non-citizens.

However, differentiations among those populations variously entitled *Latini*, *peregrini, alieni*, and others were still present. The rights to full or varying degrees

of participation in the community for populations designated by these varied names were defined especially along the axes of *commercium* and *connubium*.

Commercium referred to the rights of the non-Romans to enjoy the rules of the Roman private law, including the methods of transferring property and the laws of contract and obligation.

Connubium referred to the results of marriage between Romans and non-Romans, especially whether or not children from marriages between Latin men and Roman women became Roman citizens or remained aliens of one or another sort. If the right of *connubium* existed, the child would be under his father's power, while if there was no *connubium*, then the child followed the status of the mother. On the other hand, children from marriages between Roman men and alien women always followed the father's status, were under his paternal power (*patria potestas*), and were automatically citizens.

With the grant of universal citizenship to all subjects of the Empire by the Emperor Caracalla in 212 A.D., the distinction between citizens and non-citizens largely lost its significance. The Roman nation became coterminous with the political and juridical extent of the Empire. All those under the *res publica Romana* were part of the Roman nation and the need for the juridical distinctions surrounding the notions of *connubium* and *commercium* which had served so well in the expansion of the Roman community ended.

Questions connected with what the Romans called *connubium* and *commercium* arise whenever a political community is faced with the task of amalgamating peoples of varied societal background, from different cultural and geo-political settings, into one body politic. Although these two notions were originally part of the Roman law, they can be used in a more general sociological fashion.

Here, *commercium* refers to any social arrangement at all in which "alien" groupings are given access within specified limits and for given purposes to the juridical procedures, the common law of the land, the public affairs of the market place, and to the rules governing certain relationships in the routine, public, everyday realm.

Connubium refers sociologically to the degrees of access given "alien" populations—whether internal or external ones—to the emotionally and historically deepest, even sacred, arrangements constituted by the group's most fundamental images and definitions of self, collective identity, home and hearth, native soil, nation and community. The scope of the effect of definitions of *commercium* and *connubium* and their particular forms can and will, of course, vary greatly according to the historical, civilizational context.

American society, for example, has faced the issues of *connubium* and *commercium* in this sociological sense since the beginning. The subjugation of native American populations, the forced immigration of various African peoples who became slaves, the successive waves of immigration of religious, national, ethnic, etc. groupings—all these contacts of peoples under varying conditions and against the background of early civilizational definitions of the American nation have frequently brought the intense problems of *connubium* and *commercium* to the surface.

Where empire structures have existed, cities have taken on a distinctive set of forms and functions. Cities, when absorbed from the beginning into wider or

more inclusive political administrative structures, have been able to establish neither autonomy as a political community, nor an urban citizenry, nor independent urban institutions and associations.

The city in China never had its own independent military force responsible for the defense of the city and recruited from within its own population. This citizen militia was a crucial feature in the origins and development of independent city states in antiquity and of city communes in the European middle ages. In China, as well as elsewhere in Asia, such as India and Japan, the armies of the prince or king existed prior to the advent of cities and helped make civil-military independence impossible (Weber, 1964:13-15).

As Paul Wheatley (1971) has recently argued, Chinese cities were wholly embedded in a larger political, cultural structure of the Empire. As nodes in a political administrative structure they functioned as special institutions for the maintenance of the Empire through taxation, the establishment of public works, and the delegation of authority through a system of clientage (one developed deeper and more extensively than that found in classical antiquity). Villages were recreated within the city and the urban entity came to possess neither corporate autonomy, nor separate courts of its own, nor an urban citizenry, nor finally an associational structure which would break moral, legal ties to family, clan and local village.

To use Emile Durkheim's concept, a segmentalized structure prevailed in Chinese cities. The cities were, in fact, legally and administratively, created as an aggregation of similar juxtaposed villages, united by collective ceremonial, ritual and magical usages. The absence of what Nelson has called a "faith-structure of consciousness," which would act as a transformative agency under given historical conditions for the breaking through beyond established "sacro-magical" structures of the Empire, was crucial for the cities of China.

It should be noted that "sacro-magical" structures were also at the bottom of the later Roman conception of Empire to a degree, yet there they were in tension with the rationalistic, universalizing tendencies of the Roman jurisprudence, with continued extension of rights of Roman citizenship through the ameliorative application of the notion of a natural law. In China, the "sacro-magical" structures developed and proliferated and became constitutive of the official Chinese conception of a world order . . .

In this civilizational context there could be neither easy moves toward greater universalities of social organization or discourse nor individuation of cultural awareness in the form of an individuated notion of conscience, as Benjamin Nelson has stressed in a number of his writings.

III

Cities have typically been at the center of development and proliferation of more varied associational structures. Also, through their roles as key agents in processes of cultural change, they have generally acted as centers for the generation and diffusion of cultural symbolisms, values, movements and newer social organizational forms. In both these respects, cities have had decisive effects on their environing civilizational complexes and their histories. As a fusion point for diverse historical structures of experience and expression, cities have often both

reflected larger civilizational processes and patterns, and proved to be the source of newer historical sociocultural manifestations. However, the precise historical roles that cities have played in the above respects have differed greatly according to civilizational climate.

Taking a cue from Henry Sumner Maine's *Ancient Law* (1861), Weber noted that cities represented a major step in the transition of political community from tribal and kinship polities to modern territorial communities with a universalizing rule of law. Weber saw that this was effected through a revolutionary usurpation and relocation of the locus of authority and struggle over the basis of the *imperium* (Weber, 1968,3:1254).

As corporate persons the European medieval cities did nothing less than provide the model for the structures of the modern nation-state. When the tools of the modern law, administration, and rationalized juridical consciousness were being forged in the cities, the nascent modern states were still largely patrimonial in administration, resting on extensive networks of "personal" ties, ones which only slowly gave way to less traditionalistic forms. Only later did they appropriate from the cities a good deal of the required instrumentalities for their full appearance as modern states, and, in the process, used them to destroy the remaining vestiges of urban autonomy. By the sixteenth century, as Joseph Strayer has shown, the process was largely complete and the cities had been absorbed into the new territorial-states in the making as mere administrative elements (although often with special, generally economic, concessions).

The associational structures which emerged from the medieval Western city constituted potentially wider universes of discourse than those elsewhere in the world. Nelson has recently noted that there is no understanding either Weber's work or questions connected with cities without reference to the processes of *fraternization* and *universalization*, and the gestation of social and cultural universals, universalities and universalisms of every sort. Fraternization was necessary if there was to be the social associational and experiential contexts for greater thrusts toward "modernity" in culture and society.

The cities were autonomous urban communes, worlds within a world, a *communitas* or *universitas civium* which effected exclusive solidarity and brotherhood against the outside. As an association of individual confessors to a common faith (and not as a cultic community or confederation of tribes or families as in Greek antiquity), the medieval cities forwarded fraternization processes for a multitude of emerging purposes—educational, economic, political, religious, etc.

The medieval European cities began as *coniurationes*, brotherly associations which admitted members individually on the basis of a sworn oath of loyalty to the community.[1] For reasons of faith and religious qualification, *commensality* was refused to the Jews who otherwise played an active role in the public life of the cities. In the Roman legal terminology noted above, the Jews were denied *connubium* while allowed *commercium* within specified limits (Weber, 1968, 3:1246-7; Katz, 1961; 1971; Wirth, 1928).

---

[1]Weber (1968), and Rorig (1969). Lapidus (1967, 1973) notes the absence in Islamic cities of this solidarity against the outside and of any notion of corporate urban independence. Also, see Stern (1970) and Hitti (1973) for materials on the political contexts of Islamic cities.

The Lord's Supper was a collective religious rite and symbolism which defined the collective "faith-structure of consciousness" of members of the community, and consecrated their collective existence and functioning. In this sense, the axial associational structure of the cities, as voluntaristic oath-bound communities, had the fundamental qualities of a sect and provided the model for association generally (Troeltsch, 1931).

The movement from status to contract in the progressive societies, which Henry Sumner Maine noted, was greatly facilitated in this context. Newly evolved instrumentalities and agencies of association helped to forward this voluntaristic thrust at the societal and civilizational levels through the creation of the necessary institutional fabric for its perpetuation and wider ramification. Just as the cities in their structures of government, administration, law, and political theory had larger societal-political consequences, so too did they "explode" into their larger civilizational environment through the impacts of their associations and related institutions and cultural symbolisms.[2]

Associational structures of every sort flourished in the medieval cities. Guilds, *nations* of the universities, monastic orders, fraternities, and many others were moreover fraternal and liturgical in character. As brotherhoods, the cities cultivated associational forms which variously stressed the notions of *caritas* or *amicitia*. The guilds were, indeed, *confraternities*, organizations of brothers for newer economic, mutual aid, fraternal, religious, and other purposes (Unwin, 1966). When connected to the notions of city autonomy and urban citizenship for persons, the guilds would play especially important and wider roles in the cities, ones impossible in India and China, where the guild structures that did exist reflected the dualistic or multiple structures of allegiance to groups beyond the city such as castes, villages, and extended families.

Furthermore, the earliest medieval universities were organized into *nations*, whether of masters as at Paris, or students as at Bologna (Kibre, 1948; Durkheim, 1969,c.8). These *nations* were liturgical associations which had a variety of functions. As the international nucleus of the emerging universities, they were at the center of the frequent struggles between "town and gown" and wielded the powerful weapon of the general strike which resulted often in the shutdown of the *studium generale* in any given city. This powerful weapon, rooted in the fraternal solidarity of the *nations*, helped forward a major step toward the elaboration of the modern university as a neutralized context devoted to the testings and soundings necessary for the creation of newer differentiations in the structures of consciousness . . .

Differentiation is often a later phase in sociocultural process following other more axial phases of breakthrough.[3] Conversely, as Nelson has emphasized in several of his writings (1974b; 1969), a high degree of differentiation and division of structure and function do not necessarily imply or carry with them a full and total thrust toward universalization and fraternization and the makings of newer senses of brotherhood, community, self and world. We err greviously if we

---

[2]This perspective is taken from Nelson who refers to it as the "circulatory" sociocultural process. See, Nelson (1974b).

[3]Note the extensive emphasis placed on differentiation processes in the study of societal transformation among Parsons and his followers. See Parsons (1966) and Smelser (1959).

suppose that every time we perceive differentiated structures at work we are seeing a society which has undergone extensive cultural modernization. As R. P. Dore has noted in his study of city life in Japan, greater social structural complexity, increasing efficiency in economic life, and cultural adaptation to the conditions of modern industrial life can—indeed do— occur without a corresponding reformation in the spheres of consciousness and conscience such as that connected with the medieval cities as described above (Dore, 1967:387-393).

. . . Highly differentiated organizational and institutional forms are distinctively modern and receive their greatest emphasis—as Max Weber (1930) had seen—from the overall functionalization of all aspects of society resulting indirectly from changing conceptions of religion and world which are distinctively post-Reformation and Protestant in their roots. These highly differentiated, rationalized, functionally integrated structures could, however, only be easily brought into the world through their initial appearance as brotherly and fraternal associations, their distinctively modern contexts and purposes becoming evident only after the universalizing influences of medieval and Roman civilizations had done their work in the opening of newer possibilities of wider associational life.

These breakthroughs in the medieval Occident which Nelson has described in several of his writings occurred against the background of a revival of the classical heritage. As Nelson has noted (1973a:96), "the relative viability of integration of the classical inheritance" has been a crucial issue throughout the history of the West. It is perhaps helpful to emphasize that the breakthroughs toward universalization, rationalization, and systematization evidenced in medieval cultural life after the eleventh century occured under the impress of the near total reappropriation and integration of the inheritances of both Greek and Roman rationalism, notably the Greek philosophical structures and the corpus of the Roman law. Hardly any period since has witnessed such a fusion and balance of the structures formed around what Nelson (1974a) has named as four critical civilizational dimensions of *Eros, Logos, Nomos, Polis.*

IV

. . . Durkheim and Mauss, in their pioneering essay on symbolic classification, noted that fundamental constitutive social group distinctions within the total social body were collective representations (Durkheim and Mauss, 1963). The nature of the classification often changed historically, yet there was a strength and persistence, a powerful rootedness in emotion, sentiment and collective feeling, to such deeply lodged historical structures of consciousness. The tensions between such classificatory systems and universalizing notions of law and citizenship are great.

Louis Dumont, in his work on India, has given us an excellent example of the value of the Durkheim and Mauss perspective (Dumont, 1970a,b). As Dumont has noted, there is a great difference between a society such as India, constituted historically according to traditional definitional structures which assume the existence of a fixed hierarchically ordered whole classification of personal statuses in social groupings (castes) with distinctive duties and rights, and a civil society which assumes formally free and equal individuals to be the locus of value,

juridical personality, and socioeconomic functioning. The latter has experienced, in Henry Sumner Maine's words, a movement from status to contract where "the individual is steadily substituted for the Family, as the unit of which civil laws take account" (Maine, 1861:163-165).

Now, seen against the background of such a set of comparative, historical, systematic perspectives, cities are complex structures composed of many religious, ethnic, national, linguistic, and other cultural differentiations. As Harvey Zorbaugh once noted, a city is a mosaic of cultural sub-communities (1929:234). At times when there is a reanimation of ethnic, religious or national solidarities, the grounds of civil community, of universal otherhood, in Nelson's phrase, come under erosion and even outright attack. Indeed, the question of such collective identities in cities and civil society needs to be seen as an instance of the dilemmas of universalism variously discussed by Nelson and others, notably Maine, Durkheim and Mauss, Weber, and Dumont.

Also, the greatest tensions often generally occur in a society because of the experienced incongruity between claims possible as a citizen of a territorial state, and the working historical cultural definitions and classifications which constitute a great part of the taken-for-granted structures of consciousness of peoples. The forces at work in such contexts push and pull in many directions, are not the result of one set of sociocultural experiences or transformations, and do not find a single or simple resolution. At least the following processual components need to be differentiated in the following discussion: the heightened emphasis in Western civilizations historically on the individual as a locus of value and of social organization in civil societies; the territorial state with a universalizing rule of law, a notion of citizenship and formal equality; increasingly enhanced ethnic, religious, national solidarities forged at local, societal and even civilizational levels; within cities, the pull of local communities of varying sorts, whether strictly territorial or territorial-ethnic; finally, overall thrusts toward decentralization in political functioning generally.

Cities within modern territorial or national states are constituted differently from either independent city-states or cities within empires. As purely administrative districts, they have no political independence or capacity for self-regulation and thus face distinctive problems which result from their subjection to the ebb and flow of sociocultural processes of larger territorial political units. At the intersection point of diverse national, societal, civilizational and even intercivilizational forces, they often have great difficulty defining their precise character as *civitates*. What kinds of "communities" are modern cities?

The need for an independent military force composed of urban citizenry, at the historical root of urban independence in antiquity and the middle ages in Europe, is wholly absent in modern cities. The territorial nation state has taken over this set of activities. Also, as merely administrative districts, cities now confer no special status of citizenship on their residents as they once did. Individuals are born as citizens of a territorial state, and urban "citizenship" disappears and becomes simply a question of local administration. Thus, two of the most crucial features which defined the character of cities in the West historically are absent in the context of the modern state.

Within the political administrative district of the city, functioning within larger

territorial states, and ultimately within a federal structure, there are many communities with rooted solidarities unrecognized by the formal juridical regime (Shibutani and Kwan, 1965). As civil polities, states—either local states within a federal government, or non-federal territorial states—often are committed to a universalizing rule of law within their boundaries. All populations come to be seen equally as citizens within such a structure. As a citizenry, socioculturally varied populations can assert their vested rights in the name of their status as citizens.

The contemporary movements from status to contract in the progressive societies—to use Maine's analysis once again—involve revolutions in the realm of juridical personality and personal rights for women under tutelage, youth under domestic power, and disenfranchised ethnic minorities of varying sorts (Maine, 1861:c.5). Full participation in the rights of citizenship, when finally accorded to these groups, becomes the basis of more recent assertions of expanded capacities and senses of personhood which fill out the formal juridical structures of citizenship with social, economic, and cultural content.

The particular situation of ethnic communities in cities is complex. Within the contexts of cities the processes described above are magnified in special ways. Cultural communities become the locus of newer struggles to claim rights rooted in enhanced senses of religious, ethnic and national identity. Incorporation of such cultural characteristics into the rights of citizenship, especially in the form of newer thrusts towards particularization of education content and the recognition of ethnic and other differences in the functioning of public institutions, is more difficult. A collision over the nature of the polity and its normative structures often results. . .

Claims of equal access to a quality education often come into conflict with thrusts towards community control. Policies originating in centralized decision-making bodies connected to territorial organizations in state administrations conflict often both with local community interests and with ethnic solidarities, and sometimes with a combination of both these forces. Thus, an issue such as the busing of school children can simultaneously be seen (1) as a mechanism for the enhancement of access to better educational facilities, for equality of education as a constitutional right, (2) as a method ameliorating "racial imbalance" in schools, itself seen as a source of educational inequality, (3) as a violation of the "right" to attend a school in one's own "local community," and (4) as variously an attack on developing ethnic, religious, national solidarities, disguised racism, or an attempt to homogenize identities through impersonal institutional means. . .

Although the phenomena discussed above are characteristic of cities as both *urbs* and *civitas*, we have largely discussed them in terms of the latter dimension. When comparative civilizational and intercivilizational dimensions are added to the above, the problem of modern cities as *civitates* becomes even more complex.

Problems of ethnic, national, religious, linguistic and cultural identities are often primarily civilizational in scope, although they have local, national implications. Thus, the status of Jews in Russia can be a prime motive for concerted conduct in New York City. The solidarities variously between Jews in the United States and in Israel and between peoples of Arabic or even Islamic cultural background in New York and in the Middle East, can be reflected in processes in the New York urban area.

Cities everywhere in the United States reflect to varying degrees the stresses of civilizational process. Indeed, a focus simply on the spatial, physical, morphological urban dimensions of the questions limits one's horizons in understanding the scope of the problems being faced. Urban areas provide prime locations for such processes because of their morphological, ecological and physical layouts, yet the issues at stake in conflicts are often rooted in changing cultural, civilizational and intercivilizational conditions, and are extra-urban in nature. They concern the conflicting and intersecting lines of force surrounding the varied and changing sociocultural constitutions of fundamental social bodies.

Other national territorial polities face similar problems in their cities; the historical situation of the Irish or West Indian peoples in English cities, especially London, or the situation of Algerians in southern French cities, or the problems of Asian minorities specializing in trade and economic life in various African cities—others could be added. As urban problems, they are also, or even primarily, intercivilizational in scope and meaning, and have international repercussions. Witness the recent expulsion of Indian nationals from cities in Uganda. Many took up residence in England, but only after much controversy. . .

In the United States, however, such questions of ethnic, cultural identities and communities touch more closely the actual structures of political society. In a word, our sense of the nation is less comprehensively developed and is rooted in the notion of a universalizing internal and external perspective, one which implies a civil society, individual personhood at law, and the structures of a territorial polity with a universalizing rule of law (Arieli, 1964). These *are* what we mean or have meant most often by the nation. Otherwise, there are a multiplicity of personal statuses which are now increasingly powerful and expressed with greater frequency in hyphenated identities such as Italian-American, Mexican-American, Afro-American, etc. The sociocultural content of the nation as a whole is eclipsed on one side by formal, political, juridical structures and on the other by diverse ethnic solidarities and thus never is clearly articulated. Conventional attempts by present-minded sociologists to define distinctively American societal values, normative standards, identities, outlooks and senses, especially, of the nation have, from this viewpoint, been singularly unsuccessful. Indeed, current dialogue over "social problems" among social scientists as well as politicians increasingly takes on the character of a debate over the very meanings of the definitional structures at the highest national and civilizational levels.

It is not strange that many young people—some not so young—experience universalisms of every sort in science, law and civil society generally as "alienations" and separations from some undivided state of community, some primordial state of unity. Indeed, universalistic thrusts are profoundly disturbing to the sense of organic community. Such rationalized and abstract universalisms of cultural functioning do require an immense individual effort and careful attention to details of complex rationales in order to work actually in any regular or convincing fashion. To some it appears better to call for a return to a form of "sacro-magical" community where actualizations of cultural values and participations in collective symbolisms seem easier to obtain and where the sense of a gap between actuality and ideal is not so deeply experienced. In Dr. Nelson's words,

> constitutions, congregations, churches, universities, independent judiciaries are losing their attractions for embattled people (1973a:102).

Conclusion

A great deal more needs to be done in researching the histories of cities within a *civilization-analytic* perspective. The suggestions above merely point toward some lines of inquiry which would more explicitly link important features of civilizational complexes to the various histories of cities, polities and ethnic communities. Stress has been placed on the relations of the various types of cultural communities and structures of consciousness to city processes and institutions and to the dimensions of sociocultural process included in the notions of fraternization and universalization, ones which Dr. Nelson has stressed so strongly in his work. Much more remains to be done in the theoretical analysis and comparative historical study of institutions and processes in a developing civilization-analytic perspective.

REFERENCES

(References given below and in the notes are for the editions used in the preparation of this essay and do not necessarily represent original dates of publication.)

Arieli, Yehoshua. 1964. Individualism and Nationalism in American Ideology. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press.

Bridenbaugh, Carl. 1971a. Cities in the Wilderness. New York: Oxford University Press.

1971b. Cities in Revolt. New York: Oxford University Press.

Buckland, W. W. 1966. A Text-Book of Roman Law From Augustus to Justinian, 3rd Edition Revised by P. Stin. Cambridge: University Press.

Dore, R. P. 1967. City Life in Japan. Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press.

Dumont, Louis, 1970a. Religion, Politics, and History in India. The Hague: Mouton.

1970b. Homo Hierarchicus. Tr. by Mark Sainsbury. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Durkheim, Emile. 1915. The Elementary Forms of the Religious Life. Tr. by J. W. Swain. London: George Allen & Unwin.

1933. The Division of Labor in Society. Tr. by George Simpson. New York: Free Press.

1969. L'Evolution Pédagogique en France. Paris: Presses Universitaires de France.

(and Marcel Mauss), 1963. Primitive Classification. Tr. with an Intro. by R. Needham. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

(and Marcel Mauss). 1971. "Note on the Notion of Civilization". Tr. with an intro. by B. Nelson. Social Research 38, 4: 808-813.

Eberhard, Wolfram. 1955-56. "Data on the Structure of the Chinese City in the Pre-Industrial Period." Economic Development and Cultural Change 4: 253-268.

Fustel de Coulanges, N.D. 1973. The Ancient City. Garden City: Doubleday.

Gans, Herbert, 1962. The Urban Villagers. New York: Free Press.

Glotz, Gustave. 1929. The Greek City and Its Institutions. Tr. by N. Mallinson. London: Routledge & Kegan Paul.

Halebsky, Sandor (ed.). 1973. The Sociology of the City. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons.

Hall, John W. 1955. "The Castle Town and Japan's Modern Urbanization." Far Eastern Quarterly 25, 1.

Hitti, Philip K. 1973. Capital Cities of Arab Islam. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

Jolowicz, F. H. 1967. Historical Introduction to the Study of Roman Law. Cambridge: University Press.

Katz, Jacob. 1961. Exclusiveness and Tolerance, Studies in Jewish Gentile Relations in Medieval and Modern Times. Oxford: University Press.

1971. Tradition and Crisis, Jewish Society at the End of the Middle Ages. New York: Schocken Books.

Kibre, Pearl. 1948. Nations in the Medieval Universities. Medieval Academy of America, Publication No. 49. Cambridge, Mass.

Lapidus, Ira M. 1967. Muslim Cities in the Later Middle Ages. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press.

1973. "The Evolution of Muslim Urban Society." *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 25: 21-50.

Little, Kenneth, 1966. West African Urbanization: A Study of Voluntary Associations in Social Change. Cambridge: University Press.

McWilliams, Wilson Carey. 1973. The Idea of Fraternity in America. Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press.

Maine, Henry Sumner. 1861. Ancient Law. Ed. with notes and intro. by F. Pollock. Boston: Beacon Press, 1963.

Mauss, Marcel. 1968. "A Category of the Human Spirit." Tr. by L. Krader. In Benjamin Nelson (ed.). *Histories, Symbolic Logics, Cultural Maps*. A Special Issue of *The Psychoanalytic Review* 55, 3:457-481. (Original French in M. Mauss, *Sociologie et Anthropologie*, Intro. by C. Levi-Strauss. Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1966. 331-362.)

Mazzolani, Lidia S. 1970. The Idea of the City in Roman Thought. From Walled City to Spiritual Commonwealth. Tr. by S. O'Donnell. Toronto: Hollis & Carter.

Murvar, Vatro. 1967. "Max Weber's Urban Typology and Russia." *The Sociological Quarterly* 8:481-494.

Parsons, Talcott. 1966. Societies: Evolutionary and Comparative Perspectives. Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall.

Redfield, Robert (and Milton Singer), 1954-55. "The Cultural Role of Cities." *Economic Development and Cultural Change*. 3:53-73.

Rorig, Fritz. 1969. The Medieval Town. Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press.

Schulz, Fritz. 1967. Principles of Roman Law. Tr. by M. Wolff. Oxford: Clarendon Press.

Shibutani, Tamotsu (and K. M. Kwan). 1965. Ethnic Stratification. A comparative Approach. New York: MacMillan.

Singer, Milton. 1972. When a Great Tradition Modernizes. New York: Praeger.

Sjoberg, Gideon. 1960. The Preindustrial City. New York: Free Press.

Smelser, Neil J. 1959. Social Change in the Industrial Revolution. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Stern, S. M. 1970. "The Constitution of the Islamic City." Pp. 25-50 in A. H. Hourani and S. M. Stern (eds.), *The Islamic City*. Papers on Islamic History: 1. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press.

Thompson, M. W. 1967. Novgorod the Great. Excavations at the Medieval City Directed by A. V. Artsikhovsky and B. A. Kolchin, Compiled and Written by M. W. Thompson. New York: Praeger.

Troeltsch, Ernst. 1960. The Social Teachings of the Christian Churches. Tr. O. Wyon. New York: Harper Torchbooks.

Tuan, Y. F. 1968. "A Preface to Chinese Cities." Pp. 218-253 in R. P. Beckinsale and J. M. Houston (eds.), *Urbanization and Its Problems. Essays in Honor of E. W. Gilbert*. New York: Barnes and Noble.

Unwin, George. 1966. The Gilds and Companies of London. Intro. by William Kahl. New York: Barnes and Noble.

Ware, Caroline F. 1965. Greenwich Village, 1920-1930, New York: Harper Colophon Books.

(ed.) 1940. The Cultural Approach to History. New York: Columbia University Press.

Weber, Max. 1930. The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism. Tr. by T. Parsons. New York: Scribner's.

1964. The Religion of China. New York: Free Press.

1968. "The City: Non-Legitimate Domination." Pp. 1212-1372 in G. Roth and K. Wittich, (eds.), *Economy and Society*. Totowa, N.J.: Bedminster Press. Vol. 3.

Wheatley, Paul. 1971. The Pivot of the Four Quarters: A Preliminary Enquiry into the Origins and Character of the Ancient Chinese City. Chicago: Aldine.

Wirth, Louis. 1928. The Ghetto. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Zorbaugh, Harvey. 1929. The Gold Coast and the Slum. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.