

Somali Immigrants in Lewiston, Maine: An Application of Robert Park's Race Relations Cycle

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How to cite this paper: Kusow, A.M. (2024). Somali Immigrants in Lewiston, Maine: An Application of Robert Park's Race Relations Cycle. *Sociology Mind*, 14, 151-167.

<https://doi.org/10.4236/sm.2024.142009>

Received: February 12, 2024

Accepted: April 19, 2024

Published: April 22, 2024

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Abstract

Over the past century, Robert Park's assimilation theory, dubbed otherwise, a race relations cycle has simultaneously become the starting point for the articulation of ethnic group relations and the most controversial concept in America sociology. With few exceptions, however, the majority of the sociological reaction to Robert Park's assimilation has remained primarily at abstract level, and Stanford Lyman's comment more than half a century ago that "...little more than illustration has yet been done on "contact", "competition", or "accommodation," remains true. I use data from the secondary migration of Somalis to Lewiston, Maine, to provide a description of the empirical content that characterize the un-anticipated encounter between Somali immigrants and longtime residents of the city.

Keywords

Robert Park, Race Relations Cycle, Assimilation, Somali Immigrants, Immigration

1. Introduction

Over the past century, Robert Park's assimilation theory, also known as a race relations cycle (Park, 1914; 1926; 1930; Park & Burgess, 1969), has simultaneously become the starting point for the articulation of ethnic group relations and one of the most hegemonic concepts "... in sociology-at least American sociology..." (Kivisto, 2004: 149). Robert Park (1864- 1944) is "... recognized as one of the giants of early American sociology" (Lyman, 1990: 342), most known for his work on assimilation and urban sociology. He played a significant role in the development of the Chicago School of Sociology (Romero, 2014). His first

full articulation of the idea of assimilation appeared in Park and Burgess' *Introduction to the Science of Sociology* (1921, 1926) as "a process of interpenetration and fusion in which persons and groups acquire the memories, sentiments, and attitudes of other persons and groups, and, by sharing their experience and history, are incorporated with them in a common cultural life" (quoted in Rumbaut, 2001: 2). Robert Park further conceptualized the process of assimilation through four cycles of social interaction, starting with the contact between racially different groups and individuals under what he referred to as "Our Racial Frontier" (1926). This initial contact, according to Park, is followed by competition in which groups and individuals compete with each another over resources and social and cultural space. Continued competition, according to Park, sharpens ethnic boundaries and leads to conflict (Rumbaut, 2001).

In the third cycle, competition and conflict give way to accommodation through relative redistribution of resources and political space with one group likely becoming dominant. While acknowledging the possibility of societal obstacles, the race relations cycle, according to Park, ultimately leads to full assimilation, the formation of a new social order, the creation of new and collectively shared values and mores, and the ultimate incorporation of all into one core American culture.

Based on these comments, a number of immigration scholars immediately started to empirically test Park's assimilation theory on a host of ethnic communities (Lee, 1960; Lieberman, 1961; Masuoka, 1946; Mears, 1926; Wirth, 1956). Some of the most important research in this regard included Louis Wirth and Rose Hum Lee, who found in their respective studies on Jews and Chinese immigrants that complete assimilation had not occurred. In his classic book, *The Ghetto* (1950), Wirth found that contrary to Park's race relations cycle, Jews in urban America did not show any signs of complete assimilation. Similarly, in her study among the Chinese in America, Lee (1960) found that after more than a century of settlement, Chinese Americans did not completely assimilate into American society. In fact, a number of decades earlier, Elliot (1926) had pointed out, "The American-born Chinese and Japanese had adopted much of the culture, language, dress, habits, and opinions of conventional American society, and less frequently the victims of assaults or race riots, but considerable discrimination and social distance still separated them from white America" (quoted in Lyman 1968: 17).

Instead of testing the empirical possibility of Robert Park's formulation of assimilation, the next generation of immigration scholars have accepted the "...general view of assimilation as a linear process, with sociocultural similarity and socioeconomic success marching in lock step" and primarily proceeded to refine and expand on his view of assimilation in a number of theoretical and empirical ways (Rumbaut, 1997: 925). The first and most comprehensive expansion of Park's assimilation theory came from Milton Gordon's book, *Assimilation in American Life: The Role of Race, Religion, and National Origin* (1964). Gordon conceptualized assimilation into a series of stages through which dif-

ferent groups progress through where civic or “identificational assimilation” serves as the final stage to full assimilation and the absence of prejudice and discrimination. More important, Gordon divided the process of assimilation into two broad dimensions: cultural assimilation and structural assimilation. He conceptualized the cultural dimension as the language, religious beliefs, customs, values and ideas that groups employ to organize their everyday lives so as to properly interpret one another’s actions and behaviors. The structural dimension refers to social networks and intimate social relationships, organizations, and social stratification systems. Gordon further subdivided the structural dimension into primary and secondary. The primary dimension includes interpersonal relationships that are intimate and personal, such as families and friends whereas the secondary dimension includes institutions and organization that are more public and task-oriented. This distinction allowed Gordon to successfully argue, for example, that assimilation to basic language and acquisition of values may not necessarily lead to similar outcomes in structural assimilation, such as entry into primary group associations. This disjuncture, according to Gordon, exists because cultural assimilation is partially under the control of immigrants whereas structural assimilation is primarily determined by the host country’s contexts of reception. It is possible for certain groups to fully become assimilated into the cultural and value systems but not into the economic aspects or family and intimate aspects of the dominant society. In other words, one may be accepted into the community church but may not be accepted in marriage. According to Gordon (1964: 81), “Once structural assimilation has occurred, either simultaneously with or subsequent to acculturation, all of the other types of assimilation will naturally follow.”

More recently, immigration scholars have articulated the dynamics of assimilation and immigrant incorporation in a variety of ways. For example, in their article, *Immigrant Enclaves: An Analysis of the Labor Market Experiences of Cubans in Miami* Portes & Wilson (1980) examine the appearance of alternative labor markets in specific spatial locations where a significant proportion of the labor force work for co-ethnic employers and economic success is no longer embedded in cultural barriers and language. Other developments include segmented assimilation, the possibility of different immigrant groups or segments within groups taking different assimilation trajectories based on cultural and racial backgrounds (Portes & Zhou, 1993), and multiculturalism (Kivisto, 2002), a claims-making process in which ethnic immigrant communities seek cultural and religious accommodation instead of assimilation into the American core culture.

The various theoretical and empirical iterations mentioned above have refined and reconceptualized Robert Park’s initial articulation of assimilation and significantly contributed to our understanding of the nature and dynamics of assimilation. However, these iterations have glossed over the initial stages of the race relations cycle, contact, competition, and accommodation as givens, and concentrated only on the final stage, assimilation. This is because immigration

scholarship has assumed that the race relations cycle is not central to Robert Park's conceptualization of assimilation (Kivisto, 2004; Rumbaut, 1997). For example, Kivisto (2004) noted that Robert Park articulated the idea of assimilation in three primary texts: 1) *Racial Assimilation in Secondary Groups with Particular Reference to the Negro* (1914), 2) *Introduction to the Science of Sociology* (1921/1926), and 3) an encyclopedia entry, *Assimilation, Social* (1930), and in none of these is the idea of the race relations cycle mentioned. Rumbaut (2001) noted that despite his prolific career, Robert Park wrote about the race relations cycle only twice, one sentence at the end of his 1926 article *Our Racial Frontier*, and in the introduction to a book on interracial marriage by Adams (1937).

My purpose in this article is not to bring another angle to the idea of assimilation or to question the assertion that the race relations cycle did not figure prominently in the formulation Robert Park's assimilation theory, but to build on Stanford Lyman's suggestion that despite extensive discussion and widespread criticism, the full potential of Robert Park's race relations cycle "has yet to be tapped" (Lyman 1968: 16). I am particularly interested in following up on Lyman's observation that given the fact that ontological and epistemological issues pertaining to theoretical verification and falsification are not easily resolved, the best way to make empirical sense of Robert Park's race relations cycle is to consider it an empirical model instead of a theory. Once considered an empirical model, according to Lyman (1968: 20), "the test of its utility lies in its ability to organize a vast body of otherwise discrete data, sensitize sociologists to specific forms of human organization and generate hypotheses for research."

The most important takeaway for the purpose of my paper is Lyman's (1968: 21) observation that "...but little more than illustration has yet been done on 'contact, competition, or 'accommodation.'" I specifically draw on Lyman's observation that "the specific logico-empirical content of each of these [stages] is a worthy enterprise for future sociological research" to provide a solid description of the empirical content that characterizes each of the cycles—contact, competition, and initial signs of accommodation between Somali immigrants and long-time residents of Lewiston, Maine.

2. Data and Methods

Data for the study were derived from the transcript of a documentary titled *The Letter: An American Town and the Somalia Invasion* (Hamzeh, 2003), which chronicles the cultural firestorm that erupted when the mayor of Lewiston, Maine, send a letter (Raymond Jr., 2003, see Appendix 1) to the Somali community in America complaining about how the sudden appearance of more than one thousand Somali secondary immigrants in downtown Lewiston, Maine in a matter of few months had become an unbearable burden to the community and strained the city's financial resources, asking them to advice Somali immigrants to no longer come to the city. The publication of the letter by the *Lewiston Sun Journal* (2002) was soon picked up by national and international media and in-

terpreted by Somalis as racially motivated. It became a rallying cry for white supremacist groups across the United States and resulted in a call for a rally by The World Church of the Creator (WCOTC) to expel the Somali community from Lewiston, to which the Somali community and long-term residents of the city held a counter rally. I used grounded theory to code and analyze the transcript of the documentary. The initial coding consisted of a detailed reading of each interview (open coding), followed by axial and selective coding (Charmaz 1990; Glaser & Strauss, 1967). In the open-coding phase, I organized the data into discrete units and examined them for similarities and differences. In other words, I used open coding to fracture data to identify important categories, their properties, and dimensions. Unless otherwise quoted with different source, all quotes in the body of the text are from the transcript of the documentary, *The Letter: An American Town and the Somalia Invasion* (Hamzeh, 2003).

The Context of Contact

Lewiston, Maine, was first founded in 1795 and incorporated as a city in 1863 with a population of 5000 individuals. Attracted by the introduction of the textile industry in the 1840s, the first wave of immigrants to arrive in Lewiston were the Irish. As their number increased, the Irish immigrants faced anti-Catholic sentiments, at times violent. In one such incident, anti-Catholic Know-Nothing Party sympathizers burned Lewiston's first Catholic Church, which had been built by immigrants. The second wave of immigrants came as part of the French-Canadian migration to New England, attracted by the cotton mills in the region. The arrival of the French Canadians at the turn of last century was not met with same violence as the Irish, but both groups faced similar discrimination and performed labor-intensive jobs most earlier residents preferred not to engage in, such as digging canals for the new mill constructions. By 1900, the population of Lewiston had reached more than 23,000, 70 percent most of whom worked in the mills; and subsequently, the religious and cultural differences among the Christian, Irish Catholic, and French-speaking Canadian Catholics began to subside. Today most residents identify as primarily white.

The third wave of immigration, or what Nadeau (2005) aptly described as the rapid, unanticipated relocation of Somalis to Lewiston, started in early 2001. The first Somali families landed in Lewiston in February 2001 after officials in Portland reached out to Lewiston officials to accommodate a few Somali families that they could not find housing for. Within a matter of a few months, the secondary relocation of Somalis from cities like Columbus, Memphis, Kansas City, and New Orleans reached 1100 individuals, about 3 percent of the total population of the city (Hogeland, 2015; Nadeau, 2005).

Unlike the earlier Catholic immigrants to Lewiston, Maine, the context in which Somalis immigrated to Lewiston found themselves in was informed by several racial and global issues. First, how Somali immigrants were perceived socially, culturally, and racially was aptly captured in a 2000 interview with the Mayor of Owatonna, a small town in Minnesota, by a local newspaper, the *Star Tribune*. The mayor said, "When people of color come here, boom, just like

that—who don't speak our language, who don't worship in our churches, who don't dress as we do—we say hmmm, what's all this?" (Williams 2000: 2). Second, the Somali immigration occurred on 1) the heels of the world order vacuum created by the sudden disappearance of the geopolitics of the bimodel superpower arrangement that had characterized the world for the preceding 50 years, 2) the sudden appearance of spatiality and temporally compressed time and space as a result of increased globalization and the advancement of technology in transportation and communication, 3) the opportunities and agency created by the total disappearance of state institutions and control structures as a result of one of the most destructive civil wars in the modern history of the nation state, and 4) the social and political challenges created by the September 11 terrorist attacks in the United States and the death of 18 United States Marine Corps in Mogadishu in 1993.

The reaction of Lewiston toward the unanticipated appearance of Somalis in their midst is represented best by a letter from the then mayor of Lewiston, Laurier T. Raymond, appealing to Somali community leaders around the country to stop the continuous influx of Somali secondary immigration to Lewiston, Maine. His letter was published by the *Lewiston Sun Journal* (see Appendix 1). The mayor's letter was addressed to what he referred to as Somali community leaders and outlined the economic burden caused by the unanticipated appearance of Somalis in downtown Lewiston without much notice or warning. The mayor acknowledged that Americans in the United States, including immigrants, had the right to settle wherever they wished and that both the staff of the city and the people of Lewiston would continue to support those who were already there. But he pointed out that a further influx of Somalis would tax the city's finances. The mayor, therefore, pleaded with Somali community leaders to communicate his concerns to all Somalis and their extended families who may have been considering moving to Lewiston and tell them not do so. According to the Mayor, "Only with your help will we be successful in the future—please pass the word: We have been overwhelmed and have responded valiantly. Now we need breathing room. Our city is maxed-out financially, physically and emotionally." The content of this last sentence speaks volumes in that the concerns of the mayor were not only about resources but also about compromising the physical and emotional well-being of the Lewiston community. It is quite difficult to figure what being physically and emotionally taxed meant, but from a sociological point of view, it can only mean the difficulty that comes with the sudden influx of a large number of a culturally, ethnically, religiously, and racially different population in the midst of a small city with a primarily white Christian population that never had any experiences with people who are racially, culturally, and religiously different from them.

As soon as the letter was printed, it became national news and prompted both outrage and support from the community in Lewiston and the surrounding areas. Soon, long-term residents of Lewiston and members of the Somali community organized a march, dubbed the Unity Walk. Sources indicate that the march was

planned before the publication of the mayor's letter, but the letter may have inspired more community members to participate. At any rate, on Sunday, October 12, 2002, roughly 250 people from the community started a march from the grounds of the Calvary United Methodist Church to the Muslim Mosque to forge a symbolic affinity and respect between the two religions. By January 2003, the national news that resulted from Mayor Raymond's letter caught the attention of an Illinois-based white supremacy group, The World Church of the Creator (WCOTC), who planned to hold a rally and swore to expel the Somali community from Lewiston; in response, the community announced a counter rally. Both rallies were held on January 3, 2003. The unfolding of the ensuing cross currents of emotions and events were captured in a documentary entitled *The Latter: An American Town and the Somali Invasion*.

Initially, the reaction from some members of the Lewiston community was one of total surprise. According to Kaileigh Tara, then Mayor of Lewiston, "I woke up one morning and was told that there were 200 Somali residents in our community that hadn't been there a week before." Another respondent said, "It was truly unbelievable." The then Lewiston Police Chief summed up the reaction of the community by saying, "There was a lot of misunderstanding on why they were here, why they came here."

The sudden surprise of the community was articulated in terms of the social, cultural, and racial differences between the two communities. According to the then manager of Bates Mill Complex, "We're a Franco-American heritage mostly. We haven't seen a lot of people of color." Other speakers pointed out, "We have a 97% white ratio," or "We live in the whitest state in the nation. So, there are definite differences that made it obvious that there were new people in our community."

Moreover, the press started to characterize the Somali secondary migration to Lewiston as "the Somali invasion," which is also where the title of the documentary comes from. The invasion characterization was informed by a number of global events that put all Muslims, and Somalis in particular, at the center of difficult national conversations. First, the September 11 terrorist attacks that shocked the nation occurred around the same time as the Somali secondary migration to Lewiston, Maine. Therefore, the Somalis' arrival in Lewiston coincided with a national environment that cast all Muslims in a negative light; and in some cases, there were outright violent attacks against Muslim individuals and places of worship. The second event occurred about a decade earlier in 1993 after the deployment of the U.S. military as part of Operation Restore Hope, a multinational peacekeeping force under a United Nations mandate to restore political stability in Somalia. About seven months into the operation, the militia of one of the leaders of the warring factions, Mohamed Farah Aided, attacked a Pakistani peacekeeping contingent on its way back from a weapons inspection in the center of Mogadishu. At the end of the day, 24 Pakistani soldiers were killed and 57 wounded along with one Italian and three wounded American soldiers, which turned out to be deadliest loss of U.N. peacekeepers since the Congo in

1961, when 12 U.N troops and 200 Congolese soldiers and civilians were killed.

In reaction to this incident, the United Nations Security Council passed Resolution 837, which asked for the arrest and prosecution of those responsible for the killing of U.N. peacekeepers. A month later, American forces operating under Resolution 837 launched a barrage of missiles from six Copra attack helicopters into the house of Abdi Hassan Awale, the Interior Minister of Mohamed Farah Aided's warring faction, the Somali National Alliance. Both the purpose and the number of casualties of that incident remain disputed. According to Aided, this was a gathering of Somali cultural elders discussing ways of resolving their differences with the United Nations, and 73 individuals, including prominent clan elders, were killed in the attack. American and U.N. officials, however, argued that the meeting was a gathering of Aided's war council planning to attack American and U.N. forces and that only 13 individuals, primarily Aided's senior military commanders, were killed.

The intensification of the conflict between Aided's warring faction and the American and U.N. forces led President Clinton to dispatch the Task Force Rangers to capture Mohamed Farah Aided. On October 3, 1993, a U.S. Task Force Ranger team planned to raid the home of some senior Aided officials. The plan, initially understood to be a simple operation, turned out to be deadly. As the operation proceeded, the Somali militia loyal to Mohamed Farah Aided downed three Sikorsky UH-60 Black Hawk Helicopters, with two crashing in an area controlled by Mohamed Farah Aided's militia. The battle continued into the morning, when eventually a United Nations armored convoy rescued the survivors. At the end of what became known as the battle of Mogadishu, or Black Hawk Down, 18 American Marines were killed and 73 were wounded, one Malaysian died and seven were wounded, and one Pakistani soldier was killed and one injured.

Both the battle of Mogadishu and the September 11 terrorist attacks were very difficult moments for the American psyche and contributed to creating a negative image of Muslims and Islam in America. What was more notable for the Lewiston-Lisbon communities of Maine was that the Army Rangers who died in the battle of Mogadishu included Staff Sergeant Thomas Field of Auburn, Maine. He was the crew chief of one of the downed helicopters. He survived but was later killed by an angry crowd. He was a graduate of Lisbon High. But even more important, the Black Hawk Down incident was brought home more vividly by a successful motion picture released in December 2001, around the same time the Somali secondary migration was making its way to Lewiston; and the September 11 terrorist attacks had occurred just three months earlier and were still very fresh in the minds of the American people (Hogeland, 2015).

It was under these circumstances that one speaker, Cheryl Hamlin, said, "Somalis are evil; I mean, they killed Americans." And, according to William Welch, the then police chief of Lewiston City referring to the film *Black Hawk Down*, said "*Black Hawk Down* showed people being dragged on the streets." Another

speaker pointed out, “The people didn’t, hadn’t forgotten; I mean it made a real impression in ‘93.” James Bennett, the then city manager, summed up the feeling of the community when he said,

When you cross over the Lisbon/Lewiston line, you see a big sign that says: “The Tom—Staff Sergeant Thomas Field Memorial Highway.” So every day somebody crosses across that line to get down to the number-one employer for this area, Bath Iron Works. They have a daily reminder that one of our local boys died over in Somalia.

The negative reaction the Somali community in Lewiston encountered may have also been ignited by the negative memories of the September 11 terrorist attacks just as the Somalis’ secondary migration was making its way to Lewiston. According to one of the Somali immigrants, “This is post-September 11th. And the Somalis show up immediately after September 11th.” James Bennett, the then city manager pointed out, “Everybody after those attacks, those terrorist attacks, was looking at the world differently, through different perspectives.”

The negative response toward the Somali community in Lewiston was also articulated in the perceived notion that Somalis received unfair financial compensation. According to one speaker, “Rumors started flying around the town,” and another speaker added, “Rumors that go around about the supposed special favors and, you know, the special treatment that the Somali residents—.” Several more speakers commented about the unfair favors that the government was giving the Somalis. One speaker said, “Stamps and food stamps and cars. And they— I guess the government’s supplying them with money to live here,” and another said, “They get eight hundred dollars for their rent. And then they get eight hundred dollars, you know, to play.” This perception was summed up by the then governor of Maine, John Baldacci, who said, “Misimpressions or—or misunderstandings of what was being received was creating animosity between residents and the Somalis.” And, according to Mayor Kaileigh Tara, the then mayor of the city, “The rumor’s not based on people having lack of information. The rumor is based on hate.”

The Somali community, along with many long-term Lewiston residents and officials, rejected the government favors idea and the arguments that the city was financially maxed out as a result of the Somali presence. According to one of the Somali immigrants, “We are taxpayers. We are and will be the future workforce of Lewiston community.” This was confirmed by the CEO of St. Mary’s Health System, who said, “Well, we certainly have Somalis working here. And we’re very proud to have Somalis working here. They’re good workers. And they’re interested in becoming Americans and realizing the American dream, just like the rest of us.”

Somalis also argued they were contributing to the community and Lewiston’s economy. As one speaker pointed out, “...there are three businesses which opened in less than a year,” and one Somali woman said, “I graduated from Worcester College as RN degree. I’ve been working for eleven years at Worcester

College and Worcester Hospital. I moved here. I am a business owner.”

The idea that the city was financially maxed out as claimed by the mayor was proven to be incorrect as well. According to the former mayor of the city, Kai-leigh Tara, “I knew enough to know that the budget implications that were made in that letter were false. They were not based on fact.” The former mayor continued, “It ends up being less than half of 1% of the entire budget.” When this information was presented to the mayor, he responded, “And I’m not a numbers guy, so I can’t give you numbers.”

The real reason behind the animosity toward the Somali immigrants, according to both the Somalis and longstanding residents of the city, was simply race. Abdiaziz Ali said, “This is not an economy. This is about the race.” Both the former mayor and the city manager agreed, saying, “I absolutely believe it’s a racist action. Absolutely,” and “Absolutely, like any other place in the world we have some absolute racists,” respectively. According to one Somali speaker, “If someone comes from Lithuania or ex-Soviet Union – Russia – I mean, if someone white who comes to this city, no one would notice it.”

The Somali encounter in Lewiston was elevated one step further when, according to one speaker: “The next thing you know these Nazi-types announce they’re coming.” In the few weeks following the announcement of the WCOTC’s rally, the level of anxiety among both the Somali immigrants and long-term Lewiston residents grew intense. The announcement by the WOCTC was picked up by both national and international media, *20/20*, *USA Today*, *Primetime Live*, *Crossfire*, *The British Broadcasting Service (BBC)*, and *60 Minutes*, primarily “... feeding into people’s concerns and myths,” according to one speaker.

Confusion about the intentions of the WOCTC and The National Alliance overwhelmed the city. According to one Somali speaker, “The hate group, they are coming here to harm the Somali community. Another speaker said,

I afraid my safety. I afraid my wife’s safety. I afraid my two children’s safety. Because of—I know the history of this country; I know the white supremacists, the things that they do, the fear that they had to the black community.

Another speaker said,

Some Somalis they might say, oh, we want to take— Why don’t we take guns? Those people are coming. What are they going to do? They going to come and sing for us? They’re coming to hate us. They might attack us. What are we going to do? They have maybe— they maybe have guns. Why don’t we buy a gun?

It was not only Somalis who felt the pressure because of all the negative attention and scrutiny but also other long-term minority residents of the city, including James Jenkins, the former black mayor of the city. According to Jenkins,

When you have a threat to people who look like me, that’s a threat to me directly. And so when I’ve been in business thirty-two years in this city,

when I have to start thinking I got to look over my shoulder; that's unsettling to me, to say the least. And so I'm very concerned about that and so are a lot of citizens as well.

The former black mayor's concern was clearly observable everywhere in the city from the high school to residential neighborhoods. According to one woman speaker, "Cops at Lewiston High School have to be on duty all the time now because they're beating up the Somalians." The youth in the high school and neighborhoods were, according to a police official, "yelling and screaming, picking up weapons, and going after each other." The concern was also amplified by the comments from Brother David Stern, the leader of WOCTC, who said, "We are a battle cry that stands for racial holy war, which—a lot of people associate with jihad." The anxiety of the Lewiston Police Department was off the charts as well. William Welch, the police chief warned, "Some of these groups are known to throw tear gas, chemical agents. We needed to equip our officers with gas masks." According to the police chief, "We have never had to call in another hundred and fifty officers to assist us with a president or vice-president visit." A Channel 8 reporter observed,

Not only were there six law enforcement agencies involved, but the Lewiston fire department as well. Check it out. A hose ready to go, hooked up to a fire engine, ready to spray protestors in case things get out of hand.

Ultimately, what unfolded during the rallies on January 11 did not live up to the hype generated by the presence of the supremacist groups; if anything, it energized the Many and One rally in support of diversity more than expected. Only about 300 participants, including the press, and supporters from out of state turned out for the white supremacist rally. They were confronted by an anti-hate group, dressed in black and chanting "Nazis Out! Nazis Out!" The One and Many Coalition drew a much larger crowd, an estimated 3000 - 5000. Mainly white long-term residents of Lewiston packed Merrill Gym and the surrounding area (Hogeland, 2015). In attendance were some of the most senior Maine politicians, including Senators Olympia Snowe and Susan Collins and Maine governor John Baldacci. In his speech, the governor declared, "...Maine is lot of things, but it is not, nor will it ever be, a haven for or a headquarters for hate groups and racist organizations." Senator Snowe declared, "I just want people to know that we are a diverse, tolerant community state and we stand as one." And Senator Collins declared, "It sends a powerful message to those attending the counter-rally across the city that Maine is a welcoming place, and there's no place for hatred in our society."

January 11 passed without serious problems, and according to William Welch, the police chief, "No one in this city got hurt today, and you cannot put a price on that." And one Somali speaker declared, "January 11th is behind us. So it's just like the work has begun now. The real work has begun. And we have been given a mandate, which is to build this community as one." According to (Hogeland,

2015), the three years following January 11 saw quiet acculturation until two events brought back memories of the rallies. The first occurred when a thirty-three-year-old Lewiston man threw a frozen pig into the Lewiston Mosque while Somalis prayed inside. Even though this may have been an isolated incident, Phil Nadeau, assistant city administrator at the time, "...believed that the act was a reflection of where we are right now. There's a small group of people that will not accept this type of change in their community, ever." The second event was the controversy that occurred when in 2004, Lewiston High School allowed the hijab as an exception to no "caps, hats, bandanas, hoods, helmet hats, and other types of headgear" (Hogeland, 2015: 93).

The Somali community had come to a city that had been experiencing de-industrialization and economic decline for several decades, and just before the arrival of the Somalis, "in 2000, more than half the town's families with children under 5 lived at or below the poverty line." According to Alan Turgeon, manager of the Bates Mills Property Complex,

Bates Mill was the single largest employer in the state of Maine with 5000 employees and a very prosperous textile business. In the 60s and 70s the mill started to decline. And as the mill declined, so did the condition—or the prosperity—of our town. And today, unfortunately, the mill no longer operates here. It closed down for good. And it's been a very difficult transition to go from a very prosperous town only 50 years ago to a town that is struggling to stay afloat. The Franco-American community is a very hard-working, very proud community. We've suffered, what, in my opinion, is a decline in self-esteem.

Initial Signs of Accommodation

Despite all this, the Somali community focused on their everyday lives and, true to their word, started to contribute to the community in significant ways. They have demographically reversed the declining population of the city, opened multiple ethnic stores in downtown Lewiston along with other African immigrants, enhanced the cultural diversity of the city, and increased the high school population by 25 percent. According to Hinckley (2017) "Between two blocks of Lewiston's Lisbon Street there is one adult novelty bookstore, three "For Rent" signs, and seven halal markets."

More important, they elevated the self-esteem of the community by making Lewiston High a sports powerhouse. Led by Somali and other African immigrants, Lewiston High's Blue Devils soccer team made it to the regional finals in 2012 and 2014, losing in an upset. In the 2015 season, they went undefeated and were nationally ranked by *USA Today*. In the final state championship, more than 4500 fired-up fans turned out for the game with long lines at the ticket booth. According to Bass (2018; quoted in Erikson, 2018), "As they began to do the wave, the jumble of cultures, ages, hats, headscarves and languages melded into a cheering surge..." Just like Mayor Raymond's letter, the success of the Lewiston High Blue Devils soccer team became national news covered by news

channels, both academic and fiction books, news articles, documentaries, and a Netflix film (Erikson, 2018; Hinckley, 2017).

Even more consequential were the civic and political contributions that the younger generation made to Lewiston and the state of Maine in general. In less than two decades, Safiya Khalid, a 23-year-old University of Southern Maine graduate, won a landslide victory to become the first Somali-American to serve on the city council of Lewiston. Her campaign generated quite a lot of racist internet attacks; but on the night of the election, she was interviewed by CNN, the *Washington Post*, the *Atlanta Constitution*, and Britain's *Guardian*; and the Associated Press distributed her story globally. After her first two-year term, she declined to run for re-election and instead chose to enroll in a master's degree program in Public Policy at Northeastern University, where she received a full scholarship. Safiya had left Somalia when she was 7 years old with her family and settled in Lewiston a few months later (Harrison, 2022).

A few years later, in 2018, another Somali immigrant, Deqa Dalac, was elected to the city council of South Portland, and in 2021 the seven-member city council elected her as the mayor of South Portland, the fourth largest city in Maine, the first Somali immigrant mayor of a U.S. city. Deqa was part of the first wave of Somali immigrants who fled the civil war in the 1990s. She moved to South Portland in 2008 after finding a social work job there.

Somali immigrants in Lewiston and in South Portland made history again. In the 2022 midterm election, two Somali immigrant women were elected to the Maine State Legislature. In Lewiston, Mana Abdi, 26, a graduate of the University of Maine, Farmington, made history as one of the first two Somali Americans elected to serve in the Maine Legislature representing District 95. Mana was born in Kenya, but her family fled the civil war in Somalia. They moved to the United States when she was about 12, landing in Kansas, but soon moved to Lewiston, Maine. She wrote on her Twitter page, "I arrived in the United States at age 11 fleeing war in my home country and unable to speak English. On Tuesday, I'll be elected as the first Somali-American member of the Maine House of Representatives" (@manaformaine, 2022). The other, Deqa Dalac, the South Portland woman who had made history the previous year as the first Somali American mayor of a U.S. city, was also elected to the Maine Legislature representing District 120 (Snider 2022).

3. Discussion and Conclusion

I set out to provide a detailed description, to borrow from Geertz (1973), of the empirical content that characterizes the stages of Robert Park's race relations cycle and to account for Lyman's observation that "...but little more than "illustration has yet been done on 'contact, competition, or "accommodation. I specifically draw on Lyman's observation that "the specific logico-empirical content of each of these [stages] is a worthy enterprise for future sociological research" to provide a description of the empirical content that characterizes each of the

cycles—contact, competition, and initial signs of accommodation between Somali immigrants and longtime residents of Lewiston, Maine, and sociological forces that inform them.

I use data from the Somali secondary migration, primarily from Atlanta, Georgia, and later parts of the Midwest to Lewiston, Maine, in the 2000s to provide a picture of the empirical content that informed the nature of contact, competition/conflict, and the initial signs of accommodation between Somalis and longtime residents of Lewiston, Maine.

The data indicate two important observations. First, specifying the logico-empirical content, to borrow from Lyman (1968), that undergrid the initial contact and competition between incoming immigrants and residents of Lewiston, Maine, is very important for understanding the nature and dynamics of immigrant incorporation. In the case of Somali immigrants and long-time residents of Lewiston, Maine, the context of contact appeared highly conflictual and included a number of escalating reactions and counter reactions. The first reaction of long time of Lewiston was one of surprise, of why such a large people of color, who spoke a different language and followed a different religion suddenly appeared in the midst of one the whitest communities in the country, and where did they come from has become a central concern. Second, the initial reaction to the unexpected appearance of Somalis in downtown Lewiston, reached the highest level of government when the Mayor of Lewiston City, Maine, sent an official letter to supposed Somali community leaders in the United States to advice members of their communities to stop coming to the Lewiston because the city is now financially and emotionally taxed.

As soon as the mayor's letter was printed, the presence of the Somali community in Lewiston attracted the attention of the World Church of the Creator (WCOTC) a hate group who announced they were coming to engage in racial holy war against the Somali community. This led to the announcement of peace driven counter marches announced by the local church along with long time residents of the city. These marches and counter marches led the city to marshal the largest police forces force in the history of the city. The announcement by the WOCTC became a global sensation picked up by both national international media, and participation of the most senior politicians of the state, including Governor John Baldacci, and Senators Olympia Snowe and Susan Collins in the counter march against the World Church of the Creator (WCOTC).

The second observation is that prevailing social, racial, and geopolitical forces inform the ways in which specific contexts of contact and competition unfold. The Somali-Lewiston contact was informed by several important sociological contexts. The first pertains to the unanticipated appearance of black, Muslim, non-English speaking immigrants in the midst of a primarily white community that had no prior history with non-white, non-Christian, or non-English speaking immigrants. Second, the September 11 terrorist attacks that shocked the nation occurred around the same time as the Somali secondary migration to Lewiston,

Maine, was underway, and their arrival in Lewiston coincided with a national environment that cast all Muslims in a negative light, and in some situations resulted in outright violent attacks against Muslim individuals and places of worship in the United States. The third event occurred about a decade earlier in 1993 after the deployment of the U.S. military as part of Operation Restore Hope, a multinational peacekeeping force under a United Nations mandate to restore political stability in Somalia. A few years into the mission in what has become known as the battle of Mogadishu, or Black Hawk Down, 18 American Marines, including Staff Sergeant Thomas Field of Auburn, Maine, were killed and 73 wounded; in addition, there were one Malaysian death and seven wounded and one Pakistani soldier dead and one injured.

Conflicts of Interest

The author declares no conflicts of interest instead the publication of this paper.

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Appendix 1: A Letter to the Somali Community

October 1, 2002

For some number of months, I have observed the continued movement of a substantial number of Somalis into the downtown area of our community. I have applauded the efforts of our city staff in making available the existing services and the local citizenry for accepting and dealing with the influx.

I assumed that it would become obvious to the new arrivals the effect the large numbers of new residents have had upon the existing staff and city finances and that this would bring about a voluntary reduction of the number of new arrivals—it being evident that the burden has been, for the most part, cheerfully accepted, and every effort has been made to accommodate it.

Our Department of Human Services has recently reported that the number of Somali families arriving into the city during the month of September is below the approximate monthly average that we have seen over the last year or so. It may be premature to assume that this may serve as a signal for future relocation activity, but the decline is welcome relief given increasing demands on city and school services.

I feel that recent relocation activity over the summer has necessitated that I communicate directly with the Somali elders and leaders regarding our newest residents. If recent declining arrival numbers are the result of your outreach efforts to discourage relocation into the city, I applaud those efforts. If they are the product of other unrelated random events, I would ask that the Somali leadership make every effort to communicate my concerns on city and school service impacts with other friends and extended family who are considering a move to this community.

To date, we have found the funds to accommodate the situation. A continued increased demand will tax the city's finances.

This large number of new arrivals cannot continue without negative implications for all. The Somali community must exercise some discipline and reduce the stress on our limited finances and our generosity.

I am well aware of the legal right of a U.S. resident to move anywhere he or she pleases, but it is time for the Somali community to exercise this discipline in view of the effort that has been made on its behalf.

We will continue to accommodate the present residents as best as we can, but we need self-discipline and cooperation from everyone.

Only with your help will we be successful in the future—please pass the word: We have been overwhelmed and have responded valiantly. Now we need breathing room. Our city is maxed-out financially, physically, and emotionally.

I look forward to your cooperation.

Laurier T. Raymond, Jr.
Mayor, City of Lewiston, Maine