

The Racial Politics of Urban Celebrations: A Comparative Study of Philadelphia's Mummers  
Parade and Odunde Festival

By

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ABSTRACT

Discourses about the construction of identity, the politics of identity, and the role of design in controlling human behavior and expressing power have thus far been confined to separate realms of inquiry. This thesis will examine where these discourses intersect and how their intersection plays out in society as old conceptions of race and identity are challenged by demographic shifts and new immigrant populations. Festivals, as spatial expressions of identity that image city spaces, provide an important perspective on this topic. Philadelphia, as a former capital city that continues to struggle with race and identity in its politics, acts as a compelling backdrop for my case studies. The Mummers Parade and the Odunde Festival are two New Year's celebrations that mediate racial/political and ethnic/cultural identities for the city's white and black populations respectively. This thesis considers both festivals from their historical context and compares their current form in terms of spatial and non-spatial indicators (route, demographics, funding, and organizational structure). From this analytic framework emerges a picture of how political identities are constructed spatially, how the process of identity construction both challenges and reinforces the dominant political structure, and how the process can bridge political differences and maintain them.

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# The Racial Politics of Urban Celebrations: A Comparative Study of Philadelphia's Mummers Parade and Odunde Festival

Annis Whitlow, Massachusetts Institute of Technology

*In short, we the black and the white deeply need each other here if we are really to become a nation—if we are really, that is, to achieve our identity, our maturity, as men and women. To create one nation has proved to be a hideously difficult task; there is certainly no need now to create two, one black and one white.*  
James Baldwin<sup>1</sup>, 1963

*Coming to Philadelphia had made no real difference in my life. The racial barriers were just as strong here as they'd been down South. The political and social system was controlled just as rigidly by white folks here as it had been down South. I wasn't farming, but I was still treated like a sharecropper in a world controlled by white people.*  
W. Wilson Goode<sup>2</sup> 1992

## **Chapter 1. Introduction**

My interest in race, identity and politics stems from my experiences growing up in the New Jersey suburbs of Philadelphia and Camden. As a white little girl in a mostly-white upper middle class town, I remember learning from a young age not to judge people superficially and that racism is wrong. Yet by the time I was an adolescent, my sense of racial identity as a white person was so strong that I couldn't listen to rap music without the sense that it wasn't for me because I was white. I felt deeply disconnected from African American culture even as I was being influenced by it. And as much as I felt that this sense of separation and disconnection was wrong, I couldn't name why, and I couldn't escape it.

The residents of my town didn't talk about being white very often, and when race came up it was usually to make a comment against racism. Yet, all know they are white, and the desire to understand how these racially identities are constructed and maintained non-verbally led me to the topic of my thesis. An interest in the power relationships between groups also influenced the direction my research has taken. Three research questions in particular drove the work of this thesis: 1. How are racial identities constructed through the manipulation of public space in cities?

2. How is the spatial construction of racial identity related to racial politics? and 3. How do changing demographics impact these practices?

I chose to focus on Philadelphia, PA, partly because I am familiar enough with its context to feel confident in my observations and analysis. Racial politics are highly contextual and vary significantly from place to place. Previous research into Philadelphia history with these concerns in mind generated a base of material that I have built on in this thesis. I have researched the Mummers Parade and the Odunde Festival. Both are based in South Philadelphia, both celebrate the new year, but the former serves a mostly white population on January 1<sup>st</sup> and the latter a mostly black population on the second Sunday of June. Each, intentionally or unintentionally, plays a role in shaping Philadelphia's racial identities, and each speaks to the state of racial politics in the city.

Public identity in the United States has always been constructed in public spaces. This is particularly true of racial identity. Public celebrations have always worked in partnership with local media to build public identity and political will among the racialized groups of the United States. Even today, in a culture dominated by media, public celebrations bring a spatial component to the symbolic language of race propagated by national media conglomerates. They use that symbolic language to give a racial identity to public spaces.

The symbolic language of race is today so embedded in popular, public culture as to be nearly invisible to the average white observer. Over three hundred years of public culture designed to promulgate a dominant identity of whiteness has left our country with a symbolic landscape that speaks to the success of that project.

Blatant racism, racist hatred, has fallen out of public favor nationally, but concern for racial identity has not faltered. Recent work on the construction of white identity has begun to break down the myth that white identity is a more legitimate, natural identity than black identity,

which is generally understood as constructed because of the break in cultural continuity that slavery imposed. Racial identities are inherently tied to national identity because they are defined politically within a national context. Racial identity structures do not necessarily translate between nations, and a person traveling in a new country must often place herself in a new racial context – though this often seems less true of white than non-white identity, it remains valid because the meaning of whiteness shifts according to what its negations are.

Racial identity requires an amalgamation of various ethnic identities under a singular, nationally defined racial category. Ethnicity, on the other hand, operates at once at a more local and also a more global scale than race. Ethnic identities are tied to local places, foods, dress, and cultural practices; however, they also unite people who are widely dispersed but who have maintained ties to some or all of those characteristics of ethnic identity. Ethnic identities defy national identities on two scales: 1. on the local level, they have the potential to deviate from whatever standard national identity has been propagated, and 2. on the super-national level, they create ties between globally dispersed groups of people that are not linked under a single national identity. In this thesis, I will argue that the Mummers parade, in the form it has assumed throughout the twentieth century, is a festival that has constructed and maintained a white racial identity that has connected Philadelphians of European descent across divisions of ethnicity, class, and religion. The Odunde festival, on the other hand, attempts to break down a monolithic, nationally defined black racial identity into an ethnic African American identity. It then uses this ethnic identity to build political consciousness around issues of race in the city.

Philadelphia, as the birthplace of our nation, provides a poignant backdrop for the construction of racialized national identities in its public spaces. This thesis will explore the historic process of articulating the spaces of white and black identities in Philadelphia, and how these processes have changed and evolved into the Mummers and Odunde festivals of the early twenty-first century. In Philadelphia, individual race relations have never conformed to a singular, uniform

pattern. Despite the highly territorial nature of Philadelphia's various neighborhoods, their gridded permeability has meant that diverse groups have intermingled peacefully for years at a time. Plate 1 shows a map of Philadelphia showing major neighborhood boundaries. This peaceful co-existence has been interspersed with periods of public conflict that have been much more instrumental in building layers of meaning that tell Philadelphians what spaces are intended for whom. Because these public celebrations have strong historic ties to political identity and mobilization, the spaces that are most politically symbolic and contested have also become the most racially charged.

An example of this phenomenon is the recent controversy surrounding the recent redesign of Independence Mall. In the first few years of the twenty-first century, a new pavilion was designed to house the Liberty Bell and a new visitors center and Constitution center were designed to fill the empty lots that never quite lived up to the expectations of Edmund Bacon's 1963 plan. By 2002, it had become clear that the Liberty Bell would stand a mere five feet from the site of George Washington's slave quarters and the Constitution Center would build a bus depot over a historically important free black community without first excavating it. Figure 1 shows the public outcry over these two affronts to Philadelphia's African American population forced the National Park Service to address issues of slavery and the role of the black community in their exhibition and the Constitution Center to allow an archeological dig that produced over a million artifacts about the history of black Philadelphia.<sup>3</sup> This example demonstrates not only the contested nature of some of Philadelphia's most historically and politically important territory, but also the first response on the part of the developers (representative of the city's white community) that unearthing African American history is not a priority. Only after persuasion from some of the city's major churches did the Constitution Center and National Park Service change their decisions.<sup>4</sup> After hundreds of years' presence in Philadelphia, African Americans are only just beginning to see themselves represented in the major public buildings of the city. In the past, African American identity was embodied in buildings that served only

the black community: churches, lodges, schools, etc. It was only visible to Philadelphia's white community, however, through parades and an ephemeral presence in the street.

Image removed for copyright purposes.

Figure 1. This map, reprinted from the *Philadelphia Inquirer*, shows the siting of the Liberty Bell Pavilion relative to George Washington's slave quarters and the Constitution Center bus depot relative to James Dexter's home, an excavation of which has led to the retrieval of over 1 million historical artifacts.

I will focus my inquiry on two different, but also politically significant sites: Broad Street and South Street, the procession routes for the Mummers Parade and Odunde Festival respectively. Figure 2 shows Philadelphia divided into its four primary neighborhoods: Center

Image removed for copyright purposes.

Figure 2. This map shows the four main neighborhood divisions in Philadelphia: North, South, West, and Center City. South Street and Broad Street, the sites of the Odunde festival and Mummers Parade respectively are highlighted.

City, North Philadelphia, South Philadelphia, and West Philadelphia. Broad Street, highlighted in orange, is the north-south axis that runs from South Philadelphia through the middle of Center City up to, around, and then beyond City Hall at Market Street. Once the primary city parade



Figure 3. Beside a dollar store on the south-facing side of west South Street stands a large, recently renovated residence with ironwork window boxes and private garage. This mix of uses indicates that South Street is a contested boundary space.

route, it no longer serves that function with a few exceptions, including the Mummers Parade. Through the nineteenth and early twentieth century, African Americans' presence on Broad Street was often greeted with open hostility and sometimes violence. South Street, highlighted in black, forms the southern boundary of Center City and has never held the same civic prominence as Broad Street. It has for many years been a social and commercial zone claimed by the neighborhoods both to its north and to its south. In the 1950s, the street was slated to become a highway, causing massive disinvestment in the area. In the 1960s, residents organized an effort to block the highway plan and developed a counter-proposal for revitalization. Today the effects of that plan are visible in the form of high-end residential apartments, a Whole Foods Market, the expansion of the Graduate Hospital, and a thriving retail corridor at its eastern edge. To the east, facades alternate between newer residential development projects, older, rehabilitated housing stock, upscale boutiques, dollar stores, and pubs. This interplay of elements speaks to the contested nature of the street as a boundary zone. Figure 3 illustrates this difference.

### Content Overview

These are issues that I will examine in greater depth later in this thesis. In Chapter 2, I will review the literature that discusses political identity in the context of the built environment. I will review the work of J. Mark Schuster on urban ephemera and their role in generating

images by which to read the city. I will compare this work with F.R. Ankersmit's approach to representation in *Aesthetic Politics*, which suggests that collective action in space gives political meaning to that space. Murray Edelman also addresses the relationship between the design of spaces and the political meanings communicated through their use. Within that framework, I will explore the way that physical design of spaces and festival use of those spaces support and impact formations of national identity. For that discussion I will review Lawrence Vale's work in *Architecture, Power, and National Identity*, with reference to Christine Boyer's work on the formation of collective identity through architectural and urban design. I will also examine Dolores Hayden's *Power of Place*, which addresses the issue of whose identity and whose history is being communicated through design projects. The work of David Waldstreicher and Simon Newman provides an overview of the role festivals and festival culture has played in defining national identity in the United States.

In Chapter 3, I will introduce the context of Philadelphia's history as a framework for understanding how the Mummers Parade helped build and reinforce racial identities in the city. I will begin my study in the early nineteenth century, before South Philadelphia was annexed into the city in 1854. This period demonstrates the tension between ethnic immigrant populations living outside the city boundaries and the elite, Anglo residents of the city proper. It also marks the beginning of violent confrontations between European ethnic groups and African Americans in the city. After the city's consolidation and the Civil War, white immigrant groups began to move in the direction of assimilation, and this intention strongly influenced the celebrations that would become the Mummers Parade. During this period in the late nineteenth century, the Mummers' dude and wench blackface couple came out of the minstrel show tradition. In my study of the Mummers in the twentieth century, I will show how they developed a language of exclusion that articulated their collective membership in a racially white Philadelphia while simultaneously asserting their commitment to distinct ethnic identities.

In Chapter 4, I will discuss African American formations of identity in the public space of the city from the late eighteenth century through the present form of the Odunde festival. National and international struggles against slavery starting with the end of the slave trade through successful West Indian slave revolts and finally ending with the Civil War will provide a context for African Americans' shifting perception of identity and their shifting use of the street. I will show how with each attempt to enter mainstream society, they were spatially marginalized and excluded. White Philadelphians could either exclude black participation in their festivals and events (such as the Mummers Parade) or could antagonize them when they occupied the city's ceremonial spaces (such as Broad Street or Independence Mall). I will discuss how the simultaneous desire to integrate into American society while embracing separateness as a strategy for achieving equality (in response to the oppression and exclusion the community faced) manifested itself spatially in its public presence. The black nationalist movement of the 1960s and 1970s is the most recent manifestation of this dichotomy and provides the immediate context for the birth of Odunde. Finally, I will argue that the festival does not create geographies of racial exclusion. Rather it attempts to shape an ethnic identity for Philadelphia's African American community that asserts a political presence in the street to battle racial inequality in the form of gentrification.

Chapter 5 will provide a more thorough comparison of the two celebrations. I will compare the routes of the two parades in relation to the ceremonial spaces of the city. I will argue that the Odunde festival's location follows the pattern of marginalization laid out at the beginning of Chapter 4 and that the Mummers Parade route is connected to the historical effort to claim major public spaces for whites. Then I will explore the demographics of the two parades and their histories of exclusion or acceptance in the context of the city's demographics as a whole. Here I will also account for trends in immigration and population changes since 1990. Third I will compare their organizational structures, and finally I will look at their funding and sponsorship to understand to whom each group is accountable. This chapter will focus on the parades as they

relate to the current population of the city, though it will draw on their historical contexts. At the end of the chapter, a conclusion will synthesize the information of the last three chapters and articulate the role that these festivals have played in the formation of racial identities. Finally, I will demonstrate that trends in the city's racial politics are clearly communicated through the two festivals.

### Methodology

My primary resources for this thesis are secondary sources. Four dissertations about the Mummers Parade have been written and represent years of field work and in-depth interviewing. They have been a wealth of information. I chose not to replicate the methodology of those dissertations because my time was considerably more limited and because information about Odunde had not yet been compiled into any major research project. To supplement the work of these dissertations, I studied histories of Philadelphia and of black Philadelphia (they are rarely in the same source). I also used newspaper articles written about the Mummers over the last ten years as well as the documentary *Strut!* released in 2002. For Odunde, I relied heavily on newspaper articles, and looked at every article mentioning the festival from the early eighties until the present in *The Philadelphia Inquirer*, *The Philadelphia Daily News*, and *The Philadelphia Tribune* (the city's African American newspaper). A major source of information about the festival's early history came from an oral history recorded by the Temple University Urban Archives of Lois Fernandez, Odunde's founder. I also reference essays written for the Philadelphia Folklore Project's magazine, *Works in Progress*. This proved a useful source as it included scholarly commentary as well as direct quotes from participants and organizers. Another major source was Oshunbumi Fernandez, executive director of Odunde, and the daughter of Lois Fernandez.

Choosing not to do ethnographic research limits my ability to speak to the meaning participants find in the festivals beyond what is articulated in newspaper articles. As I make arguments, I

do not provide festival organizers or participants a voice in the discussion. While I appreciate the importance of letting people speak for themselves and making sure that everyone's voice is heard with equal weight, I was disappointed in the way that the dissertations I read handled the controversial subject of race in the parade. Though blacks have participated in the parade by providing musical accompaniment since the earliest years, their participation as Mummers ended with the Depression. So, the fact that the writers interviewed only parade participants (including the black musicians) meant that they presented a biased perception of the parade's meaning. In discussing the significance of the 1960s controversy over the Mummers using blackface, the researchers completely neglected the perspective of black Philadelphians who might have been offended by the practice because they would not have been among the participants. Conducting ethnographic research with such a poorly defined population as black Philadelphians who do not participate in the Mummers parade is understandably difficult even within the scope of a dissertation. For a Master's thesis, such intensive research would have required more time and attention than I could dedicate. I would have liked to use ethnographic methods to research the Odunde festival because no comprehensive work has yet been done, but limited time and the fact that I am based in Boston likewise made such research virtually impossible. I believe, however, that the resources available to me provided ample support for my thesis.

### **(Endnotes)**

<sup>1</sup> Baldwin, James. *The Fire Next Time*. (New York: Dell, 1963).

<sup>2</sup> Goode, W. Wilson. *In Goode Faith*. (Valley Forge, PA: Judson Press, 1992). Goode served as mayor of Philadelphia from 1984 to 1992.

<sup>3</sup> Salisbury, Steven. "Slavery in the heart of freedom." *The Philadelphia Inquirer*. June 29, 2003. From [www.philly.com](http://www.philly.com)

<sup>4</sup> Salisbury, Steven. "Site of ex-slaves home to be excavated." *The Philadelphia Inquirer*. February 06, 2003. From [www.philly.com](http://www.philly.com).

## **Chapter 2. Acting our Difference: Space, Race, and Identity in Politics**

When most people hear the word politics, they first think of politicians. In his book *Cultural Geographies*, Don Mitchell finds that even the dictionary limits politics to “the science of government; that part of ethics which relates to the regulation of government of a nation or state for the preservation of safety, peace, and prosperity; political affairs, or the conduct and contests of political parties.”<sup>1</sup> In fact, political reality extends far beyond these tightly prescribed boundaries. Many political struggles occupy the cultural sphere as well as more explicit political forums. Television networks often become heated battlegrounds for political controversies from gay rights and the representation of homosexuality on television to televised campaigns and their associated commercials. Mitchell suggests that the power of cultural politics lies in its ability to “transgress” these defined (and therefore official) boundaries, and while this speaks to the power of subtle influences, it is not a satisfying response to the question of how culture and identity are related to politics.

Race and the politics of spatial practice, the other subjects of this thesis, also occupy different spheres. On January 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup>, 2004, I attended a conference held at the Yale School of Architecture entitled, “Black Boxes: Enigmas of Space and Race.” Organized by an M.Arch. student, Jennifer Newsom, it brought together eminent speakers who presented on topics ranging from the preservation of African American landmarks in Harlem (Michael Henry Adams), to a semiotic theory of blackness in architecture (Darrell Fields). Felicia Davis of Cornell University presented historic walking tours of New York City and Robert Farris Thompson of Yale University highlighted the presence of African architecture in the Americas. The conference focused on the importance of marking and preserving the presence of African Americans’ historic contributions to society in the urban landscape and of rewriting our theory to acknowledge the influence that Africa has had in Western art and architecture throughout history. The conference did not touch on politics at all, or how the topics presented related to identity and power in our

society. The intersection of spatial practice, race, identity and politics is the subject I will explore in this thesis.

My perspective is grounded in the fields of architecture and urban studies, and I do not pretend to be well versed in political science. For this reason my research is grounded in urban and cultural studies, with references to only the work of only two political scientists: F.R. Ankersmit and Murray Edelman. In this chapter, I will review Mark Schuster's work on urban ephemera in light of Ankersmit's political theory to demonstrate how "imaging the city" is related to politicizing it. Following this, I will review Larry Vale's work on national identity and capital construction, M. Christine Boyer's work on collective memory, and Dolores Hayden's work on the "Politics of Space."<sup>2</sup> Next, I will examine the political nature of spatial practices linked to identity construction. I will use the example of festival culture in post-Revolution American nation-building to examine how festivals can 1) challenge and alter dominant political ideologies and 2) can reinforce a political order and exclude various groups from political participation.

### Imaging the City and Politicizing Spaces

*A workable image requires first the identification of an object, which implies its distinction from other thing, its recognition as a single entity. This is called identity... Second, the image must include the spatial or pattern relation of the object to the observer and to other objects. Finally, this object must have some meaning for the observer, whether emotional or practical.*

*Kevin Lynch<sup>3</sup>*

Spaces and buildings that exhibit clear formal identity and structure attract efforts to *make* them meaningful. This is the connection between form and meaning that Kevin Lynch avoids making in *Image of the City*, but which is crucial to understanding the politics of urban design. Highly legible public spaces often develop contested or contradictory meanings. The act of using those spaces becomes an act of meaning-making. The book *Imaging the City*, edited by Lawrence J. Vale and Sam Bass Warner, Jr., branches out from Lynch's legacy and tackles questions of

meaning that Lynch himself would not touch. Using the term “Imaging” to replace Lynch’s “Image” already refocuses the discussion on actors rather than just spaces, and this new focus carries through the book. “City imaging,” Warner and Vale tell us in their introduction, “is the process of constructing visually based narratives about the potential of places.”<sup>4</sup> Visual narratives imply the existence of a narrator, and thus of a particular perspective that may be challenged. Visual narratives that image the city need not only be spatial. Many of these narratives are conveyed through the media: newspapers, magazines, television, film, photography. Those that are spatial, often involve *use* of space rather than the creation of spatial form. J. Mark Schuster delves into the role of what he terms “urban ephemera” in city imaging. He includes “spectacles, pageants, rituals,” and celebrations in this classification as well as other, less prominent events that contribute to the character of cities.<sup>5</sup> While Schuster acknowledges that media coverage of ephemera contributes to its effect on city image, he emphasizes that most ephemera are not generated for the media: “they are shaped by citizens and passed along by local practices, customs, and word of mouth.”<sup>6</sup> These events shape the way that residents experience the city and the way that tourists visualize the city. In doing so, they convey meanings about the city’s identity and whom its spaces serve, though this is a point that Schuster does not address. He only goes so far to say, “Ephemera, like any other social activity, have the potential for serving certain interests while conveniently ignoring others.”<sup>7</sup> Here he acknowledges that the meanings conveyed by ephemera do not necessarily represent the reality of the city. They convey a particular image, and often they may be altered because the image they convey is not the image that city decision-makers want to convey. Within this dynamic, the politics of ephemera and urban spaces emerge.

As meaning lies at the heart of city imaging, the most important lesson to take from *Aesthetic Politics* by F.R. Ankersmit is that meaning and interpretation also lie at the heart of political reality. Ankersmit posits that aesthetics, rather than ethics, is the appropriate lens through which to understand political representation, and thus politics. He argues that “political power has

its origin neither in the people represented nor in the representative, but in the representation process itself.”<sup>8</sup> The representation process is one in which the meaning of representation is created and the identity of the representative in relation to the represented constructed. It is a process he likens to that of a painter representing a landscape:

The painting the artist makes of a landscape is not identical to the landscape painted, and still we do not speak of a conflict. The difference between the landscape itself and its artistic representation is not a mere mistake in or shortcoming of the painting—on the contrary, precisely in this difference originates all that might aesthetically please us. Hence, political ‘reality,’ ... comes into being in the hollow or the lee, so to speak, which political aesthetic representation generates between the representative and the person represented. <sup>9</sup>

While this comparison is not exact in that it requires political representatives to assume the role of both artist and painting, it illuminates a reality of politics that is missing from older political theory. In electoral politics, elected politicians usually represent diverse groups linked only by the narrative consistency of a party platform<sup>10</sup>. That narrative emphasizes or generates connections between constituent groups so they will all elect to be represented by the same politicians. The narrative also signifies the meaning behind that representation. Few people believe that their representative is an exact replica of themselves, but as long as the representatives’ actions remain true to the overarching narrative, constituents are satisfied with their representation.

The relationship of urban design to politics is linked to the latter’s need for expressions of meaning. Political identities linked by super-narratives need two types of expression: first, they must visually and spatially reinforce their unity and strength and second, they must allow their various factions to express individuality and variation within the context of that narrative. The former may be accomplished through politically sponsored and organized events. The latter type of expression is generally embedded in the cultural sphere so as not to weaken the power of its political identity. The hierarchical nature of public spaces in cities contributes to the spatialization of politics. The importance of space to politics is demonstrated by the constant

redrawing of Congressional voting districts to ensure that those in power stay in power. Spaces that have formal identity and legibility attract layers of meaning as competing groups attempt to claim them. Controlling the most visible territory in a city is one of the most potent means that constituent groups express political power.

These spatial and visual expressions of political power form the basic theoretical content of this chapter. I will examine first the politics of designing buildings and open space, and second, the politics of using space, or the politics of spatial practice. The process of designing the built environment involves negotiations among politicians, designers, and other interest groups. It constructs a visual representation of power, and can become a site of conflict. This section will demonstrate the connection between formal considerations and the political identity of spaces. The term “spatial practice” is used by Michel de Certeau in his book *The Practice of Everyday Life* to describe the way that the average person’s experience of space is as important to shaping the meaning of the space as was the intention of the designer, and that in fact a kind of dialogue exists between them.<sup>11</sup> This section will examine the ways that meanings are imposed on spaces and challenged in spaces through de Certeau’s “spatial practice” and Schuster’s “urban ephemera.”

### Constructions of Identity: Architecture and Politics

In his book, *Architecture, Power and National Identity*, Lawrence J. Vale explores these issues in the context of building capital cities and capitol complexes. He draws on Ernest Gellner’s work on nationalism to support his own research into the politics that have shaped capitol design. Gellner’s observation that “If the nationalism prospers it eliminates the alien high culture, but it does not then replace it by the old local low culture; it revives, invents, a local high (literate, specialist-transmitted) culture of its own, though admittedly one which will have links with the earlier folk styles and dialects,”<sup>12</sup> underscores the problem of what symbolism a regime will choose as a basis for its invented high culture. This is even more problematic in nations that are

not composed of homogeneous populations with a single, national “low culture” for inspiration.<sup>13</sup> In such cases, the design of space is as much a site of conflict as it is a site to make power symbolically visible. Most often the conflict is resolved in favor of the preferences of those in power in a manner that is not truly inclusive of the whole population:

In most places... the bold venture of capital city construction has been connected to the ruling elites’ attempts to consolidate national unity and cultivate national identity in the face of multiple contending groups located in rival urban centers.<sup>14</sup>

Here Vale observes that while construction of capital cities is associated with building national identity, the identity expressed in those cities is limited to only a portion of the population. Because of this gap between who the city purports to represent and who it actually represents, the city stands as a visual reminder of who holds the power in the country. If that representation excludes or alienates some portion of the populace, that is simply another expression of its power. It is not far removed from the aesthetic gap of Ankersmit’s political theory wherein the political representatives (and their visual expressions of power) do not accurately represent the public. As Murray Edelman tells us in his book, *From Art to Politics*, “Spaces affirm established roles by encouraging those who act and those who look on to respond to socially sanctioned cues and to ignore incompatible empirical ones. Spaces reaffirm a dialectic of hierarchical distinctions.”<sup>15</sup> The built forms of capitol complexes are spaces that are infused with symbolism and meaning. They create a backdrop that, however architecturally explicit, provides only subtle cues to a populace about their place in a national identity, and through this subtlety, they act as a powerful political device.

Capitols are not the only built form that carries political weight and meaning, however. M. Christine Boyer and Dolores Hayden both have explored the politics of identity expressed in urban space generally. In Boyer’s book *The City of Collective Memory*, she writes about the ways in which the urban form captures the past and creates a collective sense of memory and identity. Aside from the “vernacular landscapes” that reflect “local identity,” she writes, “there

are... civic compositions that teach us about our national heritage and our public responsibilities and assume that the urban landscape itself is the emblematic embodiment of power and memory.”<sup>16</sup> The process of creating these “civic compositions” is not static, however, because the process of historical preservation is as political as the process of deciding what and where to build new. Boyer recognizes the inherently political nature of city design in all of its forms, and remarks on the fact that the power to control design is held in the hands of the few rather than the many: “Paradoxically, we seem to recognize that struggles over good city design are always multistructured, requiring alternative viewpoints and spectator positions, and we do seem aware of the exclusions our matrix<sup>17</sup> engenders, but then we allow dominant voices to impose meaning and to control the politics of representation.”<sup>18</sup> This observation resonates back to Vale’s recognition that the shape of capitols is more reflective of those who construct them than of the populace. What Boyer recognizes is that the process of city planning and design is faced with similar constraints: a specific group of people working with a political administration to design spaces for a wider populace.

Dolores Hayden, in her book, *The Power of Place*, writes about how to capture social history in cities. Preservationist movements tend to focus on preserving buildings for their aesthetic rather than social qualities of buildings and spaces, and Hayden presents an argument between Ada Louise Huxtable and Herbert Gans in the *New York Times* of 1975 to illustrate this distinction.<sup>19</sup> Hayden is less concerned with cataloguing how memory is stored in the city than with how to expand the city’s “civic compositions” to include the identities and struggles of those who are most often excluded: poor and working class residents, women, and minorities. She argues that “a politically conscious approach to urban preservation must go beyond the techniques of traditional architectural preservation (making preserved structures into museums or attractive commercial real estate) to reach broader audiences. It must emphasize public processes and public memory.”<sup>20</sup> Later in the book, she presents examples of projects that fall into this new category of preservation from “Rediscovering an African American Homestead,” which traces a

project to mark the midwife Bidy Mason's home, to "Reinterpreting Latina History at Embassy Auditorium," which "discusses the reinterpretation of a union hall used by Latina and Russian Jewish garment workers."<sup>21</sup> These projects are notable because they fall outside the normal contemporary pattern of preservation. They memorialize the presence of outsiders—women and minorities—and they interpret their sites through a lens of social history rather than simply architectural quality. These projects serve as a visual response to the perceived exclusionism of the existing built environment, and they are the voice of the people, representing themselves to those in power. This scenario is the exception to the rule, however, and for the most part, our urban landscape reflects the reality of the power dynamics that infuse our political system.

#### The Politics of Spatial Practice: Festival Culture and American Identity

Past work on the politics of urban design has focused primarily on built projects ranging from the scale of a room in a building to that of a city. Unfortunately, this is too narrow a scope in which to consider questions of identity politics because the character of the built environment is generally controlled by only a small segment of society. Buildings and plans are manifestations of power and image the dominant political identity in cities and nations. In the context of nation-building, Vale recognizes the limitations of built projects and planning schemes to articulate an inclusive national identity:

Capital cities and the parliamentary buildings constructed within them would seem to be ready purveyors of national identity, since they are ostensibly built to serve and symbolize a nation-state as a whole. Frequently, however, since their siting and appearance are chosen by the leadership rather than by the populace, the resultant place hardly resembles a truly national identity. Architecture and planning are often used as tools for promoting something called national identity, but many dimensions of this phenomenon remain unarticulated.<sup>22</sup>

By expressing only the symbols of a country's most powerful groups, national architecture reinforces their power. As discussed earlier, architecture and planning turn space into a representation of power and order. As such, they may be actively challenged or reinforced by

collective action within the space. An imbalanced expression of political identity in the built environment does not mean that other competing identities disappear from view entirely. Rather, they emerge through spatial activity, which may either be explicitly political, cultural, or both.

Michel de Certeau's concept of spatial practice illuminates the power of expressing political identity through actions in space. Certeau writes in *The Practice of Everyday Life*, that "the ordinary practitioners of the city... walk; they are walkers," and he introduces a concept of spatial practice grounded in the way that people who do not design space use it, and the ways that their movements activate and transform designed spaces.<sup>23</sup> Certeau compares the act of walking to the act of speaking in his chapter "Walking the City":

The act of walking is to the urban system what the speech act is to language or to the statements uttered... it is a process of *appropriation* of the topographical system on the part of the pedestrian (just as the speaker appropriates and takes on the language); it is a spatial acting-out of the place (just as the speech act is an acoustic acting-out of language); and it implies *relations* among differentiated positions... (just as verbal enunciation is an 'allocution,' 'posits another opposite' the speaker and puts contracts between interlocutors into action). It thus seems possible to give a preliminary definition of walking as a space of enunciation.<sup>24</sup>

Thus walking is the expression of the multitudinous voices represented by a government that expresses its power visually through the design of its buildings and public spaces. The actions of every individual in an urban landscape are inherently political. However, this definition need not be confined to the actions of a solitary walker. Group movements through public spaces, especially those that challenge expectations about how certain spaces might be used and by whom (those that "transgress... the trajectories [they] speak"<sup>25</sup>), must also carry significant political weight. Hayden recognizes this as well: "Festivals and parades also help to define cultural identity in spatial terms by staking out routes in the urban cultural landscape. Although their presence is temporary, they can be highly effective in claiming the symbolic importance of places."<sup>26</sup> The use of spatial practice to assert political identity is not confined to those groups

who lack power or representation. The same groups who articulate power through construction often reinforce that power through other mechanisms as well. Vale observes that “public statements of collective identity take many forms and make use of many kinds of symbols for support... Objects and events, monuments and ceremonies, all contribute meaningful symbols to the production and consolidation of the ‘we.’”<sup>27</sup>

The festival or parade, as spatial practice, engages in two political dynamics: 1. as an act of deviance and conflict, it may challenge the existing political order; and 2. as a sign/representation it may reinforce the existing political order and articulate the spatial exclusion of particular groups from that order. Festivals may engage in one or the other or both of these dynamics. In a democratic society where parades have some popular local base many engage, either intentionally or unintentionally, in both. Even political parades in the United States often incorporate a popular, local component that allows for celebratory variations, some of which may directly challenge the idea of national political identity. In contrast, authoritarian governments use highly regulated public processions to spatially and visually express a national identity to which all citizens would be expected to conform.

Don Mitchell interprets spatial practices as potential acts of resistance or challenge to the social order. He writes that, “numerous studies of everyday life have redefined ‘resistance’ as *any* act that occurs in a way not fully intended by the ‘powers that be.’”<sup>28</sup> He also considers the fact that resistance according to this definition is not a politically powerful act unless it has an audience. “Resistance really can’t be private,” he says, “What would be the point?”<sup>29</sup> What he calls “oppositional power” must be visible and collective:

...for a resistant movement to be effective it must surely be *social* rather than individual; and certainly social movements must engage in *strategic* resistance. To do otherwise would be simply to cede all power to those the movement opposes. If ‘power is bound by its visibility,’ as de Certeau (p.37) hopes, it is also *made possible* by its visibility. And this is no less true of oppositional – resistant – power than of state or corporate power.<sup>30</sup>

In its collectivity, this power enters the realm of politics and in its visibility, the realm of spatial practice. Festivals fall into this category of spatial practice if they originate in popular movements—de Certeau’s definition of spatial practice is disconnected from power structures. His practitioners are individuals or small collectivities operating outside the political realm. Festivals of resistance must also challenge social norms or at least be interpreted as doing so:

‘Resistance’ can exist outside the intentions of those practicing it, but only if it is (usually later) *organized* as resistance, or *given meaning* by some influential group or another *as* resistance.<sup>31</sup>

These festival resistance activities create a visible representation of collective identity in opposition to the dominant identity associated with the built environment and thus politicize those spaces as a challenge to that order.

Anne Norton, author of *Republic of Signs*, argues that all festivals must reinforce the social order because they are embedded in it. She claims that “the dissident can—and has—appropriated aspects of the dominant culture to argue, mythically, for its subversion, yet they are hampered in such arguments by the inseparability of these myths from a history and a mythic frame that entails the dissident’s reaffirmation of their marginality.”<sup>32</sup> Cultural practices occurring within space are likewise subject to the dominance of the physical domain. In his book *From Art to Politics*, Murray Edelman notes the role of spaces in reinforcing social norms: “Spaces affirm established roles by encouraging those who act and those who look on to respond to socially sanctioned cues and to ignore incompatible empirical ones. Spaces reaffirm a dialectic of hierarchical distinctions.”<sup>33</sup> For this issue, carnival is an interesting case-in-point because of its explicit subversion of cultural norms in the space of the street. According to Norton and others, the fact that inverting of social norms is sanctioned for a single day (or week) reinforces the social order that remains in place for the rest of the year. Don Mitchell acknowledges the

theory of carnival that categorizes it as means of controlling dissent in society. He refers to Tim Cresswell's *In place/out of place* when he observes that "carnavalesque moments... temporarily invert the world: the moment is either officially limited (as with Mardi Gras) or their subversive power is reabsorbed into dominant structures of power and ordered norms of culture."<sup>34</sup> As much as its form gives space and opportunity to social and political transgressions, it also places them in a marginal relation to the power structures of society. However, the fact that such festivals do not overturn basic political and societal structures is crucial to their continued existence. They are sites of resistance rather than revolution, and as such, they simultaneously affirm and challenge the spaces they occupy and the social norms enforced in those spaces. A more interesting example of how social norms are enforced through festivals is one that is organized by the dominant social group or one that explicitly articulates national identity.

One such example of how spatial practices can both reshape and reinforce a national power structure is seen in United States history: in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, Democratic Republicans used public celebrations to popularize political support for their party and wrest control of the government from the Federalists. The texts *Parades and the Politics of the Street* by Simon P. Newman and *In the Midst of Perpetual Fetes* by David Waldstreicher explore this topic in great detail.<sup>35</sup> The example is important for two reasons: first, it demonstrates that control of popular, public celebrations is as important to politics as controlling architectural symbolism, and second, it demonstrates how control of those celebrations can further isolate and disenfranchise portions of society (in this example, blacks and women).

Political celebrations after the American Revolution gave working class white men a space of opposition from which to challenge the elite Federalists. The Democratic Republican Party, which represented those men, quickly realized the opportunity local celebrations offered for popularizing politics and building a larger constituency.<sup>36</sup> Newman notes:

With remarkable rapidity, ordinary Americans developed a shared symbolic

and ritual language of political expression, and celebrations of Washington's Birthday, Independence Day, and the French Revolution assumed common forms throughout the nation... While on the one hand this new, shared language of political activity bound Americans together, on the other it furnished them with the means to wage partisan political warfare against one another in the streets and public places of the new republic.<sup>37</sup>

By using celebrations to develop new political identities, Democratic Republicans were able to effectively challenge a power structure dominated by elites. In fact, they were so successful in their efforts, that Federalists eventually abandoned such nationally important public celebrations as the Fourth of July, choosing instead to satirize the Republican celebrations.<sup>38</sup> Their celebration of the Fourth was decried by Democratic Republicans as "hypocritical" because they did not actually support the basic tenets of the Declaration of Independence.<sup>39</sup> Contrary to the Anne Norton's argument that their control of festivals could only emphasize their marginality in a national power structure, it actually "fortified... their [Democratic Republicans'] struggle to win control of the polity itself." By 1801, the Democratic Republicans had elected their first candidate to office: Thomas Jefferson, and continued to control the White House until 1829. In this example, celebratory practices actually amassed political power.

Those same practices, however, also reinforced aspects of the dominant culture. Despite claiming to celebrate Independence for "we the people" instead of "we the noble, chosen, privileged few,"<sup>40</sup> the Democratic-Republican celebrations promoted a unified national identity that purposefully excluded blacks and women. The territories of their celebrations actually became sites of conflict. As Waldstreicher says, "If elections were wars, then every celebration was a battle,"<sup>41</sup> and each battle determined with greater certainty who would be a part of the national identity.

The battle was waged both in terms of whose festivals were adopted as part of the nationalist cause, and who attended (and spoke at) popular nationalist celebrations. So while French Revolution festivities were quickly incorporated into the Democratic Republican repertoire,

“African American innovations, especially the early nineteenth-century celebrations of the anniversary of Haitian Independence Day and the end of the slave trade, were marginalized by the Democratic Republican coalition in an attempt to exclude them from the discourse of early national popular political culture.”<sup>42</sup> This exclusion was supplemented and amplified with efforts to keep blacks from participating in national freedom celebrations. Newman writes:

The Fourth of July commemorated the republican rights and freedoms secured by American white men in a long and bloody revolutionary war between king and subjects. When black revolution erupted in Haiti in 1791, white Americans feared that the contagion of liberty and violent revolution might spread to the subordinate black peoples of the United States. As a result of these white fears, the dramatic expansion of Independence Day during the 1790s was accompanied by a systematic exclusion of black Americans from celebrations of the Fourth.<sup>43</sup>

As blacks struggled to create a national public identity for themselves celebrating the promise of freedom and equality, their public presence at Democratic Republican celebrations could attract a violent response. In Philadelphia in 1805, for example, black Philadelphians were driven violently from the square in front of Independence Hall and physically excluded from the festivities. The year before, African Americans had terrified Philadelphia’s white citizenry: “After forming themselves into unofficial military units, parodying the white militia parades seen earlier in the day, they marched through the city, beating white citizens who crossed their paths, and ‘damning the whites and saying they would shew them St. Domingo.’”<sup>44</sup> White Philadelphians, despite their tolerant, Quaker heritage, did not support granting African Americans full freedom and equal rights and the Caribbean slave revolts of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries threatened their preferred social order. By repressing black celebrations of these events and excluding blacks from any freedom celebrations, the Democratic Republicans promoted a national identity that reinforced the status quo of racial inequality.

### Conclusion

Popular celebrations construct meaning in space. They form, challenge, and reinforce cultural

and political narratives of identity. Understanding a parade or festival as a site of political representation requires consideration of how it resists and affirms a political order. The primary purpose of the festival—either challenging or reinforcing an existing political order—suggests the relationship between the identities constructed within the festival and the dominant national identity. Analysis of a festival’s political significance involves examining five components: 1) its historic socio-political context (as has already been mentioned) both locally and in relation to national discourses; 2) the location of the festival or parade route in relation to the most prominent public spaces in the city; 3) the demographics of who participates and who is excluded; 4) the organizational structure and its connection or disconnection from city politics; and 5) who funds and sponsors the festival. Chapters 3 and 4 will provide the historical context for the case studies of this thesis: the Mummers Parade and the Odunde Festival. Chapter 5 will perform a comparative analysis of the last four criteria.

### **(Endnotes)**

<sup>1</sup> Don Mitchell, *Cultural geography: a critical introduction*, (Oxford; Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishers, 2000) p. 158.

<sup>2</sup> Dolores Hayden, *The Power of Place*. (Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 1996). p. 14.

<sup>3</sup> Kevin Lynch. *Image of the City*. (Cambridge, MA: The Technology Press and Harvard University Press, 1960). p. 8.

<sup>4</sup> Warner, Sam Bass Jr. and Vale, Lawrence J. *Imaging the City*. (New Brunswick, NJ: Center for Urban Policy Research, Edward J. Bloustein School of Planning and Policy, 2001). p. 8.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.* Schuster, Mark. “Ephemera, Temporary Urbanism, and Imaging.” p. 362.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.* p. 378.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.* p. 393.

<sup>8</sup> F.R. Ankersmit *Aesthetic Politics*. (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1996). p. 53.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.* p. 50.

<sup>10</sup> This phenomenon can be seen in the ability of the Republican Party to link religion conservatism with fiscal conservatism in the latter half of the twentieth century, a process discussed at length by Lisa McGirr in *Suburban Warriors*. (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2001).

<sup>11</sup> Certeau, Michel de. *The Practice of Everyday Life*. (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1984). Part III. “Spatial Practices.”

<sup>12</sup> Lawrence J. Vale, *Architecture, Power, and National Identity*. (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1992). p. 53.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.* p. 49.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.* p. 44.

<sup>15</sup> Murray Edelman, *From Art to Politics: how artistic creations shape political conceptions*. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995). p. 80.

<sup>16</sup> M. Christine Boyer, *The City of Collective Memory*. (Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 1994) p. 321.

<sup>17</sup> “Designers of urban projects, especially in the 1970s and 1980s, seemed intent on arranging and detailing ornamental places of the city until a matrix of well-designed fragments appeared.” M. Christine Boyer. *The City of Collective Memory*.

- <sup>18</sup> Boyer, M. Christine. The. p.2.
- <sup>19</sup> Hayden. p. 3-5.
- <sup>20</sup> Ibid. p. 11
- <sup>21</sup> Ibid. p. xiii
- <sup>22</sup> Vale, p. 47.
- <sup>23</sup> Certeau. Part III. "Spatial Practices."
- <sup>24</sup> Ibid. pp. 97-98.
- <sup>25</sup> Ibid. p. 99.
- <sup>26</sup> Hayden. p. 38.
- <sup>27</sup> Vale, p. 47
- <sup>28</sup> Mitchell. p. 148.
- <sup>29</sup> Ibid. p. 151.
- <sup>30</sup> Ibid. p. 153. Referencing Michel de Certeau. The Practice of Everyday Life.
- <sup>31</sup> Ibid. p. 159.
- <sup>32</sup> Anne Norton, Republic of Signs: liberal theory and American popular culture. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1993). p. 166.
- <sup>33</sup> Edelman. p. 80
- <sup>34</sup> Mitchell. p. 162. Tim Cresswell, In place/out of place: geography, ideology, and transgression. (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1996).
- <sup>35</sup> Newman, Simon P. Parades and the Politics of the Street. (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1997). and Waldstreicher, David. In the Midst of Perpetual Fetes: The Making of American Nationalism 1776-1820. (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1997).
- <sup>36</sup> Newman, p. 186
- <sup>37</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>38</sup> Waldstreicher. p. 207
- <sup>39</sup> Ibid. p.206
- <sup>40</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>41</sup> Ibid. p. 196
- <sup>42</sup> Newman. p. 191.
- <sup>43</sup> Ibid. p. 103
- <sup>44</sup> Ibid.

### **Chapter 3. Riot and Revelry: The Mummers Parade and the Spatial Construction of White Identity**

*On or about the first day of every year, there is a lilt in the air, a song on the town; princes and clowns, columbines and harlequins dance in the streets. Serpents and devils; angels and sinners; young and old; blend into one massive, undulating bright colored throng. Blue, red, and yellow capes; white satin daisies; plush-red roses; laughter and life cover the city. The sound comes before the sight—Oh, Dem Golden Slippers, barely heard, then swelling as thousands of banjos and glockenspiels feed out of the narrow lively streets into Broad Street. They come out of the heart of Philadelphia, these unique “Shooters” in their stunning and incongruous magnificence, and the rest of Philadelphia—at least a million and a quarter people—stand to watch them: a Viking carrying a hundred square feet of costume, a Fancy Captain with a train a block long, uncountable clowns in indescribable array, a myriad of musicians—the work of a year expended on one day of glory.*

*Charles E. Welch<sup>1</sup>*

The Philadelphia Mummers Parade is an amalgam of tradition and innovation, play and politics, an event that cannot ever be fully described. The “heart of Philadelphia” referenced above by Charles E. Welch (the pre-eminent Mummers scholar and author of *Oh, Dem Golden Slippers*) is South Philadelphia, extending from South Street to the point at which the Delaware and Schuylkill Rivers meet. The population of this section of the city has always been predominantly working-class, and the area has been a major point of entry into Philadelphia for immigrant families. The traditions of today’s Mummers grew out of the mixing of folk traditions brought over from Europe by the immigrants who settled in the city. Originally known as Shooters for the Swedish practice of shooting guns in the air to ring in the new year, they were also called “Mummers” after the German “Mumme” or “mask” because their celebrations incorporated masquerade as groups of men would visit homes and asking for food and drink in exchange for short performances. Mummers, or “rustic actors wearing outrageous disguises” were also common in England throughout the nineteenth century.<sup>2</sup>

Today’s parade retains only vestiges of those original traditions, the most prominent of which is the practice of masquerading. Today’s Mummers are split into three divisions: Comic Clubs

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Figure 4. 2002 Mummies Comic Club

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Figure 5. 2002 Mummies String Band

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Figure 6. 2002 Mummies Fancy Division

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Figure 7. 2002 Mummies Fancy Brigade

(Fig. 4), String Bands (Fig. 5), and Fancy Clubs (Fig. 6). Fancy Brigades (Fig. 7) still perform in the Convention Center, but they are no longer part of the Philadelphia New Years Shooters and Mummies Association (PNYSMA). Each has its own rules and judging criteria, but all Mummies dress in costumes coordinated to present a theme to the audience. A prize purse that grew from \$1,625 in 1901 to almost \$400,000 in 2003 is controlled by the city and is used as leverage to censor the content of the parade's performances.<sup>3</sup> The grandeur of the costumes and performances and the working class background of most Mummies inspired Welch to dub them "Kings for a Day," and encouraged the city to celebrate the parade as an event of carnivalesque role-reversal. The most famous character in Comic Clubs is the wench, a man dressed in women's clothing (Figure 8). The wench was originally part of a couple: the Dude and Wench: a blackface couple who disappeared in the mid 1960s when the use of blackface was banned by city officials in response to protest from the city's black population. The parade has a long history of exclusion. Until 1980, no women were allowed to participate in the parade in any capacity. Blacks participated as Mummies in the parade's earliest years, but by the Depression were limited to musical accompaniment. Many of the brass bands that gave

the Comic Clubs music to strut to are dominated by black musicians. Though blacks are no longer barred from participating in the parade as Mummers, few have joined the festivities in that capacity.<sup>4</sup> Welch's description captures the spirit of the parade, and reflects the romanticism with which the Mummers themselves tend to characterize their celebration. It does not, however, capture the conflict and controversy that has surrounded the Mummers throughout their history.

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Figure 8. This explanation of the Mummers' Wench character was originally featured in the *Philadelphia Daily News* and is now hosted on a number of Wench Brigade websites.

The Philadelphia New Year's Day Mummers Parade has been characterized as an opportunity for white ethnic (Swedish, Irish, German, Polish, Italian, etc.) working class Philadelphians to rule the streets of a city historically characterized by strong class divisions.<sup>5</sup> Because the parade was born out of a tradition of challenging social norms in the public space of the street, its history provides insight into middle and upper class Philadelphians' insecurities about the street throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.<sup>6</sup> This chapter will contextualize the Mummers parade in terms of class and racial tensions in the city by focusing on three major turning points: the 1901 sponsorship of the parade by the city, the 1964 controversy over the use of blackface in the parade, and the 1994-1999 controversy over moving the parade to Market Street. It will examine each intervention first in terms of the wider context of insecurity and conflict over the street, and then in terms of the city's response to that insecurity through measures directly affecting the parade. On a broader scale, this paper will illuminate how urban design politics (especially the politics of race and identity) are played out in the ritualized use of public spaces (e.g. parades) not just in the control of constructed forms.

### 1901 Parade Inception

*If a city's streets are safe from barbarism and fear, the city is thereby tolerably safe from barbarism and fear. When people say that a city, or part of it, is dangerous or is a jungle what they mean primarily is that they do not feel safe on the sidewalks.*

*Jane Jacobs<sup>7</sup>*

Understanding the importance of the city's decision to sponsor the parade in 1901 requires recognition of the historical tensions in Philadelphia. As discussed in the previous chapter, the early nineteenth century was marked by the need to claim territory both literally and figuratively within a developing national identity. Because working class and black populations dominated South Philadelphia neighborhoods, those neighborhoods and the public space within them became highly contested territory between blacks, immigrants and 'native' working class, all competing for entry into the newly formed nation. In contrast, in Center City (which outlined

the city limits until 1854), the elite classes dominated public life, if not public celebrations. The rowdiness of South and North Philadelphia came to Center City in the form of working class people, and that rowdiness inspired great insecurity. When the City Council decided to include the Mummers, South Philadelphia at its most flamboyant, in Philadelphia's 1901 Millennium celebration and officially sanction their antics, the desire to control such behavior doubtless swayed its choice. After a century of public conflict and contestation, city streets embodied insecurity and their control a sign of civilization and good government. This conflict and insecurity took many forms, but this chapter will focus on the conflict expressed as rioting against blacks and immigrant Irish, especially in the first half of the century, and insecurity expressed by the settlement patterns of Philadelphia's elite classes and the city's efforts to regulate South Philadelphian Shooter's celebrations.

Riots during the early nineteenth century were a source of increasing insecurity for Philadelphians. Two types of riots marred Philadelphia's early history. First, the 1830s witnessed a series of riots against Philadelphia's black population in South Philadelphia and the Northern Liberties.<sup>8</sup> Then, the year 1844 marked the bloodiest riots in the city's history of Protestant natives against Irish Catholics, in neighborhoods both north and south of downtown. As long as its ramifications remained confined to the streets and residents outside Center City, however, rioting did not raise much public outcry. Only the riots of 1842—when the rioters against blacks in North Philadelphia turned on a sheriff's posse who had come in to protect the black residents—and 1844—when rioters invaded the streets of Center City after destroying a Catholic Church in Kensington—inspired a concerted effort by the city to restore public order.<sup>9</sup> This last riot was so disturbing to the populace that all of Philadelphia County was brought under martial law in order to bring the violence to an end and eventually led to the consolidation of the county into a single municipality under civil law in 1854. A statement made by General Patterson while he controlled the county with his militia in 1844 demonstrates the force of response against the rioting and associated insecurity:

Order must be restored, life and property rendered secure. The idle, the vicious, the disorderly must be curbed and taught to understand and respect the supremacy of the law and, if they will not take warning, on their own heads be the consequences.<sup>10</sup>

The city's consolidation of 1854—and the standing police force associated with it—greatly reduced violence in the city streets, though some outbreaks continued. The most notable of these is the election riots of 1871, in which black voters were systematically murdered to ensure that

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Figure 9. Spatial Analysis 1811. All settlement is still concentrated in the east. "Respectable," "Doubtful," and African American neighborhoods all penetrate beyond the South Street Boundary.

city Democrats stayed in power. The murder of Octavius V. Catto, an educator and leader in the black community who had worked to ensure that blacks exercised their newly regained suffrage, marked the end of the riots and inspired sympathy from white Philadelphia (this event will be discussed in greater detail in Chapter 4).<sup>11</sup>

The spatial articulation of this growing insecurity can be seen in the residential settlement patterns of the nineteenth century. These have been traced in an article written by Norman J. Johnston for the *Journal of the American Institute of Planners* in 1966. Johnston shows that the Protestant churches of Philadelphia were highly stratified by class. He compares the occupations and incomes associated with each congregation to demonstrate the presence of class distinctions.

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Figure 10. Spatial Analysis 1838. Settlement is pushing west. Only “Doubtful,” and African American neighborhoods penetrate beyond the South Street Boundary.

Then he maps the residential distribution of each congregation in his study, and a distinctly class-based spatial distribution emerges. This distribution is characterized by “Fashionable,” (those neighborhoods dominated by the upper-class congregations of Christ Church and First Presbyterian Church) “Respectable,” (those neighborhoods dominated by the middle-class

congregations of First Baptist Church) and “Doubtful” neighborhoods (those dominated by the lower-class congregations of St. George’s Methodist Episcopal Church) as well as what he terms a “Negro Enclave.” The pattern that emerges of the Fashionable and Respectable neighborhoods dominating the Center City supports the understanding that the areas to the north and south were a source of insecurity to the middle and upper classes, which continually

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Figure 11. Spatial Analysis 1856. Settlement has pushed west of Broad Street. African American neighborhoods dominate the South Street Boundary.

chose to live near the center. Figures 9, 10, and 11 are taken directly from the article and show that the “Fashionable” and “Respectable” city neighborhoods shifted from a concentration in the east along the Delaware River and Market Street in 1811 to a concentration along the city’s two major axes: Broad Street and Market Street by 1856. It is interesting to note that after 1811,

“Respectable” neighborhoods do not ever extend south of South Street. Also important to note is that these maps do not include a study of Catholic congregations, and thus do not account for the city’s growing Irish-Catholic population, which settled primarily in Kensington (north) and Southwark and Moyamensing (south) districts, all of which would be considered by 1856 (Figure 5) to be “Doubtful” areas.<sup>12</sup> The presence of a growing immigrant Catholic population likely only heightened the tension between the central city and its peripheral neighborhoods.

Yule-time celebrations practiced by residents of South Philadelphia reinforced these feelings of insecurity even after they were transformed into more organized parade activities with the inception of New Year’s Shooters Associations in the 1880s. Early celebrations have been classified as charivari (shivaree) by Anthony B. Newkirk in his dissertation on the Mummers Parade. Charivari, an Italian word, demonstrates the influence of yet another immigrant group. Newkirk defines it as “‘rough music’ . . . ritualized acts of personal violence or property destruction.”<sup>13</sup> In Philadelphia, charivari was expressed through the practice of men and boys dressing in costume and going from house to house to sing and perform in exchange for food and drink. On New Year’s Day these revelers would celebrate by shooting guns in the air (hence the name ‘Shooters’). The nineteenth century was characterized by regular (unsuccessful) efforts to ban or severely limit working class charivari practices, and upper class diaries record the distaste held for the Shooters’ celebrations. In 1805, Elizabeth Sandwich Drinker, the wife of a Quaker merchant and local politician, recorded in her diary hearing “a dull heavy thumping . . . [and] after listening concluded that the . . . noise was a Kittle-drum [sic]—a strange way of keeping Christmas.”<sup>14</sup> In 1808, the Anti-Masquerade Act was passed, though in its 51 years of existence no arrests for masquerading in Philadelphia were recorded, though upper-class distaste for the practice continued to grow. In 1845 the *Public Ledger* ran a condemnation of Christmas revelers, calling them “demons.”<sup>15</sup> Not until the city’s consolidation in 1854 did regulation of Christmas and New Year’s celebrations enjoy any measure of success. When the city outlawed the practice of “playing of horns and ‘horse fiddles’ in public” in 1868, over one hundred people

were arrested the next year, and over the next few years, “loud curbside Christmas celebrations subsided sharply.”<sup>16</sup>

During the second half of the nineteenth century, especially in the 1880s, major changes in the structure of the celebrations occurred, but they did not lessen public insecurity. By the 1880s, South Philadelphian immigrant groups who had struggled for a place in the national identity for half a century began to use Mummers activities as a vehicle for assimilation and Americanization. New Year’s Shooters Associations formed. Only nominally related to their predecessors (the Shooters of the early nineteenth century), these groups provided social support to their member families, engaged in civic boosterism, and organized informal parades of Mummers in their neighborhoods.<sup>17</sup> Minstrel shows inspired the dude and wench blackface characters that would form the backbone of the comic performances. Although the use of blackface can be traced to European masquerading traditions not inherently tied to racial constructs, its use in the Mummers Parade stemmed from American minstrel practices of the late nineteenth century that were directly tied to social constructions of race. Figure 12 shows an early photograph of Mummers in blackface. This tradition was brought to Philadelphia in the person of Frank Dumont, who owned Dumont’s minstrels and composed minstrel-show music that was published and available to musicians and music schools for purchase. His nephew, Charles Dumont brought knowledge of this minstrel music to the New Year’s Associations, several of which he played with as a musician.<sup>18</sup> Many important elements of the parade have derived from this tradition from the famous Mummers’ strut (supposedly derived from the cakewalk) to “Oh, Dem Golden Slippers,” their signature song. Though this song was written by James Bland, an African American, it was part of the minstrel tradition (this is evident from the cover of the sheet music in Figure 13).<sup>19</sup> The influence of the minstrel show on the parade is important because as a national phenomenon, it shaped negative stereotypes of African Americans in the minds of whites. Within the context of the Mummers parade, it was instrumental in promoting ideas of ‘whiteness’ that had been used to assimilate Irish, Polish,



Figure 12. This photograph depicts Mummies dressed as wenches in blackface before it was banned from the parade in 1968.

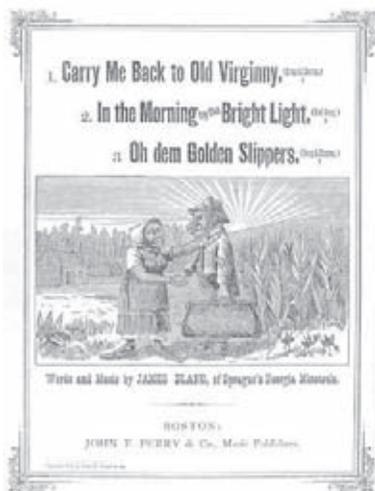


Figure 13. Despite being composed by an African American, the Mummies theme “Oh Dem Golden Slippers” demonstrates the influence of minstrelsy on the Mummies of the 20th century.

and Italian immigrants into the Anglo political power structure during the nineteenth century.<sup>20</sup> Though it never presented a unified position on Americanization and Anglophilia, the parade was a forum for white ethnic Philadelphians to participate in that discourse and reinforced the dominant social order.

These efforts at assimilation did not eliminate conflict and violence from the street celebrations. Dressed in women’s clothes and painted in blackface, Mummies of the late nineteenth century could safely engage in public drunkenness, bawdiness, and general rowdiness without fear of reprisal. And their performances attracted crowds of spectators. As these practices grew, businesses began to offer prizes to encourage parading (with its associated group of spectators) on their streets. Rivalries abounded, and violence was common. One year, a group of businesses in Frankford and Kensington raised \$1000 in prize money to lure a group of Mummies who didn’t come, and the next year exacted their revenge by throwing projectiles at any Mummer not from their neighborhood.<sup>21</sup> According to Frank Zampetti, Sr., the decision for the city to sponsor the parade was intimately

tied to the disorderly conduct of the Associations:

[T]he politicians... [said]... ‘get them off the neighborhood streets fighting with each other’—they really did get in fights [when] one section would try to rip the costumes off the other one—‘let them parade [through] the whole city and we’ll give prize money out.’ And that sort of cooled them down.<sup>22</sup>

As the parade has evolved under the supervision of City Hall, its rowdier side has become ritualized into tamer forms of expression. For example, one Mummer recalls how excited he was to be a Mummer as a teenager because the parade was the one day when it was okay to French Kiss girls.<sup>23</sup>

H. Bart McHugh was the theatrical agent for local string bands who made the suggestion to J. Hampton Moore, secretary to Mayor Ashbridge, that the city invite the Mummies to parade through the city for the 1901 New Year. Although the true motives of the city officials who followed through on Bart McHugh’s<sup>24</sup> suggestion have been obscured in history, the move effectively brought the Mummies’ street celebrations within the control of City Hall. Prize money that had been provided by businesses in neighborhoods since the late 1880s was suddenly controlled by City Hall and taken from city tax dollars. The activities of the Shooters and Mummies, once scattered throughout neighborhood streets on the periphery of Center City, were now confined to a straight route lined by a police presence on either side. This presence is a reminder of the authority of City Hall, which looms over Broad Street as the Mummies parade towards it.

While City Hall is the endpoint of the official parade, and the location of the judging stands, the parade continued on to Columbia Avenue (renamed Cecil B. Moore Avenue in 1987), well into North Philadelphia, then turned down Columbia and returned to South Philly by way of Two Street through the 1920s. Tension between the parade and the city’s black community is evident this early in the twentieth century by the fact that the Mummies shortened that unofficial route back to Girard Avenue around 1927 in response to an influx of African American residents

into the neighborhoods around their original route. Though this would be the first time these tensions would alter the parade spatially or visually, it would not be the last. Andrea Ignatoff Rothberg, in her dissertation, titled *Philadelphia Mummery: Individual Rewards and Social Interaction*, demonstrates this relationship by comparing the parade route changes with shifts in the racial composition of the adjacent wards.<sup>25</sup> Figure 14 shows the official parade route in solid red ending at City Hall, and the unofficial route continuing north along dotted lines. The shaded areas represent the black population percentage in Philadelphia neighborhoods circa 1940. As the neighborhood around Columbia Avenue (now Cecil B. Moore Avenue) shifted to a black majority, the parade route shifted south to Girard Avenue and a neighborhood still less than 50% black.

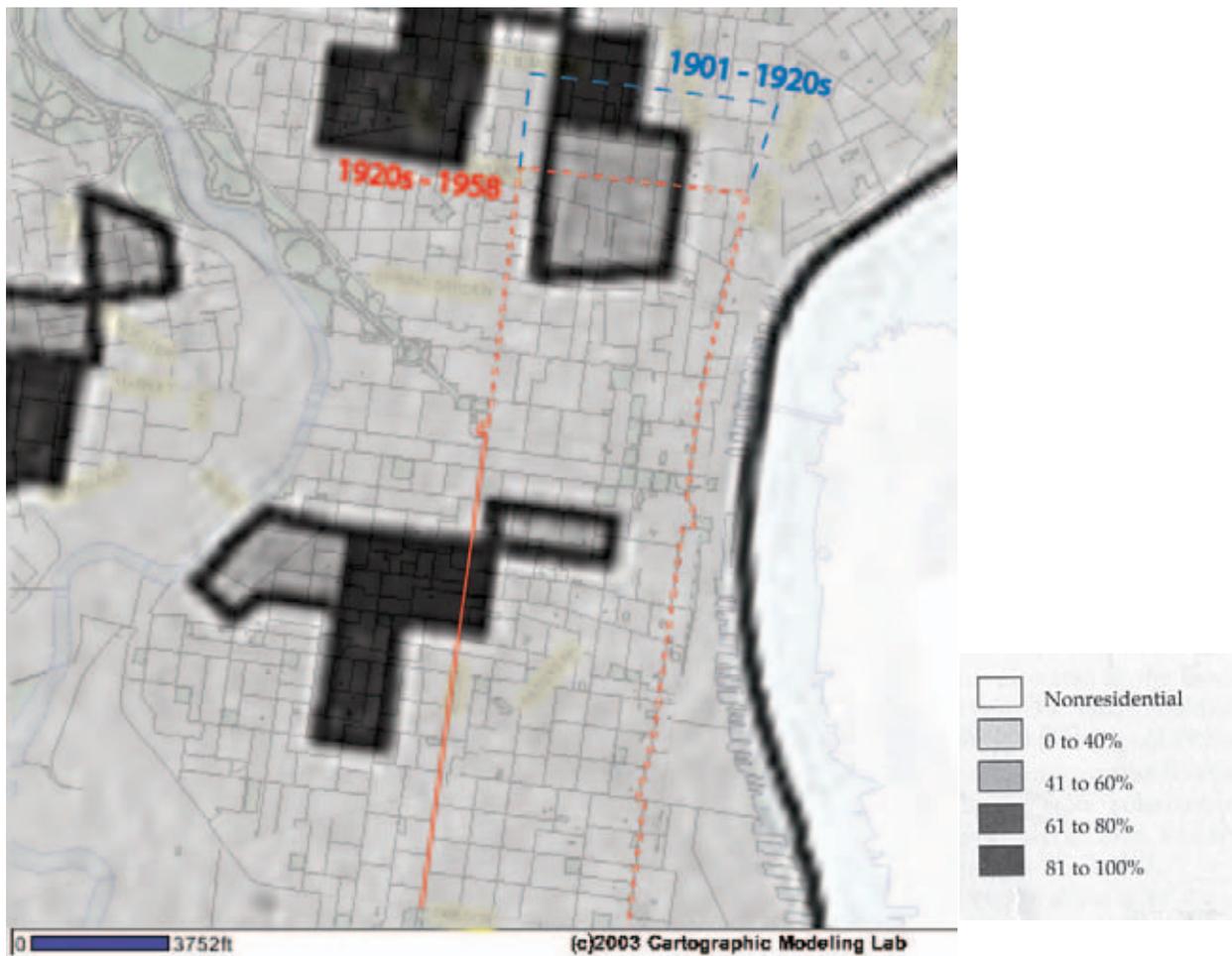


Figure 14. Percentage of black population in Philadelphia neighborhoods in 1940 overlaid with Mummery parade routes. The route shifted south away from a growing black population around the original route.

City Hall does not simply loom over the parade, but also serves as a literal site of judgment where the doling of rewards is decided. The city's control of the parade's prize money has given it real leverage by which to regulate the Mummers' behavior since the early years, and the city did not hesitate to exercise this power when it saw fit. The city rarely issued direct threats, and needed only urge the Mummers to act according to their wishes. In his dissertation on the parade, Andrew B. Newkirk notes that

In the 1930s [parade director George B.] McClelland and the PNYSMA<sup>26</sup> complied with City Council admonitions to downplay "controversial" issues and stress "good-humored" ones instead. This meant avoiding biting criticisms of local government, the Republican and Democratic Parties on the local and national levels, domestic public policies, U.S. foreign relations, and world events. While many Mummers' acts, placards, and floats referred to concrete issues, the overwhelming majority were so trivial as to be inane.<sup>27</sup>

Then, in 1942, the city enacted a wage tax, and issued a statement condemning Mummers' satire of the levy: "Don't poke fun at the wage tax. After all, many city employees have received and merited and needed pay increases from the tax. It isn't a proper subject for caricature..."<sup>28</sup> A more recent example of the city's control over the parade is the controversy over a Mummers club's intention to parody the Catholic Church's sexual abuse scandals in the 2003 parade. Mayor John Street issued a statement saying "I am personally offended by this and regret that under the Constitution I am limited by what I am able to do about it," in early January (the parade that year was postponed until January 4<sup>th</sup>). The Mummers subsequently dropped the skit (it never actually went up the street), claiming that "it was a hoax all along."<sup>29</sup> Other restrictions have limited the machinery of floats, the types of props that can be used, and a variety of other parade elements. The consistent effort on the part of City Council to regulate controversy out of the public space of the street reflects an understanding of the street as a place of instability that must be kept free of potentially inflammatory messages. This is seen more clearly during the 1964 controversy over the parade's use of blackface.

## 1964 Blackface Controversy

*Unfortunately, some persons, for their own purposes, seized on this issue of an Al Jolson type of theatrical makeup, distorted it out of all reasonable perspective, and used it as an instrument to fan the fires of intolerance, prejudice, and bigotry.*

*Lawrence H. Eldredge<sup>30</sup>*

*It has to go. To some it may sound like quibbling but when it's judged in relation to the whole picture it takes on a different light... Negroes associate it with something that runs deep in them: the dignity of the person and equality with other individuals.*

*Rev. John T. Mitchell<sup>31</sup>*

By the mid-twentieth century, most public appropriation of the street in Philadelphia was heavily regulated by a strong police presence. Conflicts during this period often played out between residents (often protestors) and the police. Some, as in the case of the Mummers Parade blackface controversy, played out as much in public discourse as in the space of the street itself. Examining stories of the controversy reveals evidence of a pervasive public insecurity about conflict over control of the street.

Since the late nineteenth century and the return of suffrage to African Americans, black communities across the country had begun working to increase their political power in order to break down the inequality and prejudice they faced. Organizations like the NAACP made huge strides in securing civil rights legislation that guaranteed protection of African Americans under the Constitution. Organizations such as the Urban League worked simultaneously to promote the economic advancement of blacks. By the middle of the twentieth century, however, the limited success of both efforts led to the increasing popularity of direct-action strategies. Sit-ins, boycotts, and demonstrations brought an African American political presence into the streets of cities across the country in a highly visible manner. In the 1950s, Rosa Parks refused to move to the back of the bus and The National Advisory Commission on Civil Disorders observes that “a ‘new Negro’ had emerged in the South—militant, no longer fearful of white hoodlums and mobs, and ready to use his collective weight to achieve his ends.”<sup>32</sup> In Philadelphia around the

same time, black religious leaders began a campaign to end the use of blackface in the Mummers Parade. They argued that the city’s prize money is taken from taxpayers, and that black Philadelphians’ money should not go to reward an activity that publicly insults them. J. Charles Short, an attorney sitting on the Philadelphia Bar Association Panel on Community Tensions explained in a newspaper article that “Negroes... are asking whites to ‘refrain from labeling the Negro as a buffoon and forcing him to live down the image of a clown.’”<sup>33</sup> As this tension built, the Mummers shortened their parade a second time from Girard Avenue to Spring Garden Street in 1959 in response to the increased proportion of blacks living in the wards surrounding Girard (Figure 15).<sup>34</sup> Though the City Council did respond to black residents by adopting a resolution that would end the use of blackface in the parade, they quickly backed away from the decision

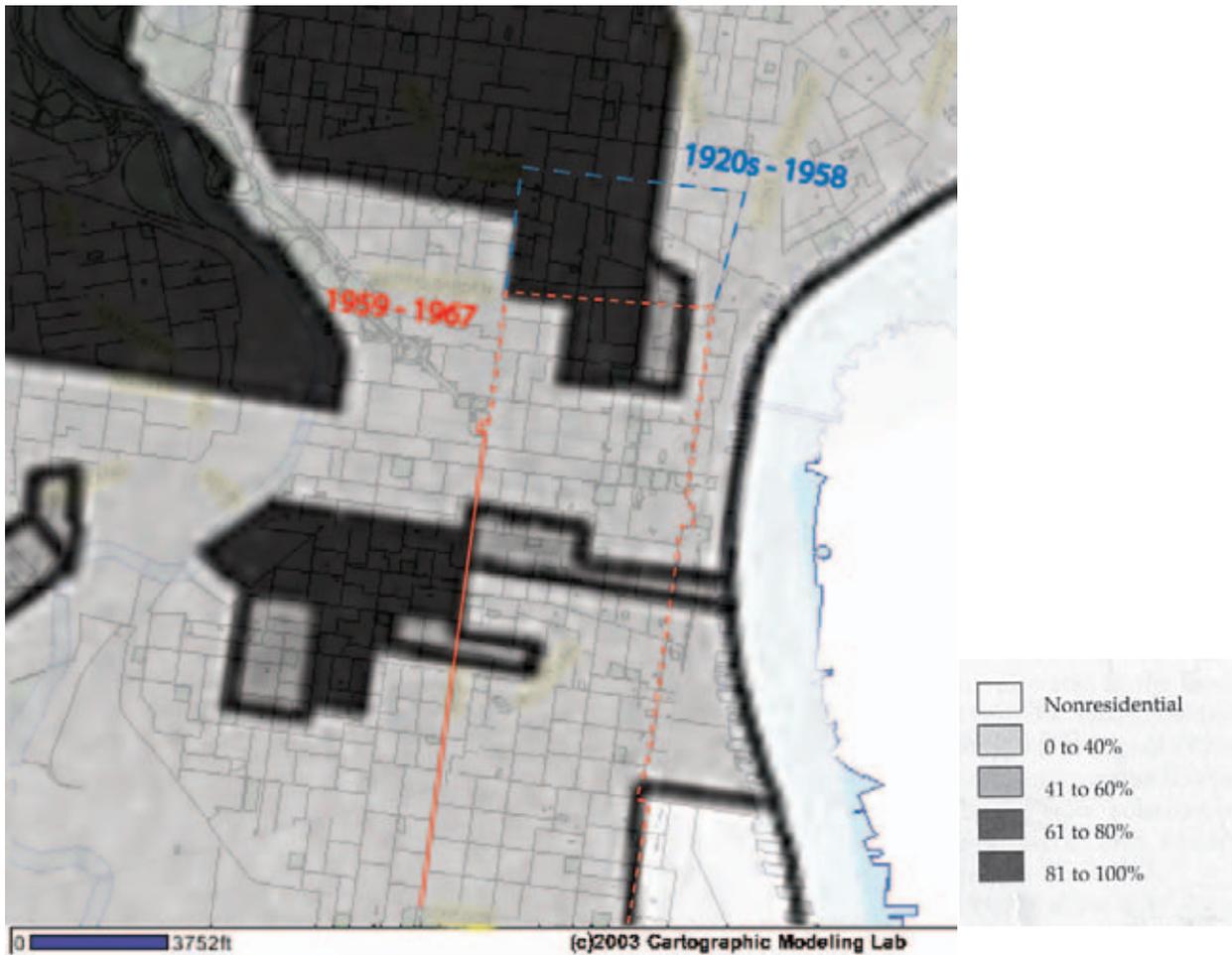


Figure 15. Percentage of black population in Philadelphia neighborhoods in 1960 overlaid with Mummers parade routes. The route shifted further south in 1959 in response to the changing racial composition of North Philadelphia neighborhoods east of Broad Street.

when the Mummies threatened to move their parade to New York City. The issue was not revisited until 1963, when Cecil Moore became head of the local NAACP.<sup>35</sup>

This time around, after seeing the failure of measures in the 1950s to stop the use of blackface, the NAACP was not satisfied with the city's request that judges not award prizes to paraders wearing blackface makeup. Instead, Cecil Moore took their argument that "black taxpayers did not want to pay for their own ridicule," to court, asking for an injunction to stop blackface Mummies from participating in the parade. When the injunction was denied, the Congress of Racial Equality (CORE) declared their intention to picket the length of the parade, accepting any violence that might be levied against them. In response the Philadelphia Council of Churches took the position that violence should be avoided, warning that "bloodshed was possible because of the deep hatred that had built in blacks over the years toward the practice."<sup>36</sup> This was a position that reversed the assumption that white Philadelphians would respond to black protestors violently, as the statement by CORE had suggested, and one that grew to overshadow the initial debate over whether blacks should have to fund their own ridicule. The racial insecurity in Philadelphia in the early 1960s is illuminated in this dialogue around the use of blackface in the parade and black Philadelphians' intention to protest the practice in the street.

Race riots in Philadelphia broke out in the summer of 1964, so it should come as no surprise that already by the end of 1963 these insecurities were coming to the fore. At the final hearing before the parade, Police Commissioner Howard Leary testified that CORE was recruiting protestors from Harlem in New York City and "that the police were advised to watch 'the rooftops because that is the way the people from New York operate.'" This testimony was obviously intended to play on public fears about blacks as a threat to public safety in the streets. The final decision handed down stripped all parties of their First Amendment rights and prohibited both blackface marchers and protestors.<sup>37</sup>

Despite city officials' long history of using their control of prize money to censor and regulate the parade, James Tate, the mayor of Philadelphia during the blackface controversy, was hesitant to issue a statement regarding the use of blackface. Rather, the conflict was brought before the court, whose decision clearly demonstrated that the city's first priority was the maintenance of 'public order'—or, in other words, control of the street—even at the expense of constitutionally protected rights. When a decision was finally handed down by the courts, it was based on the fact that “the court could not allow individuals to exercise their constitutional right to march in blackface if, by so doing, they would create public disorder.”<sup>38</sup> In response to the threat of a permanent injunction, the threat to move the parade to New York City was reissued, as well as a threat to move the parade into a stadium where admission would be charged. Not until November of 1964 did Mayor Tate announce the city's “firm policy that public funds should not be used as prize money for any individual or group which causes conceivable embarrassment to any race, creed, or color” thus bringing a permanent end to the use of blackface in the parade.<sup>39</sup> By that time, the conflict that already illuminated the underlying fears of Philadelphians about the dangers of public space and the underlying tensions of its multiple populations.

### 1990s Move to Market Street

*The City and especially ED RENDELL would love nothing more than to see the COMICS disappear. They seem to forget that we are the originals and deserve a lot more respect than we get. The day Rendell leaves office will be the greatest day in the history of Mummery. He took a great parade and attempted to ruin it. Well, too bad, it ain't happening.*

*Anonymous<sup>40</sup>*

During the first half of the twentieth century, the Mummers Parade united the city's ethnic working class populations with its elites under the white racial category, but this racial unity obscured the fact that those ethnic populations were neither unified nor in control of the city. During the 1950s and 1960s, white working class residents had to fight against urban renewal plans with their African American neighbors. By 1947, a ring of highways around Center City had been designed by the Planning Commission.<sup>41</sup> This system included highways along Vine

Street, 2<sup>nd</sup> Street, the South Street-Bainbridge corridor, and the Schuylkill Expressway, and its funding was approved by Congress in the mid-1950s.<sup>42</sup> Figure 16 shows Edmund Bacon's 1963 plan for Philadelphia, which depicts this highway network. While the Vine Street and Schuylkill River highways met little resistance or opposition, organized resistance to the location of Interstate 95 along Second Street succeeded in moving the highway between Front Street and the Delaware River and eliminated the South Street Expressway completely. The fact that Interstate 95 was originally scheduled to run the length of Two Street in the 1950s indicates just how little the decision makers in City Hall really identified with the Mummers' constituency.

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Figure 16. Taken from Bacon's 1963 Plan for Philadelphia, this image shows a highway plan in place since the late 1940s. The red road network around Center City is the highway proposal. Other colors indicate land-use, public transportation and activity centers.

In the 1960s, Philadelphia struggled to reconcile two opposing forces. City officials saw the decline that accompanied de-industrialization and decided to target middle-class suburbanites in their urban renewal strategies at the expense of their working class populace. Edmund Bacon's plan for Center City ruthlessly carved out swaths of dense, working-class housing to create shopping centers, tourist attractions, middle- to upper-income housing, and transportation facilities. At the same time, community organizations began to grow and pressure the city to

change its policies. Demonstrations were staged. Riots broke out. And as the urban renewal strategies began to bring newcomers into the city and the character of neighborhoods began to change, the pressure and tension increased.

At the same time, the 1960s signaled a major shift in population and control of the city. Many of the city's old Anglo elite had left for the suburbs (the same elites the city was trying to attract), and a mayor from an immigrant background came to office in 1962: James Tate was Philadelphia's first Irish mayor. From that point onward, all the major 2-term mayors in the city would be either an ethnic white or an African American. In 1967, Frank Lazarro Rizzo became the city's first Italian Police Commissioner, who would later be elected mayor in 1972. Born and raised in South Philadelphia, Rizzo came from a Mummer community and would become the Mummies' strongest city representative. Philadelphia's African American community mobilized politically and made their presence felt in the 1960s as well. It continued to move into the white-ethnic working class neighborhoods of North Philadelphia, and in 1968, the unofficial parade route shifted southward a third time (Figure 17). In keeping with the historical tensions between African Americans and white ethnic groups, as both groups began to assert themselves politically, the city's landscape of racial politics changed dramatically. This section will compare the Mummies' relationship to Frank Rizzo and Ed Rendell, the city's two most prominent white mayors from the latter-half of the twentieth century, in terms of the city's racial politics with a focus on Rendell's effort to move the parade to Market Street.

Despite the fact that both Rizzo and Rendell come from white ethnic communities (Rizzo, Italian and Rendell, Jewish), each earned a distinct reputation with the African American community, and each took a different position about the relationship between Center City and its neighbors to the north, south, and west. Rizzo's inflammatory language and law-and-order policy as well as his inability to "distinguish between black criminals and black activists" earned him the reputation of a racist and enemy to Philadelphia's black community.<sup>43</sup> His loyalty to his home

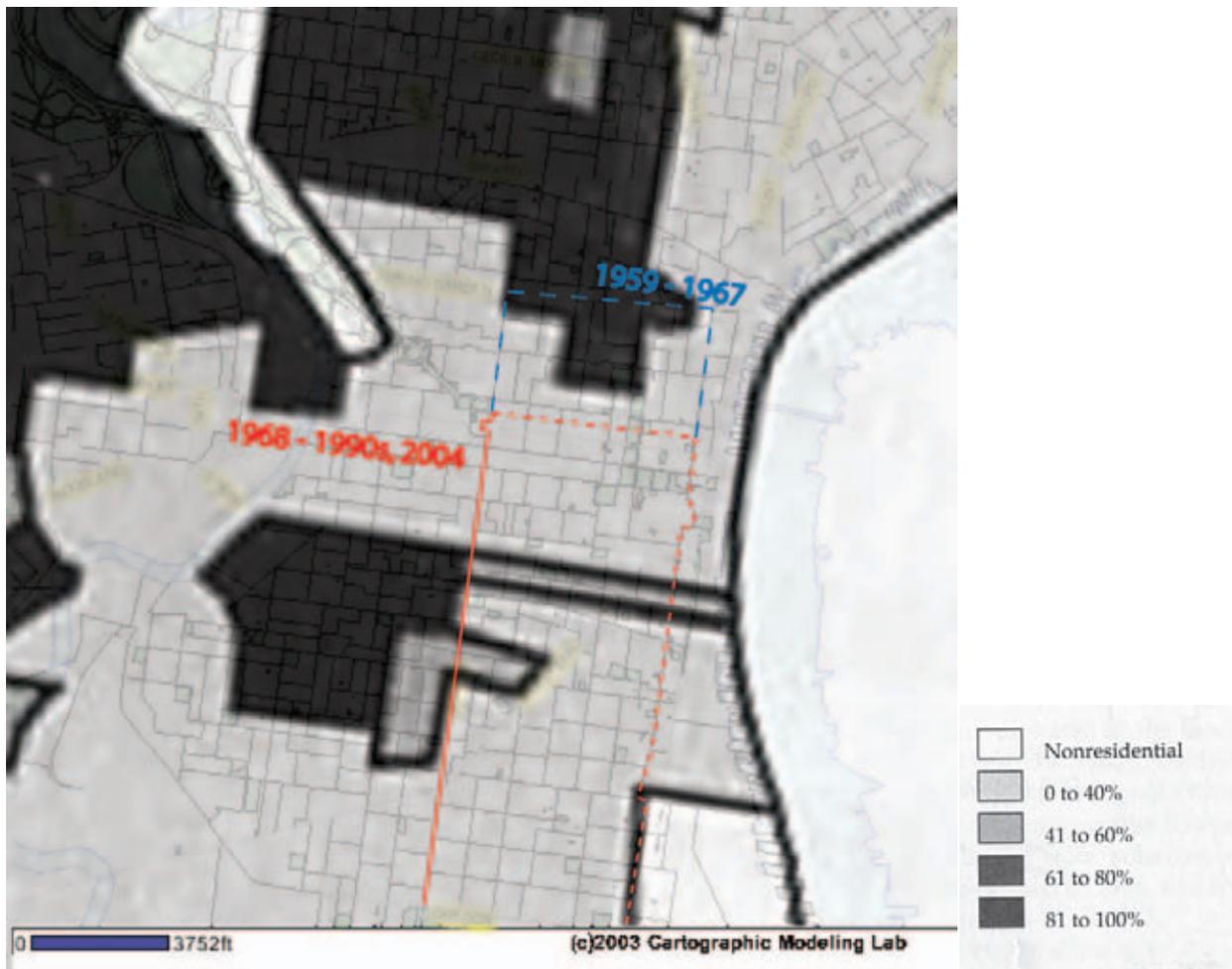


Figure 17. Percentage of black population in Philadelphia neighborhoods in 1980 overlaid with Mummers parade routes. In 1968 the unofficial route moved to Arch Street, no longer in North Philadelphia, and well south of majority-black neighborhoods.

territory meant that his presence was felt as strongly in the neighborhoods surrounding Center City as in Center City itself (and some black residents might say his presence was stronger outside the central city). Rendell, on the other hand, billed himself as a friend to the black community. He is known for going into the homes of white suburbanites and telling them that their reason for disinvesting in Philadelphia is that they associate the city with blacks and that they were wrong to do such a thing. Such was his method of fundraising. Unlike Rizzo, however, Rendell did not see any hope for the neighborhoods outside of Center City. They were too poor and had too many problems for him to be successful helping them. So he focused his energies on creating a tourist city whose main attraction would be Center City.

In 1972, the city elected Police Commissioner Frank Rizzo to be its mayor. Rizzo is best known for two things: for being a South Philadelphia native who is a champion for the Mummers and for being an unapologetic racist. As the former Police Commissioner and with a highly charismatic persona, Rizzo mobilized the working class of Philadelphia to get him into office and keep him there for two terms. His appointment as Police Commissioner under James Tate allowed Tate to attract both a white constituency who believed that Rizzo would maintain the social order and a black constituency that routinely voted for the Democratic candidate. As mayor, Rizzo was careful to be racially balanced in his political appointments while encouraging a violent police response to signs of unrest in the black community—including civil rights demonstrations. “free Mumia” graffiti scrawled across Rizzo’s mural in South Philadelphia in 2004 (over 10 years after his death) highlights the conflicted relationship between Rizzo and Philadelphia’s black community. Rizzo’s relationship with the Mummers is quite different. During Rizzo’s two mayoral terms, the Mummers received a surge in prize money from the city and funding for their very own Museum at Second and Washington Streets, and no doubt could remain that the Mummers, now embodied in the city’s mayor, were a truly Philadelphian institution.<sup>44</sup> Even after his last term as mayor, Rizzo’s prominence in the city only enhanced the Mummers’ reputation, and not until after his death in 1991 did the parade begin to notice a precipitous decline in spectatorship.<sup>45</sup>

That decline also coincided with Ed Rendell’s mayoral victory (Rizzo had been running against Rendell at the time of his death). Rendell’s interest in promoting Center City as a tourist attraction and the much-publicized decline in spectators along the Broad Street route worked together to move the parade to Market Street intermittently from 1995 to 1999 and permanently from 1999 to 2003. Rendell’s project to turn South Broad Street in Center City into the Avenue of the Arts precipitated the initial move to Market Street in 1995. He did not hide his desire to turn the parade into a tourist attraction easily accessible to commuter transit and the new Convention

Center, but he was politically savvy enough to leave the decision to the Mummers themselves. Newspapers, however, consistently framed Rendell's effort to move the parade route to Market Street in terms of the debate about spectatorship and its decline. The issue of crowd size was so critical to the debate that the police estimate for 1994 was revised up from 22,000 spectators to 60 or 70,000 in response to criticism from the Mummers.<sup>46</sup> A general agreement exists that the crowds have dropped significantly in the last decade from 200,000 to 300,000 during the 1980s and early 1990s to current estimates that are consistently below 100,000. This decline has been attributed to the out-migration of Philadelphia's white-ethnic working class population to the suburbs and to its color broadcast on local television stations, but also, importantly, to the parade's inability to appeal to the remaining population of the city.<sup>47</sup> A comparison of Figures 13 and 14 shows the change in the percent of white population in Philadelphia's census tracts between 1990 and 2000. This population continues to decline relative to Philadelphia's nonwhite population especially in South Philadelphia. In his dissertation, Andrew B. Newkirk includes information from an interview with James F. Kenney, a Mummer and City Councilman in which he commented on this trend and its relation to the parade:

“[T]he people who used to watch and care about [the Parade] either died or moved away and we never reached out to any other group of people in the city.” It has been for this reason and the availability of television, argues Kenney, that fewer Philadelphians line Broad Street on New Year's Day today than was the case fifty years ago.<sup>48</sup>

Kenney's thoughts are telling because a great deal of the conversation about moving the parade centered on the decline in spectators coming out to watch the parade. The cost of policing 2.5 miles of parade route was beginning to seem disproportionate to the benefit accrued to the city through revenues to businesses.

Rendell's clash with the Mummers over their parade route reinforced their ethnic South Philadelphian identities and their white Philadelphian identity. As a mayor who focused his money and policies on Center City and its affluent business community,

the Mummers' rejection of him spoke to their neighborhood loyalties. By framing that rejection in terms of their celebration of Frank Rizzo (not uncommon), however, they associated themselves with the racially polarized rivalry between the two mayors emphasizing their white racial identity. Rendell's focus on turning the Mummers into a tourist attraction, a visual representation of Philadelphia to visitors and residents alike, reinforced their identity as a Philadelphian institution. Moving the parade to Market Street, with its connection to commuter transit systems and to the Convention Center, also meant looking outside the city boundaries to the suburbs that the city's white population continues to seek rather than to its nonwhite populations within. The parade's role in reinforcing racial hierarchies of the early twentieth century and the Mummers' conflict with the city's black population in the 1960s are markers in the parade's history that indicate why the parade has been unable to successfully market itself to the city's non-white population. Moving the parade to Market Street responded to the problem of low spectator turnout but avoided addressing what the parade really means to the city. Mayor John Street's decision to ring in his second term by returning the parade to its Broad Street home was appropriate because he is perhaps more committed to the neighborhoods surrounding Center City than to the central city itself.

### Conclusion

*From Disney's Times Square to Dunier's sidewalk vendors, the city's public spaces—parks, streets and street corners, shopping districts, residential enclaves—function not only as utilitarian arrangements, but also as deep repositories of meaning for those who own them, occupy them, move through them. Put simply, public space always becomes cultural space, a place of contested perception and negotiated understanding, a place where people of all sorts encode their sense of self, neighborhood, and community.*

*Jeff Ferrell<sup>49</sup>*

The moments in which the Mummers Parade in Philadelphia becomes a site of change, conflict and controversy are the moments that expose the breaking points of the city's encoded sense of

“self, neighborhood, and community.” The reaction of the city government against the charivari beginnings of the parade exposed the tensions between the different economic classes of the city. Because these classes were spatially distinct from one another as demonstrated by Norman J. Johnston, tensions between the center city and its outlying areas were also expressed in the nineteenth century conflict between the city and the Shooters. Race riots and the threat of violence throughout the nineteenth century shaped the upper class central city’s understanding of South Philadelphia neighborhoods as unsafe, unstable places. This understanding was underscored by a fear of violence stemming from racial and ethnic clashes and a growing desire for public order at all costs.

The formation of New Years Associations in the late nineteenth century and the organization of their celebrations into neighborhood parades was part of a trend of Americanization of immigrants but still allowed Shooters to use the public space of the street as a site of conflict and political protest. When the city sponsored the parade in 1901, it physically inserted the authority of City Hall into the parade by running the parade route up a police-patrolled South Broad Street to the judges’ stands at City Hall before allowing the parade to continue up to the businesses on Girard Street and Spring Garden. In this way, the city eliminated violence and political controversy from the street space. What they were left with then, was a public vehicle by which to demonstrate a non-violent social hierarchy. The portrayal of blacks, Asians, and Native Americans as simple, harmless, exotic, and entertaining was a way of reinforcing their status as lower class Americans, while simultaneously reinforcing the political construct of “whiteness” that would unite native Anglo Americans with incoming European immigrants (thus lessening the threat of violent clashes between them).<sup>50</sup>

By the 1960s however, the parade’s portrayal of blacks was no longer acceptable to the black community of Philadelphia, especially because the parade’s prize money was taken from taxes paid as much by blacks in the city as by whites. The nature of the conflict over the parade’s use

of blackface highlighted the very same insecurities that had developed during the nineteenth century: the expectation of violence as a result of racial conflict in the street (as opposed to peaceful protest) and the valuing of public order above the protection of individual rights. The argument used by the Mummers for continuing the practice was that it was a part of the parade's tradition. Justifications cite the use of lamp-black as a means of disguise for light-skinned people as flour has been used for dark-skinned people, but these justifications overlook the strong influence of minstrelsy on the parade in the late nineteenth century. That influence profoundly altered the meaning communicated by the use of blackface in the parade, such that as late as 1984, black and white photographs depicting Mummers in dark makeup (the photographer claimed it was blue and green) were removed from a City Hall exhibit because of its resemblance to blackface. "They don't belong anywhere in City Hall," said Mayor W. Wilson Goode, "They are an insult to black people and should be removed."<sup>51</sup> The political significance of the use of blackface by the Mummers remains so strong that records of it have been virtually erased from public view.

The racial dynamics of today's parade are different from those of the early twentieth century. The Mummers have developed an identity that unites their various ethnic identities in a white racial category, but they still retain their distinction from the Anglo identity of Philadelphia's historic elite. Ed Kirlin, Associate Producer of *Strut!*, the Mummers' documentary, notes, "The Mummers are almost like their own ethnicity. We have every ethnicity in the parade, but Mummers themselves sometimes think of themselves more as Mummers sometimes than they think of themselves as Irish, Lithuanian, or Polish." Today these almost-assimilated, mostly-white Mummers parade up Broad Street in whiteface or two-toned makeup and are accompanied by black musicians and drill teams. Comic Club themes like the club Froggy Carr's "Jamaican me Froggy" (2004) still appear on occasion but they are in the minority (Figure 18). In that theme in particular, some blackface Mummers made an appearance but were reprimanded and asked to remove their makeup before reaching the judges stands. Fancy Brigades perform mini-Broadway

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Figure 18. Froggy Carr Jamaican Theme, 2004.

shows in the Philadelphia Convention Center featuring themes like “The Wonders of Ancient Egypt” presented by the Shooting Stars (2004), and “The Isle of Doctor Moreau,” the winning presentation by the Jokers (2004). Potential new Mummers groups must lobby City Hall to participate in the parade but few are granted permission because of the length of the existing parade.<sup>52</sup> The Goodtimers, a club started in the 1980s, is the only black-owned comic club, but nevertheless marches with mostly white Mummers taken from other groups. As the proportion of whites in Philadelphia declines, the

parade is less capable of adapting itself. Throughout the twentieth century, its primary adaptation strategy had been changing the parade route to avoid areas with growing black populations, but as the city continues to waffle about whether the parade will be on Market Street or Broad Street, it remains unclear whether that intervention is sufficient to regain parade spectators. The parade’s intimate connection to the racial politics of the city—embodied in Frank Rizzo and Ed Rendell—only weakens its ability to appeal to a broader audience. The parade has always been a representation of the white communities in South Philadelphia, and as those communities shrink in proportion to non-white communities, the question remains whether or not the parade can hold positive meaning for multiple groups in the city.

The Mummers parade can be most accurately read as a reflection of popular American culture transformed into a day of revelry and masquerade. While the comics and even occasionally the fancies may include political satire in their repertoire, the string bands and fancy brigades are much more whimsical than either comical or political. They pick themes that will allow them to create ornate costumes and entertaining dance routines and set pieces. In *Strut*, the Mummers documentary, Mickey Adams, captain of The Shooting Stars, likens the fancy brigade

performances to a Broadway show condensed into four and a half minutes, and the influence of Broadway and other popular entertainments is clearly visible in the dancing, set pieces, and even the themes.<sup>53</sup> Themes featured in *Strut* included “The Wonders of Ancient Egypt” presented by the Shooting Stars, and “The Isle of Doctor Moreau,” the winning presentation by the Jokers. The characters included Egyptians and “natives” of Dr. Moreau’s South Seas Island portrayed with a kind of nineteenth century exoticism not uncommon on Broadway itself. The brigades are judged on costumes, performance, production, and overall effect. The Mummies’ self-proclaimed primary motivation is “bragging rights in the neighborhood.”<sup>54</sup>

While the parade does not articulate its intentions as racial or even political for that matter, it asserts a multi-ethnic, racially white identity on Broad Street year after year. Its performances and costumes reflect the current waves of popular culture, which for better or worse still bear the marks of a segregated society despite efforts at integration. And whether on Broad Street, Market Street or inside the Convention Center, the Mummies are a representation of Philadelphia, and they make it quite clear that being a true Philadelphian means being white.

### (Endnotes)

<sup>1</sup> Welch, Charles E. *The Philadelphia Mummies Parade: A Study in History, Folklore, and Popular Tradition*. Dissertation in Folklore and Folklife. University of Pennsylvania, 1968.

<sup>2</sup> <http://www.compulink.co.uk/~l-hodges/wadard/mummies.htm>

<sup>3</sup> Welch, *Oh Dem Golden Slippers*, p. 48; also Newkirk, Anthony B. *The Philadelphia New Year’s Day Parade: A History of Urban Carnival and Culture*. Dissertation. Temple University, 1998.

<sup>4</sup> “String Band Request Rejected,” *The Washington Post*. December 27, 1984. First Section; Around the Nation; A6.

<sup>5</sup> Charles E. Welch, *Oh Dem Golden Slippers*

<sup>6</sup> For discussion about the challenging of social norms in the street, see Newkirk, Anthony B. *The Philadelphia New Year’s Day Parade: A History of Carnival and Culture*; and Rothberg, Andrea Ignatoff. *Philadelphia Mummery: Individual Rewards and Social Interaction*. University of Wisconsin, May 1980.

<sup>7</sup> Jacobs, Jane. *The Death and Life of Great American Cities*. (Random House: New York, 1961) pp. 29-30.

<sup>8</sup> Willis, Arthur B. *Cecil’s City: A History of Blacks in Philadelphia 1638-1979*. (New York: Carlton Press, Inc.). p. 23

<sup>9</sup> Willis, p. 25. Also, Feldberg, Michael. *The Philadelphia Riots of 1844*. Contributions in American History, no. 43. (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1975). p. 114 “The burning of St. Augustine’s marked the last major outbreak in the Kensington riots. The transfer of the rioting to the city, home of Philadelphia’s elite, seems to have marked a turning point... [A]fter the violence had struck close to home, Philadelphia’s leading citizens started taking measures that would not only end the Kensington riots but eventually transform the city from a preindustrial battleground to a characteristically modern, urban bastion of state-enforced order.”

<sup>10</sup> Feldberg, p. 115.

<sup>11</sup> Willis, pp. 39-40. Though this marked the last time that blacks were systematically persecuted on a large scale, it did not guarantee their general safety: "The election riot of 1871 was the last time that the interiors of private homes were consistently violated. By the 1890s, although a black man in a largely black district might still be assaulted on his own doorstep by a passing white stranger, the district itself was safe from invasion." from Lane, Rodger. *The Roots of Violence in Black Philadelphia, 1860-1900*. (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1986). p. 20.

<sup>12</sup> Johnston, Norman J. "The Caste and Class of the Urban Form of Historic Philadelphia," *Journal of the American Institute of Planners*, November 1966, pp. 341, 345, 347. and Feldberg, Michael. *The Philadelphia Riots of 1844: A Study of Ethnic Conflict*. Contributions in American History Number 43. (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press) 1975.

<sup>13</sup> Newkirk, p. 10.

<sup>14</sup> Taken from Newkirk dissertation, pages 32, 41-42. Newkirk also notes that "Devout Quakers especially had little regard for plebian street celebrations because they were signs of 'riot and dissipation.'"

<sup>15</sup> Ibid. p. 44-45.

<sup>16</sup> Newkirk, Andrew *The Philadelphia New Year's Day Parade: A History of Carnival and Culture*. pp.47-48.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid.

<sup>18</sup> Newkirk, 1998. p. 93-95; and Valania, Jonathan. "The Mummies vs. the Men of the Cloth." *The Philadelphia Weekly*, Vol. XXXII, No. 2. January 8, 2003. <http://www.philadelphiaweekly.com/archives/article.asp?ArtID=4969>

<sup>19</sup> <http://mywebpages.comcast.net/wench/graphics/wench.gif>. Also see Newkirk, p. 11-12.

<sup>20</sup> For a detailed discussion of the parade's role in the Americanization process, see Newkirk, Chapter 3 "Rituals of Assimilation: The Parade Takes Shape," pp. 60-111, Chapter 4 "The Shooters and Civic Pageantry," p. 112-150 and Chapter 5 "'Harmony of Color': The Shooters, Americanization, and Nativism," pp.151-187. For more information on minstrelsy's influence on whites' perceptions of blacks, see White, Shane "It Was a Proud Day," *The New African American Urban History*. Kenneth W. Goings, Raymond A. Mohl, ed. (Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications, 1996), pp. 32-34.

<sup>21</sup> Rothberg, Andrea Ignatoff. *Philadelphia Mummery: Individual Rewards and Social Interaction*. Dissertation. University of Wisconsin-Madison, 1980. pp. 70-71.

<sup>22</sup> Newkirk. 1998. p. 60.

<sup>23</sup> Ed Kirlin. *Strut!* Max L. Raab Productions; 2002 Sidmax Productions.

<sup>24</sup> This action has also been credited to Jacob Seeds, the City Council Chairman at the time. See Newkirk, p. 96 and Masters, Patricia Anne. *The Philadelphia Mummies Parade: A Sociological Study of Play and Community*. Dissertation. American University: Washington, DC, 1998 p. 125.

<sup>25</sup> Rothberg, Andrea Ignatoff. *Philadelphia Mummery: Individual Rewards and Social Interaction*. University of Wisconsin, May 1980. pp. 73-76 and Appendices A, B, C.

<sup>26</sup> Philadelphia New Year's Shooters and Mummies Association

<sup>27</sup> Newkirk, p. p. 204-205. Referencing "Politics Banned by Mummies," *Evening Bulletin* December 19, 1939, 1.

<sup>28</sup> Welch, Charles E. *Oh, Dem Golden Slippers*. (Thomas Nelson Inc: New York, 1970). p. 134-135.

<sup>29</sup> "Mummies Group Skips Clergy Sexual Abuse Skit," *The New York Times*. January 5, 2003. Section 1; Page 21; Column 1; National Desk. also, "Mummies Club Drops Controversial Priest Parody," *CBS-3, KYW-TV Philadelphia*, January 4, 2003. [http://kyw.com/news/local\\_story\\_004194146.html](http://kyw.com/news/local_story_004194146.html).

<sup>30</sup> Eldredge, Lawrence H. "A Legal Dissent." *The Philadelphia Bulletin*. January 7, 1964.

<sup>31</sup> Quoted by Martin J. Herman, "Priest Suggests Blackface be Dropped by Mummies." *The Philadelphia Bulletin*. November 17, 1964.

<sup>32</sup> From Rueter, Theodore. *The Politics of Race: African Americans and the Political System*. (Armonk, NY: M.E. Sharpe, 1995). Chapter 2, "Rejection and Protest: An Historical Sketch."

<sup>33</sup> "Blackface Ban For Mummies" *The Philadelphia Inquirer*. November 11, 1964.

<sup>34</sup> Rothberg, pp. 73-76, Appendices A, B, C.

<sup>35</sup> Willis, pp. 75-76.

<sup>36</sup> Willis, p. 133-134. "Louis Smith, chairman of CORE, said, "We will picket the full length of the parade. If there is violence and we get beat[en], then we will take our beating." Referenced from "CORE Threatens Mummies with Human Chain," *Philadelphia Bulletin*, December 30, 1963, p.1.

<sup>37</sup> Willis, p. 135, referenced in "Court Bans Blackface, Pickets from Broad Street," *Philadelphia Bulletin*, January 4, 1964.

<sup>38</sup> From Willis, p. 135.

<sup>39</sup> Willis, 137.

<sup>40</sup> This quote was taken from a Mummies site that allowed viewers to post their responses. The site is <http://www.wrybread.com/gametone/mummies/memories.shtml>, and the quote was posted January 23, 1999.

<sup>41</sup> Levy, Paul R. *Queen Village—the eclipse of community: A case study of gentrification and displacement in a South Philadelphia neighborhood*. (Philadelphia: Institute for the Study of Civic Values, 1978). p. 55.

<sup>42</sup> Ibid.

<sup>43</sup> Daughen, Joseph R. and Binzen, Peter. *The Cop Who Would Be King*. (Boston: Little, Brown & Company, 1977). p. 132.

<sup>44</sup> Odom, Maida. “The Spirited Offerings of Odunde.” *Philadelphia Inquirer*. June 10, 1991. Local, p. B02.

<sup>45</sup> Attendance estimates are highly subjected and controlled by the police department. Rizzo’s connections to that department (as former Police Commissioner) and his loyalty to the Mummies suggest that he may have helped maintain attendance estimates reaching into the 300,000 range.

<sup>46</sup> Woestendiek, John. “A Mummer’s Flap Over Crowd Size,” *The Philadelphia Inquirer*. Monday, January 3, 1994. Section B, Page 1, Column 2.

<sup>47</sup> Von Bergen, Jane. “The Marketing of the Mummies,” *The Philadelphia Inquirer*. Tuesday, December 29, 1998. Section A, Page 1, Column 3.

<sup>48</sup> Newkirk. 1998. p. 210.

<sup>49</sup> Ferrell, Jeff. *Tearing Down the Streets*. (Palgrave, New York: 2001) p. 12.

<sup>50</sup> Newkirk, Andrew B. in his dissertation *The Philadelphia New Year’s Day Parade: A History of Urban Carnival and Culture*. Dissertation. Temple University, 1998; discusses the parade’s role in the Americanization process in great detail. See esp. Chapter 3 “Rituals of Assimilation: The Parade Takes Shape,” pp. 60-111 and Chapter 5 “‘Harmony of Color’: The Shooters, Americanization, and Nativism,” pp. 151-187.

<sup>51</sup> “Mummies Pictures Rejected,” *The New York Times*. December 31, 1987. Section C, Page 15, Column 2.

<sup>52</sup> “String Band Request Rejected,” *The Washington Post*. December 27, 1984. First Section, Around the Nation; A6.

<sup>53</sup> *Strut!* Max L. Raab Productions; 2002 Sidmax Productions.

<sup>54</sup> Fred Keller, Ibid.

#### **Chapter 4. Odunde and the Spatial Marginalization of Black Identity**

*I never really understood why we stood perched together on the South Street Bridge throwing fruit, flowers, honey, and money into the murky Schuylkill River, but it was fun, exciting and mysterious. The walk to the river had something to do with Oshun. Oshun, the Yoruba deity of rivers was a concept I did not comprehend. Did she live in the river? I didn't know, not at the age of 10... Year after year, my mother and I would stay the entire day until we limped home after having our fill of fried fish sandwiches, lemonade, fruit cups, and bean pies. Odunde was always hot, crowded, noisy, and friendly. People you would see on the streets at other times of the year with frowns on their faces were now smiling, laughing, and dancing in the streets. It was African magic!*

*Kwame Warrington!*

Every second Sunday of June in Philadelphia, “Odunde!” “Oh-doon-day!” rings out: a song of celebration echoing off the walls, echoing through the street, echoing over the throngs of people gathered to honor Yoruban *orisha* Oshun (Oh-shoon) and celebrate African American identity. Stilt walkers and enormous, colorful umbrellas stand above the crowds, hundreds of bodies move to the river to make their offerings and open the festivities, vendors fill the air with the smell of curries, fried fish and funnel cake and tempt the eyes with colorful fabrics and crafts, and the milling crowd grows and grows, filling South Street from 21<sup>st</sup> Street to the Schuylkill River and Gray’s Ferry Avenue from 23<sup>rd</sup> Street and Lombard to 24<sup>th</sup> Street and Christian.

Some residents of West South Street are taken aback by the crowds: they peer out from behind their curtained windows at the throng below: Nigerians, African Americans from California, African Americans from Washington, DC, African Americans from Baltimore, and most of all, their own neighbors: African Americans living in and around Philadelphia. Whites, Latinos, and Asians dot the crowd, joining in the celebration. The newer residents (those who arrived post-1980) complain to reporters about the years without public latrines when their newly bleached steps were stained with human waters. Meanwhile, near the festival’s southern edge, Hattie Thelmon serves Southern home cooking under the slogan “Stomach Joy” in front of her

daughter's apartment. As afternoon reaches its height, the crowd swells toward the South Street stage to watch the Washington DC Hand Dancers take on Philly in an annual competition that has helped win "The Bop" its prestigious title as the Official Dance of Philadelphia, and then relax again when the show starts—drawn in by the dancers' rhythmic movement and casual flair. "Everyone who comes to ODUNDE, participates," Oshunbumi Fernandez, the festival's Executive Director tells me. She is in this crowd too, relaxing with friends, keeping watch over the activity, and stopping every now and then to talk to her mother, one Ms. Lois Fernandez, the South-Philadelphia born activist whose energy and enthusiasm have kept this festival going since 1975.

The Odunde festival, despite its resemblance to and association with other ethnic festivals in Philadelphia is in fact intimately tied to racial politics in the city. The festival connections to the Nigerian Oshun Festival and the Philadelphia Block Party allow it to construct an ethnic African American identity. This ethnic identity then becomes a form of racial resistance to a political structure that has encouraged the replacement of African Americans with upper-middle class whites. The festival is rooted in the historic struggles of the Philadelphia black community. This community has always embraced the goal of gaining equal entry to American society while maintaining a nationalism and separatism that has allowed it to protest and resist conditions that fall short of its goal. This chapter will trace the public presence of the black community throughout its history to contextualize the Odunde festival. First it will examine the spatial marginalization imposed on that community through the threat of violence and rioting during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. In this period, the conflict between separatist/nationalist philosophy and the uplift/integrationist philosophy will first emerge. Then the mid-twentieth century will provide the immediate context for the development of Odunde. The black community's increasing use of public protest and demonstrations as well as the resurgence of Afrocentrism and black nationalism in response to persisting inequalities together paved the way for a new celebratory culture that could build political consciousness. Finally, this chapter

will show how the festival has participated in the racial politics of the city by constructing a new public identity for African Americans.

#### African American Settlement and Celebration, 1776-1950

*In the course of conversation, the Governor spoke of the prejudice against colour prevailing here as much stronger than in the slave States. I may add, from my own observation, and much concurrent testimony, that Philadelphia appears to be the metropolis of this odious prejudice, and that there is probably no city in the known world, where dislike, amounting to hatred of the coloured population, prevails more than in the city of brotherly love.*

*Joseph Sturge*<sup>2</sup>

In the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, the formative years of this nation, free blacks struggled to assert their identity as Americans but found their efforts thwarted and their identity marginalized. Because Philadelphia functioned as the United States' capital until 1800, the struggle there carried greater significance for blacks and whites everywhere. Chapter 2 demonstrated how the Democratic Republicans used public ceremony to assert a popular, i.e. working-class, political identity that challenged the elite Federalists and excluded blacks and women from participation. This section will focus on the spatial practices of African Americans during from that time to the mid-twentieth century to demonstrate how their spatial marginalization is tied to their political marginalization.

As free black identity in Philadelphia developed, it struggled with two important dichotomies. On the one hand, a 'double consciousness' developed and demanded that African Americans see themselves at once as American and as Other, with that Otherness implying an inferiority in the eyes of whites. In the words of W.E.B. DuBois:

One ever feels his two-ness,—an American, a Negro; two souls, two thoughts, two unreconciled strivings; two warring ideals in one dark body, whose dogged strength alone keeps it from being torn asunder... The history of the American Negro is the history of this strife,—this longing to attain self-conscious manhood, to merge his double self into a better and truer self. In this merging he wishes neither of the older selves to be lost. He would not Africanize America, for

America has too much to teach the world and Africa. He would not bleach his Negro soul in a flood of white Americanism, for he knows that Negro blood has a message for the world. He simply wishes to make it possible for a man to be both a Negro and an American, without being cursed and spit upon by his fellows, without having the doors of Opportunity closed roughly in his face.<sup>3</sup>

In Philadelphia racial politics, as in other areas of the country, this ‘double consciousness’ manifested itself in two different approaches to achieving equal entry into white society: a black nationalist and separatist movement (historically based in the lower classes) and a moral uplift and integrationist movement based in the middle and upper classes of the black community. Because black Philadelphians formed separate churches for their worship practices in the eighteenth century, their community was also faced with the question of what identity to construct publicly versus privately. While the church provided a space protected from the scrutiny of whites where elements of African identity could be safely preserved, proponents of moral uplift attempted to suppress public activities that resembled slave culture and embodied the racial stereotypes that class was battling. Despite their different tactics, both the black nationalists and the integrationists shared the same goal, and this meant that both were committed to participating in American national identity and to demanding equality and freedom for all their brethren. These two goals set both groups at odds with the white majority of the city and the recent immigrants who found themselves in direct competition for jobs and status in American society. The violence directed at African Americans during the nineteenth century further marginalized their public identity and public presence.

For most of the eighteenth century African Americans in Philadelphia had almost no space in which to develop a unified identity. The only public space available to the black community in these early years was located at the periphery of the city in what is today Washington Square Park. At that time it was a potter’s field or “Strangers’ Burial Ground,”<sup>4</sup> located at the corner of 6<sup>th</sup> Street and Walnut Street in the southeastern

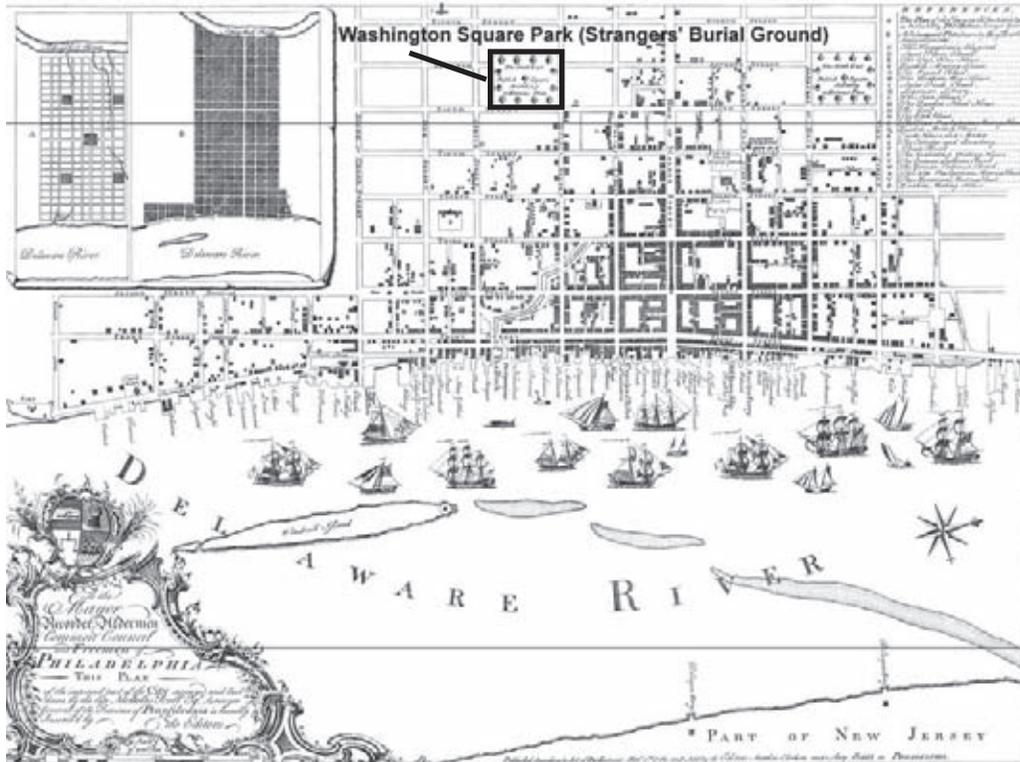


Figure 19. 1762 map of Philadelphia showing Washington Square, which served as the African American burial ground, on the periphery of the city.

quadrant of Center City. As the burial ground for blacks in Philadelphia it also served as their outdoor social center and was later dubbed, “Congo Square.” Figure 19 shows the square in 1762 on the periphery of development in Philadelphia. Slaves and free blacks gathered on its grounds to speak their common languages together, dance and sing.<sup>5</sup> Celebrations and dancing in the square often attracted white Philadelphians as well, and it was probably the most prominent public expression of identity available to the black community for much of its early existence. The importance of the square to free blacks is evidenced by the fact that they petitioned in 1782 for permission to fence in the area containing their burial ground.<sup>6</sup> When Richard Allen and Absalom Jones broke from the white Methodist Episcopal congregation and built the first separate black church in 1794, they gave the black community a place to socialize, worship, dance, celebrate, and organize politically away from the scrutiny of white Philadelphia.<sup>7</sup>

The philosophy of racial uplift profoundly affected African American identity in Philadelphia

and its public expression. Absalom Jones, who led the St. Thomas African Episcopal Church, affiliated himself closely with this philosophy. The Free African Society he formed with Richard Allen when they first broke from the Methodist Episcopal Church embodied this philosophy, and when Allen broke off to form a new Methodist Congregation, Jones continued to adhere to it. This worked in the interest of his congregation: the black elite who were at that time trying to gain equal entry into white society. These members of the black community distanced themselves from slave culture and celebration to prove themselves worthy Americans in a culture that consistently attempted to justify slavery by racializing and dehumanizing blacks. Free black societies formed, and the black Masons paraded on the streets of Philadelphia for the first time in 1797 and continued to do so through the nineteenth century.<sup>8</sup> Even as members of the black elite embraced ideas of racial uplift, they also remained committed to the struggle against slavery and commemorating its victories. In 1808, Jones declared January 1<sup>st</sup> a “day of public thanksgiving,” for Congress’s abolition of the slave trade. The day also coincided with Haiti’s Independence Day, and thus allowed free blacks to celebrate both the abolition of slavery and the promise of emancipation.<sup>9</sup> These celebrations brought together black Philadelphians from a wide range of cultural and class backgrounds. Many participants were more closely connected to slave culture than to the more European culture of public behavior valued and espoused by the black leadership.<sup>10</sup> In his study of black freedom celebrations, *Festivals of Freedom*, Mitch Kachun notes that “Attempts to control public behavior illustrate the intertwining of the cultural and the political, since blacks’ public decorum had a direct bearing on the political goals of abolition and citizenship.” Blacks who believed in moral uplift saw any public display of disorder, violence or immorality as working against the movement to abolish slavery and admit blacks as equal citizens. For this reason, as black leaders sought to nurture an African American political identity, some also fought to marginalize African forms of celebration.

One black leader who did not marginalize African forms of celebration was Richard Allen. Ordained a Bishop in the 1790s, he believed that Methodism was the sect best

suites to African American religious practices and was strongly influenced by ideas that would later form the basis of Black Nationalism and Pan-Africanism.<sup>11</sup> His Bethel African Methodist Episcopal Church encouraged the integration of African forms of worship and attracted the poorest members of the black community, many of whom were likely recent migrants from the South. Black nationalist philosophy found its expression in public spaces as well, especially during the era of West Indian slave revolts. The violent overthrow of slavery in Haiti became a source of inspiration for blacks and heightened white insecurities. Public parades that asserted a strong black identity seeking universal emancipation threatened the social order of racial hierarchy that European immigrants embraced as part of their own assimilation. These parades were further reinforced by formal commitment to the cause of abolition. At the first black political convention, hosted by Allen and held in 1831, Philadelphia's black community decided to take a firm abolitionist stance they never wavered on despite their knowledge that such a stance would put them at a political disadvantage.<sup>12</sup> When they lost their right to vote in 1837, black leaders drafted a formal appeal against the decision and directly questioned whether it resulted from their firm commitment to abolition.<sup>13</sup> This commitment to abolition also found itself expressed in freedom celebrations like a Society Hill gathering of 1842 to commemorate West Indian abolition of slavery. These festivities created a public political presence for black communities and attracted not only the elite, but also the under classes whose separation from the realities of slavery may have been tenuous at best.

As blacks asserted a public political presence appealing to either uplift or nationalist philosophies, they met with increasingly violent resistance from the city's white communities. That same August 1<sup>st</sup>, 1842, celebration, which attracted 1000 black Philadelphians to Society Hill, was assaulted by an Irish mob. Not only were the black participants beaten, but their homes were attacked, and their churches and public institutions burned, leaving behind a sense of disillusionment and hopelessness.<sup>14</sup> The riot was but one in a two-decade period characterized

by severe race riots. Any public display of blacks challenging the racial order seems to have been vulnerable to attack. In *Forging Freedom*, Gary Nash recounts that “in 1828, white ruffians gathered on South Street outside a dancing assembly hall, where a black subscription ball was being held, and assaulted women as they stepped from coaches, insulting them, tearing their gowns, and throwing guests into the gutter,” because they “resented the status inversion symbolized by the arrival of black couples in coaches with white drivers and footmen.”<sup>15</sup> Patterns of residential segregation placed the heart of the African American community in Center City (the city of Philadelphia until the 1854 consolidation) immediately adjacent to the European immigrant communities that had settled in South Philadelphia. Black Episcopal churches and their middle-class congregants settled around Washington Square and between Lombard Street and South Street.<sup>16</sup> Figure 20 shows this pattern in 1838. The class distinctions between Philadelphia’s marginalized black community and the immigrant communities of South Philadelphia further fueled the racial tensions of the 1820s and 1830s. The 1838 amendment to Pennsylvania’s constitution revoking suffrage for free blacks received “decisive” support across party lines.<sup>17</sup> Not only were they spatially marginalized through violence and residential segregation, but they were politically marginalized as well.

The consolidation of Philadelphia County under one municipal government in 1854 greatly reduced rioting, and the end of the nineteenth century was marked mostly by subtler forms of marginalization. After the Civil War, inter-racial alliances supporting the cause of abolition were not strong enough to last far beyond the victory of emancipation. White abolitionists were not united behind the cause of racial equality, and as blacks pursued this goal after the war, they could not rely on assistance from their former allies. In fact, African Americans found themselves further marginalized in public culture:

As Reconstruction waned and the age of Jim Crow set in, public commemorations generally became more racially circumscribed events. African Americans were increasingly excluded from national public rituals, and whites withdrew from blacks’ commemorations of emancipation... After the early 1870s biracial public celebrations took place less frequently; increasingly, black commemorations were

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Figure 20. Distribution of African American population in 1838 by congregation. St. Thomas and African Presbyterian represent the wealthiest African Americans. African Baptist areas represent the middle class of African Americans and Bethel African Methodist Episcopal the lowest class.

attended by more racially uniform crowds in a more racially segregated public sphere.<sup>18</sup>

In Philadelphia, schools, public facilities, and street cars were segregated. Even African American soldiers returning home were refused admittance to streetcars, and women “were forced to walk miles to visit soldiers in the hospital.”<sup>19</sup> In response, African American public culture during this time focused on achieving equal rights. The long association between black leaders and the Quakers meant that violence was never advocated and rarely employed by the black community. In 1865, the newly formed Pennsylvania State Equal Rights League enacted a

public campaign to desegregate streetcars by having black women and clergymen enter streetcars to be forcibly removed and black men assemble at stops in order to fill the cars before any whites could enter. That fight, spearheaded in the African American community by the Pennsylvania State Equal Rights League, began the process of claiming equal right to the city's public spaces and services. In the following years, activists involved in the effort, namely Jonathan C. Gibbs and Octavius V. Catto, petitioned the state government to reinstate voting rights for blacks.

<sup>20</sup> Pervasive racism frustrated their efforts, however, and even the Fifteenth Amendment to the national constitution could initially persuade Philadelphia to admit African Americans into politics:

“At a time when black Louisianans and Mississippians were electing their fellows to statewide offices and even the Senate of the United States, the Afro-American residents of Pennsylvania, far from the action, still had no right to vote at all. Neither Catto's eloquence nor the varied activities of the Equal Rights League could mask the fact that the state was one of the last in the North to override its own constitution and ratify the Fifteenth Amendment. The first attempt to do so, in 1868, was defeated in the House of Representatives by a margin of 68 to 14.”<sup>21</sup>

The efforts of Philadelphia's black population were far from futile, however. Their increased presence in the city's major thoroughfare, Broad Street served as a visual reminder of their progress. When the Fifteenth Amendment was finally ratified in Pennsylvania, the Union League presented Catto with a silk banner and led a celebratory procession from their headquarters down Broad Street to Horticultural Hall where nationally recognized African Americans Frederick Douglass and Robert Purvis spoke along with Catto and various white leaders.<sup>22</sup> Catto's death was also commemorated with a Broad Street parade to Mount Lebanon Cemetery that “included one infantry brigade, three regiments, eight other military detachments, and 125 carriages.”<sup>23</sup> The street was “packed with spectators on both sides,” with black and white Philadelphians coming together to pay their respects.<sup>24</sup>

Resistance to the efforts of the black community took two forms: violent and non-violent. The

presence of blacks on streetcars often incited a violent reaction from the white passengers, and the courts upheld segregation to avoid “breaches of the peace.”<sup>25</sup> The return of suffrage to Philadelphia’s black citizens incited the bloodiest riot in the city’s history. Despite the fact that the riot brought the death of Catto, one of the most important leaders of the black community at that time, no violence was reciprocated. The black leadership maintained their commitment to nonviolence and won the support of many white Philadelphians.<sup>26</sup> As violence in the streets waned, and black political participation increased, black Philadelphians still found themselves marginalized spatially. Black organizations, now politically enfranchised, participated in more national parades and events, but always in brought up the rear. The Republican National Convention of 1900 exemplifies this treatment:

“The affair was a far cry from the last Republican Convention in Philadelphia in 1872. The party’s colored delegates from the deep South states were asked directly whether they were in it only for the patronage... Most of them were denied hotel rooms, and many had trouble in public restaurants and were forced to board with local families... At the grand parade on June 18, the Citizens’ Republican Club marched under its official banner, “We Believe in Education, Morality, and Equality under the Law.” They were bunched toward the back, however, with the southerners and other colored organizations from around the country. The viewers had largely exhausted their applause on the cakewalkers, who led off.”<sup>27</sup>

This description highlights important points about the marginalization of blacks in spatial politics. Not only were “colored organizations” relegated to the back of the procession, but the delegates were excluded from the city spaces commensurate with their political status. By denying them entry into hotels and restaurants, white Philadelphians demonstrated their lack of respect for African American political figures. The description of the slogan banner is also telling: emphasis on education and morality reinforce the emphasis black leadership of the time placed on assimilation. That the club would publicly assert its belief in “equality under the law” also suggests its recognition that such had not yet been achieved. Finally, the fact that the crowd had “exhausted” its “applause on the cakewalkers,” highlights a national cultural tension emerging at that time. The minstrel tradition and corresponding influence of southern

black culture on American popular culture worsened exacerbated existing tensions in the black community.

As political culture subsided and popular entertainment became a more prominent form of public expression, African Americans found themselves a new entrance into the national identity, but one that chose their identity for them. Public cultural events allowed struggles over identity to continue, but masked them in the guise of humor and play. Chapter 3 discussed the role of the Mummers parade in solidifying a white racial identity for Philadelphia's European immigrants by drawing on minstrel traditions. The description of the Republican National Convention of 1900 highlights the conflict African American leadership faced because of these new forms of entertainment. The white public much preferred the image of blacks as clowns and buffoons to the image of African American statesmen and politicians. Here the issue of double-consciousness reemerged in the public sphere. Blacks sought both to participate in the new entertainment culture, which co-opted the image of African American culture that black leaders had been trying to suppress and also to assert a new, politically active, image of equality. Even those blacks who became famous entertainers during this period found themselves struggling with the desire to portray more complex African American identities but unable to find support in doing so.<sup>28</sup>

The first half of the twentieth century marked a decline in Freedom Day celebrations as blacks focused on developing new institutions to combat racism. While American popular culture insisted on displaying a stereotyped African American identity, and Jim-Crow era spatial segregation took hold, African Americans developed their own society separate, but parallel to that of whites. The struggle between Black Nationalism and uplift was now embodied by the national figures of Booker T. Washington, who strongly espoused moral uplift, W.E.B. DuBois, who encouraged and fought for equal rights as well as black self-reliance, and the radical Marcus Garvey, who embodied a militant, Pan-Africanist, black nationalist identity. All three men built important institutions for the black community: the Tuskegee Normal and Industrial Institute (Washington), the Niagara Movement and the NAACP (DuBois), which fought to establish

civil rights and legal protections for African Americans, and the Universal Negro Improvement Association founded by Garvey who is best known for his insistence that “the black man develop ‘a distinct racial type of civilization on his own and... work out his salvation in his motherland [Africa].’”<sup>29</sup> Political participation and agency strengthened through these various organizations, and social organizations grew as well.<sup>30</sup> African Americans still avoided Market Street altogether, and expected the stones and garbage thrown and at their Broad Street parades, but the Elks continued to successfully host them annually. Their largest event, a 1945 war bond rally, attracted 200,000 people to Broad Street and featured 65 different lodges as well as 39 bands.<sup>31</sup> Together with the black churches, these organizations would eventually develop the leverage to confront the inequality and segregation of American society.

#### Civil Rights, Afrocentrism and the Politics of the Street, 1950-1975

*Once, xiv*

*then there was/ the/ picture of/ the bleak-eyed/ little black/ girl/ waving the/  
American/ flag/ holding it/ gingerly/ with/ the very/ tips/ of her/ fingers.*

*Alice Walker<sup>32</sup>*

The Odunde festival grew out of the African American political context of the mid-twentieth century. The period between 1950 and 1975 marked a major shift in African American public presence in Philadelphia. The marginalization of black communities through mid-twentieth-century national housing policies mobilized African Americans’ political will against the continuing inequality they faced. Uplift strategies, and even the efforts of the NAACP, were not moving the black community toward the equality they had been fighting for over so many years, and this period marked a swing toward direct-action strategies and a greater emphasis on Black Nationalism and Afrocentrism. Though African American religious and political leaders still embraced a more conservative path for the black community, radical movements energized Philadelphia’s black political presence in the 1960s. The Black Panthers, SNCC, and MOVE (a radical, back-to-nature group) all maintained a strong political presence in the city. Civil rights activists and Cecil Moore, the dynamic leader of Philadelphia’s NAACP chapter held

demonstrations throughout the 1960s as well as the conventions, despite animosity from the city's Police Commissioner, Frank Rizzo. By the early 1970s, however, national and local events conspired to transform African American public identity from explicitly political to more cultural forms.

Odunde's growth in the 1970s was a response to patterns of spatial marginalization through residential segregation and Jim Crow policies that reached their apogee during the 1950s. The Philadelphia black community's spatial segregation allowed it to develop a vibrant, thriving community but also left it vulnerable to mid-century planning policies geared toward attracting whites back to the city. Cheap, subsidized mortgages made suburban living possible for the white working class residents, while red-lining caused massive disinvestment in city neighborhoods, especially those with African American residents. During the 1950s, South Philadelphia resident Falaka Fattah recalls, "When people came up, when they migrated into Philadelphia, the saying was, 'Walk South Street and find a friend.' Find somebody from home, a homeboy, and inevitably you would. You would connect up with somebody from home, whether that home was Georgia or North Carolina or Virginia."<sup>33</sup>

The city's 1947 plan to develop the South Street-Bainbridge corridor into a highway caused massive disinvestment in the area throughout the 1950s. By the time local community groups came together in the 1960s to successfully oppose the highway construction, the disinvestment had left the corridor vulnerable to gentrification. The community-based counter-proposal approved by the city effectively took "the fate of South Street west of Broad... out of the hands of the neighborhood people and small family-business owners" and put it into the hands of "a new group of people: developers, speculators, the ever-expanding Graduate Hospital, and individual property-owners—largely newcomers, white, and gentry."<sup>34</sup> Philadelphia's plan to attract the middle class whites who had abandoned the city for the suburbs removed African Americans from their historic home-ground on the outskirts of Center City around Society Hill

and South Street and pushed them further into the margins. The decision to locate Odunde at the western edge of South Street became a statement for the black community that “we shall not be moved.”<sup>35</sup> In the thirty years since its founding, west South Street has seemed to resist some gentrification pressures. Compared with the eastern edge, which started from the same position of disinvestment in the 1950s and is now the heart of a wealthy, white residential area, the census block groups at its western edge have successfully maintained a degree of residential diversity.

Odunde grew out of the African American political agenda of the mid-twentieth century, which embraced Afrocentrism and demanded equality in all facets of society. One of the major political accomplishments for African Americans during this period was the reclaiming of public space and public identity. Arthur C. Willis notes in his history of Philadelphia that “By the time the 1950s arrived, blacks in the city had struggled and opened up public places in Philadelphia. The local branch of the NAACP had led the fight to open the movie houses, restaurants, skating rinks, and other public places to all on a non-segregated basis.”<sup>36</sup> The major battles of the 1950s and 1960s were the struggles to desegregate swimming pools in the city, to integrate Girard College, and to remove blackface from the Mummers parade.<sup>37</sup> All three of these were struggles over access to space and expressions of public identity and used (or threatened to use) spatial as well as strictly political strategies to succeed.<sup>38</sup> During this time African Americans created a much more complex public identity for themselves than they had ever previously enjoyed.

The Afrocentrism that had been present in Philadelphia’s black community since the country’s founding strengthened in the 1960s, and this too influenced the Odunde festival. The national political climate of the 1960s, however, popularized Afrocentric cultural expression and united—on a national level—highly disparate black communities. Willis notes that “it was not long before the movement for freedom had created a revolutionary lifestyle to go along with the new mood and new thinking... The term, ‘soul,’ was put to use to define the new concept of blackness... Blacks discovered a new racial identity: ‘Black was truly beautiful.’ A catharsis of

the spirit of black folk was taking place.”<sup>39</sup> As this new way of thinking permeated Philadelphia, one of the first to embrace it was South Philadelphia resident, activist and Odunde founder Lois Fernandez.<sup>40</sup>

Understanding the ways that Afrocentrism influenced Fernandez and the Odunde festival requires an understanding of the term itself. In his book *Afrotopia*, Wilson Jeremiah Moses defines Afrocentrism as “the belief that the African ancestry of black peoples, regardless of where they live, is an inescapable element of their various identities—imposed both from within and from without their own communities.”<sup>41</sup> He is as interested in acknowledging the development of Afrocentric ideas in popular culture as in examining when and through whom those ideas rose to literary prominence. So while he notes that “‘Afrocentrism’ was not invented until the 1960s,” he expounds that “the idea of discussing African American culture as a survival of African culture was well established in sociological and anthropological literature before the Second World War. The idea that African Americans were essentially African, and that the solutions to their problems must be discovered within a Pan-African context is nothing new.”<sup>42</sup>

Moses also demonstrates that contemporary figures in African American studies are connected to Afrocentric traditions of thought developed in the 1930s by Melville Herskovits. “Sterling Stuckey, like Henry Louis Gates, represents a continuation of the Herskovits tradition in Afrocentric studies... Both view African American culture as an African culture, which came into being as a process of fusing numerous African cultures during the slavery period.”<sup>43</sup> Lois Fernandez’s father transferred a tradition of Afrocentrism to his daughter. Although Moses is critical of many of Garvey’s Egyptocentric and at times Imperialist positions, he notes that “his cultural program was simply a repetition of ideas that African American populations had featured since the early nineteenth century.”

In her efforts to bring a Yoruban festival to the streets of Philadelphia as a means of educating

African Americans on African cultural traditions (and thus construct a culturally African identity), Lois Fernandez allies herself more closely with an anthropological Afrocentrism rooted in the work of scholars like August Meier, Roger Abrahams, Sterling Stuckey, and Robert Farris Thompson.<sup>44</sup> In his book, *Flash of the Spirit*, Thompson traces the influence of Yoruban orishas on the religions of surrounding African communities and on Caribbean *vodun* beliefs, which combine African spiritual practices with European Catholicism.<sup>45</sup> In their book *Osun Across the Waters*, Joseph M. Murphy and Mei-Mei Sanford take this a step further and trace the influence of the orisha Osun (also spelled Oxun, Oshun, and Ochun) in the African Diaspora. They write that “with the catastrophic mass enslavement of Yoruba men and women in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, Osun traditions were carried across the Atlantic and redeveloped in Cuba and Brazil. Under conditions of enslavement and marginalization, Osun traditions became a key feature of African American strategies of adaptation and resistance to European values and spirituality.”<sup>46</sup> They theorize that the influx in Caribbean immigration to the United States has resulted in an increased popularization of Oshun and her associated Yoruban religious practices<sup>47</sup>, an idea that is supported by Odunde’s growing popularity, attracting worshippers and non-worshippers alike. Though its core is a religious ceremony, its appeal is in its promotion of a secular, African ethnicity. In fact, its religious component attracts worshippers from Caribbean and Latin American backgrounds who might more readily associate with a Hispanic than an African American identity.<sup>48</sup>

As the 1960s reached their close and social upheaval tore through the nation’s major cities, Philadelphia’s African American population gradually transformed their public presence from politically militant to culturally determined. Police Commissioner Rizzo ruled the city streets with a “roving army of policemen” and buses that could transport 150 officers at a time to any point in the city.<sup>49</sup> Even after the assassination of Martin Luther King, Jr. in 1968, Philadelphia’s black community remained quiet as they watched their sister city, Camden, NJ, burning on the other side of the Delaware river. The city’s African American citizens were familiar with Rizzo’s

brutal response to their peaceful demonstrations and did not provoke him further with violence of their own. Instead, they began to adopt new, cultural strategies to achieve their goal of equality.

Constructing a Contemporary African American Identity in Philadelphia, 1975-2004

*[Odunde] helps our sense of identity, not just as black people, but as African Americans. Let's face it, there is no country called black.*

*Gwen Winfrey<sup>50</sup>*

Rizzo's rise to mayor in the early 1970s coincided with a shift from highly charged political demonstrations to cultural expressions of African American identity. The Philadelphia Odunde festival asserted an African American identity that emphasized the *African* as much as the *American* and took a stand against the spatial marginalization of blacks in Philadelphia. By calling itself "Odunde," a New Year celebration, the festival set itself in direct opposition to the Mummers Parade and its connection to white political structures in the city. As Odunde has grown over almost thirty years, it has become a symbol of strength and identity for the African American community as well as venue for national and international political mobilization. By uniting a Yoruba religious procession with the form of a Philadelphia block party that brings together vendors from throughout the African Diaspora, the Odunde festival has helped to create a vibrant ethnic American identity for Philadelphia's black community. This identity is all the more powerful because it transcends boundaries of class, religion, and even neighborhood for one day a year.

The Odunde festival is an explicit attempt to use ethnicity to build political consciousness and an image of Blackness for South Street. Like the Mummers Parade, however, it emphasizes that it is open to all Philadelphians, and anyone who wishes to participate in the festival is welcomed to do so. Its founder, Lois Fernandez, is an African American activist and social worker from South Philadelphia whose parents connected her both to Afrocentric cultural traditions (her Bahamian born father was a follower of Marcus Garvey) and Philadelphia political traditions

(her mother was active in city politics).<sup>51</sup> She founded the festival in 1975 with the intention of helping African Americans connect with their ethnic African heritage while acknowledging their racialized American heritage. The festival is derived from the Oshun festival in Osogbo, Nigeria. There the festival performs a kingship ritual that reaffirms the city's foundation. During the celebration, a processional makes offerings to the *orisha* (a Yoruban spirit) Oshun by throwing gifts, fruit, and flowers into the Oshun River. Odunde's version brings gifts of to the Schuylkill River in a procession led by Yoruba priests and priestesses. That procession kicks off eight hours of a large-scale block party replete with live music and dance performances (Figure 21). The image of Afrocentric identity is further accentuated by the fact that many participants come in traditional African dress (Figure 22), a practice actively encouraged by festival organizers. Food vendors from many African countries as well as the Caribbean, South America and different regions of the United States also build an image of African-American identity for festival-goers. Vendors selling a variety of crafts and specialty items add political as well as cultural meaning to the event. Newspaper articles during the 1980s and early 1990s mention the availability of Malcolm X t-shirts and products encouraging the end of South African apartheid.<sup>52</sup>

By locating itself in the contested territory of west South Street, Odunde provided a highly visible forum for the adjacent African American community to fight gentrification and further marginalization. It also embraced marginality by rejecting the formal, more centralized

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Figure 21. Drummers are some of the most important performers at the festival. This bata battery led the 1992 procession to the river.

Figure 22. Lois Fernandez in African dress exemplifies the spirit of the festival.

celebratory spaces in the city, but this point will be discussed in greater detail in Chapter 5. By 1975, the year that the first ODUNDE festival was held, the gentrification of South Street east of Broad was well underway. An article in a *Progressive Architecture* Journal published in 1976 notes that “Today, a part of South Street is going through the self-revitalization of its New York counterpart, Soho, survivor of a similar battle.”<sup>53</sup> During the 1970s and early 1980s, while the festival was still relatively small—a few thousand at most—it slid beneath the radar of the city and maintained a persistent but quiet African American identity along the border between white, gentrifying Center City and black, gentrifying South Philadelphia. The festival’s procession actually enters territory that had historically been off-limits to blacks: 26<sup>th</sup> and South is still known as “the Pocket” a white community settled in the corner of a black neighborhood.<sup>54</sup> Initially, Fernandez’s neighbors were wary of using the South Street bridge as well: they told her, “They ain’t doing to let you go across. No black folks go across no South Street bridge.”<sup>55</sup> As the festival grew, tensions increased between the historical importance of South Street to Philadelphia’s black community and the desire of its new (wealthy, European-American) residents to claim (and control) it as their territory. These tensions became visible in the political confrontations recorded in the major city papers between the ODUNDE festival and some community residents in the late 1980s and early 1990s. Fernandez used the opportunity to publicly decry city policies that encouraged gentrification and the marginalization of black residents. The conflict built through the 1980s and came to a head in 1994, when the city attempted to move the parade south to Washington Avenue after a shooting incident near 24<sup>th</sup> and Bainbridge, at the 1993 festival’s periphery.<sup>56</sup>

The city’s effort to move the parade and Odunde’s insistence on staying on South Street highlight the festival’s connection to Philadelphia’s racial politics. In response to the assertion that it should be moved to Penn’s Landing or the Benjamin Franklin Parkway where other ethnic festivals are held, Fernandez would say: “Have the Mummies left Broad Street? We’re staying.”<sup>57</sup> This invocation, repeated in the press, implies that certain (white) groups in the city are given

preferential treatment while likening Odunde to Philadelphia's most prominent celebration. After the shooting incident, Fernandez immediately responded to newspapers associating the shooting with the festival by stating that "we lived in violent time and we could no longer stop that incident no more so than they stopped the most guarded, the most important man in this world, the President."<sup>58</sup> Despite her stance that it was not Odunde's incident, the city seriously considered the possibility of moving the festival further south to Broad and Washington, and in 1994 Fernandez found herself meeting with "the mayor [Ed Rendell], his chief of staff, the head of city council, police commissioner, the fire commissioner, managing director, everyone was there."<sup>59</sup> She brought her own entourage to the meeting, and they refused to discuss moving the festival. In that meeting, John F. Street, then City Council President and a major figure in the black community, supported Odunde's decision to stay on South Street, and with his backing, the festival held its ground and even expanded.<sup>60</sup>

By allying itself with the city's African American leadership and setting itself in opposition to the Mummers parade, Odunde actively participates in the racial politics of the city. It is a forum for African American political mobilization. In 1991, a Philadelphia Inquirer reporter noted that "State Rep. David P. Richardson Jr. (D., Phila) peppered his presentation of a state proclamation commending Odunde—for a festival 'marked by joy and hope,'—with remarks about local politics and a movement by some black leaders to back former Mayor Frank Rizzo in this year's mayoral election... 'We cannot go back to Frank Rizzo, and anybody that tells you that is sick and crazy and out of their minds.'"<sup>61</sup> Its alliance with mayor Street further politicizes its identity, especially because no such alliance was formed with former mayor cum governor, Ed Rendell. Street, Philadelphia's second African American mayor, won the favor of Odunde when he helped them win their right to stay on South Street in 1994.<sup>62</sup> He also honored Lois Fernandez for her work with Odunde as a "Drum Major for Community Empowerment" at a 2004 Press Conference honoring the life and work of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.<sup>63</sup> He has attended the festival himself and has even spoken words of encouragement: "We have had a

wonderful festival in this city for 26 years,” he told festival-goers in 2001, “We have a wonderful heritage... This is a national, international event. People come from all over the world to join in this celebration with us.”<sup>64</sup> The only other mayor quoted from any festival year was the city’s first African American mayor, W. Wilson Goode.<sup>65</sup>

### Conclusion

The Philadelphia Odunde festival is a spatial manifestation of identity politics. It constructs an African ethnic identity that unifies the black community in Philadelphia across class and territory, and it builds political consciousness about the racial inequalities of gentrification, highlighting the spatial marginalization of African Americans. Because its route lies at the border between white Center City and black South Philadelphia, it is visible to both communities and implicates both in its politics. The Yoruban identity that it enacts directly challenges the upper-middle class European heritage that characterizes South Street’s newest population. Its highly visible conflict with that population gave the African American community a voice to oppose city policies that encourage gentrification. In this way, Odunde has been a response to the dynamics of race and class shaping Philadelphia to the disadvantage of its poorer and darker residents. As the city’s largest and now oldest continuous African American celebration, it has also become a vehicle that unites a diverse and diffuse African American population, creating opportunities for direct political mobilization and outreach.

By connecting to Philadelphia’s black leadership, promoting an ethnic American identity, and rejecting the city’s central spaces, Odunde strengthens African American racial-political identity and embodies its marginalization. While Odunde is used as a benchmark for measuring the success of other large-scale African American events in Philadelphia, it is only a benchmark for African American events. It symbolizes an African American identity that is not only separate and distinct from a mainstream Philadelphian identity but also located at the margins of Philadelphia. Even news articles on events as highly politicized as the Million Woman March

make sure to mention whether the event is supported by Lois Fernandez, who is known as an important figure in the African American community. These references are only made in relation to African American events in the city. Despite attracting crowds up to 400,000 people, at least 4 times the size of current Mummers spectatorship, Odunde remains virtually unknown to white suburbanites and ignored by white Philadelphians, and thus continues the historic pattern of marginalization that African Americans face.

### (Endnotes)

- <sup>1</sup> Warrington, Kwame. "Odunde: It's in the blood." *The Philadelphia Tribune*. June 11, 1993. p. 1B
- <sup>2</sup> From *A Visit to the United States in 1841*; quoted in Stevick, Philip. *Imagining Philadelphia: Travelers' Views of the City from 1800 to the Present*. (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1996).
- <sup>3</sup> DuBois, W.E.B. *The Souls of Black Folk*. (Chicago: A.C. McClurg, 1931).
- <sup>4</sup> Nash, Gary B. *Forging Freedom: The Formation of Philadelphia's Free Black Community, 1720-1840*. (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1988). p. 94
- <sup>5</sup> Dubin, Murray. "Local African Americans left two centuries of landmarks." *The Philadelphia Inquirer*. Wednesday, March 17<sup>th</sup>, 2004. Also, Nash, Gary B. *Forging Freedom: The Formation of Philadelphia's Free Black Community, 1720-1840*. (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1988). p. 13.
- <sup>6</sup> Nash, p. 94.
- <sup>7</sup> Willis.
- <sup>8</sup> White, Shane. "It Was a Proud Day." *The Journal of American History*. (Bloomington: June 1994). Vol. 81, Issue 1, p. 13.
- <sup>9</sup> Kachun, Mtch *Festivals of Freedom: Memory and Meaning in African American Emancipation Celebrations, 1808-1915*. (Amherst, MA: University of Massachusetts Press, 2003). p. 16.
- <sup>10</sup> Ibid, p. 35-37.
- <sup>11</sup> [http://www.africana.com/research/encarta/tt\\_643.asp](http://www.africana.com/research/encarta/tt_643.asp)
- <sup>12</sup> Willis, p. 24.
- <sup>13</sup> Willis, p. 30.
- <sup>14</sup> Dubin, "Local African Americans left two centuries of landmarks."
- <sup>15</sup> Nash, p. 254.
- <sup>16</sup> Nash, p. 267-269.
- <sup>17</sup> Brown, Ira V. "Pennsylvania and the Rights of the Negro, 1865-1887." *Pennsylvania History*. (University Park, PA: Pennsylvania Historical Association). January 1961. Vol. XXVIII, No. 1.
- <sup>18</sup> Kachun, p. 7.
- <sup>19</sup> Lane, Roger. *Roots of Violence in Black Philadelphia, 1860-1900*. (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1986). p. 48.
- <sup>20</sup> Brown. pp. 47-53.
- <sup>21</sup> Lane, p. 53
- <sup>22</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>23</sup> Ibid, p. 46.
- <sup>24</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>25</sup> Willis, p. 38.
- <sup>26</sup> Ibid. p. 40.
- <sup>27</sup> Lane. p. 76.
- <sup>28</sup> Lorini, Alessandra. *Rituals of Race: American Public Culture and the Search for Racial Democracy*. (Charlottesville, VA: University Press of Virginia, 1999). Chapter 5, "From Stage to Street: Rituals of Color Consciousness" provides a good overview of this conflict.

- <sup>29</sup> Ibid. p. 36.
- <sup>30</sup> Kachun, p. 258.
- <sup>31</sup> Buchholz, Karen. “‘The right to assemble:’ African American uses of public space.” *Works in Progress*. (Philadelphia: Philadelphia Folklore Project). Vol. 6, No. 2. Spring 1993.
- <sup>32</sup> Alice Walker. *Once: poems*. (London: Women’s Press, 1986, c. 1968).
- <sup>33</sup> Excerpted from Murray Dubin’s *South Philadelphia: Mummies, Memories, and the Melrose Diner*. p. 77.
- <sup>34</sup> Fernandez, Lois. “Origins: why we shall not be moved.” *Works in Progress*. (Philadelphia: The Philadelphia Folklore Society). Volume 6. Number 2. Spring 1993. pp. 2-3.
- <sup>35</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>36</sup> Willis, p. 65.
- <sup>37</sup> Ibid. p. 67-76.
- <sup>38</sup> Cecil Moore actively promoted public expressions of political will, regularly staging rallies and demonstrations that grew rowdy and (especially if police were involved violent). His strategies, while in many ways effective, won him the enmity not only of city whites, but also of other leaders of the black community.
- <sup>39</sup> Ibid. p. 130.
- <sup>40</sup> Oral History, p. 156-158.
- <sup>41</sup> Ibid. p. 6.
- <sup>42</sup> Ibid. p. 12-13.
- <sup>43</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>44</sup> Ibid. p. 11-12.
- <sup>45</sup> Thompson, Robert Farris. *Flash of the Spirit*. (New York: Vintage Books, 1983). p. 163.
- <sup>46</sup> Murphy, Joseph M. and Mei-Mei Sanford. *Osun Across the Waters: A Yoruba Goddess in Africa and the Americas*. (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2001). p. 4-5.
- <sup>47</sup> Ibid. p. 5.
- <sup>48</sup> Lucas, Renee V. “ODUNDE – ‘Happy New Year’ fest is also a reunion.” *The Philadelphia Daily News*. June 8, 1984. Features, p. 51. “Of course everybody is welcome, as with any ethnic festival. You’ll see European-Americans, and many Hispanics... The religious aspect of the festival unites us.” Lois Fernandez.
- <sup>49</sup> Daughen and Binzen. p. 140.
- <sup>50</sup> West Philadelphia resident quoted in Leigh Jackson, “African Fest on South Street Odunde has Roots in Nigerian Rite.” *The Philadelphia Daily News*. June 10, 1991. Local, p. 3.
- <sup>51</sup> Macklin, William R. “ODUNDE Festival: A vision realized/the joy of Africa’s Yoruba Culture has been the passion of Lois Fernandez for two decades. And today, she’ll celebrate again.” *Philadelphia Inquirer*. June 11, 1995. Features, Style. p. M01. Also, Oral History.
- <sup>52</sup> For example: Odom, Maida. “The Spirited Offerings of Odunde.” *The Philadelphia Inquirer*. June 10, 1991. p. B01.
- <sup>53</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>54</sup> Buchholz, p. 8.
- <sup>55</sup> Oral History, Temple Urban Archives. P. 161.
- <sup>56</sup> Oral History, p. 166.
- <sup>57</sup> Dribben, Melissa. “Odunde Fete Enlivens South Street.” *The Philadelphia Inquirer*. June 12, 1989. Local, p. B01.
- <sup>58</sup> *Be Prepared: Oral History Interview with Lois Fernandez*. Prepared by Margaret Jerrido. Urban Archives, Paley Library, Temple University, Philadelphia. 1999.
- <sup>59</sup> Ibid. p. 167
- <sup>60</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>61</sup> Odom, Maida. “The Spirited Offerings of Odunde,” *The Philadelphia Inquirer*. June 10, 1991. Local, p. B02.
- <sup>62</sup> *Oral History*. p. 167.
- <sup>63</sup> [http://www.philamlk.org/MLK\\_2004\\_Luncheon\\_PR.pdf](http://www.philamlk.org/MLK_2004_Luncheon_PR.pdf)
- <sup>64</sup> Meltzer, Mark. “Annual Odunde festival draws thousands.” *Philadelphia Daily News*. June 11, 2001. Local. p. 09.
- <sup>65</sup> Gillin, Beth. “The Sun Shines on Tribute to African River Goddess.” *Philadelphia Inquirer*. June 11, 1984. Local, p. B03.

## **Chapter 5: Comparative Spatial Practice in Racial Identity Construction**

While Chapters 3 and 4 contextualized the meanings of the Mummers Parade and Odunde festival in terms of Philadelphia's history, this chapter will seek to contextualize their current meaning through a comparison of their salient features. First, a comparison of their parade routes and festival spaces will be analyzed in terms of the city's civic structure to understand the spatial meanings each seeks to convey. This route analysis will be supplemented by a demographic comparison that examines the racial makeup of neighborhoods bordering each parade route. This comparison will then examine participant demographics for each festival. Finally this section will look at demographics of gentrification, comparing east and west South Street in their ability to withstand development pressure. The final two sections will compare the festivals' connections to city politics and racial politics by examining their organizational structures and lastly their funding and sponsorship.

### Route

The Mummers Parade traverses a route through the city that uses spatial symbolism to signify the racial assimilation of white ethnic groups into a white Philadelphian identity. Its official and unofficial paths now route the parade through two prominent civic corridors: Broad Street and Arch Street. The Broad Street corridor is most significant because it is the official route and because it connects the Mummers' neighborhoods to City Hall. The Odunde festival, on the other hand, stakes a claim on marginal territory in the southwest corner of Center City. No major city institutions serve as a focal point for the festival, though the Center City skyline (including the top of City Hall) is visible from the starting point of the procession (Figure 23) and from the bridge on the return (Figure 24). By establishing a neighborhood presence and rejecting the city's ceremonial spaces, Odunde rejects assimilation into a white Philadelphian identity and instead asserts an ethnic African American identity. Simultaneously, it supports a historic pattern whereby African American culture is visible only on the city's periphery.



Figure 23. Starting point of procession. Odunde banners hang from light posts and Center City Philadelphia is visible in the background.



Figure 24. Returning from the River, participants are reminded of Center City's close proximity with its wealth and disproportionately white population.

Although Broad Street was Philadelphia's first major ceremonial boulevard, it has become a minor ceremonial pathway in the city. Its width accommodates two lanes of traffic in either direction and three lanes of parking (one on each side and one in the middle). It ties the city's northern and southern boundaries together in a straight line through City Hall, which is visible along much of its route. Until the Benjamin Franklin Boulevard was completed in 1918, Broad Street was the only logical choice for major civic processions in the city, and—as discussed in previous chapters—was racially defined “white” territory. Today the official City Parade Route begins at Logan Circle, runs down the Parkway to 16<sup>th</sup> and Market Street, then turns around and comes back up the Parkway to reviewing stands on the western side of Logan Circle before dispersing between 20<sup>th</sup> and 22<sup>nd</sup> Streets and the Parkway (Figure 25). This route is used for most of the city's ethnic parades including the St. Patrick's Day Parade, the Pulaski Day Parade (Polish), the Puerto Rican Festival Parade, the General Von Steuben Parade (German). The Columbus Day Parade, which had been using the City Parade Route, recently switched to a South Broad Street route. These ethnic festivals are distinct from Odunde in that they do not use the parade to make a strong political statement. Other major events on the Parkway are Unity Day, the Boscov's Thanksgiving Day Parade and the Philadelphia College Festival.

Image removed for copyright purposes.

Figure 25. The official Philadelphia City Parade Route.

Despite the fact that Broad Street is no longer the main ceremonial boulevard for the city, it still provides a spatially symbolic backdrop for the Mummers parade. City Hall is visible from its starting point, over 2 miles south at Oregon Street, and after the official route leads the Mummers past many of the city's

centers of society and culture—including the University of the Arts, the Kimmel Performing Arts Center, the Academy of Music, the Merriam Theater, the Park Hyatt at the Bellevue, and the Ritz Carlton Hotel—the unofficial parade along Arch Street is lined with major civic and historical buildings: the Convention Center, the Federal Reserve Bank and United States Federal Building, Independence Mall and the new National Constitution Center, the United States Mint, Benjamin Franklin's Grave, and the Betsy Ross House. The fact that the Philly Phlash Visitor Bus traces this same path suggests that it is also a significant tourist destination. The final unofficial stretch down Two Street (Second Street) is only interesting in the fact that I.M. Pei's Society Hill Towers interrupt the Mummers pathway, diverting them along Dock Street from Walnut Street to Spruce. The effect of the entire movement is that white South Philadelphia renews its connection to Center City in a New Year's ritual that weaves itself through and into Center City's most significant civic spaces.

Odunde's location on South Street places it at one of the most contested boundaries in Philadelphia. Its early significance as the southern boundary of the city is evident by the fact that its original name "Cedar Street" was accompanied by the moniker "South Street" on maps published as early as 1762. As mentioned earlier, it became the site of a major struggle

between neighborhood residents and city planners in the 1960s because it was the site of a proposed highway. The gentrification pressures that resulted from the community's successful opposition to the highway illuminate the tensions between Center City and South Philadelphia, both of which lay claim to the street. Unlike Broad Street, South is not particularly wide. Traffic flows one-way: from west to east in two lanes running between curbside parking. It is home to the Graduate Hospital, the Waters Memorial A.M.E. Church, and two theaters, but is mostly known for its eclectic mix of shops and restaurants running from 6<sup>th</sup> Street to Front (this strip is mentioned in *Insight Map Philadelphia's* top ten "Sights You Shouldn't Miss"). The western edge of South Street is virtually invisible to the average tourist, unless that person was coming into the city from University of Pennsylvania on the other side of the South Street Bridge. Otherwise, traffic patterns in the area do not bring heavy traffic to the festival's location, which is 11 blocks from the nearest subway station. Center City, on the other hand, still asserts a visual presence over the site from a number of vantage points.

Because this choice of location was deliberate, it does not represent a willful exclusion of the festival on the part of the city. Rather, by choosing this location, the festival asserts its commitment to a specific population and its belief that this population is not represented by the city's primary ceremonial spaces. Karen Buchholz frames this assertion in economic terms: "Community-rooted festivals bring people and their dollars to neighborhoods. In contrast, parades that march down the central spaces of the city—the Parkway, Broad Street, Chestnut Street—draw crowds, media attention, and dollars to the city's political, bureaucratic, and financial centers of power. While it may be easier for the city to serve and manage such events, and to promote them to tourists, this represents yet another strategy of disinvestment in neighborhoods."<sup>22</sup> Presumably, generating dollars for the city's "centers of power" would not be in conflict with bringing money into neighborhoods if those centers of power adequately represented and attended to those neighborhoods. The Mummies' objections to the Market Street move followed similar lines and demonstrated that the city's white ethnic populations in South

Philadelphia also do not feel fully represented by the Center City power structure.

Tourist maps of Philadelphia illustrate the strength of this divide. The area of South Street occupied by Odunde is virtually invisible to Philadelphia's average tourist. Many tourist maps end abruptly just below South Street, and those that do not highlight only the location of the Old Navy Home and the Graduate Hospital as potential sites of interest. The maps in Philadelphia PATCO Speedline (the train to South Jersey suburbs) Stations cover the area with a list of "Information Numbers," (Figure 26) and *Streetwise Philadelphia* locates its scale just below Odunde's unmarked headquarters (Figure 27). The Mummern's route is somewhat better

Image removed for copyright purposes.

Figure 26. Map in PATCO stations. The key in the lower left corner covers the site of Odunde.

Image removed for copyright purposes.

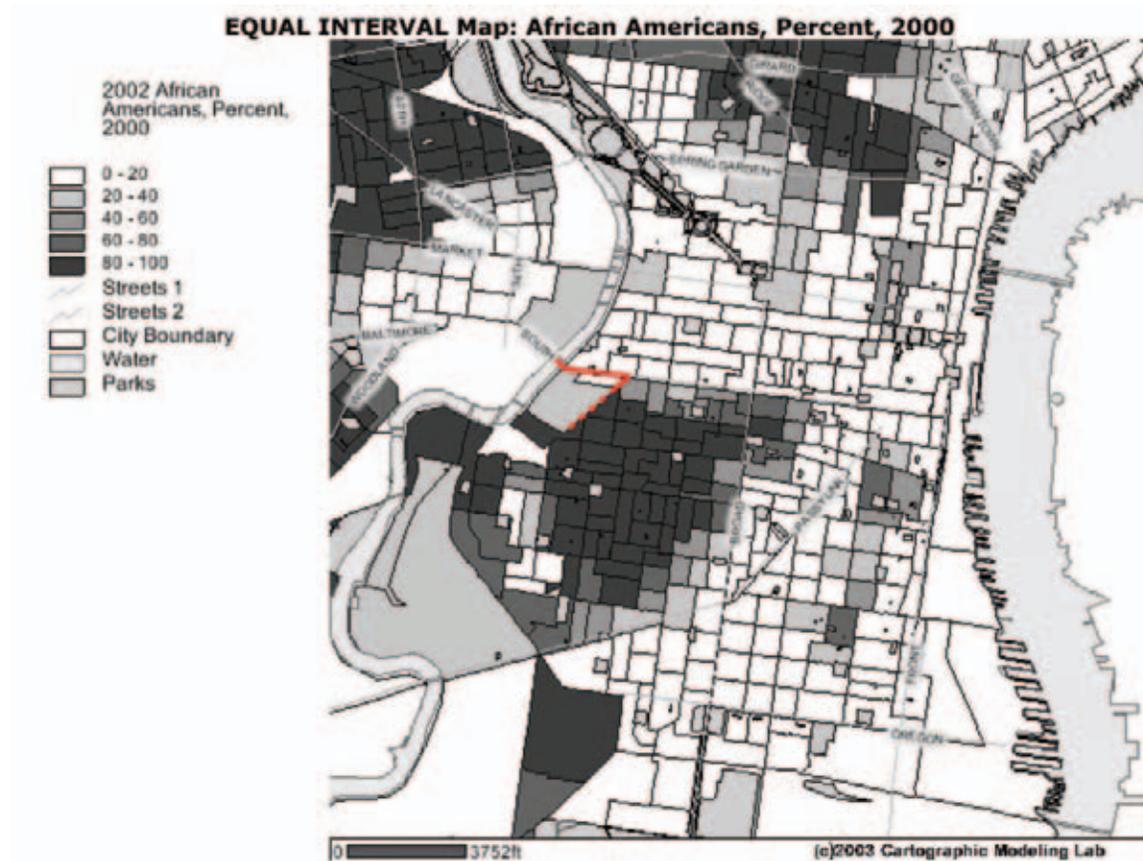
Figure 27. *Streetwise Philadelphia* map. The map's scale lies on the site of Odunde.

represented because it traverses Center City's southern boundary, but at least half its route is usually cut off. Even the *ADC The Map People* map of Philadelphia, which depicts the Odunde festival's location in its entirety, stops short of Oregon Avenue in South Philadelphia, the starting point of the Mummern's String Bands (the Comic and Fancy Club starting points, which are not so far south, are visible however).

### Demographics

Aside from the formal symbolism of the route selection, both the Mummern Parade route and the Odunde's processional route occupy racial boundaries with symbolic statements of racial identity. Odunde's

route patrols the border of an African American neighborhood at the edge of Center City (Figure 28). It has a double purpose: to provide a route to the Schuylkill River from South Philadelphia and to remind the city that South Street is a historically African American community that remains vibrant and alive. The Mummies parade The Mummies' Broad Street route also traces

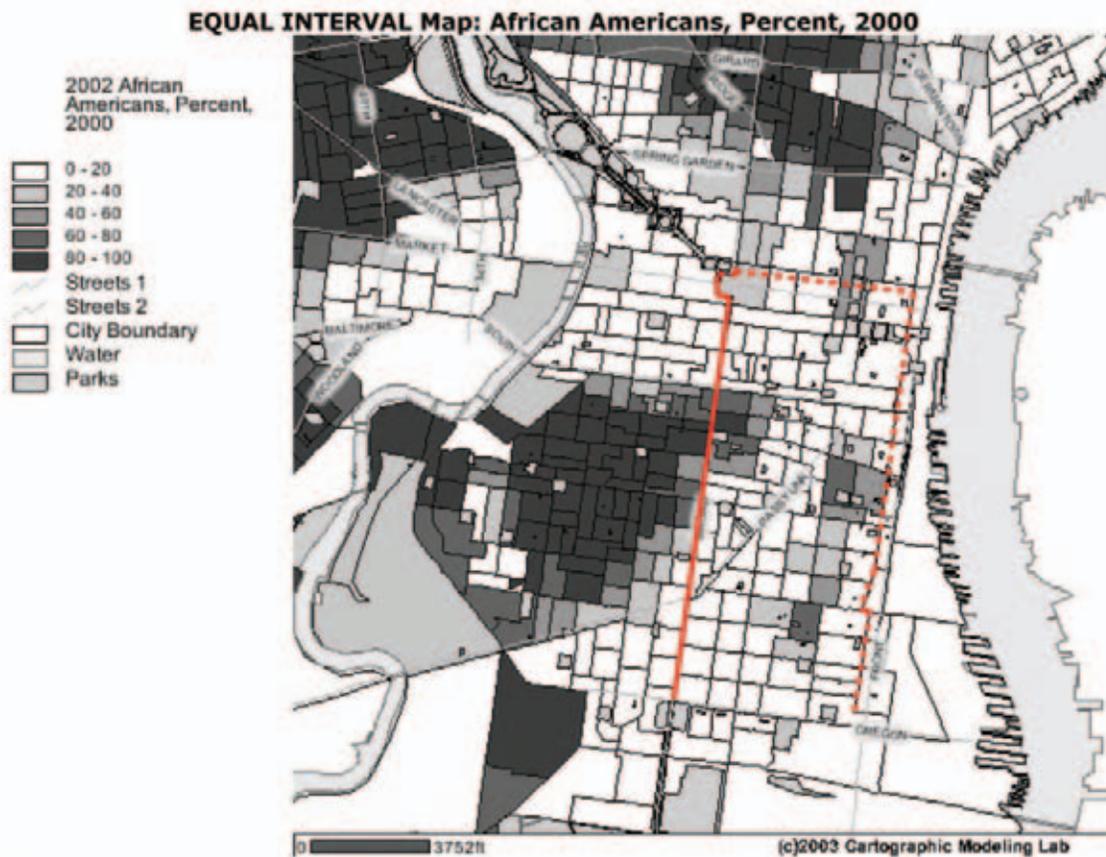


**Year:** 2002  
**Geographic Level:** 2000 Census Blockgroups  
**Geographic Unit ID:**

Figure 28. The solid red line indicates the procession route and the dotted line indicates the extent of the festivities. Its location on a boundary zone is critical to its political meaning.

the boundary between east South Philadelphia, which is predominantly white and west South Philadelphia, which is predominantly black (Figure 29). In response to complaints about the 2004 Mummies parade from African American city residents, *Inquirer* columnist Stu Bykofsky noted: “You make it sound like South Philly is as white as Glasgow, Scotland. There are huge numbers of blacks living west of Broad, don’t you know that? It’s a pity more black people don’t come out to watch it, but that may be because they share your distorted view of the

parade [i.e. that it is racist].”<sup>3</sup> By tracing this boundary, today’s Mummers present themselves as accessible to different racial groups; however, this assertion denies the history of exclusion that accompanied the parade’s development. After establishing itself as a white celebration and claiming Broad Street as white territory over three-quarters of a century, it cannot reasonably expect a sudden reversal.



**Year:** 2002  
**Geographic Level:** 2000 Census Blockgroups  
**Geographic Unit ID:**

Figure 29. The solid red line indicates the official parade route (2004) and the dotted line indicates the unofficial route. The pronounced difference between racial demographics east and west of South Broad Street is clearly evident. Because the black and white populations are approximately equal across the city, they exhibit almost exactly opposite patterns (i.e. block groups that are 0-20% black will be 80-100% white).

As a parade that was brought to its Broad Street route by the city government, the Mummers parade represented the assimilation of European immigrants into Philadelphia’s older Anglo populace. For at least 60 years, it also asserted that these European, “white” populations

could dominate the street. Black residents who came to Broad Street to watch the parade were harassed and provoked,<sup>4</sup> and today a noticeable majority of the parade's spectators are still white, especially in Center City. Blacks and women were explicitly excluded from the parade for many years, and though neither is any longer, the resultant disconnection from the city's black community remains un-bridged and unresolved. In a period when the city's population is almost evenly split between white and black residents (46% white and 44% black in 2000) the overwhelming presence of white spectators at a parade whose main participants are predominantly white, the Mummers, "a Philadelphia institution"<sup>5</sup> continues to present an incredibly distorted picture of who Philadelphia is and what it means to be Philadelphian.

Odunde's rejection of the option of moving—even to the city's Parkway route or Penn's Landing—is further illuminated by a demographic analysis of those spaces. The City Parade Route follows an even more racially specific pattern (Figure 30). No census block group bordering that route is less than 60% white and some lie in the range of 80 – 100% white. The area around Penn's Landing from Market Street all the way down to South Street is no more than 20% African American and ranging between 80 and 100% white. A proposal to move the festival down to Washington Street would have put it in an area surrounded by block groups comprised 80 – 100% by African Americans. While that move would not have alienated the city's black community, it would have greatly reduced the festival's visibility and defeated its battle against gentrification. Given the intention of the Odunde Festival, it is unsurprising that it would reject such racially undifferentiated ceremonial spaces.

Preliminary demographic analysis suggests that while west South Street certainly faces gentrification pressures, it has seen significantly less drastic changes than east South Street. In the neighborhood lying west of Broad Street and just to the south of South Street, the white population increased by about 11% between 1990 and 2000 while the African American population fell by about 7%. During the period between 1996 and 2000 for this same

**EQUAL INTERVAL Map: African Americans, Percent, 2000**



**Year: 2002**  
**Geographic Level: 2000 Census Blockgroups**  
**Geographic Unit ID:**

Figure 30. Philadelphia's official parade route along the Benjamin Franklin Parkway is only adjacent to block groups that are no more than 40% African American.

neighborhood, the average residential sale price increased by approximately 58% -- the largest increase for any neighborhood in Southwest Philadelphia.<sup>6</sup> The neighborhood remains almost 70% African American (at least this was its makeup in 2000), but clearly it is facing pressures of gentrification and population change. The neighborhoods east of Broad Street and South of South Street, which were also predominantly African American in the 1950s and 1960s and entirely working class are now almost uniformly white. Median household income is much more uniform in the block groups to the north and south of east South Street than in the west (Figure 31). On the western edge, median household income in block groups south of South Street is always at least one quantile below the same indicator for block groups north of South Street. This pronounced distinction demonstrates that South Philadelphia blocks bordering South Street to

**QUANTILE Map: Household Income, Median, 2000**



**Year:** 2002  
**Geographic Level:** 2000 Census Blockgroups  
**Geographic Unit ID:**

Figure 31. Although the distinction between east and west Philadelphia is not so pronounced in terms of household income, the eastern edge shows a more uniform pattern to the north and south of South Street than does the western edge.

the west of Broad Street have been more successful than those east of Broad at prolonging the gentrification process.

A demographic comparison of spectators at Odunde and the Mummers parade supports the thesis that the two festivals reinforce and cater to distinct racial identities. Odunde attracts hundreds of thousands of African Americans, 80% of whom are from the Philadelphia area. Because Odunde, which is a New Year's festival based in South Philadelphia just like the Mummers Parade, can attract such a large body of African Americans, it highlights the low level of African American spectatorship at the Mummers' New Year's parade. The festival gives African Americans in

Philadelphia a New Year's celebration that is free from negative historical associations of racism and oppression. With attendance estimates reaching 200,000 to 250,000, even up to 400,000 people, the parade is probably attracting about 20% of Philadelphia's entire African American population (if we assume that approximately 80% of those attending are African American<sup>7</sup>). This is a far higher percentage than attend the Mummers parade, whose recent attendance levels have been comparable to Odunde, but whose spectators are probably only 20% African American, if that.

### Organizational Structure

The organizational structure of the Mummers parade gives its participants an opportunity to connect into city politics that Odunde participants do not enjoy. Because the Mummers grew out of grassroots celebrations held by loosely affiliated organizations, they have developed a representative structure extending up to the Philadelphia New Years Shooters and Mummers Association (PNYSMA), which directly coordinates with the Philadelphia Department of Recreation. A diagram included in Rothberg's dissertation illustrates this structural organization as it existed in the late 1970s. While the parade has undergone a number of structural changes, the idea is still the same: Clubs are grouped into Division Associations (separated by Comic, Fancy, String Band, and Fancy Brigades). These are "legislative and rule enforcement" bodies for their members.<sup>8</sup> Clubs send representatives both to the Divisional Associations and to the PNYSMA, except for the Fancy Brigades, which are no longer part of the umbrella organization. Because the number of clubs in each division is not proportional, however, the string bands, which still make up the largest division, control much of the decision making.<sup>9</sup> Despite the internal squabbles among Mummers Divisions and Clubs, the structure establishes political connections between the Mummers and City Hall, and no decision about the parade can be made without input from the PNYSMA. Even during the 1990s controversy over the parade route, Rendell always emphasized that the final decision lay in the hands of the Mummers.

The structure of Odunde, Inc. on the other hand, is not connected into the city's political structure. Run with a staff of five and a six-member Board of Directors (due to some overlap, nine total), the organization's President and Executive Director are Lois and Oshunbumi (her daughter) Fernandez respectively. In our interview, Oshunbumi explained that the vision for the festival is held by the Fernandez family and they are wary of others trying to co-opt the festival for other purposes.<sup>10</sup> Because the festival's structure is determined solely by Odunde, Inc. and attended by unaffiliated residents and visitors, the organization does not provide the direct connection to city government for its participants that the Mummers parade does. The result of this disconnection is evident in the controversy over the festival's location. When city officials invited Lois Fernandez to a meeting about the festival, she approached it like a battle and brought all of her allies with her to the table.<sup>11</sup> Because no formal communication structure between the parade and the city existed, Fernandez found that she depended on the unexpected support of then-City-Council-President John Street to win her case.<sup>12</sup> That she succeeded in staying on South Street while the Mummers moved off Broad Street to Market illustrates how funding and sponsorship can both empower an organization and make it more vulnerable to outside forces.

### Funding and Sponsorship

Because the Department of Recreation and the Mummers collaborate to organize the parade each year and because the city contributes so much money to the prize purse (not to mention the much smaller allocations to individual clubs), it has a stake in promoting the parade and encouraging attendance. This partnership has another side to it, and the fact that the city provides so financial support to the Mummers means that it has some leverage over parade decisions. The Mummers generate most of their income outside of city support, but the prize purse (\$386,448 in 2002) offered by City Hall is the carrot that keeps the parade moving up Broad Street. The partnership that the Mummers have with the Department of Recreation means that the city has input into what themes can go up the street and which street they go up.

Odunde, Inc., which receives a city allocation that is but a small fraction of the Mummers' prize purse, is not beholden to the city for resources, but must also struggle to meet its expenses. For the Mummers, if an individual club is not profitable, it will fold without disrupting the flow of the event. If Odunde, Inc. cannot maintain financial solvency, however, the entire festival is endangered. While the festival has courted a number of partners and sponsors and cultivated relationships with private donors, its primary income source is its vendor fees. By charging its vendors fees above those required for a city permit, Odunde is able to use the crowds it generates to help support itself.<sup>13</sup>

While the reliance of each event on city funding illustrates its connection (or disconnection) to city politics, a comparison of their additional program partners and sponsors reinforces their racial identities. The Mummers' radio sponsor is WTHK-FM (94.5), playing classic rock. Odunde, on the other hand, identifies itself with the radio stations WDAS-FM (105.3), specializing in R&B and Soul, and WUSL-FM (Power 99 FM), which is Philly's main hip-hop music station. This difference in radio-station sponsorship speaks volumes to the difference in populations that each event is serving. Odunde's alliance with other African American cultural organizations reaffirms its commitment to African American identity. Both organizations are also sponsored by major, non-racially specific Philadelphia organizations: SEPTA transit authority and the WB television station sponsor the Mummers and a variety of Philadelphia organizations such as the Philadelphia Cultural Fund, the Philadelphia Convention and Visitors Bureau, and the Greater Philadelphia Tourism and Marketing Corporation sponsor Odunde. These sponsors would seem to suggest that both celebrations are major Philadelphia events and obscures the fact that Odunde still occupies marginal territory in the space of the city and the minds of many of its (white) residents.

One of the major differences between Odunde funding and Mummers funding is that a significant proportion of Odunde funding comes from state and national sources. The National Endowment

for the Arts (NEA) provided Odunde with the money it needed to renovate 2308 Grays Ferry Avenue and establish a headquarters at the festival location. The Pennsylvania Council on the Arts and The Commonwealth of Pennsylvania are both important contributors. These sponsors reinforce Odunde's connection to conversations about African American identity that transcend the local politics of Philadelphia.

### Conclusion

Just the fact that Philadelphia hosts two separate South-Philly based New Year's festivals that draw participants from the city's two largest racial groups speaks volumes about the character of racial politics in the city. The city is clearly divided along racial lines. Independent observers characterized the 2003 mayoral race as racially charged. Larry Ceisler, a political consultant, was quoted in *The Philadelphia Daily News* saying, "We risk confirming all of the former impressions of Philadelphia, as a city rife with corruption and racially polarized - not a place where you'd want to be."<sup>14</sup> However, this observation does not answer the questions laid out in the introduction about the spatial construction of racial identities and how it is related to politics. This thesis demonstrates how racial identities are constructed and expressed in festival settings. Festivals communicate meaning through who they allow to participate and who to watch, through how they are advertised and promoted, through the symbols and images with which they associate, through their funding and sponsorship, and through the performances that define them. They act out meaning in spaces, and when that meaning draws on symbols associated with racial constructs and unites populations along racial lines, festivals construct and maintain racial identity.

The Mummies parade in its original form drew intentionally excluded women and African Americans. At the same, by performing caricatures of those groups' identities, Mummies had license to engage in raucous behavior that would be unsanctioned under normal circumstances. Sponsored by the elite Anglo power structure, the parade's exclusion of African Americans'

indicated an alliance between the European immigrant populations in the city and the native Anglo population. This alliance continues to serve as the backbone of white racial identity. Antagonism of African American spectators along Broad Street further alienated that population, and created a racialized backdrop of spectators for the parade as well. The parade's direct use of characters, music, and dance from minstrel traditions, however, is its most significant contribution to the formation of racial identity in Philadelphia. Blackface minstrels were nationally recognized for their impersonating performances of black culture. They allowed whites to receive black culture from other whites, and by defining *blackness* as otherness, they defined *whiteness* as normality.

Odunde also draws on symbols that are part of national and international conceptions of African American identity. Its visual language in posters and advertisements, as well as the African dress encouraged by festival organizers are part of a larger structure of Afrocentric symbolism developing in the United States since the mid-twentieth century. The primary activity of Odunde—the procession to the river to honor *Oshun*—is a tradition adapted from its contemporary form in Nigeria and also part of the Afrocentric project for black identity. Unlike the racial identity constructed through the Mummers parade, this Afrocentric African American identity works to develop an ethnic identity for African Americans that is at once both Philadelphian and local and also connected internationally to the African Diaspora. Such ethnic identification is a rejection of national racial categories while its construction is an acknowledgement of them.

This Afrocentric identity is reinforced in a number of other ways as well. Although no one is formally or officially excluded from participating in the festival, most participants are African American. This phenomenon illuminates the divide between white and black populations in Philadelphia, but it is not wholly accidental. Though in the last few years, Odunde has been promoted through banners hung across Market Street, for many years it was advertised almost

exclusively through word-of-mouth and a few posters distributed across the city. Since the mid-1980s, it has been announced in *The Philadelphia Daily News* and *The Philadelphia Inquirer*, but *The Philadelphia Tribune*, the city's African American newspaper, is given a special advertising section by Odunde, Inc. While corporate sponsorship changes from year to year, the festival's first sponsor was an African clothing boutique in South Philadelphia run by Lois Fernandez. Other participant-run businesses have continued to support the festival over the years, emphasizing its ownership by the community rather than the city.

Racial identities have historically been political identities. Their primary purpose is to establish lines of exclusion within a political process. This division of political identity and its associated imbalance of power carry over into the social mores and are reinforced spatially through festivals and celebrations. Festivals tie symbolic representations of identity to the hierarchical public spaces of the city. In Philadelphia, the Mummers parade excluded women and blacks from participating (at least on significant, publicly visible scale). White men, acting out a caricature of those whom they excluded, filled the streets. But they did not fill just any streets. Since 1901, they occupied Broad Street, the city's ceremonial avenue, leading to City Hall, the center of municipal authority. Over the course of the twentieth century, they shifted their route time and again in response to a rising African American population along their unofficial route through the northern section of the city back to Second Street. These spaces form part of a spatial hierarchy that defines the city's civic structure as separate from its urban fabric (or neighborhoods).

The Mummers Parade occupies the space of Broad Street, which, living up to its name, is the widest street in Penn's original city plan. It is the city's spine, connecting South Philadelphia and North Philadelphia to City Hall, the city's tallest building until Willard G. Rouse III built One Liberty Place in 1987. To parade on Broad Street, especially in the early twentieth century, is to be an important piece of Philadelphia culture. The Mummers parade, a movement of powerful physical symbolism, connected the working class immigrants in South Philadelphia to the power

structure of City Hall.

The physical connection between South Philadelphia and City Hall indicated a political connection between the two populations. However, it did not establish a connection for everyone in South Philadelphia. Broad Street was also a territory dominated and controlled by white Philadelphians for most of its history, and the Mummers Parade very intentionally excluded African Americans from that new political access. African American public ceremonies on Broad were consistently met with hostility, and even an African American spectator presence was met with threat and intimidation. Today the Mummers parade's Center City stretch is lined almost entirely with white spectators. Though African Americans may no longer feel threatened, many prefer to watch the show on television than stand in eight hours in the cold. It is not their tradition. The result of this disconnection is that white Philadelphians, many living in the suburbs, see themselves in the context of a white Philadelphia.

The fact that the Mummers Parade prize purse is controlled by the city's Department of Recreation is yet another way that the parade and its participants are tied to the power structure of the city. The prize purse gives the city a greater amount of control over the content of the parade, and it also provides an incentive for Mummers to participate in city politics. The structure of working with the Department of Recreation in making decisions about the parade has created a political structure amongst the participants. The Philadelphia New Years Shooters and Mummers Association is made up of representatives from each Division in the parade. Each division comprises representatives from each club in a complicated, and not always uniform, decision-making structure. These interactions and connections with City Hall ensure that the identity of the Mummers is not only racial, but political as well.

Despite the increased political power of African Americans in the city—made manifest by its election of two African American mayors, each serving two terms in the mayor's office—African

Americans still consider themselves politically marginalized. They continue to have virtually no symbolic presence in Center City. The recent fight to include African American identity in the redesign of the Liberty Bell exhibition and the new Constitution Center indicates that they still have an uphill battle to achieve an equal political presence in the city. South Street is a border between Center City and South Philadelphia. Despite the historic presence of African Americans on and around South Street, the western edge of the street is at the periphery of many historically significant sites, which tend to cluster east of Broad Street. Odunde's position at this location follows a trend of African American celebrations occupying marginal spaces, border spaces. South Street is the southern edge of William Penn's Philadelphia. It is not an insignificant street, but it is also not well connected to the power structure of the city.

Currently the face of the mayor is one of the only images of African American identity that occupy City Hall and Center City. Even in terms of residential population, the city remains highly segregated with the highest concentrations of whites living in Center City and blacks living outside. Racial politics in the city are strongly influenced by this divide. Ed Rendell, the city's first Jewish mayor, was known for his candid conversations with white suburbanites about race and the city accusing them of pulling away from the city because of the black communities living there. Yet, he focused his policies almost exclusively on Center City. Mayor John Street, the city's second African American mayor, also known for his abrasive candidness about race, has focused his attention and policy on the neighborhoods surrounding Center City.

Odunde, though it receives some support from the city budget, funds itself primarily through its vendor fees and grants from the National Endowment for the Arts. Because its funding sources are national and international (many vendors come from various countries in Africa and South America), it is not inherently tied to city politics. It's interactions with city government are situational rather than on-going. Festival leaders met with city leaders when local residents were pressuring the city to move Odunde from South Street, and again when they were unable to

pay a city fee. These interactions are often characterized by arguments that the festival should be shown equal treatment as the Mummers, who are guaranteed city sponsorship and their parade route. Though the festival is an important city event, and a site of political engagement on local, national, and international issues, it is not connected to the city in a mechanism for civic engagement. It does not challenge the notion that African American political identity in Philadelphia is marginalized, but rather continues that pattern of marginalization.

One of the most difficult tasks in studying festivals is extracting conclusions when their meanings and contexts are constantly shifting. One of the most important contextual shifts for both the Mummers and Odunde is the city's changing demographics. The increase in African American populations along the northern stretches of the Mummers' unofficial parade route is another indication of the changing demographic context of the parade. The increased presence and visibility of African Americans in the city put greater pressure on the parade to be more inclusive. The blackface controversy demonstrated that the parade did not hold the same meaning for all Philadelphians, and it succeeded in removing the most offensive reference to minstrelsy from the faces of the Mummers.

Odunde has also been impacted by the changing demographics of the city. It has grown tremendously since its 1975 inception, owing much of its success to the influx of Caribbean immigrants in the United States since the 1960s. Caribbean immigrants in 2000 made up the second largest immigrant population entering Philadelphia County totaling 19,716 people. This trend is significant because Lois Fernandez, the festival's founder is herself of Bahamian heritage, and the festival draws on Caribbean as well as African traditions. The festival is also a response to the new wealthy populations that are moving back into Center City, so its meaning is very much tied to those demographic shifts as well.

A potentially important question about demographics for both festivals, however, is how the

Asian population, which is the fastest growing population in South Philadelphia, will affect the events. At this point Asians make up such a small percentage of the population as to have little effect, but their presence is increasingly visible as areas once dominated by Italian stores and restaurants now cater to various Asian populations. While Caribbean immigrants are moving to Philadelphia, they are concentrating west of the Schuylkill River. For most of the census tracts of South Philly, the greatest population growth is in the Asian community. How this will impact the meaning of the two festivals examined in this thesis remains to be seen. Will that population adopt one or both festivals as its own? Will it assert a new Asian racial identity or multiple, competing ethnic identities in the spaces of South Philadelphia? On January 1<sup>st</sup>, 2004, the comic groups strutted up Broad Street. A Flintstones float passed by me blaring music, and right behind it came a array of yellow dresses and ribbons waving as a Falun Gong group came by passing out flyers and CDs. They were most certainly not Mummies, but they had made a space for themselves in the parade and a space for themselves on Broad Street. The political nature of their presentation and presence doubtless foreshadows the future of celebratory practices in South Philadelphia.

### **(Endnotes)**

<sup>1</sup> *Insight Map Philadelphia*. Maps: (Fuerstenfeldbruck, Germany: Berndtson & Berndtson GmbH, 2003); Text: (Singapore: APA Publications GmbH & Co. Verlag KG, 2003).

<sup>2</sup> Buchholz, p. 9.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

<sup>4</sup> Buchholz, Karen. pp. 8-9.

<sup>5</sup> Bykofsky, Stu and Dan Gross. "The racial prism: We See Everything in Black and White." *The Philadelphia Daily News*. January 6, 2004. Features, p. 33.

<sup>6</sup> Philadelphia Neighborhood Information Systems database and US Census from 1990, 1996 and 2000.

<sup>7</sup> This percentage is based on a comparison with the 2000 Census figures that include anyone who claims African American as part of their racial composition.

<sup>8</sup> Rothberg, p. 125-128.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid.

<sup>10</sup> Interview with Oshunbumi Fernandez. February 16, 2004.

<sup>11</sup> Oral History, p. 167 "I brought in my troops too."

<sup>12</sup> Ibid.

<sup>13</sup> <http://www.odunde.org/licenses.htm>.

<sup>14</sup> Davies, Dave. "What Street Faces." *The Philadelphia Daily News*. November 05, 2003.

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### Acknowledgements:

Odunde (top left): Thomas B. Morton. Courtesy of *Works in Progress* (Philadelphia: The Philadelphia Folklore Project). Volume 5, Number 2, Spring 1992. p. 1.

Mummers (bottom right): Golden Sunrise New Year's Association  
<http://philadelphia.about.com/library/gallery/bl2002mummers171.htm>

### Chapter 1.

Figure 1: Courtesy of *Philadelphia Inquirer* <http://www.philly.com/images/philly/inquirer/6168/38049712520.jpg>

Figure 2: Composite image created by author. Base map courtesy of *Philadelphia Murals and the stories they tell*. (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2002).

Figure 3: Photography by author.

### Chapter 3.

Figure 4: Murray Comics <http://philadelphia.about.com/library/gallery/bl2002mummers115.htm>

Figure 5: Fralinger String Band  
<http://philadelphia.about.com/library/gallery/bl2002mummers48.htm>

Figure 6: Golden Sunrise New Year's Association  
<http://philadelphia.about.com/library/gallery/bl2002mummers171.htm>

Figure 7. <http://www.robbender.com/photos/philadelphia/mummers2002/>

Figure 8. <http://mywebpages.comcast.net/wench/graphics/wench.gif>

Figures 9-11: Johnston, Norman J. "The Caste and Class of the Urban Form of Historic Philadelphia," *Journal of the American Institute of Planners*, November 1966, pp. 341, 345, 347.

Figure 12: (web) Reference lost.

Figure 13: <http://www.stephen-foster-songs.de/Amsong35.htm>.

Figures 14-15: Composite image created by author. Base map courtesy of University of Pennsylvania Neighborhood Information Systems: <http://cml.upenn.edu/nbase/>. Demographic overlay courtesy of Goode, Judith and JoAnne Snyder. *Reshaping Ethnic and Racial Relations in*

*Philadelphia: Immigrants in a Divided City*. Temple University Press: Philadelphia, 1994. p. 41

Figure 16: Courtesy of *Center City Plan*. (Philadelphia: Philadelphia City Planning Commission, 1963).

Figure 17: Composite image created by author. Base map courtesy of University of Pennsylvania Neighborhood Information Systems: <http://cml.upenn.edu/nbase/>. Demographic overlay courtesy of Goode, Judith and JoAnne Snyder. *Reshaping Ethnic and Racial Relations in Philadelphia: Immigrants in a Divided City*. Temple University Press: Philadelphia, 1994. p. 41

Figure 18: <http://www.frogycarr.homestead.com/Mvc-019s.jpg>

#### Chapter 4.

Figure 19: Base map courtesy of *Historic Urban Plans*, Ithaca, NY, 1969.

Figure 20: Johnston, Norman J. "The Caste and Class of the Urban Form of Historic Philadelphia," *Journal of the American Institute of Planners*, November 1966,

Figure 21: Thomas B. Morton. Courtesy of *Works in Progress*. (Philadelphia: Philadelphia Folklore Project). Volume 8, Number 3, Summer/Fall 1995. p. 22.

Figure 22: Thomas B. Morton. Courtesy of *Works in Progress*. (Philadelphia: Philadelphia Folklore Project). Volume 6, Number 2, Spring 1993. p. 6.

#### Chapter 5.

Figures 23-24: Photography by author.

Figure 25: <http://www.polishamericancenter.org/ParadeRoute.htm>

Figure 26: Photography by author.

Figure 27: *Streetwise Philadelphia Map*. 2004.

Figures 28-31: Composite image created by author. Base map courtesy of University of Pennsylvania Neighborhood Information Systems: <http://cml.upenn.edu/nbase/>. US Census 2000 demographic data.