

The Decline in Shared Collective Conscience as Found in the Shifting Norms and Values of Etiquette Manuals*

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ABSTRACT

In this article we address Emile Durkheim's theory that norms and values become more generalized and abstract in a society as it becomes more complex and differentiated. To test Durkheim's theory we examine etiquette manuals—the common texts that define normative manners and morals in American society. We perform a deductive content analysis on past and present etiquette manuals to understand what changes have occurred regarding shifting behavioral norms and values over time. Our findings suggest that a change has occurred in the presentation and language of contemporary etiquette manuals, reflecting a greater change in the normative order. We find—as Durkheim would expect—that three main shifts have occurred: a shift from specific to general expectations for behavior in social settings, a shift from demanding to more suggestive rules of behavior in social situations, and a weakening in the severity of sanctions for breaches of etiquette.

Keywords: etiquette, Emile Durkheim, collective conscience, normative order

INTRODUCTION

Cultural generalization—the spreading of norms and values to everyone in a social system, and process by which such norms and values become more abstract—was a ubiquitous process that Durkheim (1893) observed in societies as they grow larger and more complex. Durkheim reasoned that increasing social complexity creates challenges to local, particularized codes of conduct and value-orientations, and that as a society's social division of labor becomes increasingly differentiated, norms and values must be simplified through abstraction and generalization (and, in Weberian terminology, *formalized*). Indeed, Durkheim's concept of *anomie* is rooted in this process. When norms lose their anchorage in societal

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values, humans face the ultimate danger—"the danger of meaninglessness" (Berger, 1969, p. 22). Only concretized, strongly sanctioned norms serve as the ultimate shield against what Peter L. Berger has called the "terror of anomy" [*sic*] (1969, p. 26).

A significant body of theoretical and empirical work in sociology has substantiated Durkheim's claims (Parsons & Bales, 1955; Parsons & Smelser, 1956; Alexander, 1988; Alexander & Colomy, 1990; Turner, 2003, 2010; Luhmann, 2012; Abrutyn, 2009, 2013). Historical and archaeological research also have supported the idea that cultural norms and values become more generalized and abstract over time, two prime examples being the evolution of legal codes in Mesopotamia (Yoffee, 2005) and ancient Rome (Kunkel, 1966). In addition, codes of conduct that appeared in Canon law in the 11th and 12th centuries became more formalized as they spread to royal, manorial, and mercantile law systems (Berman, 1983). Across disciplines, there is ample evidence that shows how generalized, formal systems of conduct emerge in societies as they increase in complexity.

In this article, we ask a basic set of interrelated questions: (1) Can we identify the generalization of norms and values in the contemporary United States? (2) If so, what is the shape and texture of these generalizations? And finally, (3) is it possible to surmise any consequences of these generalizations? To answer these questions, we examine etiquette manuals. Sociologists have long used etiquette manuals to study various things, be it the leveling or democratization of society (Elias, 1978; Wouters, 1995a, 1995b) or, conversely, the solidification and obfuscation of class distinctions (Arditi, 1999). Erving Goffman (1963a) famously drew from them to highlight what he deemed "some of the norms that influence the conduct of our middle class" (1963a, pp. 4–5). Or, as Wouters (1995a, p. 109) remarked: "the codes expressed in these books may reveal a mixture of actual and ideal behaviour, but these ideals are 'real;' that is, they are not constructed by social scientists." Goffman and others conceived the behavioral guidelines presented in etiquette manuals as one "shield" against the "terror of anomy," because while societal norms and values had grown abstract and distant from *particular* situations, protection could be found in knowing how one should behave *across* situations. Thus, studying the "evolution" of etiquette manuals in terms of how they present codes of behavior to a general audience is one plausible strategy to reveal whether or not generalization has occurred in greater society. To accomplish this we perform a deductive content analysis on three editions of Emily Post's *Etiquette*—the seminal publication on American manners and morals. By examining changes in editions of Post's etiquette manuals we obtain a comprehensive view of the process of cultural generalization.

ETIQUETTE MANUALS: PAST AND PRESENT

Etiquette manuals of the past painted a picture of post-World War II middle class America as a monolithic class—a perspective shared by many mid-century soci-

ologists (Reisman, 1950; Mills, 1951, 1959; Parsons & Bales, 1955). Because of this one might question whether etiquette manuals can provide a complete understanding of how generalized norms emerge for all members of a society. Some may claim that etiquette manuals are too reductionist and narrow—that they reflect the ideals of one cross-section of the population. While it is given that etiquette manuals generally reflect the norms, values, and cultural milieu of their target audience, many believe such manuals provide a keen insight into the nature of *all* individuals' behavior:

[The] content and success of *Etiquette* provide evidence of a society that, while theoretically classless—or at least largely homogenized into a self-identified and broadly defined middle class—is practically well-versed in reading subtle delineations of class codes from mien, gestures, expressions, and behavior (Lees-Maffei, 2012, p. 219).

Scholarly interest in changing etiquette is not new. Elias (1978) was interested in how changes in etiquette manuals were linked to changes in personality, the meanings of privacy, and personal space; Wouters (1995a, 1995b) looked at changes as reflective of the democratization of western societies and the subsequent decreasing social and psychic distance between classes and sexes; and Arditì (1999) argued that the changes were, in fact, not indicative of the decline in power between classes, but rather reflective of its reconfiguration and decentralization. We agree with Arditì's contention that people do not only use etiquette manuals to learn how to behave—they use them “because they help men and women to rearrange conceptually a changed order of social relations . . . [and] help the members of social groups immediately below the dominant classes to master the logic of social life” (1999, pp. 28–9).

However, our analysis on changes in etiquette manuals moves away from Arditì's poststructuralist concerns of the previous scholars by employing a Durkheimian perspective: if society has changed, and heterogeneity has become a salient characteristic of the American civil sphere, then we should expect—according to Durkheim (1893)—that the norms and expectations undergirding encounters between strangers, colleagues, and intimates should also have become more generalized and abstract—and sanctions for transgressions should have weakened in severity over time. If this is the case, then we must ask how the social relations in which Arditì is interested are ordered. If they no longer provide paths to social mobility, has the distance between the small American elite and the large heterogeneous mass become insurmountable?

The Theoretical Logic of Etiquette

A central problem in sociological theory has been to identify the underlying logic that manages the tension between action and order. If proper etiquette represents the rules all

should abide by, what is the process by which people conform to such rules? Durkheim (1893) famously proposed a normative theory of action in which socialization internalizes norms whose violation brings sanctions. Internalized norms and the understanding of potential consequences leads individuals to *self-regulate*, or control their behavior. According to Durkheim, then, actors self-regulate because the moral order presses down upon them and makes them think it is the right thing to do. The conflict between order and action is thus mediated by *norms* that define how to behave in social situations, and the threat of sanctions for violating the moral order; these norms constitute the substance of etiquette manuals.

Norms have been a fundamental component of functionalist explanations of social control (Parsons, 1951) as well as in interactionist models that focus on recurrent exchanges (Blau, 1964). Understanding norms is also important when addressing the shift from instrumental to social rewards (especially emotions), when explaining the shift from expectations to obligations, and when identifying how significant others monitor and sanction behavior (Lawler, 2006). Of course, these arguments fit mechanical types of social settings, where face-to-face, intimate relationships form around trust and commitment as equally valued benefits. “Organic” types of societies replace *concrete norms* predicated on specific members of the group with *generalized norms* meant to ensure that impersonal others can ritually manufacture trust in lieu of shared history (Goffman, 1967). In addition, these ritualized interactions must also reduce outward tension and conflict as organic relationships often are driven by power imbalances (Collins, 2004); thus, rituals of demeanor and deference are central to the successful impersonal interactions between a wide swath of role-performers—e.g., doctor-patient; professor-student.

Etiquette Manuals over Time: The Transition of Widespread Norms

Do etiquette manuals represent widespread societal norms? Some claim that in the past behavioral rites and rituals have differed between social strata, and that certain norms were only found among a small percentage of the aristocracy and military elite (Elias, 1978). But norms that defined specific segments of the culture became more diffuse over time. The emergence in Europe of a legitimate urban, merchant middle class, the expansion of liberal arts education, and slowly expanding university-system offered a tempered path to social mobility (Meyer, Ramirez, & Soysal, 1992). With the Industrial Revolution and democratic nation-states, urban centers became concentrations of bigger middle classes. This combined with the lack of landed gentry, the gilded age “Horatio Alger” mythos, and the visibility of self-made men like Carnegie made social mobility in the U.S. the dream for the masses. Rapid change brought anomie and, for the elites, a lack of control over this rapidly changing urban, industrial class (Arditi, 1999). Enter etiquette manuals:

One of the functions of etiquette is to draw and maintain social dividing lines, to include new groups that have “the necessary qualifications” and to exclude the “rude”—that is, all others

lower down the social ladder. In this way, changes in etiquette convey changes in established-outsider relationships, that is, in power relationships. Another function of etiquette is, within an environment protected by exclusion, to develop forms of behaviour and feeling that are considered and experienced as “tactful,” “kind,” “considerate,” and “civilized.” The social definitions presented in etiquette books are dominated by the established, those who are “included” (Wouters, 1995a, p. 108).

Wouters goes on to argue, drawing from four different nation-states and a century’s worth of etiquette manuals, that the double-function of etiquette books is as such: (1) those below the elite who adopt the norms prescribed in these books feel superior to those in their own class or below them, and thus become more accepting of their position as mobility via manners is “assured,” while (2) the adoption of these norms reinforces the power differentials between the adopters and the “authors” of these norms, as deference and demeanor become encoded in routine encounters.

Etiquette manuals, then, in the functional sense provide “codes . . . intended to regulate social interaction to achieve a smooth and considerate result, and . . . provide a framework within which to judge others” (Lees-Maffei, 2012, p. 218). Their latent function is *integration*, while also providing the building blocks for the American dream of social mobility; the means to achieving both is through what Elias (1978) called “generative structuralism,” or the intergenerational transmission of taken for granted “common stocks of knowledge.” However, those who own the means to intellectual property (or symbolic power in Bourdieu’s (1989; 1991) terminology) also shape what form and content the generative structure takes, as well as gain an advantage by being in a position to dispense with such advice; especially when it is adopted in interactional strategies and their *habitus* by those in subordinate positions. Ardit (1999, pp. 28–9) shows how the goal of those aspiring to be elite do not just want to learn the right behavioral dispositions, but to “make that logic into a habit” and “not simply learn the manners of the elite but to master the logic instructing their manners.” In a sense, then, whether one takes a functionalist or a more critical approach, etiquette manuals do have objective, empirical consequences for consensus-formation around certain norms. It is imperative, then, to question just (1) how serious a change has occurred between Post’s earliest editions of *Etiquette* and the latest one (while also drawing from other classical/contemporary etiquette manuals), and (2) how much of a change has occurred, thereby raising questions about how homogeneous American society is and, perhaps more seriously, whether the chasm between elites and those potentially aspiring towards them has vanished or, perhaps more accurately, ceased to matter, or whether it has manifested itself in ways other than behavioral norms.

METHOD

In this study we examine passages in etiquette manuals to identify normative behavioral expectations for actors in encounters. Admittedly, treating etiquette

manuals as valid indicators of societal norms raises methodological questions, but their validity has been supported:

Although [etiquette manual] authors do not empirically test their claims as to what is regarded as proper . . . they are still describing some of the norms that influence the conduct of our middle class, even though on many occasions other factors will predominate (Goffman, 1963a, pp. 4–5).

The codes expressed in these books may reveal a mixture of actual and ideal behaviour, but these ideals are ‘real;’ that is, they are not constructed by social scientists (Wouters, 1995a, p. 109).

While others have generally only examined single editions of etiquette manuals (Goffman, 1963a), we go beyond this strategy by *comparing* past and present editions of etiquette manuals. We do this to understand (1) how norms and values have become more generalized over time, (2) how expectations/tolerance for conformity and nonconformity have shifted over time, and (3) how sanctions for breaches in etiquette have diminished in severity over time. While we cite many different etiquette manuals (Dresser, 2005; English, 2012; Rossi, 2011), we focus our attention on editions of Emily Post’s *Etiquette*, the most popular, best-selling manual in America and, thus, the definitive source on proper etiquette (Post, 1922; Post, 1937; Post et al., 2011).¹

Study Procedure

In this study we follow and extend the methodology Erving Goffman employed in *Behavior in Public Places* (1963a). Goffman provided one of the first sociological studies on etiquette manuals, and we generally follow his procedure. In order to identify differences in etiquette standards over time we dichotomize etiquette manuals as *classical* or *contemporary*. Manuals published prior to (and included in) Goffman’s study are treated as classical. Though we define etiquette manuals published after 1963 as “contemporary,” we only analyze those published in the last 10 years given the remarkable technological changes that took place in the 1990s and 2000s. New developments (such as social media and the Internet) have influenced a shift in behavior norms in society (Post Senning, 2013).

Because Goffman’s research was limited to Post’s fifth edition, we follow Goffman’s procedure by citing relevant passages from the fifth edition, but we also cite the first and most current (18th) edition. We chose the first, fifth, and 18th editions because they represent differences in normative rules for behavior across roughly a century in American culture. The first edition provides a baseline for values and norms that defined early 20th century America. The fifth edition represents behavioral standards that Goffman identified. The 18th edition offers the most up-to-date guidelines for behavior in contemporary society.

In addition to a more comparative analytic strategy, we move away from Goffman’s arbitrary and anecdotal analysis and attempt a more thorough,

systematic approach by employing a deductive content analysis on the first and 18th editions that compares differences of etiquette guidelines across eras. Deductive content analysis is appropriate when the structure of analysis is operationalized on the basis of previous knowledge and the purpose of the study is theory testing (Elo & Kyngas, 2007; Kyngas & Vanhanen, 1999). In deductive content analysis, one develops a general research question to guide one's analysis. As stated previously, in this study we seek to discover if and how norms and values have become more generalized over time, how expectations/tolerance for conformity and nonconformity have shifted over time, and how the severity of sanctions for breaches in etiquette have changed over time. The next step in deductive content analyses is to define code categories (or categories of relevance) that are derived from one's research question. These categories provide a focus in which to guide the content analysis. The categories for this study include:

1. Normative focus (representing dimensions of *specific* vs. *general* societal norms)
2. Degree of conformity (representing dimensions of *demanding* vs. *encouraging* expectations for conformity)
3. Severity of sanctions (representing dimensions of *extreme* vs. *moderate* behavioral sanctions)

These categories of relevance follow Durkheim's (1893) simple model of societal differentiation stated above: societies move from systems of mechanical to organic solidarity². Mechanical solidarity creates trust and commitment through homogeneity and a strong collective conscience, both of which generate clear norms, with compliance demanded, monitored, and sanctioned with severity for even the simplest offenses. Organic solidarity, however, is predicated on heterogeneity and mutual interdependence, and thus norms must be generalized to cover a broader set of circumstances, role-status positions, and the impersonal nature of relationships. Additionally, the emergence of several disparate social units—differentiated by occupation, ethnicity, and so forth—puts pressure on the generalization and relativization of authority systems so that they are less severe and more sensitive to cultural differences within and between subpopulations. We expect the same process to occur from past to present etiquette manuals: norms and values should shift from specific/concrete to general/abstract; the collective conscience, as understood as a moral force coercing obligatory action, should shift from demanding and “must” to suggestive and “should”; and, finally, sanctions should shift from severe implications of the self to more gentle implications likely diluted with humor.

The next step in deductive content analysis is to define the recording unit. Goffman focused on *passages of words* as the recording unit. To discover differences in each edition of *Etiquette* regarding normative focus, severity of conformity, and severity of sanctions, we focus both on *passages of words* and *individual words* as recording units. A combined approach is helpful to discover definitively how each

manual differs in their treatment of behavioral expectations. In particular, we focus on four parts of speech as our individual word recording units: *adverbs of frequency*, *auxiliary verbs*, *verbs of requirement*, and *adjectives of quality*.³

Adverbs of frequency (also called adverbs of time) represent how often something happens. Such adverbs can be coded as *definite* (e.g., “always” or “never”) or *indefinite* (e.g., “sometimes” or “often”). We focus on definite adverbs of frequency in this study to address Category 2 (shifts in degrees of conformity). Auxiliary verbs (also known as *helping verbs*) add functional or grammatical meaning to a clause. The auxiliary verbs we examine in this study include “must” (and “must not”) and “should” (and “should not”). These are *modal* auxiliary verbs—i.e., verbs that express necessity, possibility, or obligation. As with our adverbs of frequency, we address the use of modal auxiliary verbs in editions of *Etiquette* to understand changes regarding Category 2.

Verbs of requirement represent action in a sentence. They are *subjunctive mood* verbs that express a requirement or request. We examine one verb of requirement (the term “demand”). Adjectives of quality describe the nature of a noun, i.e., whether a noun is good or bad. We examine one adjective of quality: the term “bad.” Verbs of requirement and adjectives of quality are examined to understand changes in Category 3—the severity of sanctions.

Because the individual recording units in this study (words) sometimes have different meanings depending on usage, each part of speech we examine is treated as a *semantic unit*. For example, the words “always” and “never” appear in both editions of *Etiquette* to refer to situations where behavior is obligatory or to be avoided. But these words are not always used in this context. Because of this each instance of the study recording units are coded for their semantic meaning. For example, when recording units take the form of adverbs of frequency they are coded as either a *declarative command* or *otherwise*, depending on whether or not they are used in the context of behavior that is obligatory. An example of an adverb of frequency that is used as a declarative command includes the sentence “One should never call out a name in public, unless it is absolutely unavoidable” (Post, 1922, p. 27). In phrases like “Unless you wish to stamp yourself a person who has never been out of ‘provincial’ society, never speak of your husband as ‘Mr.’ except to an inferior” (Post, 1922, p. 44), never is only counted once (as a declarative command), even though it appears twice.

STUDY FINDINGS: A SHIFTING MORAL ORDER

One of the first statements in the current edition of *Emily Post’s Etiquette* (Post et al., 2011) regards the *change* of proper etiquette over time:

Long gone are the 1st edition chaperone and the 12th edition ashtrays as are the dinner table and white gowns; they have been replaced by topics that have relevance to the daily lives of most

Americans today, such as managing new communications forums and devices, having confidence at work, and navigating new family structures and dynamics (Post et al., 2011, p. x).

The newer edition still features etiquette found in the first edition such as guidelines for a proper table setting or how to prepare for a wedding. Also included however are modern lessons that would confuse early-to-mid 20th century readers. Rules regarding “un-friending” people on *Facebook*, tips on when to use a smart phone in public, and how to plan a dinner party when guests have extensive dietary restrictions would confound past readers. The fact that there are different types and manifestations of proper etiquette in contemporary American society compared to the past is not surprising, and not in itself particularly noteworthy; such developments have been documented in previous literature (Wouters, 1995a, 1995b; Arditi, 1999; Lees-Maffei, 2012). What is noteworthy is that an abstract change has occurred that defines etiquette across the eras—a change that is evident upon examination of present and past etiquette manuals. What was once a comfortable venue for moralizing and for shaming has been replaced by a message of considerateness and respect. The etiquette guidelines of the past that were centered on social climbing, refinement, and goodness have been replaced with simple guidelines for making public encounters tolerable for all parties involved.

Consider as an opening piece of evidence the differences in front matter between the first edition of *Etiquette* and the most recent. In the introduction to the first edition, the Ten Commandments are invoked in the *first sentence* (Post, 1922, p. 3). The second paragraph notes the “long, slow progress of social intercourse in the upward climb of man from the primeval state” (Post, 1922, p. 3), noting that morals and manners are the backbone of a civilized society. By the middle of the section, adopting etiquette standards has been linked to social mobility, citing their emergence in France from the King on down. This is followed with an elegant quote: “It is not the people who make small technical mistakes or even blunders, who are barred from the paths of good society, but those of shame and pretense whose veneered vulgarity at every step tramples the flowers in the garden of civilization” (Post, 1922, p. 6). This contrasts a statement in the current edition that appears on the inside flap of the dust cover: “Above all, manners are a sensitive awareness of the feelings of others. Being considerate, respectful, and honest is more important than knowing which fork to use. Whether it’s a handshake or a fist bump, it’s the underlying sincerity and good intentions of the action that matter most” (Post et al., 2011). Our analysis continues by examining this broader shift within the context of specific guidelines becoming increasingly general.

Normative Focus in Everyday Encounters: From the Specific to the General

At first glance, contemporary etiquette manuals seem to be as concerned with specific guidelines for proper etiquette as their classical counterparts. For

example, English (2011) discusses proper etiquette in interviewing for and securing a summer job; Rossi (2013) delineates the proper behavior while getting a tattoo; and Dresser (2012) goes as far as to discuss the proper way for American school administrators to handle a Hmong family's request to sacrifice a rooster in order to exorcise evil spirits that entered their daughter on school property.

By any standard, these seem to be very specific instances of etiquette. However, the focus in these examples—and in contemporary etiquette manuals overall—appears to be more *situational* than *specific* regarding the details of codes of conduct. In all the above examples, the main guideline is to be considerate toward others and to be aware of others' needs and normative expectations. While the situation is specific, the main recommendation for behavior involves *general* notions of kindness, respect, and consideration. The manifestation of such general guidelines takes different forms, but the details and differences in the context is mostly irrelevant—the general guideline for behavior is what is emphasized. We now investigate the shift from specific to general behavioral expectations over time by examining different editions of Post's *Etiquette*.

Returning to the introduction in the first edition of *Etiquette*, we find the specific focus of its treatment of manners, qualifying its approach in a positive fashion:

As a study of all that is admirable in American manners . . . there can be no happier choice than the present volume . . . all minutia of correct manners are included and no detail is too small to be explained, from the selection of a visiting card to the mystery of eating corn on the cob (Post, 1922, p. 6).

Juxtaposing this preface with the introductory passages in the current edition shows the contemporary version having a more general focus:

Etiquette is fluid . . . not a set of rigid rules. Manners change over time and reflect the best practices of our times. Etiquette isn't a set of "prescriptions for properness" but merely the guidelines for doing things in ways that make people feel comfortable (Post et al., 2011, p. 6).

Both introductions orient the reader in different ways. In the first edition manners are presented in moral absolutist terms, whereas the 18th edition lacks such rigidity—manners are presented as guidelines that facilitate "comfortable" encounters. Etiquette standards in the first edition take the form of the "prescriptions for properness" that the current edition condemns. Let us examine these manuals more closely to illustrate the shift from specific to general cultural etiquette standards, first by addressing changes in gender roles, which are some of the clearest changes identifiable in all contemporary etiquette manuals (Wouters, 1995b).

Gender Roles. Past editions of *Etiquette* often and directly address how a man and woman should behave as *separate* entities, in relation to one another and idiosyn-

cratically (an emphasis on *specific* norms). The newest edition comments on gender differences from time to time, but such distinctions are often to remind the reader that the divide between etiquette patterns between the sexes has greatly diminished. One illustration of the distinction between gendered expectations of behavior in the editions of *Etiquette* regards the wearing of hats. The 5th edition strongly emphasizes that men are to take off hats in front of women in an elevator, hotel, club, or opera house, but may put them on when leaving such places and upon entering a public corridor. Special emphasis is provided regarding wearing a hat in a house: "A gentleman does not keep his hat on in the presence of ladies in a house—ever!" (Post, 1937, p. 25). The 18th edition of *Etiquette* does not comment on the appropriateness of men removing their hat in front a woman. Rather, a short passage is provided about how removing a hat in front of "another" is a general sign of respect and acknowledgement. Also provided is a list of social settings where one should leave a hat "on" or "off." This edition says it is still inappropriate to wear a hat in a house, but one can wear a hat in an elevator and not take it off if a woman is present.

Empirically, in contemporary society, it is common to see men wearing hats in front of women across a wide range of social settings. These norms have changed over time. The main sociological difference seems to be that etiquette of this sort is determined more by *environment* or *context* than idiosyncratic, *personal characteristics* of an "other" that may be present: "Men and women either remove or leave hats on depending on the place, whether they are in or outdoors . . ." (Post et al., 2011, p. 21).

An interesting juxtaposition concerning hat etiquette is provided by Dresser in her book *Multicultural Manners*, a treatise on etiquette rules for the 21st century (Dresser, 2005). She titles her discussion with a humorous cultural reference: "Hats Off—Not!" Dresser notes that wider cultural norms have redefined appropriate hat rules since some wear hats as part of religious significance. Dresser's notes how contemporary norms for the appropriate wearing of hats seems to have no solid core. For instance, Dresser (2005, p. 6) remarks, "Guidelines are not absolutes . . . there will be exceptions to every rule because conduct differs with individuals." Thus, Durkheim's thesis appears to be confirmed: the generalization (and relativization) of norms parallels the growth in heterogeneity. If it is true that there are "exceptions," and not any absolutes, then can one even locate a shared moral order? Where clear moral guidelines are internalized, and actors are able to observe, judge, and sanction others' behavior, a strong collective conscience must be present; yet, where the criteria for judgment become open for debate—which is the opposite of Emily Post's specific, unbending mores—how can a "looking glass self" emerge and how can we speak of a generalized American other? Indeed, the "decentering" of American society is seemingly in play (Arditi, 1999), but it is far more serious in the sense that either the American "civil sphere" has fragmented, or it always has been but now it has been made salient.

Changes in Interaction Rituals. Other evidence of the specificity of norms changing over time regards *introduction rules*. In the first edition of *Etiquette*, very specific details define contingencies that occur in introduction scenarios, such as when introductions should or should not be made, what to do when meeting a stranger for the second time, the “half-way” introduction of a servant, and how to retort courteously to someone forgotten. The current edition addresses none of these scenarios, instead providing very brief guidelines for what to do in “formal greetings” vs. “informal greetings.”

Goffman (1963a, p. 122) used Post to illustrate a very specific interaction norm that defined middle-class practice in the past: the proper etiquette practiced when two people are walking together and they meet a third who stops to speak to one of them. In this instance the proper behavior was defined by the other walking slowly on, not standing awkwardly to wait for an introduction. Only when formally invited to join the two could the third join the group. In the present day, these common occurrences seem to lack a formal, known etiquette in which all are aware. Sometimes both individuals stop to address the third, sometimes the other walks slowly on, and sometimes the third readily and purposively joins the group without any formal invitation to do so. The vague awareness and informal practice of such etiquette in contemporary society follows what is presented in the newest edition of *Etiquette*. There is no mention of how a third person should be integrated into a dyad when meeting them in social encounters. What is provided in contemporary etiquette books are general, more abstract guidelines for what to do during any introduction, regardless of context (Rossi, 2011; Post Senning, 2013).

To recapitulate: we find that the degree of clarity between the older manuals and the newer ones moves from nearly specific/concrete to situational/general. The logic of the manuals shifts from morality play to referential. And, finally, the norms move from specific institutionalized norms to broader situational norms. In particular, the women’s liberation movement and the remarkable diversification of civil life—especially the growth of black, Hispanic, and Asian middle class subpopulations, as well as the mobility Jews and Catholics have experienced since the 1960s (Gans, 1997)—has “forced” etiquette writers to recommend and encourage behavior couched in highly generalized situational terms rather than coerce the reader through specific prescriptions. This discussion naturally brings us to the next section: the transition from *demanding* to *suggestive* behavioral expectations and a shift in the severity of conformity.

Degree of Conformity: The Shift from Demanding to Suggestive Behavioral Rules

Another difference in past and present etiquette manuals regards the *degree of expected conformity* for rules of behavior. This difference is particularly evident when

examining the writing style the manuals employed. Past etiquette manuals are *severe* and *demanding* regarding appropriate behavior (i.e., there is more emphasis on conformity); present etiquette manuals are *moderate* and *encouraging* regarding appropriate behavior (i.e., there is less emphasis on conformity).

In the current edition of *Etiquette*, the authors appeal to the reader's common sense; it is written in a didactic manner. The authors specifically state that the new edition is written in a "more conversational tone" than what was employed in older editions (Post et al., 2011, p. x). Early editions were absolutist in their treatment of proper etiquette. For example, a common preface by Post in the early editions was "people of taste do this . . ." (Post, 1937, p. xi). In the contemporary version, the tone follows a more *recommending* tone: "The modern place setting usually consists of five pieces" (Post et al., 2011, p. 45). The term "usually" softens the mandate, defining it in a less absolutist manner. By Post's own admission, the etiquette of the past was defined in an ideal typical sense. Consider how she finished the previous quote: ". . . when I say that 'people of taste do this' . . . I naturally have in mind definite people whose taste is, in my opinion, the most nearly *perfect* among all those whom I know" (Post, 1937, p. xi, emphasis added). Rather than rely on anecdotal evidence, however, we turn to a systematic analysis of the differences in the specific language employed by the older and newer versions of *Etiquette*. By examining parts of speech (e.g., the use of specific types of verbs, adverbs, and adjectives), we make transparent the shift from past *demanding expectations* for behavior to present *encouraging recommendations* for behavior.

The Use of Adverbs of Frequency. We first compare the different use of *adverbs of frequency* in the first and 18th editions of *Etiquette*. Adverbs of frequency define where and when a type of behavior is appropriate; "always" and "never" are common examples. In the first edition, the use of "always" includes "When gentlemen are introduced to each other they always shake hands" (Post, 1922, p. 12), and "The groom's presents to his ushers are always put at their places at the bachelor dinner" (1922, p. 233). Examples of "always" in the 18th edition include "Hosts should always check before mentioning age" (Post et al., 2011, p. 316) and "When planning to visit someone who is ill at his home, always call first" (2011, p. 535).

Examples of the use of "never" in the first edition include "the hostess never leaves her post" (Post, 1922, p. 180) and "A lady never asks a gentleman to dance" (1922, p. 188). Examples from the 18th edition include "Never bring a sick child to work" (Post et al., 2011, p. 419) and "The throwing of the garter should never be done in a tasteless manner, with the groom fondling the bride's leg for all to see." (2011, p. 653).

A content analysis on both editions of *Etiquette* revealed important differences in the use of adverbs of frequency. The word "always" appears 439 times in the first edition. Of those 439 instances, the word is used 348 times to reference a declarative command of when it is appropriate to do something in line with proper etiquette. "Always" only appears 231 times in the 18th edition of *Etiquette*. It is used

Table 1. Comparisons of Frequencies of Parts of Speech in Post's 1st and 18th editions of *Etiquette*

Recording Unit	1 st Edition		18 th Edition		% different for “used as a command” 1 st vs. 18 th editions
	# of times appearing	# of times used as a command	# of times appearing	# of times used as a command	
<i>Adverbs of Frequency</i>					
always	439	348	231	151	+130%
never	376	303	154	99	+206%
<i>Auxiliary Verbs</i>					
must	507	444	148	65	+583%
must not	47	47	0	0	*
should	483	432	726	638	−48%
should not/ shouldn't	65	65	47	47	+38%
<i>Verbs of Requirement</i>					
demand	25	20	16	0	*
<i>Adjectives of Quality</i>					
bad	99	78	43	14	+457%

*Percentage differences for "must not" and "demand" cannot be calculated because they are never used in reference to a command in the 18th edition of *Etiquette*.

151 times as a declarative command. This is a large disparity, considering that each edition is similar in length. The use of "never" in each edition of *Etiquette* closely mirrors that of "always." In the first edition the word "never" appears 376 times. It appears 303 times in reference to behaviors or situations that should be avoided. In the 18th edition, "never" appears far less: 154 total times, 99 of them in context of avoiding some form of behavior or situation. It is concluded that the older edition of *Etiquette* relies on obligatory adverbs of frequency to a much greater degree, and thereby is more absolutist in tone and tenor. (Table 1 presents the quantitative findings for all content analyses in the study).

The Use of Auxiliary Verbs. The previous conclusion is further bolstered when we examine how the two versions use *auxiliary verbs*, specifically the terms "must" and "should" (and "must not"/"should not"). Examples of the use of "must" in each edition include "One inexorable rule of etiquette is that you must talk to your next door neighbor at a dinner table" (Post, 1922, p. 155), and "Using your turn signals before turning a corner or switching lanes is another must" (Post et al., 2011, p. 82). The term "must" appears 507 times in the first edition of *Etiquette*. It appears 444 times in reference to behaviors or situations that are obligatory. Conversely, "must" appears a total of 148 times in the 18th edition; it appears only 65 times in reference to obligatory behaviors.

Perhaps most interesting is that 88% of the time “must” appears in the first edition it refers to an obligatory behavioral mandate, wherein the 18th edition the term is only used half as often in the same manner (44% of the time). What accounts for this difference in writing style? The answer is partly found in an interesting shift toward the use of the phrase “*if you must . . .*” in the 18th edition that precedes various topics of etiquette. Examples of this include “If you must stand to retrieve something from the overhead bin, be as quick as possible” (Post et al., 2011, p. 115), and “If you must make or take calls when you’re with others, excuse yourself, keep it short, and return as soon as you can” (2011, p. 486). This phrasing is relatively common in the 18th edition, but virtually absent in the first edition (“if you must” appears 19 times in the 18th edition; it is only used four times in the original edition). This difference is underscored even more when examining the negative use of “must” in each edition—e.g., “*must not*.” An example of the use of “must not” is “No matter what happens, if all the china in the pantry falls with a crash, she must not appear to have heard it.” (Post, 1922, p. 152). “Must not” appears 47 times in the first edition, each instance referring to situations or behaviors to be avoided. In the 18th edition, there is not a single instance of the use of “must not.”

Let us now examine another auxiliary verb, the word “should.” Examples of the use of should in each edition include “Although the arrangement of the procession is thus fixed, those in affliction should be placed next to the one whose nearness may be of most comfort to them” (Post, 1922, p. 272), and “Hosts and hostesses should rise and go to greet all arriving guests at social events, but once the party is under way, it isn’t *necessary* to stand *every* time someone enters a room.” (Post et al., 2011, p. 11, emphasis added). The phrase “should” appears 483 total times in the first edition; it appears 434 times in reference to situations or behaviors that should be engaged. “Should” appears 726 total times in the 18th edition; it appears 638 times in reference to situations or behaviors that should be engaged. It follows that “should” appears more often in the contemporary edition of *Etiquette* than in the first edition. “Should” is a more moderate, *suggestive* auxiliary verb than “must.” The current edition of *Etiquette* treats conformity as something one *should* do; the first edition treats conformity as something one *must* do. “Should” is a word Dresser considers to be even too severe, as she notes that her manual is not intended “as a finger-pointing book of ‘shoulds’ ” (English, 2012, p. 3).

As with “must not,” the use of the phrase “should not” was examined to gain a more complete understanding of how “should” is used in editions of *Etiquette*. There is a great disparity in the use of “should not” between the editions, with it appearing more in the first edition. The phrase “should not” appears 67 times in the first edition; it appears only 5 times in the 18th edition. This disparity is mitigated though when examining the more contemporary use of the contraction “shouldn’t” which was not often used in formal writing in the past.⁴ The contraction “shouldn’t” appears 42 times in the 18th edition in reference to behaviors that

should not be engaged, so there is less disparity regarding the use of this phrase across editions. But still, controlling for the contraction, the first edition still has more of these negative phrases.

The Use of Verbs of Requirement. Verbs of requirement are words that represent an obligatory action, such as the term “demand.” In editions of *Etiquette*, “demand” is used in reference to situations where a behavior or etiquette guideline is obligatory. Examples include “Etiquette absolutely demands that one leave a card within a few days after taking a first meal in a lady’s house” (Post, 1922, p. 63) and “when a man marries a girl from a distant place, courtesy *absolutely demands* that his friends and neighbors call on her as soon as she arrives in her new home” (1922, p. 68).

“Demand” appears 25 times in the first edition of *Etiquette*, 20 of which references guidelines that absolutely must be followed. Though the 18th edition uses the term demand(s) 16 times, a frequency not that different from the older edition, what is interesting is the fact that “demand/demands” is *never* used in the 18th edition in context to an etiquette guideline that is obligatory in its expectation of conformity. When it does appear, it takes the form of “Please changes a demand into a request” (Post et al., 2011, p. 7), or “In this fast-paced society with its multiple demands, it’s all the more important to be intentional about using common courtesies in our everyday interactions” (2011, p. 5), or “This dual role can cause stress as the competing demands of parenting and providing financial support can come into conflict” (2011, p. 462). The differences in the use of adverbs of frequency, auxiliary verbs, and verbs of requirement in editions of *Etiquette* clearly illustrate the shift from demanding to suggestive conformity.

Severity of Sanctions: Changes in Reactions and Punishments for Breaches in Etiquette

In addition to shifts in normative focus and degree of conformity, etiquette manuals over time have changed along a third dimension: *severity of sanctions*. By this we refer to the manner in which etiquette manuals treat transgressions and breaches of etiquette. To be sure, the enforcement of proper etiquette is not like the enforcement of a legal code that has discernible sanctions attached to each breach, but rather is implied in most cases, or preemptively warned. Durkheim’s notion of the sacred and the profane was meant to capture the potential polluting effects that occur when the moral order is breached. Goffman, shifting from the religious sphere to everyday life, was also interested in pollution and the consequences of this breach. For instance, Goffman (1963a, p. 120) labels something as simple as forgetting a person’s name when he or she *ought* to remember the name a “sin.” Also, in his (1963b) work on stigma, he identifies *character blemishes* as a type of stigma which include, but are not limited to, idiosyncratic behaviors that

breach expectations, and thus cast doubt about the person's competence or, in worst cases, their status claims as a person—that is, they *pollute* the self. In *Interaction Rituals* (1967), he focuses on sanctions imposed by others in interactions when expectations are not met, or worse, when the individual does not show proper deference or demeanor given the context leading to feelings of *shame*.

Shame is one of the most powerful social emotions that calls into question the *person* and not the behavior (Lewis, 1976; Scheff, 1997; Turner, 2000). Shame is so intense an emotion that clinical and psychological research has confirmed Goffman's own observations that once shamed, a reparative or reintegrative ritual (Braithwaite, 1989; Scheff and Retzinger, 1991 [2001]) must be performed otherwise the social bond is threatened. We would expect, then, given the thesis and analysis posited above, the older etiquette manuals will explicitly or implicitly focus on the harm or consequences breaches will bring to the self, while contemporary manuals will likely soften the blow by focusing on guilt (or poor behavior and not poor self) or, even less intensely, on weaker emotions or outcomes.

Shame and Self. While early editions of *Etiquette* are heavily laden with shaming content, the 18th edition is not. In the first edition, shaming is found as early as in the introductory comments: "The perfection of manners by intensive cultivation of good taste . . . may not make men and women really virtuous, but it will often save them from what theologians call 'occasions of sin' " (Post, 1922, p. 6). In the first edition etiquette is discussed as being founded on *ethics*. Following this, Post's introductory chapter—notably titled "Best Society"—draws strong parallels to Confucius' *Analects* in that it appeals to the gentleman in even the common folk, and that a good society is one in which all people adhere closely to "the code."

As we move through Post's other chapters, we find strong condemnation for the most minor transgressions. In a section regarding when one should or should not use someone's first name in conversation, the 1937 edition claims that "to speak thus familiarly of one who is a mere acquaintance or whom one perhaps does not even know, is *unthinkable*" (Post, 1937, p. 33, emphasis added). This condemnation is omitted in the current edition, with very general guidelines provided for appropriate sequence of greetings and situational contingencies for what to say to whom in conversations (e.g., how to listen, how to know when to stop talking, etc.). And, in the current edition, the etiquette is presented as *here is what you should do*, without the *not doing this reveals you to be a lower station* ancillary statements.

Another notion of the juxtaposition of shaming in each edition is found in the chapters addressing relations between men and women. In the 1937 edition, a chapter entitled "Modern Man and Girl" makes sweeping statements like "The man who is deliberately 'out for what he can get' from a woman, is a type of parasite that is not even mentionable. And it is natural that every man of decent impulse shuns the faintest likeness to one of those pariahs" (Post, 1937, pp. 365–6). Post was equally harsh on women who exhibited "cheapness" of behavior:

The most typical meaning of the word “cheapness” is exemplified in the girl or young woman who *puts no value on herself*; who shows no reserves mentally, morally, or physically; who confides most personal and intimate details of her life to strangers; who, exacting no courtesy, doesn’t mind being nudged or pushed or shoved; and, having no sense of personal value, is willing to be kissed and petted—in other words, to put *herself* in the class with the food on a free-lunch counter” (Post, 1937, p. 371, emphasis added).

Clearly, Post means to attack the offender’s self, and not their behaviors. Contrast this with the current edition of *Etiquette* where there are no passages that comment on how someone should be looked upon for breaching dating codes. In the 18th edition we only find general guidelines of how to meet people, what to do on a first date, how to break up, etc. There is much more emphasis on *procedure* and *situational appropriateness* (e.g., differences in dating online, in person, or at work) than shameful self-definitions that should be applied to men and women who do not follow such procedures.

Another way this difference is illustrated is found in Goffman’s discussion of *acquaintanceship*, specifically the taboo of “cutting” another when it is obligatory to engage them in greeting or conversation. Cutting is “the practice of pointedly denying an encounter overture” (1963a, p. 114). Goffman notes that the rules of cutting are best illustrated by Post in the 1937 edition of *Etiquette*: “For one person to look directly at another and not acknowledge the other’s bow is such a breach of civility that only an unforgivable misdemeanor can warrant the rebuke” (Post, 1937, p. 30). In the 18th edition of *Etiquette*, no mention of cutting or a more colloquial term representing it is presented. The chapter dealing with the same topic (conversation) is positive in tone, providing information of what a good conversationalist *does* rather than does *not* do (or how one who breaches conversational etiquette should be viewed)—that is, it is about being effective and not about offending others.

An examination of *Etiquette*’s fifth edition reveals how severe breaches of etiquette during introductions were considered:

You must never introduce people to each other in public places unless you are very certain that the introduction will be agreeable to both. You cannot commit a greater social blunder than to introduce to a notable person someone she does not care to know (1937, p. 16).

Such “social blunders” as introducing to a notable person to someone the person cares not to know is hardly a major transgression in society today, even though it may be avoided. The first edition comments further on shameful behavior:

The hall-mark of so-called “vulgar people” is unrestricted display of uncontrolled emotions. No one should ever be made to feel like withdrawing in embarrassment from the over-exposed privacy of others. The shrew who publicly berates her husband is no worse than the engaged pair who snuggle in public. Every one supposes that lovers kiss each other, but people of good taste wince at being forced to play audience at love scenes which should be private (1922, p. 212).

Perhaps the most severe use of shame in the early editions of *Etiquette* is illustrated in a chapter entitled “The Guest No One Invites Again,” which discusses offenses against etiquette and the “bad upbringing” of girls and boys:

The guest no one invites a second time is the one who runs a car to its detriment, and a horse to a lather; who leaves a borrowed tennis racquet out in the rain; who “dog ears” the books, leaves a cigarette on the edge of a table and burns a trench in its edge, who uses towels for boot rags, who stands a wet glass on polished wood, who tracks muddy shoes into the house, and leaves his room looking as though it had been through a cyclone (1922, p. 300).

Post follows this passage with a striking condemnation, claiming that when people commit such acts it is . . .

. . . not only bad form but want of common civility and decency, and reflects not only on the girls and boys themselves but on their parents who failed to bring them up properly (1922, p. 301).

There is no such effusive language in the current edition of *Etiquette*.

The Use of Adjectives of Quality. Our content analysis continued to examine the use of shaming parts of speech in editions of *Etiquette*. To see these differences we examined the first and 18th editions’ use of an *adjective of quality*. Adjectives of quality describe the nature of a noun; examples include “bad” and “good,” as in “It is not only bad manners, it is bad housekeeping” (Post, 1922, p. 65). We focus only on the word “bad” as it is directly linked in meaning to “shame.” The term “bad” appears 99 times in the first edition of *Etiquette*. Of those instances it is used 78 times as an adjective of quality that condemns the engagement of a behavior or a breach of etiquette. The term “bad” appears 43 times in the 18th edition; it only appears 14 times to condemn a breach of etiquette. Most of the uses of bad in the 18th edition qualify nouns but do not condemn one for not adhering to an etiquette guideline. For example, bad is used in the 18th edition in reference to “bad weather,” “bad breath,” or a “bad day” rather than “doing *x* is in “bad taste” or “bad form.”

FINAL THOUGHTS

We began by asking three questions: Can we identify cultural generalization? If so, what does it look like? And finally, what are its consequences? While the research presented above is by no means exhaustive, it confirms the first question, provides insights into the second, and, is suggestive enough to invite future research to further explore the process of cultural generalization. We turn now to the consequences.

If the thesis of Norbert Elias’ (1978) great work was that the gradual centralization of authority was coupled with shifts in etiquette manuals directed at

internalizing shame and embarrassment as mechanisms of self-regulation, then our findings can only point to three possible conclusions. First, our study's findings are aberrations, or what Elias himself recognized as sudden countertrends that will eventually disappear or be moderated over time. Second, shame and embarrassment have been so effectively encoded in western democratic institutions like public education that using these techniques in etiquette manuals is superfluous. Or third, a combination of demographic, technological, economic, and sociological changes have arisen to mitigate the efficacy of particularized norms and values. Our findings seem to resonate with the third conclusion, and support Durkheim's prediction: that increased heterogeneity in society has led to abstractions and generalizations in values.

One could claim that changes in expectations of behavior over time are not as severe as what is reflected in etiquette manuals. On the one hand, many of the things people did in the Middle Ages—like eating from the same plate or public flatulence—were prohibited except in appropriate times and places—e.g., in Ethiopian restaurants or in Goffman's proscribed "back stages," respectively. Embarrassment and shame continue to be powerful self-regulating forces for many public behaviors. On the other hand, aristocratic norms and values that were leftovers from the late 19th century have clearly lost their strength in the face of several important factors.

First, it is arguable whether W.A.S.P. society remains as dominant or homogenous today as perceived in the early 1960s or pre-World War II. Regionalism has dramatically reshaped the way white folks "do" politics, religion, education, and the like, and also has impact on the organization of public life, norms, and appropriate sanctions.

Second, since 1963 (when Goffman wrote about etiquette) a massive restructuring of what it means to be American, who is American, and what civil rights are has occurred. Women are far more mobile occupationally, educationally, and martially than in any time since nonliterate hunter-gatherers (Blumberg, 1984). Asian-Americans and many Hispanics have also become more mobile, and African Americans—while lagging in many ways—are far more integrated and mobile than in 1963. Ultimately, the face of America has become multi-cultural, diverse, and relativism has emerged as a counter-ideology to the older assimilationist and melting pot models (Gordon, 1961; Glazer & Moynihan, 1963; Gans, 1997).

Third, the 1980s and 1990s brought about—for the first time in history—"affluent" teenagers and the shift in marketing strategies to these teens. Though it is open to debate, it is plausible to suggest that teen culture has replaced, or is competitive with, "middle class" culture. Hip hop music, trends in electronics and social networking, and the entertainment industry cater to teenagers and young adults far more than before, and thus a sort of "suspended"—or what Erik Erikson called "prolonged" adolescence—characterizes post-Vietnam War America. Thus, "adult" sensibilities and adult society have been challenged by

the ephemeral nature of adolescence, and have only gained a serious foothold via advances in medical technologies and health knowledge that extends life and surgeries and other methods that allow older people to stay looking younger. The baby boomers embrace the youth movement, and can now “stay” young to some degree.

Fourth, the rapid evolution of technology has both drawn people closer together by shrinking time and space, while also speeding up cultural change and, thereby, making fads come and go much faster (Bauman, 1997). New technology makes obsolete sets of norms and etiquette associated with the older forms or patterned behaviors. Additionally, new technologies challenge the viability of a set of norms and etiquette. The internet, for instance, forced the invention of new norms of appropriate behavior, but its relative anonymity and ubiquity challenges the ability to sanction them efficaciously. Coupled with prolonged adolescence and the already difficult time Americans have with expressing shame (Turner, 2000), a sort of *laissez faire* attitude has emerged around many issues that younger Americans consider no big deal. This condition has serious consequences as it has spread beyond mere etiquette and custom, and has bumped up against formal law—e.g., whether music should be free and available to all, or whether we should have to pay.

Fifth, it is entirely plausible that in light of these other factors, (1) behavioral norms have shifted towards the “lowest” common denominator, (2) informality has replaced formality in public settings, and (3) what acts as a status marker differentiating the elite from those aspiring to be them has moved from appropriate behavior to consumption patterns, residential, educational, and/or occupational prestige, and other aspects of lifestyle patterns closely associated with Max Weber’s (1968 [1918]) status groups. Yet, we suggest caution in dismissing the importance of etiquette for members in society, as the trappings of the aristocracy likely still remain important among the old aristocratic elite in the U.S. (e.g., the Rockefellers and Kennedys) and for those looking to gain entrance to elite groups in society (as well as for those seeking to gain acceptance at events that are closed to the general public and involve the wealthiest of wealthy, such as private, large-donor political soirees). Indeed, as Randall Collins (2000) warned, it is very often the rich that are most visible to the average person via the media; the wealthy are physically and cognitively removed from the everyday reality that most people have access too. Anecdotally, this difference is clear among professional athletes who are rich, visible, trend-setters and followers and the owners of sports teams who are wealthy, run in much more closed circles, and peddle trends to grow their business.

Unfortunately, our research strategy precludes us from exploring these questions any further than we have already. Future research needs to both determine how far-reaching cultural generalization has become and, more systematically, what the consequences are. Moreover, with all changes, there are two possible reactions: (1) countertrends towards greater particularism and shame, and (2) the

creation of new mechanisms of social control meant to supplement the decline of older forms. Research exploring these reactions would be extremely helpful to understanding cultural change.

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ENDNOTES

¹ The Emily Post Institute Media Kit (downloaded from emilypost.com on 6/25/14) states that over 200,000 copies of Post etiquette manuals are sold every year. The Post website has over 400,000 visitors per month; the Post Etiquette Daily Blog has approximately 50,000 monthly page views. Many national media outlets also feature etiquette advice from the Emily Post Institute, e.g., *The Boston Globe* (500,000+ readers per week), *Good Housekeeping* (4.68 million readers per month), and *The New York Times* (900,000+ readers per day).

² While Durkheim (1893) commented on the shift from mechanical toward organic solidarity in *The Division of Labor in Society*, it should be noted that in later work he seemed to abandon this dichotomy and the idea that these types of solidarity are purely discrete social systems. Indeed, in *Suicide* (1897 [1951]), Durkheim had already begun to conceptualize modern societies as having highly generalized value systems (organic forms of solidarity), while different cultural milieus (e.g., Protestant denominations vs. Catholic/Jewish communities) provided varying levels of specific norms and, thereby, different levels of protection (Abrutyn & Mueller, Forthcoming). He also saw organic solidarity as reducing structural equivalencies, as social units become less and less alike, while, on the other hand, new cultural mechanisms like stereotyped patterns of mobility (e.g., obtaining a bachelor's degree) helped mitigate the loss of a common conscience or consciousness (Abrutyn & Turner, 2011).

³ Digital transcripts of the Post *Etiquette* manuals were used in the deductive content analysis for this study. Individual words were identified, counted, and systematically analyzed using Microsoft Word (First edition of *Etiquette*) and Adobe Digital Editions (18th edition of *Etiquette*) software applications.

⁴ The use of the contraction “shouldn’t” in the current edition of *Etiquette* is itself a latent indicator of shifting norms and illustrates the laxness of formal standards in contemporary society; such contractions were not acceptable in formal writing in the past.

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