Symposium on the *Ghetto**

The *Ghetto*: Origins, History, Discourse

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Nearly a decade into the new millennium, many traditionally black *ghettos* like Harlem, the Fillmore, and Chicago's South Side have experienced declining population and gentrification. Now seems like a fitting time to evaluate the conceptual merits of the term and the trajectory of research on the "*ghetto*." Much of the research on poverty neighborhoods focuses on Chicago—but is Chicago's South Side representative of poverty neighborhoods (and *ghettos*) in other cities? Recently, this issue has been widely discussed on the Community and Urban Sociology listserve; as a follow-up, we invited an international group of scholars to offer their views on the subject in this Symposium on the *ghetto*.

The Jewish community in Venice dates back to 1382, when the Venetian government first authorized Jews to live in the city; the first residents were money lenders and businessmen. The enclosure of the Jews came after an outbreak of syphilis—a disease introduced from the New World that had no certain name, diagnosis, or treatment—said to be linked to the arrival of the so-called Marrani Jews from Spain (*Marrani* pl. *Marrano*—Spanish for pig). With the act of the Venetian Senate on March 29, 1516, some 700 Jewish households were required to move into the Ghetto Nuovo, an island in Cannaregio sestieri on the northwest edge of the city, with entry controlled by two gates that were locked at sundown (the term *ghetto* refers to the original use of the island as a foundry, and is from the Italian verb gettare, which means "to pour").

The Jewish ghetto would eventually include the Ghetto Nuovo (1516), Ghetto Vecchio (1541), and Ghetto Nuovissimo (1633). Because Jews could not own land, they had to pay rent to landowners who lived outside the ghetto. In addition, they had to pay taxes to finance the police boats that circled the islands each night to ensure that persons did not enter or leave the ghetto. Each morning Jews would leave behind the world of the Ghetto—their clothing marked with a yellow circle (for men) or yellow scarf (for women)—to work or to shop among gentiles and then return to the Ghetto each evening before sundown. Within the Ghetto, Jews were free to wear jewelry and other clothing prohibited on the streets of Venice following the Decree of 1512. In 1589, a charter guaranteed Jews the right to practice their religion. There eventually would be five synagogues for the separate groups of French, German Ashkenazi, Italian, Levantine, and Spanish (Sephardic-Marrano) Jews. While the Ghetto developed as an urban space isolated from the outside world, it provided the Jewish community with some measure of protection. When groups of angry citizens attacked the Ghetto in 1534 during Lent, the gates and

*References for the entire symposium are gathered at the end of the symposium.

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windows closed, and those inside were safe from the outside threat. Curiel and Cooperman (1990) suggests that

> The Ghetto's Jews did not refer to their enforced residence as a jail. Rather, it was a biblical 'camp of the Hebrews,' a place of Holiness on the way to the Promised Land. In Verona they declared a public celebration of its establishment. For the puritanical young rabbi, Samuel Aboab, who had first seen Venice as a 13-year-old student, the city's Ghetto seemed Isaiah's Jerusalem. . . . Aboab's attitude tells us much about Venetian Jewry's intense efforts to order their enclosed world; his choice of words tells us even more about how these Jews identified with their community-behind-walls and gloried in it.

In some sense, we must view the ghetto as a space between expulsion (in Spain and France) and incorporation (in the Muslim world). While segregation from the outside world brought an oppressed community together, it also turned the oppressed inward in new ways. This allowed for the development of a religious culture different from other Jewish communities. By the end of the sixteenth century, fear of assimilation and intermarriage led rabbinic courts to forbid dancing between Jewish women and Christian men. The Christian had become the alienated other.

The example of the Jewish Ghetto in Venice connects with the racialization of urban space across many dimensions. Racialization in this instance begins with the forced relocation of a group of persons distinguished as morally different and identified by a particular ethnic feature—their religion—to a physical space that is isolated from other areas of the city. The very space of the city becomes identified with the stigmatized; persons living outside of the Ghetto view the behavior and beliefs of those inside the Ghetto with suspicion and their bodies as dangerous; as Sennett (1994) says, "the space of the Ghetto reinforced such beliefs about the Jewish body: behind the Ghetto's drawn bridges and closed windows, its life shut off from the sun and the water, crime and idolatry were thought to fester" (248).

The Venetian Ghetto often is associated in the popular imagination with *The Merchant of Venice* (performed 1597, folio no. 1,600). The play likely has its origins in Edward de Vere's visit to Venice in 1575–1576, when it was fashionable for young aristocrats to complete their classical education in Greek and Latin literature with visits to Italy. The ghetto is not referenced in the play, and none of the scenes are set in the Ghetto, but popular culture still associates Shylock as *The Merchant of Venice*, and situates the play within the Ghetto, as in Julia Pascal's 2008 production of "Merchant of Venice" at the Arcola Theatre in London, where a survivor of the Warsaw Ghetto confronts a group of English actors in the modern-day Venice Ghetto and tries to reconcile 500 years and different ghetto experiences.

The Venetian Ghetto early on became a tourist destination as part of the Grand Tour of the 1600s and 1700s. Rail travel in the 1800s would directly link Venice with cities across Europe—although by this time there were many travel narratives by visitors from Europe and the United States. Today, the Museo Communita Ebraica in the Campo Ghetto Nuevo offers a tour of the ghetto with visits to three of the historic synagogues. There is a guided tour in the footsteps of Shylock (to connect us back with *The Merchant of Venice*). The Jewish ghetto has evolved into "the Jewish quarter," where a small community of

Orthodox Jews has repopulated the sixteenth-century complex. The Ghetto remains a tourist destination, somewhat off the beaten path even though it is very near the train station; not surprisingly, there is an official tourist map available in English, Japanese, and other languages at the Venetian tourist offices.

HISTORY: POPULAR LITERATURE AND SCHOLARSHIP

Given the usual narrative concerning the influence of the Chicago School of Urban Sociology, one might expect that the beginning point for discussion of the *ghetto* in American cities would be Louis Wirth and *The Ghetto*. But while the term *ghetto* was used in academic writing to refer to African American neighborhoods prior to publication of *The Ghetto*, it would not be used by white scholars to refer to black settlement patterns for another 20 years.

Discussion of and reference to the "voluntary" Jewish ghetto was commonplace in popular culture in the late nineteenth century. *Children of the Ghetto* (1892) by the British journalist Israel Zangwell (1864–1926) was later dramatized and performed in England and America (he also published a series of biographical studies titled *Dreamers of the Ghetto* (1898)). Abraham Cahan (1860–1951), the Russian-American journalist, emigrated to New York in 1882 and published *Yekl: A Tale of the New York Ghetto* (1898). This work presents the *ghetto* both as a historic entity and contemporary place, but also makes reference to Yiddish as "ghetto culture" brought from the old world (28).

African-American scholars used *ghetto* to describe the segregation of black populations in cities during the same period. In *The Black North: A Social Study*, W.E.B. Dubois describes the growth of the black population in Philadelphia's Seventh Ward and comments that "The Seventh Ward was itself a residence section 50 years ago, and then the negroes were strictly confined to a ghetto bordering the Delaware River." The *ghetto* here refers to a segregated area of first settlement, not to the entire Seventh Ward as a whole. Similarly, in his study of *Conditions among Negroes in the Cities*, George Haynes, an early urban sociologist and founder of the National Urban League, observed that "... the growing Negro business and professional classes and those engaged in other than domestic and personal service find separate sections in which to dwell. Thus the Negro ghetto is growing up." Haynes noted that "from the beginning" whites had segregated Blacks into separate neighborhoods and by 1900, 80.9 percent of the Black population of New York City was living in 12 of the city's 35 assembly districts (Haynes, 1913, 48). Here, too, *ghetto* refers to any neighborhood where Negroes were being concentrated.

Louis Wirth's classic, *The Ghetto*, was published first as an article in the *American Journal of Sociology* (this was common for the Chicago School studies). Wirth gives a historical overview of the development of the *ghetto* in Europe before describing the Chicago ghetto. This was not the first discussion of the ghetto: the area is described by Manuel Zeublin in *The Chicago Ghetto* (1895). Wirth traces the development of the Chicago ghetto from the Maxwell Street neighborhood west into North Lawndale (called "Deutschland" because this was the area of second settlement for German Jews) and notes that already there is a movement out of this area into the north-side neighborhoods. For Wirth, the Chicago ghetto is similar to other ethnic enclaves, an area where first-generation immigrants live and over time become assimilated to the mores of the larger society, and a model for the acculturation of other ethnic groups. Although Wirth's work is cited in

other Chicago School studies, *ghetto* is used strictly to refer to the Jewish area, not to other poverty neighborhoods (these remain slums), not to other ethnic neighborhoods (these remain Little Italy and the like), and not to African-American neighborhoods (this will remain the Black Belt in the Chicago School literature). In their classic study of Bronzeville (*Black Metropolis*, 1945), St. Clair Drake and Horace Cayton use the term *ghetto* in a way that is consistent with Wirth and the early Chicago school; it is used in only one section as a geographical reference to describe the poorest area of Chicago's south side (there is an elaborate description of the black lower class and lower-class culture of this area) and does not appear in the index. Clearly, the ghetto was located within Bronzeville, but Bronzeville itself was not a *ghetto*.

DISCOURSE: THE EMERGENT GHETTO

If the term *ghetto* does not enter sociology through Wirth and the Chicago School, where did it occur, and why did it become ubiquitous in the field in the 1960s? There appear to be two significant points of entry: first is the debate among human ecologists about how to measure Black segregation in the post-WWII city; second is Kenneth Clark's seminal work *Dark Ghetto* (1965). The development of various indices to measure segregation in American cities was on the agenda of human ecologists in the postwar period. Josephine Williams published an article entitled "Computing the Ghetto Index" in the *American Sociological Review*—the first such use of this term. In the same year Robert Weaver, later to become the first Secretary of HUD, published a study of housing segregation in American cities entitled *The Negro Ghetto* (1948). This was the first social sciences book since Wirth's *The Ghetto* (1928) in which the term *ghetto* appears in the title, and it would be another 10 years before it would happen again!

With the publication of Gilbert Osofsky's landmark study *Harlem: The Making of a Ghetto* (1966), historians began to use *ghetto* to refer to African-American communities. The Harlem of 1930, according to Osofsky, is broad, spanning from East 98th Street north to West 166th Street, a very generous definition that included many areas that were less than 10 percent black. It seems that Harlem included every contiguous neighborhood in northern Manhattan that had even small concentrations of black residents. Osofsky focused on the historical pattern of race relations in shaping the ghetto and the "sameness" of black urban life between "the Jacksonian era and the America of Watts, Newark, and Detroit." The second edition of the book (1971) was published with a concluding chapter entitled "The Enduring Ghetto," which argues that the essential nature and structure of the ghetto has remained the same since the end of slavery in the north.

Osofky's work was followed by many other studies of black settlement in the urban north, including Allan Spear's *Black Chicago: The Making of a Negro Ghetto* (1967), Kenneth Kusner's *A Ghetto Takes Shape: Black Cleveland 1870-1930* (1976), and Thomas Philpott's *The Making of the Second Ghetto*. These scholars all rejected the immigrant analogy and stressed the role of white racial animosity in shaping black opportunity in the modern city (Trotter 1993). In geography, Harold Rose would write about the Negro *ghetto* as a new urban subsystem and refer to suburban black communities as *mini-ghettos* (1976). The use of *ghetto* to describe African-American communities entered the mainstream in academic research.

Kenneth Clark specifically stressed the role of power in the creation and maintenance of the Black *ghetto*. As an "involved observer" Clark described the psychological and sociological impact of the *ghetto* on African Americans: "The ghetto is ferment, paradox, conflict, and dilemma. Yet within its pervasive pathology exists a surprising human resilience. The ghetto is hope, it is despair, it is churches, and bars. It is aspiration for change, and it is apathy. It is vibrancy, it is stagnation. It is courage, and it is defeatism. It is cooperation and concern, and it is suspicion, competitiveness, and rejection. It is the surge toward assimilation, and it is alienation and withdrawal within the protective walls of the ghetto" (pp. 11–12). Clark argued that in order to change the conditions of the ghetto, residents needed to change the power dynamics between ghetto residents and the majority society outside the confines of its "invisible wall." Since the 1960s, references to the metaphor of the dark ghetto and its invisible walls became commonplace in academic publications. Moynihan and the other theorists turned to a set of internal group processes and a "culture of poverty" to explain the black presence in cities. While this literature has its origins in scholarly concern with conditions for inner-city residents, the focus would move to the unrestrained culture of poverty argument of the likes of William Banfield in *The Unheavenly City* (to cite just one of many examples).

The use of the *ghetto* as a general referent for African-American areas in the American city, then, emerges from historical studies of the black metropolis and from the sociological literature on urban migration and residential segregation. Yet even here we find a more deliberate use of the term, due in large measure, we might suppose, to the concern that each of the authors had for the consequences of what we would now call ghettoization. Perhaps it is ironic that we can trace the widespread use of *ghetto* in the social science literature to the efforts of reform-minded scholars to bring such issues to our attention. But it is from this background that the *ghetto* emerges in Wacquant's *Urban Outcasts* and in the many journal articles based upon his research in Chicago.

This leads us back to our starting question. Throughout this discussion of the legacy of the *ghetto* in the social sciences, Chicago, and the Chicago School figure prominently. Certainly the best-known studies on urban poverty of the last two decades, William J. Wilson's *The Truly Disadvantaged* and *When Work Disappears*, are based upon neighborhoods that comprise Chicago's south side. So too the critiques of Wilson and Wacquant from Mary Patillo and Mario Small, who ask whether we can generalize from the Chicago experience to that of other cities. And so the debate is framed.

CONCLUSION: THE ENDURING *GHETTO*

We can trace the broad outline of the use of the concept of the ghetto in the social sciences through the early studies of African-American scholars at the turn of the century and again in the 1930s, and in the development of a research focus on segregation in American cities in the post-WWII period. This path may be different from what is expected, as Louis Wirth's early work on *The Ghetto* did not result in widespread use of the term to describe either ethnic or racial neighborhoods. Indeed, while there is likely much more to the story than can be told here, it would appear that it was the use of term by both white (Robert Weaver) and black (Kenneth Clark) scholars to draw attention to the problems of segregation that moved the *ghetto* to the forefront.

By the 1970s, the term had migrated from popular culture into scholarly research and then back into popular culture—with a vengeance. It appeared in popular music (Elvis Presley's 1970 hit *In the Ghetto* brings images of poverty and despair into the mainstream), consumer products (boom boxes became ghetto blasters), and of course, in the ever present labeling of speech, behavior, and dress: *that's so ghetto!*

We invited an international group of scholars to follow up on the CUSS listserve discussion by responding to a series of questions about the use of the *ghetto* concept in sociological literature. The questions posed to our discussants build from basic concepts to more specific applications, including: Is the *ghetto* concept (still) useful? Is the *ghetto* a generalizable concept or is it a rhetorical device about race-based oppression? How would we distinguish between a *ghetto* and barrio? Are barrios *ghettos* or enclaves? Is the *ghetto* concept applicable outside the U.S. context?

The *ghetto* remains a central concept in sociological research. Our listserve discussion demonstrates the range of interests and interconnections with many areas of study in community and urban sociology. We are aware of recent and substantive statements about the ghetto (as in Wacquant's *Urban Outcasts*) as well as debates about the definition and use of the concept (as in the recent comments by Mary Patillo and William J. Wilson in the special 2003 issue of *Ethnic and Racial Studies*). But as the contributions to the Symposium demonstrate, the final work on the meaning, use, and extension of the *ghetto* has yet to be written.

Involuntary Segregation and the *Ghetto*: Disconnecting Process and Place

By Herbert J. Gans, *Columbia University*

According to the dominant origin myth, the first modern *ghetto* was created by sixteenth-century Venice, which involuntarily segregated its Jewish population and locked it up at night in the neighborhood of a former iron foundry. Today, *ghetto* continues to be defined, by academics and the general public, as a place for the involuntary segregation of racial, ethnic, or other minorities, but at least two other definitions are also in use in the United States.

One might be called the race-class definition; it refers to black *ghettos* marked by extreme or concentrated poverty. The other is a residual definition, sometimes used critically or ironically, for voluntarily or self-segregated populations, such as the occupants of intellectual *ghettos*, or the affluent residents of gilded *ghettos*, Jewish and other. As often happens, one word is defined in several different ways.

I think that for researchers, definitions are tools, and they should therefore be as clear, easily operationalized, and widely agreed-to as possible. Applying these criteria, I suggest the *ghetto* is a place to which the subjects or victims of the involuntary segregation process are sent.

This definition is framed with the United States in mind, but it also useful for comparative research. Since it has a long history, it can be used to compare past and present places and processes. In addition, the definition can be applied in cross-national and cross-cultural research, for example, to compare American black *ghettos* with those of other involuntarily segregated groups, such as Eastern Europe's Roma, the Japanese Burakumin, and Australia's aborigines.

Moreover, although in today's America only racial minorities are involuntarily segregated in *ghettos*, even here, the term does not have to be limited to racial minorities, provided it is properly qualified and preceded by an explanatory adjective. Indeed, a historical study would require distinctions between racial, ethnic, religious, and yet other *ghettos*. Moreover, very poor people, whatever their skin color, who need to find the cheapest housing, are for all practical purposes involuntarily segregated in economic *ghettos*.[1]

The term *ghetto* is also relevant for analyzing the places that housed what Erving Goffman (1961) described as total institutions, such as prisons, mental hospitals, and reservations for native Americans. However, for brevity's sake alone, this article will be limited to racial ghettos and omit the prefix.

Places occupied by the voluntarily or self-segregated have generally been described not as *ghettos* but as enclaves.[2] *The Puerto Rican, Mexican, and other Latino "barrios" are usually enclaves, although many black Latinos are sentenced to the same involuntary segregation as African Americans.* "Mixed neighborhoods," which are shared by involuntarily and voluntarily segregated people, are thus ghettos for some and enclaves for others.

INVOLUNTARY AND VOLUNTARY SEGREGATION

The *ghetto* being a place, it cannot be understood without looking at the processes by which it comes into being and without which it cannot exist: primarily involuntary

segregation and ghettoization. Understanding involuntary segregation requires an analysis of the societal Othering process: the selection of minorities who are stigmatized, discriminated against, racialized, and ghettoized. Such an analysis must also ask which minority or minorities are so selected and for what reasons, including the uses to which dominant or majority populations put them.

Enclaves are seen as places settled by racial, ethnic, religious, or other minorities that are not stigmatized by the white majority but self-segregate themselves, for example because they share a language, culture, or nationality. True, such minorities, other than very orthodox religious ones, generally do not seek total self-segregation; most especially want some neighbors from the white or nonethnic majority.

Nonetheless, the most widespread form of voluntary segregation is economic. As long as many people, especially homeowners, at least in America, want secure and if possible rising property and status values, the building industry, real estate market, and zoning officials, among others, are ready to supply them with economic enclaves.

However, the boundaries between involuntary and voluntary (or self-) segregation are not hard and fast. People with limited incomes—even those in the middle class—are not choosing their residences entirely voluntarily, and nor are people who need to live near relatives. In fact, no social being, animal or human, has completely free choice of where to live.

Sometimes the involuntarily segregated participate in their own exclusion, being unwilling to live where they are not wanted. More important, however, by enabling family and friends, as well as culturally similar and like minded people, to live together, involuntary segregation can provide the same support system and sociability as voluntary segregation. Still, the involuntarily segregated know they can live only in places assigned to them by others. The researcher just has to know how to ask them the right way.

Furthermore, voluntary segregation may produce involuntary segregation. White flight from racially mixed neighborhoods also increased the involuntary segregation of blacks. The self-segregation of the very rich is in part influenced by fear of the involuntarily segregated poor. In many parts of the world, the rich live behind walls for fear of kidnapping; in the U.S. they tend to choose gated or guarded communities, sometimes hiring private police forces who patrol for strangers who look like they belong in racial or economic ghettos.

In addition, the boundaries between involuntary and voluntary segregation are often hidden. Segregators generally deny their activities, and the involuntarily segregated mostly remain free to choose where in the *ghetto* they want to live. In large communities, they can choose between *ghettos*. Economic segregation is rarely seen as involuntary, because it is usually ascribed to the workings of seemingly impersonal economic forces.

GHETTOIZATION AND DEGHETTOIZATION

Involuntary segregation requires *ghettos*, which are created by the ghettoization both of people and places. In America, slaves and their emancipated descendants have been ghettoized from birth and many Afro-Caribbean immigrants undergo ghettoization when they arrive here. Conversely, European Jews were deghettoized after their arrival in America, even if a number of neighborhoods remained off-limits to them for many decades and a few still are.

Sometimes neighborhoods have been built as *ghettos*, but most started as white neighborhoods, which became *ghettos*, for example when an expanding central business district took over an adjacent ghetto and its residents moved into an emptying white neighborhood. Emptying Jewish neighborhoods seem to be ghettoized more often than those occupied by other white ethnics. If the latter are financially less able or for other reasons unwilling to move, they may resort to harassment of and violence against the first black arrivals, and thus discourage others from moving in.

Ironically, extensive white residential mobility, including "white flight," has enabled blacks to improve their housing condition. However, in the process, some *ghetto* areas from which they departed became depopulated and were left to the very poorest of the ghettoized. The resulting concentration of extreme poverty is often accompanied by the departure of stores, public offices, and other community facilities, resulting in the social isolation of the remaining residents (Wilson, 1987).[3]

Conversely, gentrification may lead to deghettoization, as the involuntarily segregated are replaced by more affluent white and other residents. The victims of gentrification move to other *ghettos*, and the white gentrifiers become self-segregated, although not always by choice. Some white and black gentrifiers choose to move to poor *ghettos* because they say they want to raise their children in economically and otherwise diverse areas.

THE *GHETTO*

The *ghetto* is merely the place in which the involuntarily segregated are housed; it is the spatial representation of the sociopolitical process of involuntary segregation. In fact, the *ghetto* is in many respects an ordinary neighborhood, which resembles other neighborhoods similar in age, the socio-economic level of the population, housing stock, and related features. However, like other ordinary neighborhoods, all *ghettos* are not alike (Small 2007). In addition, a *ghetto* neighborhood also differs from ordinary neighborhoods in several ways; I will only mention four.

First, *ghettos* are demographically both more homogeneous and heterogeneous than other urban or suburban neighborhoods. Unless they are changing neighborhoods turning into *ghettos*, they are likely to be monoracial or nearly so. At the same time, they are generally multiclass areas, especially in communities too small to allow the establishment of class-differentiated *ghettos*. As a result, the ghettoized classes must live together, or at least adjacent to each other.

Second, *ghettos* are apt to be more diverse in land use than other residential areas. Because of continuing discrimination, *ghettos* have to be more self-sufficient than other areas, with a fuller array of stores, public and private facilities as well as professional offices than equivalent white neighborhoods.

Third, *ghettos* are likely to be qualitatively inferior in almost all respects to neighborhoods of similar age, class, housing stock, etc. Since the involuntarily segregated are a captive audience, they are subject to economic, political, and other kinds of exploitation, including by coethnics and coracials. *Ghetto* residents usually pay more for housing and most other goods and services than whites, although they earn far less than whites.

Even with income held constant, the *ghetto* is more crowded than other neighborhoods and has less public open space as well. Most of its stores, public and private facilities as well as professional offices are of lower quality than those in white areas.

At the same time, the *ghetto* may contain more of the land uses and facilities that other neighborhoods do not want, for example, bus depots, sanitation facilities, and other noisy and toxic land uses. Partly as a result, *ghettos* are noted for their high asthma rates.

Fourth, the *ghetto* absorbs and reflects the varieties of marginalization, harassment, injustice, and stigma imposed on the involuntarily segregated. For example, poverty combined with discrimination by financial and other institutions leaves more of the *ghetto* economy off the books than the economy of white neighborhoods (Venkatesh, 2006).

Ghetto pathology rates are normally higher than those in white neighborhoods when class and other factors are held constant. School performance rates are lower; drug and alcohol addiction rates are higher, as are depression, stress, and stress-related diseases. Street crime is more prevalent, and thus so are police presence, harassment, and arrest rates. Having a *ghetto* address reflects and adds to the stigma born by its residents, and can add to their difficulties in obtaining jobs.

Some of the differences between *ghettos* and other neighborhoods reflect the greater poverty of involuntarily segregated populations. Nevertheless, other characteristics associated with the *ghetto* could once be found in poor white neighborhoods. Such neighborhoods have virtually all disappeared, however, since most of today's white poor live amidst their economic betters.

CONCLUSION: DISCONNECTING PROCESS AND PLACE

Ghettos as commonly defined can exist only in societies that involuntarily segregate some of its members, and most of the *ghetto*'s distinctive spatial features are effects of that process. Not only must the analysis of process be separated from that of place, but the causes of what takes place in the *ghetto* are found in one or another aspect of the processes that together produce involuntary segregation.

To be sure, *ghettos* are not uniform, but the differences between them often have little to do with place. Affluent *ghettos* differ from poor and middle-class ones, although these differences are the effects of class—and the same class differences associated with white neighborhoods.

Although concentrated poverty has been studied almost entirely in *ghettos*, it actually reflects patterns of class stratification that have little to do with race. In the days when many whites were poor, their neighborhoods also included areas of concentrated poverty.[4] Jacob Riis and other muckrakers assisted the twentieth-century housing reform movement by identifying such areas in a number of American cities.

Finally, the search for neighborhood effects has also been limited largely to the *ghetto*, but to my mind, researchers have not made a case that residential neighborhoods, including *ghettos*, have effects that can be attributed to the neighborhood per se. Neighborhoods are imagined communities with boundaries often determined or imposed from outside. While the boundaries sometimes generate social, economic, and political effects, most neighborhood effects stem from economically or politically powerful institutions and populations within these boundaries. Even in the very poorest areas, the deleterious effects of poverty are not caused by the neighborhood, but by institutions, most of them outside the neighborhood, that initiate or perpetuate poverty and conditions associated with it. The *ghetto* itself does not often impoverish people.

Too much emphasis on place gets in the way of antipoverty policy. Enabling the poor to escape poverty requires policies creating or strengthening the institutions that make that escape possible. Improving the places in which the poor, black or white, live will not hurt but it will normally raise the income only of those who do the improving. Moreover, places are local, yet neither poverty nor racial segregation can be eliminated by local policies.

The disconnection of process and place is particularly necessary now that sociologists have rediscovered space and place. Whatever the virtues of spatial sociology, it can easily be infected with the spatial or physical determinism of architects and urban designers. Their professions may impel them to believe that space, place, or the built environment determines social and other processes, but sociologists must remember that these processes are causally prior. Ultimately, space and place are causally relevant mainly because gravity forces human societies to be attached to the surface of the earth.

Notes

[1] Thus when William J. Wilson (1987) analyzes black *ghettos* as areas of concentrated poverty, he is describing areas that are both racial and economic *ghettos*, while Pattillo (2003) views the *ghetto* as purely racial. One can, however, argue about (and study) whether economic segregation is as involuntary as racial.

[2] The Jewish neighborhood that Wirth (1928) studied was, despite the title of his book, an enclave.

[3] Wacquant (2007) has described these areas as hyperghettos, although since their residents are no more or less ghettoized than most other blacks, they are really hyperpoor areas.

[4] If researchers could gain access to the neighborhoods of the very rich, they would discover areas of concentrated affluence, which enable the very richest to maintain their distance from the lesser rich.

A Century of Harlem in New York City: Some Notes on Migration, Consolidation, Segregation, and Recent Developments

By Andrew A. Beveridge[1], *Queens College and Graduate Center, The City University of New York*

Harlem is an iconic *Ghetto*. The original settlers in Harlem, before 1910, were often middle class, including many notable African Americans. In the 1920s, an efflorescence of culture known as the Harlem Renaissance occurred, and the Apollo Theatre and the Savoy Ball Room were founded. As the "great migration" from the U.S. South continued, and the size of the black population expanded, an area of concentrated poverty developed. Kenneth Clark's (1965) edited volume entitled *Dark Ghetto* certainly was influenced by Harlem. Clark taught for years at City College, which is in the midst of Harlem. Clark's studies of the influence of segregation on school children were recited in the famous footnote 11 to the Brown v. Board of Education decision in 1954 that ruled that segregation was illegal, at least with respect to schools. From the 1950s until recently, the involuntary segregation of housing and schools has been seen by most sociologists and other social scientists as an unrelenting negative. There is, of course, another side to this view of segregation, which argues that segregation of African Americans in and of itself is not necessarily pernicious, and since African Americans are discriminated against and stigmatized by many whites and other nonblacks, it is better for them to develop on their own in their own communities. Harlem was and is still seen by many non-African Americans as a dangerous place, which is unsafe to travel in even during the day. More recently, many have noted that Harlem, along with most other neighborhoods in Manhattan, is becoming more and more affluent. We will see to what extent this is true.

This brief essay will look at the development of the African American presence in New York City and the development of the area that is Harlem. It will focus on the patterns of segregation in the city, as a whole, and the growth and change in Harlem. It will also examine the social and economic status of Harlem residents, at different points in time, to see the extent to which Harlem changed. Most particularly, the more recent developments of Harlem becoming much less black and of Harlem townhouses, condominiums, and rental property drawing residents from outside the African-American community will be examined in terms of what it means for the future of one of the most famous *Ghettos* in the United States.

SEGREGATION IN NEW YORK CITY: 1880 TO 2000

The migration to the North and the consolidation of African-American *Ghettos* in major cities, the efforts by the Census Bureau to produce data at small areas (census tracts), and the development of measures of segregation all occurred simultaneously. Ethnographic researchers such as Drake and Clayton (1945) focused on the day-to-day life and organization of the *Ghetto*. Drake and Clayton included a fair amount of quantitative material, as well as work by WPA researchers. Alma and Karl Taeuber's (1965) *Negroes in Cities*

examined segregation in 207 cities in the United States. Using the tract concept, which was institutionalized in 1940, though developed first in New York City by Walter Laidlaw in 1910, the Taeubers were able to give a quantitative measure to how separated and isolated the African-American community was from the white community in various cities. The measures they used have been used by other researchers since the 1960s, and work by Massey, White, and Phua (1993) shows that the indexes they developed capture two of the main dimensions of residential segregation.

What was not easily possible was to examine the patterns of segregation before 1940 using the same tools and concepts. The creation of the data and boundary files now available in the National Historical Geographic Information System (NHGIS), as well as the enumeration district codes on the 100 percent sample from the 1880 population census, have made it possible to explore long term patterns of segregation in New York City. (All data are available for download from the Minnesota Population Center.) Using these data, which were tabulated by Census tract for 1910 through 2000, and which I tabulated at the enumeration district for 1880, I was able to compute standard measures of segregation, as well as the growth of the black population in New York City, from 1880 and 1910 through 2000. My results are presented in Table 1.

For comparative purposes, for this analysis I treated all blacks as black, regardless of Hispanic status. The concept of Hispanic was not fully developed until 1980 by the U.S. Census Bureau. In New York City, there were a substantial number of Puerto Ricans as early as 1950 and 1960. Puerto Ricans are still the number one Hispanic group in New York City. Very few Hispanics report that they are "black"; however, a substantial number do report being "other" and a large number also report being "white." For the development of Harlem from 1980, this distinction is taken into account.

In any event, the number of blacks in New York City was slightly more than 35,000 in 1880, was about 325,000 in 1930, reached over 1 million in 1960, and peaked at 2.16 million in 2000, before declining to 2.06 million in 2006. In 1990, the percentage of black New Yorkers peaked at 28.7 percent and had declined to 25.1 percent in 2006. New York City is now losing black population. This trend is happening in many cities in the United States (Dougherty, 2008). Indeed, the native born African-American population in New York City has been declining since at least 1980.

The most common index of segregation is dissimilarity. It measures the proportion of a group that must be moved to even the group out across some unit, here the census tract. It is most useful with only two groups. The size of either group does not matter, so one can gauge level of segregation regardless of group size. It makes the interpretation of black/white segregation relatively simple. When one examines Table 1 it is plain that the segregation of blacks from whites in New York City was high to start with, became even higher by 1930, and has maintained a quite high level ever since.

The two other common segregation measures are isolation and exposure. Each looks at the presence of members of groups by neighborhood, here the census tract.

1. Isolation is the average proportion of members of the same group in a tract for members of that group.
2. Exposure is the proportion of members of a different group in a tract for members of a given group.

When one examines black isolation from other groups, both whites and others, it is plain that over time blacks have become increasingly isolated from other groups. In 1910,

TABLE 1. Population, Racial Composition, and Segregation, New York City, 1880 to 2000

Decade	1880	1910	1920	1930	1940	1950	1960	1970	1980	1990	2000
Dissimilarity Back/White	0.59	0.64	0.73	0.79	0.83	0.83	0.75	0.72	0.77	0.76	0.75
Dissimilarity Other/White	0.63	0.53	0.66	0.63	0.66	0.61	0.52	0.49	0.55	0.52	0.46
Dissimilarity Black/Other	0.76	0.70	0.81	0.79	0.84	0.80	0.72	0.69	0.59	0.58	0.59
Isolation White	0.98	0.98	0.98	0.98	0.97	0.96	0.93	0.88	0.80	0.75	0.66
Isolation Black	0.09	0.18	0.43	0.54	0.64	0.69	0.62	0.62	0.66	0.66	0.62
Isolation Other	0.01	0.05	0.07	0.08	0.14	0.08	0.08	0.13	0.29	0.34	0.42
Exposure White/Black	0.02	0.02	0.02	0.02	0.02	0.03	0.06	0.10	0.09	0.10	0.10
Exposure White/Other	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.01	0.02	0.11	0.15	0.24
Exposure Black/White	0.91	0.82	0.57	0.46	0.36	0.31	0.37	0.37	0.21	0.18	0.17
Exposure Black/Other	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.01	0.01	0.13	0.16	0.21
Exposure Other/White	0.97	0.93	0.90	0.87	0.80	0.82	0.78	0.71	0.47	0.42	0.38
Exposure Other/Black	0.02	0.02	0.03	0.06	0.06	0.09	0.13	0.16	0.24	0.24	0.20
Total pop	2,044,724	4,763,970	5,654,210	6,943,808	7,454,995	7,891,954	7,781,939	7,664,489	7,071,639	7,322,564	8,008,278
% Change	na	132.99%	18.69%	22.81%	7.36%	5.86%	−1.39%	−1.51%	−7.74%	3.55%	9.36%
Black	35,856	91,630	152,668	327,828	458,444	747,610	1,087,931	1,604,379	1,784,337	2,102,512	2,156,244
% Total	1.75%	1.92%	2.70%	4.72%	6.15%	9.47%	13.98%	20.93%	25.23%	28.71%	26.93%
% Change	na	155.55%	66.61%	114.73%	39.84%	63.08%	45.52%	47.47%	11.22%	17.83%	2.56%
White	2,007,351	4,666,334	5,493,428	6,600,458	6,977,501	7,116,438	6,640,617	5,926,488	4,294,075	3,827,088	3,576,385
% Total	98.17%	97.95%	97.16%	95.06%	93.59%	90.17%	85.33%	77.32%	60.72%	52.26%	44.66%
% Change	na	132.46%	17.72%	20.15%	5.71%	1.99%	−6.69%	−10.75%	−27.54%	−10.88%	−6.55%
Other	1,517	6,006	8,114	15,522	19,050	27,906	53,391	133,622	993,227	1,392,964	2,275,649
% Total	0.07%	0.13%	0.14%	0.22%	0.26%	0.35%	0.69%	1.74%	14.05%	19.02%	28.42%
% Change	na	295.91%	35.10%	91.30%	22.73%	46.49%	91.32%	150.27%	643.31%	40.25%	63.37%

only 18 percent of the other residents of the average black person's tract were black. By 1930, this number was 54 percent, and it reached 69 percent in 1950, and was 62 percent in 2000. The isolation of whites from other groups declines from 98 percent in 1920 to 66 percent in 2000. When one looks at the exposure measures, which give the proportion of other groups that share the tract with a specific group, the following patterns are found: Exposure of white to black increases in small ways, from 0.02 in 1910 to 0.10 in 2000, while exposure of black to white declines, from 0.82 in 1910 to 0.17 in 2000. In short, the African Americans are more and more isolated and less and less exposed to whites. This implies that the African-American areas (including Harlem) consolidated in New York City, and blacks, experienced *Ghetto* conditions; they lived quite apart from whites. Indeed, in New York City the three main concentrations of African Americans remain centered in Harlem, as well as in Southeast Queens and in Flatbush and Bedford Stuyvesant in Brooklyn. Of these three, Southeast Queens remains the area that attracts the most affluent African Americans into its areas of mainly owner-occupied, single-family detached homes.

HARLEM'S TRAJECTORY FROM 1910 TO 2006

Using materials from the NHGIS, it is possible to track the trajectory of Harlem for 96 years. Going all the way back to Osofsky (1966), the definition of Harlem, as with many New York neighborhoods, is difficult to discern. For purposes of this essay, two definitions will be adopted: Central Harlem and Greater Harlem. The outline of each is shown in Figure 1. Greater Harlem does follow the Osofsky definition, more or less, but is somewhat more restrictive. It starts at 96th Street on the East Side, at Fifth Avenue and Central Park it goes up to 110th and then cuts over to 106th Street on the West Side. The top of the area is mainly 155th Street, though a little area above that is also included on the East Side. The advantage of this definition is that it can be used consistently from 1910 through 2006, since it is based upon the Public Use Microdata Areas or subboroughs, which are used to report data from the American Community Survey and are delineated in 2000 and 1990 Censuses. Central Harlem is shown on the map and is basically north of Central Park and East of Morningside Avenue and St. Nicholas.

The racial and population change in Central Harlem, Greater Harlem, and New York City is shown in Table 2. Here the distinction is made between Hispanic and non-Hispanic beginning in 1980. In 1910, Central Harlem was about 10 percent black, Greater Harlem was a little more than 4 percent black, while the rest of New York City was less than 2 percent black. By 1930, Central Harlem was over 70 percent black, Greater Harlem was about 35 percent black, but the rest of New York City was still not 2 percent black. In short, by 1930, during the Harlem Renaissance, Central Harlem had become very definably black. By 1950, Central Harlem was about 98 percent black, and Greater Harlem was 57.5 percent. By 1980 Central Harlem had declined a bit to 94 percent black, while Greater Harlem was 58.8 percent black. Central Harlem lost more than half of its population between 1950 and 1980, and Greater Harlem also declined. This was a period of very marked economic decline in New York City, especially for the black community. It also included the era of urban renewal, and many older housing units were raised either for public housing projects or for other apartment developments. The new developments did not come close to housing the same number of people.

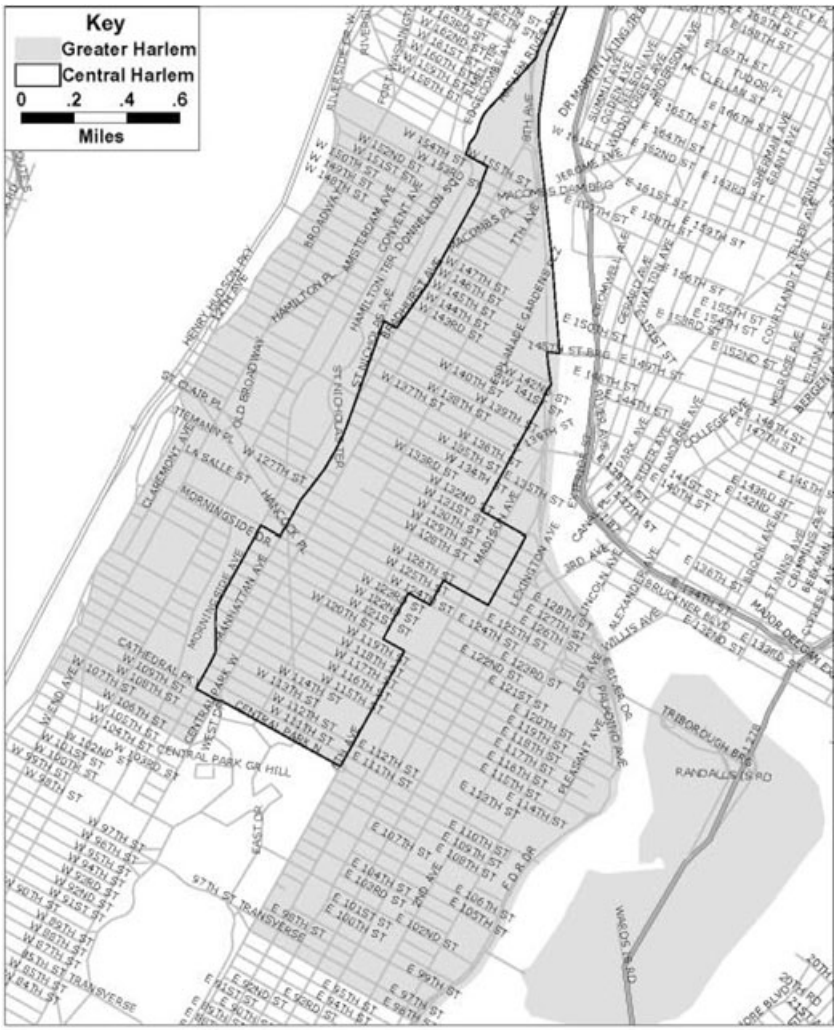

FIG. 1. Central and Greater Harlem delineated.

From 1980 on, Central Harlem has become less black, and by 2006 it had a lower percent black than it did in 1930 and had less than half the population. In 1980, there were 672 whites in Central Harlem, which constituted about 0.6 percent. By 2006 that figure had increased to 7,741 or about 6.6 percent. In short, there had been a turn around of sorts in Harlem. The white population that had moved to Harlem by 2000 was distributed in many different areas. Figure 2 displays the concentration of the black population in and near Harlem in 1980 and 2000. Comparing those two maps, it is obvious that there has been a decline in the concentration of blacks in Harlem during that 20-year period. Furthermore, according to the 2006 American Community Survey, the overall decline in black population has continued.

TABLE 2. Population and Racial Composition in Harlem and New York City, 1910 to 2006

	Central Harlem	Greater Harlem	Rest of NYC		Central Harlem	Greater Harlem	Rest of NYC
1910				1970			
Black	9.89%	4.28%	1.73%	Black	95.42%	63.53%	18.48%
White	90.01%	95.64%	98.12%	White	4.28%	34.44%	79.82%
Other	0.10%	0.08%	0.15%	Other	0.29%	2.02%	1.70%
Total	181,949	593,598	3,191,962	Total	157,178	430,567	7,083,455
1920				1980			
Black	32.43%	12.28%	1.46%	Black-NH	94.17%	58.76%	22.20%
White	67.47%	87.60%	98.39%	Hispanic	4.32%	28.46%	19.45%
Other	0.15%	0.14%	0.15%	White-NH	0.62%	10.29%	53.98%
Total	216,026	652,529	4,767,727	Other-NH	0.89%	2.49%	4.37%
1930				Total	108,236	339,490	6,732,149
Black	70.18%	34.82%	1.99%	1990			
White	29.43%	64.78%	97.80%	Black-NH	87.55%	52.37%	23.93%
Other	0.39%	0.40%	0.21%	Hispanic	10.14%	33.94%	23.90%
Total	209,663	580,277	6,168,984	White-NH	1.50%	10.85%	44.74%
1940				Other-NH	0.80%	2.85%	7.43%
Black	89.31%	48.32%	2.65%	Total	101,026	334,076	6,988,199
White	10.48%	51.38%	97.10%	2000			
Other	0.21%	0.31%	0.25%	Black-NH	77.49%	46.03%	23.67%
Total	221,974	576,846	6,677,187	Hispanic	16.82%	38.02%	26.47%
1950				White-NH	2.07%	10.45%	36.11%
Black	98.07%	57.52%	5.64%	Other-NH	3.62%	5.50%	13.75%
White	1.76%	41.89%	94.03%	Total	109,091	354,057	7,654,221
Other	0.17%	0.60%	0.33%	2006			
Total	237,468	593,246	7,078,650	Black-NH	69.27%	40.54%	23.40%
1960				Hispanic	18.58%	38.24%	27.22%
Black	96.71%	58.53%	10.71%	White-NH	6.55%	14.80%	36.06%
White	2.94%	40.55%	88.62%	Other-NH	5.60%	6.42%	13.33%
Other	0.35%	0.92%	0.67%	Total	118,111	374,854	7,838,724
Total	163,632	467,634	6,829,199				

Sources: 1910 to 1940, Census Tract Data from National Historical Geographical Information System, Compiled by Andrew A. Beveridge and co-workers; 1950, Ellen M. Bogue File, as edited by Andrew A. Beveridge and co-workers; 1960 through 2000, Tabulated Census Data from National Historical Geographic Information System; 2006 Data from American Community Survey, U.S. Bureau of the Census.. Boundary Files from National Historical Geographic Information System 1910 to 2000, U.S. Bureau of the Census, 2006. All data and boundary files available from Minnesota Population Center. Since results are tabulated from the sources indicated, they may not necessarily match Census published figures for population and race.

By 2000 and 2006, there were areas of some highly affluent residents. In the early days of Harlem, the black community there was quite diverse, especially compared to African Americans who lived elsewhere. During the period of the rapid influx of residents from elsewhere, the level of concentrated poverty increased in Harlem. During the 1950s through the 1970s, urban renewal occurred along with housing lost and Harlem had a declining population. At the same time, the area in Southeast Queens that was attractive to affluent black families developed. Now it appears that areas of Harlem are sought after once again. Indeed, one of the areas with the highest income now is Lenox Terrace apartments, where the local Congressman Rangel, who had moved in around 1970, was living in an apartment combined from three units, which would rent for nearly $8,000 on the open market. He was paying somewhat more than $2,000 per month. Median household income in Central Harlem had increased from about $13,765 in 1950 to over

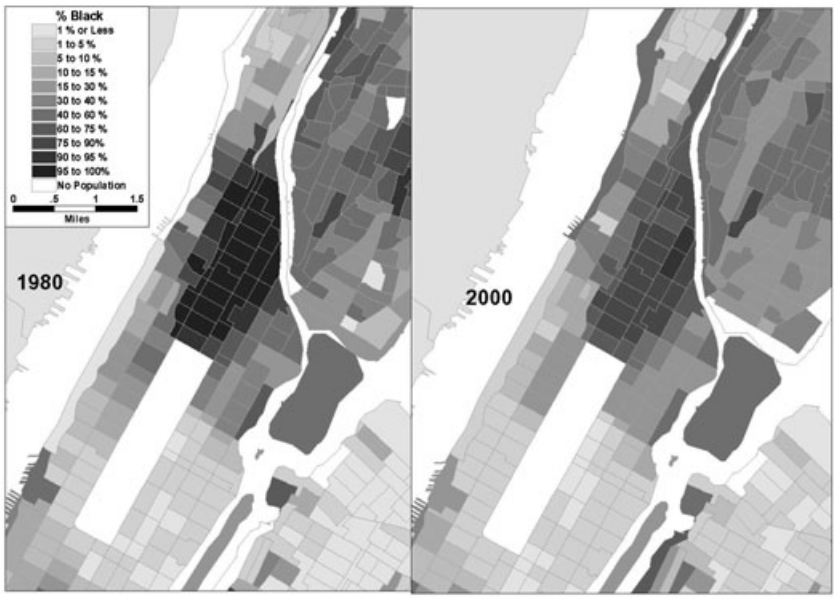

FIG. 2. Maps showing concentration of Black population in and near Harlem 1980 and 2000.

$26,161 in 2006, in 2006 dollars. Still, this figure is well below the median of $46,285 for the rest of New York City.

Thus, there is some evidence of change in Harlem, as the area is transformed from one that is mostly impoverished with a few middle class families still in residence to an area where some middle class, including a few whites, have now moved in and made their homes. However, unlike Chicago or other major cities, New York City has chosen not to tear down its public housing. As such, one cannot expect Harlem to escape the designation of a largely minority area with high concentrations of poverty anytime soon.

CONCLUSION: STILL A *GHETTO*, BUT ON THE RISE

Harlem is still a *Ghetto* in the sense that it is still an area with high concentrations of low-income African-American population. Some parts of Harlem have been joined by Hispanics, but that percentage has not grown much since 2000. Rather, the new residents of Harlem seem to be non-Hispanic white and non-Hispanic others. The traditional town house areas around Strivers Row, Sugar Hill, and Marcus Garvey Park have undergone a rebirth. Partially abandoned buildings and decrepit structures have been and are being destroyed. Townhouses now often sell for well over one million (some even higher), and new condo developments in West Harlem in the 140s and other areas are signs of a bustling real estate market. Columbia University, which had been trying to expand into Harlem, has just had its plans to condemn a large swath of West Harlem approved. Stores and restaurants catering to the affluent have opened in West Harlem, while Magic Johnson opened a Starbucks and a Multiplex on 125th Street in Harlem, near where former President Clinton has his office suite.

Now, of course, the panic and crash in 2008 may cool the new real estate boom, while the concentration of public housing means that Harlem's newly affluent will be living quite near the poor. What these changes portend for New York City's iconic black neighborhood is hard to fathom. On the one hand, new residents mean that Harlem will have more income, occupational, and educational diversity than it did in the 1970s and 1980s. At the same time, the large stock of public housing and the relatively low income means that high levels of poverty will continue to be a feature of Harlem. Finally, a real economic downturn will probably hit Harlem harder than most of the city. So, though the future of Harlem as a *Ghetto* is uncertain, it is certain that it has reflected and will continue to reflect changes in the wider New York City area.

Note

[1] The author greatly acknowledges the assistance of Susan Weber, Michiyo Yamashiki, and Ahmed Lacevic for help organizing the data, and Petra Noble and Evan Roberts and others at Minnesota Population Center for the 1880 data and the edited tract boundary files from 1910 through 2000. Funding by the National Science Foundation, Awards 0647902 (The National Historical Geographic Information System) and 0618456 (Creating Exemplary Curricula and Supporting Faculty Development in Using Social Explorer to Teach with Demographic Data Maps).

Barrio Geneology

By Diego Vigil, *University of California, Irvine*

The concept of the *ghetto* shares many features with what Mexicans, and other Latinos, refer to as the barrio (neighborhood). Obviously there are historical differences on where and how these enclaves started in different regions and cities of the country. Such enclaves are representative of various ethnic minority peoples' experiences in having had to settle in inferior places that were spatially separate and socially distanced from the dominant majority group. Race, poverty, and urban space are intertwined in the emergence of *ghettos* and barrios and their development into permanent fixtures of American cities, as well as why they continue to matter in American culture. This article focuses primarily on the Mexican American experience. However, other Latino barrios also reflect the strict boundary markers and sense of isolation imbued by this settlement pattern.

The barrio itself was initially established, and has been maintained by a social process that has relegated Mexicans to ecologically inferior neighborhoods. This insured that social mobility aspirations would typically be thwarted for the original residents and especially so for subsequent newcomers. Continuing immigration has somewhat changed the form and structure of barrios over the decades, but most Mexican immigrants are still subjected to spatial and social isolation from the opportunities afforded to others residing beyond the barrio boundaries. Each barrio in the Southwest has a different story on its growth and development, but most of them are definitely identifiable as special enclaves where the "others" reside.

Los Angeles has had a major barrio since the nineteenth century, located just east of the center of the city (Romo, 1983), an area generically referred to as East Los Angeles. Mexican immigrants have long settled in southern California, especially Los Angeles, in isolated and separate urban neighborhoods called barrios, low-income Latino equivalents to the *ghetto*. (In rural areas, they moved into similarly isolated enclaves called colonias, some of which later became de facto barrios as urban sprawl engulfed them.) This settlement pattern started in the nineteenth century soon after the conclusion of the Mexican American War of 1846–1848, as more and more Anglo Americans arrived to distance themselves and/or push the resident Mexicans into ethnic enclaves (Villa, 2000). Such isolated and separate developments later were expanded and deepened in the aftermath of the 1910 Revolution with large-scale immigration to the area that has not subsided to the present. In the context of these developments, newcomers and their offspring have experienced a series of repercussions as a consequence of this social and geographic separation.

East Los Angeles (East L.A. or East Los to native speakers) has become, through the continuing process of large-scale immigration, a macrobarrio inhabited by literally dozens of meso (encompassing several street blocks) and micro- (just 2 or 3 blocks) barrios. Each of these enclaves has its own spatial markers and place name. In short, within the large urban region of East Los Angeles rest pockets of other barrios like El Hoyo Maravilla, White Fence, Cuatro Flats, Little Valley, and so on. Some once-rural entities such as Los Nietos and Canta Ranas date from early Mexican rancho (ranch) days. Most were of the interstitial variety in the urban area, such as El Hoyo Maravilla, located

in a low-lying area adjacent to more upscale residential neighborhoods and commercial avenues. Gustafson, a Methodist minister, reported that "El Hoyo" looked like a "hobo jungle" (1940:43). Several decades later Moore (1978) found that things had remained unchanged in El Hoyo Maravilla in her study of gangs.

This article examines the ways ecological and socioeconomic factors have figured in the segregation and isolation of Mexicans in southern California and how the rate and direction of acculturation has been undermined under these situations and conditions. The power of place and space are noteworthy in these developments. Los Angeles in the 1920s was undergoing rapid industrial and technological changes and urban planning was unable to keep up with and accommodate the growth in the population. Thus, a makeshift and uneven integration of Mexican immigrants and their families transpired. This adaptation process was especially detrimental because the newcomers were poor, from a rural background, and fit into the well-worn devalued stereotype as Indian-looking Mexican workers.

Indeed, the rapidity and unevenness of such changes affected the urbanization process, particularly where Mexicans were to work, live, raise their families, and gain access, exposure, and their identification with the dominant Anglo-American culture and institutions. The manner in which these changes unfolded has tended to marginalize a significant segment of the Mexican population. In fact, there is a multiple-marginality dynamic to this experience. Multiple marginality implies that at every point of entry or contact and at every level of integration and adjustment, the Mexican entrance and adaptation to the United States was outside of mainstream consideration (Vigil, 1988, 2002).

HOW PLACE AND SPACE UNFOLD

Where Mexican immigrants settled contributed to a number of problems, some of which reflected inadequate infrastructure and public amenities and others having a more long-lasting geosocial imprint. First, the ecological aspects. Low-paying jobs, of course, necessitated settlement in areas where land and rent values were low. Discrimination, additionally, forced them to congregate in locations separate from the dominant Anglo majority. Barrio enclaves, then, can be traced in part to the fact that immigrants, who earned little pay, were forced to settle in areas that they could afford. This externally imposed choice was also reinforced by immigrants' preferences to live where others like them were living. The assistance of cultural brokers who were here before them and the influence of other social groups aided their adaptation. In the first instance, Mexican immigrants, like other ethnic groups, gravitated to communities that reflected their own customs and patterns, for this lessened the effects of culture shock and gave them a sense of community and security. Many cultural celebrations and events took place in the barrio (Villa, 2000).

The combination of external and internal influences led to the spatial separation of immigrant settlers from the surrounding community and the creation of visually distinct neighborhoods. The common implications of the phrase "across the tracks" (or irrigation canals, highways, river, or freeway) reflect this spatial separation and visual distinctiveness (Bogardus, 1934, p. 70). In addition, most barrios are characterized by homes that are smaller in size, with more people per household; and are generally lacking in adequate public services (Villa, 2000).

Discrimination and residential segregation aided developers and landlords in making a profit without consideration of immigrant needs. Settlement patterns in southern California attest to this fact, as numerous barrios or colonias were founded in the most neglected interstices of the cities and outlying rural areas. Rural colonias were usually situated next to the work place. Cucamonga is an example of such a place. At first the Mexican settlements were scattered in small pockets throughout the area (for example, Guasti, Ontario) when they arrived as unskilled farm laborers to work the citrus and vineyard industries. As the industries expanded, the need for more seasonal workers (and additionally more year-round regulars) increased, the Mexicans eventually filled one particular neighborhood—Northtown (situated across the tracks and flood canal, ironically). This enclave had once been peopled mostly by non-Mexican (Italian) semiskilled and skilled workers who eventually bought land of their own and moved out of the neighborhood. By the 1930s, it was a Mexican barrio, and has remained so to the present.

Railroad section workers and their families rooted themselves in Watts, and agricultural workers in Cucamonga, and so on. Romo noted how Mexican workers and their families had to settle in labor camps near train track lines (1983, p. 69). Whether old or new, urban or rural, all of them shared the qualities noted earlier: spatial separation and visibly inferior housing. Other contemporary reports also noted these conditions.

In the last 30 years, a new type of barrio has materialized. A decline in the downtown Los Angeles commercial and retail district led to skilled and semiskilled employees vacating nearby residential developments. New types of businesses brought about a need for different types of unskilled and semiskilled workers. As these transitions occurred, new immigrants, initially Mexicans, but increasingly Central Americans, moved into the well-worn apartments and sought employment in the new light industry and small-scale commercial operations, as well as opportunities for employment as domestic servants. The surge in Central American immigrants was related to civil unrest in the home countries and the need for service workers in Los Angeles. The area known as Pico Union became home to Central Americans, mostly Salvadorans. One could refer to this area as a postmodern barrio because of what preceded it, and the way that it was reconstituted. The mostly four-story apartments' original residents just west of downtown Los Angeles once were mostly Anglo office workers and retail salespersons. The structures they lived and worked in—stores, four-story office and apartment buildings, and a sprinkling of single-family houses—dated from the 1930s and 1940s. The structures are still there and in the late 1970s and early 1980s large-scale Central American immigration brought in a new group of Latinos. By the 1990s, a majority of the population was Latino (Vigil, 2002).

THE EFFECTS OF SPACE ON HUMAN BEHAVIOR

Researchers of the Chicago School of urban sociology have provided a general understanding of the ways in which urbanism (the structure) and urbanization (the process) work to make certain segments (ethnic group, social class, or residential areas, singly or in combination) of the city more subject to human disorganization (Thrasher, 1963[1926]). Studies of early Mexican immigration to Los Angeles documented that these new

residents settled in neglected and inferior locations, areas initially bypassed in the development of urban Los Angeles—the "flats" or lowlands; the areas underneath bridges; and the undesirable gulches, ravines, and hollows.

Many of these "interstices" became marginal areas of the city, in which problems of social disorganization originated and grew. Since the 1940s the Flats area has generated at least three gangs: Primera (First St.) flats, Tercera (Third St.) flats, and Cuatro (Fourth St.) flats. Today, another type of ethnic enclave occupies the place, a public housing development, Pico-Gardens, and has emerged as a "public" barrio. East Los Angeles has five such housing projects. All of these have become barrios in their own right. Although intended to curb urban social disorganization, the projects were engulfed by the larger barrio world that existed all around them. Gustafson (1940:112,) recognized this problem at a public housing development being built in the early 1940s, now known as VNE (Varrio Nuevo Estrada court).

Moving from a rural, peasant background to one in the United States, as most of the Latino immigrants have done, also took its toll among immigrants. Many raised large families living in squalid conditions, in a modern version of the hacienda and debt peonage, and gender roles became redefined. In this context, most immigrant household heads settled their families right next to or close to the work site, becoming a permanent work force near a field or factory. Poor pay and working conditions went alongside job insecurity, as oppressive bosses and unpredictable economic cycles sometimes turned immigrant workers out into the streets. Since women had by now joined the industrial work force, many female-headed households were victimized by the same economic circumstances. Many of the unemployed workers were confined to their only known world, the little island of a "barrio." Social mobility aspirations and residential mobility efforts were hampered in several ways because of this.

Similarly, in an isolated, segregated environment, the rate and direction of acculturation to dominant values and norms are also affected. Having access, exposure, and a mode of identification with the dominant Anglo social world and cultural repertoire is a requisite for integration into society. Labor from Mexico was sought after, but Mexicans were unwanted, unwelcome, and relegated to a second-class status. Thus adjustment to and integration into American society was often thwarted or, at best, slowed.

Barriers stemming from location or place exist on so many fronts and in so many different ways that one cumulative effect is the development in many barrio residents of a sense of inferiority. The law enforcement apparatus, of course, is also a factor in the sense of inferiority that emerges among barrio dwellers, particularly when police brutality and harassment are part of the historical record.

Finally, we must remind ourselves that allowing for this type of "pocket" settlement creates problems within the community. Rather than an open and fluid adaptation and adjustment to American society, the insulated, isolated, closed community that emerges implodes on itself. Sometimes this manner of settlement tends to cultivate a distinctively separatist identity, where people living in each barrio begin to think only of themselves: Cuca (monga), Hoyo, Lomas, Pacoima, etc., stand apart not only from the larger Anglo American society but from other barrios as well. Rather than networks and bridges among Mexican immigrants there are gulfs and moats, each enclave a castle onto itself. The more isolated and poverty stricken the barrio, the more "boundedness," such as El Hoyo or Cuca, and the more likely that the children there have severe problems.

CONCLUSION

The development of the barrio as described in this article has many parallels with that of the *ghetto*. The role of externally imposed barriers along with internal choices of residents explains most of how ethnic enclaves started and grew. Living in spatially separate and socially distanced neighborhoods made for a marginal existence, which thwarted and hamstrung social mobility aspirations. Race and cultural differences also served as a rationale for the isolation and mistreatment of each ethnic group. However, how race and poverty played out for each group was substantially different.

For Mexicans, the aftermath of the Mexican American War of 1846–1848 involved concerted efforts to push them into enclaves that were separate and isolated from Anglos. Thus, the barrio for original natives was a way to curtail contact and interaction with what was then considered a "mongrel" race, an amalgam of Indian, Spanish, and African blood. Later immigrants poured into the old barrios, using them as way stations for entrance into the United States and transition to a new culture. With continuing immigration over time there developed different settlement patterns, and new variations of the barrio notion evolved.

Blacks and *ghettoes*, in contrast, are more closely associated with race and racial exclusion right at the beginning of the growth of urban areas. "The one-drop rule" almost dictated that the blacks would be kept "separate and unequal" in the resources at their disposal and the means for uplifting themselves. Thus, race and poverty were inextricably linked in the case of the African American. The ghetto wall was rigidly constructed and tightly sealed off from upscale society. Even with these contrasts, however, there appears to be a similarity in more recent developments since the uplifting Civil Rights movements of the 1960s. Both barrio and ghetto dwellers helped break down the spatial barriers and were able to carve out paths of success to move out and up from the margins of isolated enclaves. Although an improvement from the past, there are still plenty of residents locked into marginal situations and conditions, a reality that Wilson spoke about some time back (Wilson, 1987).

Few can argue that settlement in barrios, especially in the way outside forces and interests dictated this reality, had a profound effect on the Mexican population. Adaptation to the United States was certainly made more difficult. A life of poverty in the hollows, ravines, across the tracks, and what not, did little to accommodate and aid adjustment of new groups of Mexican immigrants to American society. Moreover, the large-scale immigration to densely populated areas in both the twentieth and twenty-first centuries created the conditions for major social problems.

In the early decades of the twentieth century, Los Angeles was undergoing rapid changes, moving from a Mexican pueblo to a major U.S. city in just a few short decades. The technological expansion and need for an immediate, steady, exploitable, and cheap labor pool made it imperative that workers and their families settle in similarly available and cheap locations. The ecological niches that constituted the new Mexican settlements were reflective of policies based on expedience with little concern for the residents or their needs. Workers were paid poorly and in turn paid less for rent in substandard housing, both of which tended to stymie or slow social mobility and residential mobility, a vertical jump trumping a horizontal shift. Moving up and out was severely compromised and barrios became pressure cookers for the residents.

Sociocultural and sociopyschological repercussions emerged from where Mexicans lived and worked. Historically, there is continuity in how this process of separation and distance is imposed on poor immigrants. As a result, there is an enclave typology of urban barrio, rural colonia, postmodern barrio (older former Anglo neighborhoods that are occupied), and public housing development barrio, all of which are largely populated by Mexicans or other Latinos. The externally imposed "other" choice dominated "self" choice in the establishment of visually distinct and spatially separate communities. From this crucial marginal start, the ripple effects of marginality consumed residents and their children. People there knew that they were in the backwaters of the city or area, and tacitly understood that they were a low-status people. The seeds of resistance and protest were thus sown at that time, although decades passed before they bore fruit as protests and other eruptions of resistance. School officials and other public servants began to think of these barrios and people as a drain on resources and nuisance to the social fabric. This disparaging attitude has become so ingrained that mention of the barrio, or any low-income Mexican American neighborhood, usually involves social distancing ("they're from Northtown").

From the Outside Looking in: A "European" Perspective on the *Ghetto*

By Talja Blokland, *Technische Universiteit Delft*

When Julius Wilson published *The Truly Disadvantaged* in 1987, an influential group of Dutch sociologists at the University of Leiden was developing a research program on "modern poverty." This time period saw the beginning of the crisis of the welfare state and the gradual shift to a more neo-liberal regime. It was the start of a slow growth of acceptance of the perspective that holds the poor responsible for their poverty, or at least explains poverty by "a culture" or personal choices and individual shortcomings. Such understandings were alien to a previously predominantly social-democratic and Christian-democratic moderate-left political climate. Wilson was invited for a talk, and an old newspaper clipping pictures him walking with his young assistant Loic Wacquant and the Dutch scholars through what then were considered the "worse" areas of Rotterdam. The caption to the picture noted that Professor Wilson did not think Holland had *ghettos*. Here, an Italian concept, for example, *ghetto* as originally used in Venice, traveled across Europe and then the Atlantic and back to Europe again, gradually changing its meaning.

This essay addresses the question whether the concept of *ghetto* is applicable in Europe. I draw my arguments from the Netherlands only. The idea that there are European ways of seeing things holds only so far as this is meant to say "container of views geographically located in Europe", or "Non-American but Western." Beyond that, those European ways of seeing vary more than they converge. I show how in the Netherlands *ghetto* is used as a term for high-poverty neighborhoods with a moral and behavioral connotation and an original focus on poverty, not race or ethnicity. I argue that the term may be usefully applied as a generic sociological term for spatial expression of exclusion. This, not the question of it affecting one or another racial or ethnic group, then determines its core. In fact, African Americans in a high poverty, segregated public housing development that I studied in the United States used the term as such. But they *also* used the term as a moral category to denounce behavior. As such, they emulated the dominant discursive use of "ghetto" from the outside as a descriptive term *and* a moral category into the everyday understandings of their own neighborhood.

This points to two aspects of labeling areas *ghetto* or else. First, not all cities are so large that everyday life is confined to neighborhood borders. Many American, most European, and all Dutch cities are not. The use of space has changed since the early Chicago School and certainly since the days of the Venice ghetto. So a *place-bound* definition of *ghetto* becomes rather difficult to apply if we are to understand mechanisms and processes of exclusion. To be from a *ghetto* matters more outside the specific area than in everyday interactions within. In cities like Amsterdam and Berlin alike, some students of high schools in low-income districts report that they never make a trip downtown. All preconditions (affordable transportation, even biking lanes) are in place. In Amsterdam, the distance is even walkable. So there appear to be exclusionary processes that prevent these youths from venturing out of their area and into downtown—in the city that is being named by American scholars on the listserve as almost ideal.

Second, we risk ecological fallacy or physical determinism when delineating areas by a concept that has such clear moral dimensions in common usage, also among the Black poor (an ecological fallacy that in practice is applied as stigmatization and evokes responses of distancing). A *ghetto*, then, soon turns into another label in a war of words against the poor, to paraphrase Herbert Gans. *Ghettos* become the areas of the undeserving poor. Consequently, those living there are bound to be undeserving. These two aspects can be dealt with, as I will argue here, through an understanding of *ghettos* as spatial expressions of social processes, rather than as given spatial units. This also allows for a dynamic perspective, where *ghettos* come and, hopefully, sometimes go while the neighborhoods remain.

GHETTO OUTSIDE A U.S. CONTEXT

The question of (in)voluntarism that is essential to the American historical development of the usage of "ghetto" as a term has not been central to its use in Holland. In Wikipedia, referred to in the online discussion of the Urban and Community Listserv, the *ghetto* is defined as a specific area into which people are forced "because of the government or of circumstances." But the entry also noted that residents have "the *same* ethnic background or culture"—which is relatively rare in contemporary European cities. As Wacquant impressively shows in his *Urban Outcasts*, cultural diversity and a status of being excluded, *not* same ethnicity or "culture", defines the French *banlieu* as it does the Dutch *achterstandswijk*. When one continues to read, one sees that the Dutch Wikipedia indeed assumes the *ghetto* to be of other times and other places. It used to exist as a place where Jews were segregated, and then the Americans "took over" the term to refer to "their poor ethnic urban neighborhoods", where it is "synonymous" with the phrase "area of disadvantage (*achterstandswijk*) but then with a slightly more extreme outlook." And, the entry continues, there is general agreement that the Netherlands does not have such *ghettos*.

As in the public debate more generally, there then is an interesting discursive shift. While elsewhere the involuntary nature of segregation is stressed (examples of Roma's in Middle Europe are cited), (in)voluntarism receives little attention in the discussion of the Dutch situation—in Wikipedia or elsewhere. As Van der Laan-Bouma Doff points out in her work on segregation in Dutch cities, the question whether choice or constraint brings people to live where they do is often easily assumed to be a matter of personal choice in a country with public housing provisions extending to more than only the bottom segment of the housing market. Given the economic quality, such a choice is in fact often a choice between similar neighborhoods, if there is a choice at all.

The question whether there are *ghettos* in the Netherlands is then primarily approached from a behavioral perspective: there are "bad" neighborhoods with high crime rates and where people feel unsafe and face "many nuisances" (and, indeed, which tend to be ethnic minority neighborhoods) and they may hence feel they live in a *ghetto*. So, the entry continues: "some neighborhoods give the 'sense' of a ghetto because of the presence of drugs, crime, welfare dependency, high percentages of ethnic minorities, vacancies, social housing and naturally the physical appearance of an area." But as poverty is not so severe and only relative, from the outside looking in they cannot be called *ghettos* like the areas in the Third World, United States, or "even France." There hence is

a shifting back and forth from seeing *ghettos* as areas with extreme poverty, to seeing them as areas with concentrated behavioral problems and deviance. But they are *not* explicitly seen as places where people are involuntary segregated through processes beyond their *own* individual agency.

This entry reflects the connotation that the term has gradually acquired since the times of Wilson's visit. Very briefly, three developments set the stage for this concept formation. First, immigration grew, particularly of Turkish and Moroccan families and African refugees to large urban centers with abundant affordable housing. Second, middle-class whites continued to move to the suburbs and smaller towns. Third, the welfare state gradually retreated. This retreat was accompanied by a debate about deserving and undeserving poor (but not necessarily in such terms). These three developments gave disadvantages their stronger spatial reference, began to give poverty a racialized dimension, and connected it implicitly to deviance and crime.

Initially, the academic and public debate focused on inner city neighborhoods with (relatively speaking) concentrated poverty, irrespective of or ignoring immigrants there. (The dominance of white (male) researchers in the social sciences who spoke no Turkish or Moroccan may have contributed to this.) Since the Leiden sociologists started quoting Julius Wilson, many have wondered whether a culture of poverty was developing in "poverty ghettos." Poverty, not so much race or ethnicity, determined the definition of the *ghettos* one feared for, in an odd combination with fear for social disintegration as a result of cultural *heterogeneity*, not homogeneity, in these areas.

The public discourse reflected a fear for neighborhoods with a *shared* culture of poverty implying a strong community among deviant poor. As Van der Pennen pointed out in an essay on the Dutch *ghetto* debate, the discussion has been one about fear, where *ghettos* were constructed as areas with a concentration of people who opted to live there, sharing views, values, and lifestyles deviant from mainstream society. At the *same* time, the idea developed that the lack of a warm and nice neighborhood-as-community made these areas so disintegrated that crime and other vice proliferated, as lack of cohesion would induce crime.

Since then, the concentration of poverty has not decreased, and the demographic changes have continued, with some neighborhoods now counting over 80 percent residents of foreign origin, but of various backgrounds. Amsterdam West, for example, which is sometimes referred to as Satellite City because of the many satellite dishes attached to roofs and balconies for receiving a wide variety of foreign television channels unavailable through the cable, has a slight majority of residents of Morroccan origin, but residents have a heritage in over 80 different countries.

Ghettos would thus threaten social integration. So "mixed neighborhoods" are seen as most desirable, because the combination of disadvantage and one ethnic group would increase the chances of development of *ghettos*. But multiethnic neighborhoods need to include a substantial number of native Dutch in order to be called "mixed": multiethnic neighborhoods still qualify for risking to be(come) *ghettos*. Such an understanding of mixture fits with other peculiar features of Dutch society. In no other language that I know of is there one term for the "native" population that is the dominant group and one for all others, as the distinction *autochtonen* and *allochtonen* respectively in Dutch. Similarly, the everyday understanding of ethnic or racial groups is based on a notion of Otherness: "they" have a race or an ethnicity—the "native Dutch" tend not to define themselves as having a race or ethnicity at all.

The sense of undesirability of monoethnic and multiethnic/non-Dutch neighborhoods was primarily fed not by concerns about racism and exclusion and the spatial expression thereof, but by questions of social integration and assimilation into the mainstream. Interestingly, several cities have encouraged the development of commercial Chinatowns. Politicians have never seriously considered the building of mosques with traditional design, concentration of Muslim stores in shopping streets and the like as opportunities for an attractive ethnic enclave, but mostly (and recently quite seriously) as an undesirable sign of *ghetto*-formation.

Public discourse about the question whether or not the Netherlands have or will get *ghettos* hence focuses primarily on a fear that a concentration of marginality will turn neighborhoods into no-go areas where deviance reigns, no social control is possible, and "decent" residents suffer from the problematic behavior of the undeserving. Put more sharply, this anxiety is a fear that these areas will be beyond the control of the established and "things will go out of hand." The fear of ethnic concentration and an implicit idea that such concentration will harm social integration is relatively recent, and has strengthened a fear of loosing grip. This is, for example, reflected in an increasingly strong support for zero tolerance policing, especially toward youth, and support for stop-and-search practices and the obligation to carry an ID. To be stopped in the street for an ID or searched used to be outlawed and then became legally possible, but initially only as an experiment in the "worse" neighborhoods. In practice, these continue to be by and large the only areas where (especially youth of migrant descent) are stopped. A recent law enables cities to "lock" certain neighborhoods for low-income newcomers when they consider these areas liable to slide into further "accumulation of disadvantage." Hardly is the question of racism, let alone forms of institutional racism, evoked in the public debate in relation to *ghettos*.

THE *GHETTO* AS A GENERIC TERM FOR A SPATIAL EXPRESSION OF EXCLUSION

In the Netherlands and America alike, *ghetto* is not a merely descriptive term of a geographical site. It is used as a label for spatial expressions of forms of exclusion. Whether it is the established who fear or the excluded who fulminate using the label "ghetto" for a neighborhood, a label it is. Here it diverts from the original usage in Venice. The area where Jews were forced to concentrate was called Ghetto because of the geographical fact that it was a site for production of iron. It later became simultaneous with areas where Jews were forced to concentrate, delineating again a geographical site. Exclusion and the creation of Otherness in the processes of exclusion can take on spatial expressions. Seen in this way, what happened in Venice was not giving a name to a bounded place. Instead, it was the spatial expression of social processes of exclusion, when Jews were defined as inferior citizens and excluded professionally from certain trades and relegated to live in certain areas.

For such processes it does not matter much whether it is the individual's preference to live there or not. Social boundary construction is a matter of both categorization and identification. The two move in tandem, so that individual voluntarism of specific persons is not a useful starting point for analyses. One may, even more strongly, say with a far-away

reference to Thomas, that at times no one may individually want something to exist—say, a neighborhood where people are forced to live—and stuff still happens.

This may be one of the reasons for the reluctance in countries like the Netherlands to employ the concept of the *ghetto* in its original usage, if at all. To open up the possibility that there is involuntary concentration of groups of people as spatial expressions of boundary work that creates Otherness sits uneasily with the European history of racism, the Holocaust, and the dream of tolerance and freedom that so many, especially in Holland, adhere to. Yet in a project on urban safety we have interviewed male residents of Turkish descent who said that they did believe they were concentrated purposively in what they called a *ghetto*: "They are only putting in foreigners here. You know why they do that? We know. It will make it easier to deport us all one day."

Naturally, there is no "they." It is hard to see why anybody would want to concentrate immigrants with low incomes into nineteenth-century inner city areas or estates on the outskirts of the city. And yet they concentrate there, and it is just as hard to see this as the accidental results of individual minds who happen to want the same thing. As authors on new racism such as Les Back and Phil Cohen in Britain have pointed out, the tendency to reduce racism to the sick minds of individuals liberates the liberal minds in society from thinking about the structural or institutional dimensions that categorical inequalities reflect.

Polemically, one may argue that the easy way to deal with the fact that racism is a mechanism that creates and maintains categorical inequality to solve organizational distribution of scarce resources, as one would in Tilly's framework, is twofold. First, one may deny that there are *ghettos* because the problematic neighborhoods are less extreme than those in the United States. Second, one may define such *ghettos* behaviorally rather than structurally. But once members of ethnic or racial groups start to experience social exclusion from mainstream society and see their residential location as a spatial expression of such exclusion, we are back to the notion of *ghetto* in its original usage. I have no clue to what extent this is the case, and it would be quite hard to establish. But statistical truth is not necessary for social facts to become true—in their consequences.

CONCLUSION

Understood as the spatial expression of processes of exclusion, "ghetto" is an analytical category, generalizable and useful, that avoids physical determinism and stays away from too much focus on geography and demographic statistics. It is dynamic, as it maintains a reference to space but not to a bounded site, allowing for *ghettos* to become and "unbecome."

The everyday usage of the term in the United States and the Netherlands alike is a moral one. In my studies in New Haven, CT, and Rotterdam, the Netherlands, alike, people who live in disadvantaged areas apply the term with negative moral connotations as does mainstream discourse. A poor neighborhood of concentrated disadvantage does not need to be seen by agents involved (residents, landlords, the police, City Hall, media) as a *ghetto* in the moral sense. The very mixture of the descriptive and moral aspects in the term makes us also powerfully aware that when it comes to people's lives, there are no clear-cut categories that easily delineate, for example, the hoodlums and the decent poor, or the *ghetto* and the working-class neighborhood—only from the outside looking in do such easy categories seem possible.

Rather than aiming for the perfect definition and finding cases fitting these, we may, starting from its original connotation as being a situation of involuntary segregated groups, stress the spatiality and the exclusionary practices that lead to *ghettos*. By studying *ghettos* as given geographical units that contain certain groups of people we may, to reiterate the anthropologist Gerd Baumann, be studying social groups of our own making. The question is not "which area is a ghetto" but instead "how do mechanisms of border creation and maintaining create areas where residents consider themselves involuntarily segregated and what processes and mechanisms contribute to this understanding of social reality?"

Enclaves, Condominiums, and Favelas: Where Are the *Ghettos* in Brazil?

By Circe Monteiro, *Federal University of Pernambuco in Recife, Brazil*

When one reviews the recent sociological discussion, one would suspect that there are no *ghettos* in Brazil. This would be odd in a country where spatial segregation, seclusion, and social differentiation are evident features of the urban configuration. The concept of the *ghetto* has been neglected in the Brazilian context, thus making it necessary to argue for the use of the term in order to address current patterns of urban segregation and exclusion.

One of the reasons for avoidance of the term to describe segregated areas in Brazilian cities has been due to its strict definition. *Ghetto* has been seen as an urban expression of segregation with the presence of clear and controlled boundaries. *Ghetto* has also entailed separation provoked by external social distress, either through fear of, or the need to control, people with different customs and moral ethics. This original formulation was applied to segregated Jewish neighborhoods at different times and in different places.

Chicago school sociologists regarded the city as a "mosaic of social worlds" and pursued explanations for the causes and effects of the urban segregation. This was when *ghetto* became a sociological term. This wider interpretation understood an urban *ghetto* as the result of society's explicit interests in segregating ethnic or racial groups who, as a consequence of deprivation, experienced the welling-up of internal forces of resistance and of the creation of specific subcultures. The inner characteristics of the social isolation of blacks and minority groups living in deprived urban neighborhoods in American cities at that time justified their designation as *ghettos*. Different from the traditional Jewish *ghetto*, these new *ghettos* were economically segregated as well.

Currently, the concept of *ghetto* echos past and present interpretations. The concept implicitly considers two sides of the same coin; the *ghetto* is treated as both "weapon and shield." From an external point of view, a *ghetto* requires the presence of an exogenous power oppressing or controlling a group of people and separating them from society (SPEAR, 1928). From an internal point of view, a *ghetto* requires homogeneity of the oppressed group or at least their sharing important common traits (race, religion, sexual affiliation, and so on). It also calls for the effects of prolonged segregation such as ties of solidarity, forms of resilience, resistance, and the organization of internal institutions (Clark, 1965).

For Wacquant (2004), the idea of the *ghetto* is "an opaque and mutant one," but it is still under transformation and open to new expressions such as the hyperghettos. The author focuses on extreme forms of segregation, like prisons, gulags, and war camps, but this does not become reflected in a proposal for a relational and more flexible usage of the term. Wacquart continues to stress the four essential constituents of a *ghetto*: stigma, boundary, spatial enclosure, and institutional encapsulation; on top of that, what is still essential are the clear presence of an oppressor and the collective identity of the oppressed. Wacquant sounds the warning that "all ghettos are segregated areas but not all segregated areas are ghettos."

Under the circumstances specified above, most urban segregation found in Latin America and Brazil cannot be addressed as *ghettos*. Slums and favelas are not *ghettos*, nor

are housing estates on the outskirts, nor informal settlements caught in the middle of city sprawl, nor illegal invasions that thrive in enclosed waste lands, and nor even is the new segregated pattern of gated communities on the periphery of cities.

If we consider all the stated sociological requirements, we should say that the term *ghetto* is not robust enough to describe the complexity of current urban segregation and should probably be set aside. So, what is the point of having a precise and detailed concept if it cannot be used to describe real phenomena?

Discussion on what is and is not a *ghetto* is sterile, when it does not allow for identification of what stage of "ghettoization" groups are in, or if their outlook is to push beyond this condition or on the contrary to keep themselves prisoners within it. Rather than that, a great contribution would be to devise, update, and enlarge the concept in order to differentiate between acceptable and unacceptable types of segregation (Wacquant, 2007).

GHETTO AS A METAPHOR

The idea of the *ghetto* has also become a metaphor. It has been appropriated and transformed by popular usage to classify any kind of social isolation, spatial or not. The media use the word *ghetto* to characterize restricted places with controlled access where artists, upper-class people, or other groups get together in an exclusive manner.

The lay usage is anchored in a singular image of group isolation. This social representation of the *ghetto* lacks moral judgment on whether this is a negative or positive situation. In fact, this interpretation transformed a negative idea of the *ghetto* into a positive condition, ready to be aspired to, especially in uneven societies such as in Brazil. Spatial segregation and social homogeneity nowadays become the most desired urban quality. Different social classes (upper and lower ones) envisage residences in gated areas as a sign of positive differentiation and social status, and of course, as a means of providing personal safety and protection from urban violence.

Brazilian society at large refuses to accept the label of being racist. The social logic of spatial segregation does not discriminate race, color, religion, ethnicity, or cultural background, but social class. In this country, social discrimination is a matter of income and style of consumption. This is a flexible social structure, which allows great upward mobility, where rich people are easily accepted into the upper classes' milieu whether they are black, Jewish, Asian, football players, country bumpkins, or even criminals. In this perspective, spatial discrimination reveals a relationship of economic and political power that enables some groups to gain security and have access to the scarce provision, in Brazilian cities, of urban infrastructure and services while others are excluded.

NEW PATTERNS OF URBAN SEGREGATION IN BRAZILIAN CITIES

To contribute to this discussion, we consider different experiences of urban segregation due either to poverty or wealth, which are commonly found in Brazilian cities. The basic idea is to show the plurality and the nuances of experiences that tend to be collapsed under a single term.

The analysis of patterns of spatial segregation is subject to erroneous interpretations especially by external observers. First of all, because by dwelling on more visible features

of poor areas, such as the morphology, composition, and income of the inhabitants, one can confuse different phenomena because of their ostensible similarity. Thus, it may be thought that all favelas are similar. Nor is there anything more erroneous than generalizations based on historical interpretations that have been superseded and repeat ideas that have been consolidated into out-of-date descriptions. It would be wrong also to say that all favelas are considered *ghettos* only by taking account of the situation of spatial segregation.

According to Valladares (2006), local urban discussion has returned to understanding "the causes of urban segregation" via an analysis of the forces of exploitation, of economic imbalances, and of the faulty results of social and urban policies. Curiously, there are few studies of a sociological nature that deal with the "effects of segregation," which range over the complexity of resulting arrangements and their consequences on people's everyday routine.

Thus, we decided to ask residents of different places what the effects of spatial and social effects have been on their lives, and took this opportunity to ask what they understood as being a *ghetto*.

THE SOCIAL SEGREGATION OF FAVELAS

Favelas can be places of despair and hope, of resignation and resistance, of survival and death. "The Favela should stop being seen in the singular and recognized as a plural universe" (Valadares, 2006). Two very different cases present the wide array of favelas' dwellers' experience of urban segregation.

When I asked Alzira, a black woman living in a favela in the Northeast of Brazil, what a *ghetto* is she could not answer. In fact, she did not have a clue about the meaning of such a word, had never heard anyone mentioning such a thing. Yet, she lives in a shantytown (favela) not very far from the center of a big city. She rarely leaves the neighborhood; she is forced to live there because she cannot afford to live in a place that is better. She is poor and only poor people live in that area. She has suffered discrimination because she lives in a favela and has found it difficult to get a job after printing her address on employment forms. She socializes mainly with neighbors and relatives that live around her. Alzira spends most of her time in the favela and goes out mainly to the hospital or to deal with local agencies of water and electricity. The city's seaside trendy neighborhood is only one hour away from her house, but she has been there only twice, when she was a child. The neighbors are very heterogeneous and do not consider themselves as a community. As she says, "every man for himself, and God for all of us." However, she clings to a notion of "virtual community" that arises when she is in need or in the presence of external threats. This favela is not seen as a *ghetto*, but Alzira's segregated life in that place is very reminiscent of one.

NEO-FAVELAS FROM SEGREGATION TO COERCION

Recent transformations arising from segregation have changed certain urban relationships and the favelas of Rio de Janeiro exemplify almost an inversion of position—from segregated places to the opposite position of dominance and threat.

The favelas of Rio de Janeiro were formerly known for their culture, such as being the cradle of samba and important cultural manifestations, which defined the identity of

Brazil as a whole. The occupation of the hillsides promoted at one and the same time the advantages of segregation and the advantages of being close to the city. This situation favored a large internal organization of these communities. This positive situation has been being changed over the last thirty or so years. Organized crime, especially that linked to drug trafficking, has found this to be a perfect place to set itself up, including use of the favelas' informal means of communication and of protection.

Under organized crime, the barriers were turned inside out. The favela now imposes fear and controls the outside city. Those with power in the favelas can command public transportation to stop and commerce to close. In an extreme demonstration of control, during a recent war between favelas, they ordered people to stay at home, kept the police under siege, and dictated rules for their copresence with "the ghetto."

The neo-favela, as Valladares (2006) called Rocinha in Rio de Janeiro, is integrated by intranet and has its own cable TV.[1] Far from being a place of poverty, this favela now has local branches of major banks, post offices, language schools, and all kinds of services. Their inhabitants are classified under all ranges of income and there are already three companies promoting international tourism in the area. According to Valladares, "in future, let's stop confusing favela and poverty."

THE SPATIAL SEGREGATION OF PERIPHERAL NEIGHBORHOODS

In another place, living in the housing estate of Curado in Recife, built by the government in the middle of nowhere, at the periphery, Robson, a middle aged *mulato* man, also talked about his experience. He gave up looking for a proper job, and makes money fixing things for his neighbors. Because of the distance from the city, the residents started small businesses such as video shops, drugstores, hairdressers, fitness centers, usually on invaded public land. He likes the place and feels a strong identity with and attachment to the neighborhood. According to him, people there live a very isolated existence, especially the women; even though they praise the periphery lifestyle like finding pleasure in the informality of social gatherings, local music, and football. Robson rarely leaves the neighborhood and in answer to my initial question, he recalled that Ghetto is the name of a hip hop band. This is a spatially segregated neighborhood, but its inhabitants are not socially excluded from society. City isolation made them cohere as a group, build their own identity, which is expressed in cultural values and cherished as a peripheral lifestyle. Most public housing estates on the outskirts of cities can be regarded as segregated areas, differently from the case portrayed. In extreme cases these housing ensembles turn into islands of violence and crime as shown in the Brazilian film *City of God*.[2]

Again, we should stress that if all favelas are not the same, all peripheral neighborhoods are not the same either and that the intricate relationship of poverty and segregation should be carefully examined.

THE PERVERSION OF WEALTH DISCRIMINATION

Nearly all capital cities in Brazil are witnessing the spread of self-contained walled condominiums similar to gated communities, presented by Caldeira (2000) as a city of walls.

The pattern of São Paulo is perhaps the most intense, with huge residential enclaves alongside highways. The new condominiums are built to substitute the city: they have their own shopping malls, medical center, schools, sports grounds, cinemas, dry cleaners, services for home decoration, and even for the maintenance of plants. These enclaves located side by side with their encapsulated forms of commerce, service, and leisure facilities create the most acute form of urban disconnection. The large scale of segregation is already causing unusual problems, such as this year's "sky congestion" due to helicopters flying from hypersecure residential condominiums to the city center. Upper-middle class residents of these walled enclaves share common spaces but their forced proximity rarely results in social ties and collective values The middle class does not come together just because of their physical proximity to each other since the value they give to individuality and differentiation rises above any collective aim.

Antonio, a teenager raised in an exclusive condominium in Rio de Janeiro, knows what a *ghetto* is. He said that he lives in one, since he spends most of his time inside it. He mentions three other places where he normally goes apart from school: the shopping center, the club, and the beach, generally by car, driven by the chauffeur of his friends, or by the taxi company that serves his condominium. Security is a daily concern, inside and outside the condominium. He has school friends who live in other condominiums; they are connected with each other through the Internet. As his mother works away from home all day, she does not permit friendship with some neighbors, especially the judge's son and the son of the man who receives money for the Brazilian gambling game called "jogo do bicho." In this place representatives of the law and the crime are neighbors. Antonio considers that the law of the city does not apply inside the condominium, "not even the police dares to come in here." This is called a "Golden Ghetto" but in reality is a cluster, not a *ghetto*.

GHETTOS OUTSIDE URBAN SPACE

What we are trying to show is that the detailed sociological definition of *ghetto* has not been useful for describing the variegated forms of segregation of Brazilian cities. Notwithstanding this, it is possible to acknowledge the presence of places where lifestyles, social, and cultural forms are outcomes of extreme discrimination and urban exclusion and closely resemble *ghettos*. The fundamental nature of this distinction bears not only external traits such as poverty, and feelings of inferiority brought about by being stigmatized, but also the emergence of ways of thinking, of seeing the world, of identification, which signal these people are locked into a disadvantaged situation in society from which they see no escape.

The increasing complexity of urban life distorts general features, and makes the internal differentiation of places a difficult task. If we take into account spaces well outside cities, we are able to identify the indisputable presence of *ghettos* such as Indian settlements in rural areas, often found midway between towns; the *Quilombo*s (today autonomous communities of black people whose ancestors were runaway slaves and founded these settlements); and even the new MST (Landless Workers Movement) camps. The residents of all such settlements, historically formed for different reasons, experience the fundaments of life in a *ghetto*.

Social sciences are meant to understand and explain changing phenomena in society. We should be arguing to what extent the concept of the *ghetto* could be pliable so that its quintessence may continue to be described in different ages and contexts. Surely, what we have traditionally defined as *ghettos* can no longer be addressed as such, and this could be good news. Surely also our blinkered vision is failing to address new extreme cases of segregation and their nefarious effects on society and this certainly is neither new nor good news.

Notes

[1] See the internet site at www.tvroc.com.br

[2] *City of God* (2002) is a film directed by Fernando Meirelles, which shows the gradual escalation of violence through the standpoint of a child from a peripheral public housing estate in Rio de Janeiro.

Reconsidering the "Ghetto"[1]

By Anmol Chaddha and William Julius Wilson, *Harvard University*

Perhaps because the term "ghetto" has had a long life outside of social science, its use as an analytical concept has long been contested. Profound and continuous changes in urban conditions over the last century have complicated matters further. Our understanding of what defines a *ghetto*, how we identify it, and who lives there, has evolved over this time, which frustrates the expectation that analytically useful concepts should have consistency and apply across various contexts and time periods.

Many definitions of the "ghetto" suggest that it should be defined in terms of the presence or absence of particular racial, spatial, and class characteristics. For instance, some scholars argue that *ghettoes* are defined exclusively by racial segregation and subjugation regardless of income level or class. Others call for a strictly class-based definition, whereby areas of concentrated poverty are defined as *ghettoes* regardless of their racial or ethnic makeup. Still other definitions consider a combination of these characteristics.

This article resists these traditional approaches that rely on observable characteristics and instead argues for a conceptualization of "ghettoization" that emphasizes the underlying and interrelated social processes that produce and maintain *ghetto* areas, rather than approaching the "ghetto" as an unambiguously discrete category that describes a particular urban space. As a useful analytical concept, the definition of the "ghetto" in empirical research should be connected to broader theoretical arguments that seek to explain observable events.

A THEORETICALLY DERIVED DEFINITION OF THE "GHETTO"—THE PROCESS OF GHETTOIZATION

The publication of *The Truly Disadvantaged* (1987) spurred a prolonged focus on poverty research in the social sciences. Scholars have examined poverty concentration effects, debated the relative importance of structural and cultural factors in explaining urban poverty and inequality, and disputed the validity and usefulness of such terms as "underclass" (Mayer and Jencks, 1989; Jencks and Peterson, 1991; Wilson, 1991; Wilson, 2009, *inter alia*).

In conducting empirical research that required social scientists to distinguish *ghetto* areas from *nonghetto* areas, many recent researchers have operationalized *ghetto* areas in accordance with a definition proffered by Jargowsky and Bane (1991) of "a ghetto as an area in which the overall poverty rate in a census tract is greater than 40 percent. The ghetto poor are then those poor, of any race or ethnic group, who live in such high-poverty census tracts. . .It is important to distinguish our definition of ghetto tracts based on a poverty criterion from a definition based on racial composition. Not all majority black tracts are ghettos under our definition nor are all ghettos black" (Jargowsky and Bane, 1991, pps. 239, 241).

Wacquant (1997, 2002) sharply criticizes this redefinition as an atheoretical "gutting" of the substantive meanings that had long been attached to the term "ghetto." While the residents of the earliest incarnation of the *ghetto* were defined by membership in

a stigmatized group and its subsequent usage in America placed race at the core of ghettoization, Jargowsky and Bane's definition "obfuscates the racial basis and character" of the observed concentration of poverty that they examine (Wacquant, 1997: 341). By removing segregation as a constitutive characteristic of the *ghetto*, "it transforms a *relational* notion... into a falsely neutral, gradational construct ostensibly pegged on income level... The result is that, for the first time in its long life in America, the concept of 'ghetto' has been stripped of its ethnoracial referent and denuded of any mention of group power and oppression" (2002, p. 37; emphasis in original). This criticism expresses the concern that overextending the concept "ghetto" by defining it only in terms of poverty—instead of a more precise substantive definition that holds together economic disadvantage, race, and segregation—effectively dilutes its analytical strength (Sartori, 1970).

The Jargowsky and Bane formulation may be theoretically indistinguishable from a "slum"—an area with high poverty and poor living conditions, regardless of racial composition, or segregation. In Wacquant's view, this redefinition of "ghetto" as areas with high-poverty rates substantially alters its analytical significance and explanatory power. He argues, "To say that they are ghettos because they are poor is to reverse social and historical causation: it is because they were and are ghettos that joblessness and misery are unusually acute and persistent in them" (Wacquant, 1997: 343). Considering the growing influence of poverty research on public policy, Wacquant attributes the widespread acceptance of Jargowsky and Bane's redefinition of the "ghetto" to the exigencies of policy research embraced by a "consensus of a circle of like-minded policy-oriented scholars for whom mention of race is deemed superfluous, disagreeable, or ill-advised" (Wacquant, 2002, p.40).

Responding to Wacquant's criticism, Jargowsky (1998) argues that Wacquant incorrectly interprets Jargowsky and Bane's attempt to identify areas of concentrated poverty as an argument about the causal mechanisms that produce them. He writes, "nothing in our usage of 'ghetto'...implies anything about causation; we were only seeking to identify a particular aspect of urban spatial differentiation for further scrutiny" (Jargowsky, 1998, p. 161). Jargowsky goes on to call for research that first identifies communities that are segregated by race and/or class, and then "having identified 'racially segregated ghettos' and 'impoverished slums'—substitute your preferred labels here—we study such neighborhoods to learn whether outcomes for their residents are different than the outcomes for similar persons who live in less segregated communities" (Jargowsky, 1998: 162). While the invitation to empirical research is well founded, Jargowsky does not engage Wacquant's basic argument that the *ghetto* is not merely an area that is racially or economically segregated. Considering Jargowsky's suggestion that "racially segregated ghettos" and "slums" are interchangeable and Jargowsky and Bane's explicit stipulation that race is not substantively constitutive of the "ghetto" (i.e., "The ghetto poor are then those poor, of any race or ethnic group, who live in such high-poverty census tracts" [Jargowsky and Bane, 1991, p. 241]), they do not acknowledge how their definition departs from the usage of the term "ghetto" in earlier research.

Pattillo (2003) also questions the Jargowsky-Bane income-based definition of "ghetto"—particularly its adoption by Wilson (1996). She extends "ghetto" to include segregated black areas, regardless of class composition—"the entirety of the spatially segregated and contiguous black community" (Pattillo, 2003: 1046). In emphasizing "racial segregation and subjugation as the key identifiers of ghettos, rather than viewing poverty as the characteristic condition," Pattillo sees her usage of the term as remaining faithful to

Wirth's application of "ghetto" to Jewish enclaves and to earlier research on black *ghettos* (Wirth, 1928). Understanding the *ghetto* in this way reveals socioeconomic heterogeneity in black communities and institutional impediments to the mobility of black residents.

Drawing on her own research, she describes two black neighborhoods in Chicago—one very poor and the other low-middle class—that "are equally racially ghettoized, but differently composed" (Pattillo, 2003, p. 1055). Despite their socioeconomic difference, "they share a history of racial residential structuring in Chicago, and the concomitant stratification of politico-economic resources and power" (Pattillo, 2003, p. 1049). As black neighborhoods, they face common disadvantages in health, poverty, school quality, crime, and housing. They are both *ghettos*, Pattillo argues, because they "are component parts of a system of spatially based racial segregation and subjugation that defines the ghetto and circumscribes the visions, interactions, and life possibilities of its residents" (Pattillo, 2003, p. 1049).

Pattillo's argument raises two important questions. First, should every urban black neighborhood be considered part of the *ghetto*? Second, if urban conditions change over time, is it necessarily misleading to develop a new understanding of how the term "ghetto" should be used? Concerning the latter question, Wilson argued that beginning in the 1970s the outmigration of working and middle-class blacks to nonpoor neighborhoods in the metropolitan area has resulted in an increasing class bifurcation in urban black communities (Wilson, 1987 and 1996). The resulting concentrated poor black neighborhoods were a new urban form—a manifestation of racial and economic disadvantage that was unique to the postindustrial period.

Responding to Pattillo's criticism, Wilson (2003) highlights the problem of constructing general definitions of analytical concepts in the absence of a broader theoretical argument that seeks to explain observable events. He argues, "Definitions of social categories that are not derived from theoretical frameworks are arbitrary" (Wilson 2003, p. 1106). Pattillo's definition of the "ghetto," states Wilson, may very well be appropriate for the sociological questions that guide her research. However, for his research on social transformation and neighborhood change in urban black communities, Wilson (1996) adopts the Jargowsky-Bane definition of "ghetto" as an area in which at least 40 percent of residents have incomes below the poverty line. By using this threshold, Wilson identifies relevant neighborhoods that he uses to test and elaborate on hypotheses about concentration effects, social isolation, and the increasing incidence of joblessness among blacks in certain neighborhoods compared to others, hypotheses derived from his theory of the social transformation of the inner city in *The Truly Disadvantaged* (1987).

Wilson addressed the following questions in *The Truly Disadvantaged*: why did concentrated poverty rapidly increase in inner-city neighborhoods between 1970 and 1980 and why were some neighborhoods transformed into high-poverty neighborhoods? His underlying concern was that the rise in concentrated poverty in certain inner-city neighborhoods increased the social isolation of the residents in these neighborhoods. In Wilson's theory a structure of inequality has evolved that is linked to contemporary behavior in the *ghetto* by a combination of constraints and opportunities. The exogenous factors, which represent the sources of the growing concentration of black *ghetto* poverty, include changes in the economy that have restructured occupations and relocated industries, and political processes (antibias legislation and affirmative action programs) that have contributed to the increased physical and social separations of middle-class blacks from poor blacks. These exogenous determinants created a number of endogenous

demographic variables—the outmigration of working and middle-class blacks from poor inner-city neighborhoods, as well as shifts related to this outmigration such as changes in the age structures, changes in the pool of marriageable men, and changes in employment and income distributions. The combination of these demographic endogenous factors has contributed to social isolation, a social endogenous variable, which is now a characteristic feature of the social environment of the ghetto poor.

In Wilson's theory, social isolation limits the access of inner-city *ghetto* residents to institutions in the larger society and to economic and social resources, including conventional role models whose presence cushions the impact of neighborhood joblessness. Social isolation also diminishes their contact with mainstream social networks that facilitate economic and social mobility in the broader society. The restricted access to societal institutions; lack of neighborhood economic and social resources; disappearing presence of conventional role models; and circumscribed cultural learning give rise to outcomes that restrict economic and social advancement. Some of these outcomes are structural (weak-labor force attachment and diminished access to informal job networks and weak-labor force attachment) and some are social-psychological (negative social dispositions and limited aspirations).

This theoretically informed operationalization corresponds to several social processes—including racial exclusion—that are central to understanding the nature of *ghetto* poverty. For example, In the United States the concept "ghetto" will more often apply to people of color because whites seldom live in *ghetto* or extreme poverty areas—that is, neighborhoods with poverty rates of at least 40 percent (Wilson, 1996). In the final analysis, the relationship between operational and theoretical definitions of the "ghetto," and the function of each type of definition, deserves further consideration and is crucial for theory building.

THE ANALYTIC USEFULNESS OF "GHETTOIZATION"

Following his sharp critique of research on the "ghetto" by other scholars, Wacquant (2008) provides a comparative, ethnographic analysis of a South Side black neighborhood in Chicago and a Paris *banlieue*. In his critical review of Wacquant, Small (2007) poses broader questions that prompt a reconsideration of sociological research on the "ghetto." Disputing Wacquant's characterization of the *ghetto* as having low organizational density, Small challenges the widespread reliance on the South Side of Chicago as representative of poor black neighborhoods. Small uses data on the location of various establishments (e.g., grocery stores, banks, restaurants, and churches) to support his argument that poor black neighborhoods in Chicago have unusually low organizational densities compared to similar neighborhoods in other cities. From this he concludes, "The average black poor neighborhood in the United States does not look at all like the South Side of Chicago" (Small, 2007: 418).

While Small rightly highlights the heterogeneity of the "ghetto" in the United States, he is not fully persuasive in using the deviation of *ghetto* organizational density in Chicago to support his claim that sociologists have relied too heavily on Chicago in research on poor black neighborhoods. Small's argument would seem to presuppose that other neighborhoods and cities could be identified that more closely resemble some "average" black poor neighborhood or city, without describing how an "average" place should be understood. Further, Small examines only one dimension—institutional density—in

questioning the representative nature of the South Side of Chicago. However, other relevant dimensions reveal something different. In terms of depopulation, a common demographic trend across *ghetto* areas in the 1970s and 1980s, Jargowsky (1997) suggests that Chicago was not an outlier compared to other cities. While *ghetto* areas may have generally high vacancy rates, New York City undoubtedly stands out with lower vacancy rates in even the most disadvantaged areas, especially compared to a city like Detroit. Zukin (forthcoming) emphasizes the symbolic dimension in arguing that Harlem should no longer be considered a *ghetto* because of its increasing ethnic heterogeneity and because a discourse shaped by investors and developers that marks Harlem as a site for expanding luxury housing has significant effects on actual conditions of the community. Ecologically, the extremely dense high-rise housing projects in the Midwest and Northeast contrast sharply with less dense public housing in cities in the West. The point here is that precisely because of the heterogeneity of *ghetto* areas that Small (2007) emphasizes, it is misleading to make claims about the whether the *ghetto* in any city should be considered "typical" based on analysis along only one dimension.

Small also suggests, "it is possible that idea of 'the ghetto'—like the idea of 'the underclass'...has outlived its usefulness" (Small, 2007, p. 418). While the opportunity to reconsider the sociological usage of the term "ghetto" is worthwhile, this comment seems to neglect the historical development of a term that has changed its meaning over time and may be constantly evolving.

The objective is not to unambiguously mark certain areas as belonging to a discrete "ghetto" category and others as areas that are not *ghettos*. Research on the "ghetto" should be theoretically oriented toward the process of *ghettoization*, which itself should be understood as comprised of a set of interrelated social processes. Ghettoization would have as its constitutive processes: segregation, racial stigmatization/domination, economic disadvantage, and state action carried out through policy.[2] Understood this way, the "ghetto" can be conceptualized as an ideal type—the product of these interrelated social processes. Actual empirical manifestations would exhibit varying intensities along these dimensions.

Approaching ghettoization as a combination of underlying, interrelated social processes would obviate the debate about which cities and neighborhoods should be considered "average" and which are "outliers". Accordingly, contrary to the suggestion by Small (2007), ghettoization has not outlived its analytical usefulness since the underlying processes continue to be relevant. Focusing on ghettoization as a set of underlying, interrelated social processes would "increase its scientific import—that is, its role in the description, explanation, and prediction of behavior" (Wilson, Quane, and Rankin, 2001, p. 15947).

Notes

[1] We would like to thank Robert J. Sampson, Lauren Paremoer, and Jessica Houston Su for their helpful comments on a previous draft.

[2] It is important for research on ghettoization to also place emphasis on state policy in not only producing *ghetto* conditions but also in facilitating the ongoing economic and social changes in some *ghetto* areas. For example, Jackson (1987); Katz (1993); Katznelson (2005); and Wilson (2009) recount how federal transportation and highway policy, mortgage-interest tax exemptions, and mortgages for veterans facilitated the migration of whites to the suburbs, exacerbating the confinement of black residents in segregated urban areas.

Four Reasons to Abandon the Idea of "The Ghetto"

By Mario Luis Small, *University of Chicago*

This article questions one common use of the concept "the ghetto" to theorize conditions in poor, predominantly black urban neighborhoods in the United States. Many scholars use the term "ghetto" as shorthand to designate an area with a given demography. For example, Massey and Denton (1993, pp. 18–19), emphasizing race, employ it to designate "a set of neighborhoods that are exclusively inhabited by members of one group, within which virtually all members of that group live." Wilson (1987), emphasizing class, employs it to refer to any neighborhood with a high concentration of poverty. Shorthand uses of the term "ghetto" are benign; they require no assumptions and introduce no complications. For this reason, they are not the subject of this critique.

For other scholars, however, *the ghetto* is not merely a neighborhood that happens to cross a demographic threshold; instead, it is an institution (Wacquant, 1997, p. 343; see Marcuse, 2002, for a discussion). This *strong conception* of the *ghetto* varies from scholar to scholar, but advocates tend to support one or more of the following ideas: the *ghetto* is a particular *type* of neighborhood; it exhibits a cohesive set of characteristics, such as deteriorating housing, crime, depopulation, and social isolation, that recur from city to city; it is directly or indirectly perpetuated by either dominant society or, specifically, the state; and it constitutes a form of involuntary segregation. Consider the following conceptions, which contain one or more of these elements: "an involuntarily spatially concentrated area used by the dominant society to separate and to limit a particular population group, externally defined as racial or ethnic, and held to be, and treated as, inferior" (Marcuse, 2002, p. 111); and "an ethnically and socially homogeneous universe characterized by low organizational density and weak penetration by the state in its social components and, by way of consequence, extreme levels of physical and social insecurity" (Wacquant, 2008, p. 5, italics in original; definition of "hyperghetto"). Scholars in this tradition often cite Wirth (1928), who drew parallels and contrasts between Jewish *ghettos* in Europe and those in the United States, and Clark (1965), who, focusing on African Americans, aimed to identify the distinctly American aspects of the *ghetto*: "the restriction of persons to a special area and the limiting of their freedom of choice on the basis of skin color" (1965, p. 11). Many scholars in this vein reject shorthand uses of the term "ghetto" as a-theoretical.

Proponents of strong conceptions of the *ghetto* are right to argue for more sophisticated theories on conditions in poor urban neighborhoods. However, this article argues that these strong conceptions ultimately undermine scholarly efforts to understand the complexity of poor black neighborhoods or their residents in the twenty-first century. If sociological ideas are useful to the extent they identify or clarify phenomena that were previously unknown or misunderstood, then these models fail by both misrepresenting poor black neighborhoods and masking important aspects of their conditions, creating muddled pictures where clarity is called for. Relying on propositions or assumptions scarcely substantiated by the available data, strong conception contain important grains of truth, but ultimately perpetuate the very stereotypes their proponents often aim to fight.

FOUR REASONS

This article offers four reasons to abandon strong conceptions of the *ghetto* in scientific studies of black urban poverty: the unacknowledged heterogeneity of poor black neighborhoods, the failure of most poor black neighborhoods to exhibit the characteristics of popular archetypes, the inadequacy of sole-entity conceptions of the state deployed in strong conceptions of the *ghetto*, and the failure of the idea of "involuntary segregation" to capture the complexity of contemporary black urban residential patterns.

HETEROGENEITY, NOT HOMOGENEITY

One of the most important assumptions behind strong conceptions of the *ghetto* is that poor black neighborhoods are relatively homogeneous across cities. The assumption is often implicit. When ethnographers in this tradition describe conditions in a given poor black neighborhood—say, a drug transaction on a desolate Detroit streetcorner—they rely on the reader's tacit agreement that the patterns described therein manifest themselves similarly in poor black neighborhoods in Philadelphia, Cincinnati, Los Angeles, and other cities. And when pure theorists describe the *ghetto* as a type of neighborhood, they rely on the reader's ability to call upon a picture of this type—of desolate streets, boarded-up housing, streetcorner drug dealing, and deteriorated landscapes—culled from whatever factors feed the reader's image.[1]

The assumption is sometimes explicit. Wacquant's (2008) theory of urban marginality argues that "the black American ghetto" is "homogeneous," and must be contrasted to other types of neighborhoods, such as the French *banlieues*, to which it is improperly compared. Banlieues, he argues, are characterized by "external heterogeneity," such that conditions in one differ substantially from those in others. This situation "contrasts sharply with the social and spatial monotony exhibited by the ghettos of major U.S. cities. That is why we shall... speak of the ghetto in the singular and of the banlieues in the plural" (2008, p. 5; italics in original). There are many banlieues, but only one *ghetto*.

Are poor black neighborhoods homogeneous? Space does not permit a detailed answer, and I will not attempt to provide one in the few page allowed by this symposium. Nevertheless, I will briefly explain two conditions which, aside from high violent crime, may be the traits most commonly attributed to poor black neighborhoods: depopulation and de-institutionalization.[2]

Consider depopulation. The image of poor black neighborhoods as depopulated is ubiquitous: supported by the fact that many urban neighborhoods lost residents over the 1970s and 1980s (Wilson 1987; Jargowsky, 1997), strong conceptions invoke images of boarded-up housing, vacant lots, and isolated streets. To assess the accuracy of this picture, I report population density data from all metropolitan areas for neighborhoods at least 50% black and at least 30% poor in 2000. I use zip code data for consistency across tables (data in later tables are only available at the zip level). Table 3 exhibits the average population density, with standard deviations.[3] The bottom panel exhibits data for central cities only.

Two patterns are evident. First, poor black neighborhoods are generally more, not less dense than other neighborhoods. In central cities, the median poor black zip code has 4,558 persons per square mile; the median among all others, 3,778. Second, and most

TABLE 3. Number of Persons Per Square Mile, Urban Zip Codes, 2000

		Metropolitan Areas	
		Poor Black Neighborhoods	All Other Neighborhoods
Median		3,686	492
Mean		6,596	2,304
SD		(11,466)	(5,595)
	n	235	13,320
		Central Cities Only	
		Poor Black Neighborhoods	All Other Neighborhoods
Median		4,558	3,778
Mean		7,850	7,059
SD	*n*	(12,361)	(11,725)
		191	2,534

importantly, poor black neighborhoods are remarkably *heterogeneous*. Among those in central cities, the standard deviation is 12,361 persons per square mile, about 1.5 times the mean. For example, in zip code 62090, a more than 90% black, more than 30% poor neighborhood in St. Louis, the population density is only 1,402 per square mile, consistent with strong ghetto theories; but in zip code 19139, one with nearly identical black and similar poverty rates in Philadelphia, it is a whopping 23,974. And in many of the black poor neighborhoods in Harlem (which have the highest density in the nation), it is over 80,000. Poor black neighborhoods range *substantially*, from desolate to overcrowded. And they vary even more than other metropolitan neighborhoods. (Analyzing subcategories of cities which reduces heterogeneity, does not alter the picture substantially. For example, within Rustbelt cities, the figures for poor black neighborhoods are: mean 5,790, S.D. 3,681).

Consider deinstitutionalization, or what Wacquant (2008, p. 5) called "low organizational density." The idea that high-poverty neighborhoods are scarce in grocery stores, banks, childcare centers, and other basic amenities has characterized both weak and strong conceptions of the *ghetto* (Wilson, 1987; Wacquant, 2008; see Small and McDermott, 2006; Small, 2007). This scarcity is sometimes said to result from the absence of middle-class residents (who are expected to have a sustaining effect) or from abandonment by the state. Table 4 exhibits the mean number of small establishments—hardware stores, groceries, convenience stores, pharmacies, banks, credit unions, childcare centers, restaurants, laundries, and religious organizations—per 100,000 residents in poor black neighborhoods, and in all other neighborhoods, along with standard deviations, for all metropolitan areas.[4]

Two patterns are clear. First, poor black neighborhoods do not generally exhibit lower organizational density than other neighborhoods. Second, organizational density varies *widely* across poor black neighborhoods. The standard deviations are consistently high, in almost all cases greater than the mean. The interquartile ranges (not shown) are large, such that both low and high organizational densities are common. For example, 25% of poor black neighborhoods have fewer than 3.7 convenience stores per 100,000 residents, consistent with strong *ghetto* imagery; nevertheless, another 25% have more than 21.7, directly contradicting the models.

TABLE 4. Number of Small Establishments Per 100,000 Residents in Poor Black Zip Codes, Metropolitan Areas, 2000

	Poor Black Neighborhoods	All Other Neighborhoods
Hardware stores	3.9 (10.8)	4.9 (12.1)
Groceries	37.4 (29.6)	14.3 (29.6)
Convenience stores	15.9 (17.3)	10.5 (23.8)
Pharmacies	13.3 (17.1)	8.2 (12.8)
Banks	1.5 (4.0)	4.4 (10.6)
Credit unions	16.6 (62.1)	4.2 (14.9)
Childcare centers	29.8 (38.0)	18.7 (26.2)
Restaurants	45.8 (70.0)	35.1 (43.5)
Laundries	4.5 (6.6)	3.4 (7.2)
Religious organizations	75.7 (53.7)	56.0 (58.3)

Source: Author's tabulations, U.S. Census and Zip Business Patterns. Small establishments have 20 or fewer employees. See Table 3.

Neither population nor organizational density helps distinguish poor black neighborhoods as "types" from other neighborhoods—and both characteristics vary widely across poor black neighborhoods. This variation is likely associated with differences in resource access, transportation, congestion, gang penetration, police presence, and a host of other conditions. The variation is difficult to reconcile with the idea that the neighborhoods constitute a homogeneous entity.[5] At a minimum, we should be speaking of "ghettos" in the plural.

STEREOTYPICAL, NOT TYPICAL

A closely related issue is representativeness. Some defenders of the strong conception of the *ghetto* might argue that not all poor black neighborhoods are *ghettos*, only those that also exhibit characteristics such as de-institutionalization and depopulation. But surprisingly few theorists in this vein have answered a natural question: How many such neighborhoods actually exist?

Table 5 offers some answers. The table quantifies the number of zip codes that meet increasingly refined strong conceptions of the *ghetto*, and reports the proportion of the entire non-Hispanic black urban population living in them. The table presents statistics for only four measures: majority black, high poverty, relative depopulation (indicating a population density below the city median), and relative deinstitutionalization (indicating an organizational density below the city median). The top panel shows that 41.6% of metropolitan blacks live in majority-black neighborhoods, confirming the persisting racial segregation documented by others (Massey and Denton, 1993). In addition, 12.6% live in the 235 metropolitan zip codes that are majority black and over 30% poor.

Among these 235 zip codes, however, only 9 are also below their metropolitan area's median population and organizational density levels—that is, only nine meet the criteria of a basic strong *ghetto* conception. Since these figures are affected by the presence of suburbs, the bottom panel limits the figures to central city zip codes. Only 16 zip codes are majority black, poor, *and* below their central city's median population and organizational density. And contrary to common conceptions, fewer than 300,000 blacks in 2000 lived in them.

TABLE 5. Proportion of Black Urban Population Living in Majority Black Zip Codes with Selected "Ghetto" Characteristics, 2000

	Metropolitan Areas		
		Black Population	
	Number of zips	Count	Percent of total
All neighborhoods	13,555	28,726,814	100.0%
Neighborhoods >50% black	687	11,947,367	41.6%
and high poverty	235	3,626,895	12.6%
and depopulated	31	134,906	0.5%
and deinstitutionalized	9	20,952	0.1%
	Central Cities Only		
		Black Population	
	Number of zips	Count	Percent of total
All neighborhoods	2,725	15,419,162	100.0%
Neighborhoods >50% black	423	8,405,466	54.5%
and high poverty	191	3,246,516	21.1%
and depopulated	69	908,129	5.9%
and de-institutionalized	16	281,968	1.8%

Source: Author's tabulations, 2000 U.S. Census and Zip Business Data. Depopulated neighborhoods are below the metro/city median population density; deinstitutionalized neighborhoods are below the metro/city median number of small establishments per 100,000 residents, based on establishments in Table 4. See Table 3.

Strong conceptions of the *ghetto* may correspond to popular media images, but they do not accurately represent the experience of very many urban African Americans. This partly results from the de-concentration of poverty that occurred over the 1990s, and the radically different dynamics of twenty-first century black urban poverty. We know that urban blacks are more likely than others to live in high-poverty neighborhoods and in predominantly same-race neighborhoods. But many live in predominantly black neighborhoods with poor, working class, and middle class blacks, and many others live in poor areas with neighbors of other racial and ethnic backgrounds.

MULTIPLE STATE ACTORS, NOT ONE STATE

Many social scientists have shown that conditions in poor black neighborhoods result in part from state actions or inactions (e.g., Marcuse, 2005, p. 23ff; Logan and Molotch, 1987). Strong *ghetto* theorists therefore suggest that one institution (the *ghetto*) was created in part by another (the state). Some such theorists draw parallels to the state's role in creating the Jewish *ghettos* of medieval and later Europe, wherein residential segregation was state enforced (Wirth, 1928). Others speak more broadly (and more subtly) of state activity during recent decades, wherein "the black American ghetto has undergone an accelerating process of organizational desertification which. . . was directly induced by the abdication of the state" (Wacquant, 2008, p. 214).

As with other aspects of strong conceptions of the *ghetto*, an important grain of truth, insufficiently assessed against empirical evidence, has muddled the issues at hand. State action certainly plays critical roles in urban residential patterns; however, there is no one state, no single institution whose actions are consistently favorable or unfavorable to the

ghetto. Instead, there are different state actors at the city, state, and federal level who respond to different political exigencies, and thus have multiple and sometimes contradictory interests. Thus, while it is clear that the federal government abdicated many of its responsibilities vis-à-vis the inner city during the 1980s, it is also the case that local governments, mayors, aldermen, and legislators in many cities and states—often by collaborating with the nonprofit sector—reacted against federal actions or sought to contain the deterioration of poor neighborhoods (often, to be sure, with mixed results). The stark differences in cities' abilities to revitalize during the 1990s—and the extent to which this revitalization generated its own residential inequities—bear evidence to the importance and differential effectiveness of *local* state actors.[6] The importance of local state actors was heightened by passage of the most significant recent legislation to affect black poor neighborhoods, the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act of 1996. The law transformed welfare to a system of block grants awarded to the 50 states, transferring to them the responsibility to allocate resources on the basis of locally determined priorities.

Local state actors may matter more today to the urban poor than they have at any time in the past 50 years. Thus, the heterogeneity of state actors parallels the heterogeneity of poor black neighborhoods. The notion of *the* state as an incontrovertible force in the perpetuation of the *ghetto* points to an easy culprit while failing to grapple with the complexity of interests at play. "The state" is a vague idea called upon to support another of its ilk ("the ghetto"), in the hopes, unfulfilled, that two amorphous entities may crystallize into an empirically convincing picture.

CONSTRAINED CHOICE, NOT "INVOLUNTARY SEGREGATION"

Many advocates of strong conceptions insist that the *ghetto* is maintained through "involuntary segregation." Some aim to distinguish what African Americans experience from self-imposed segregation, by which, for example, rich whites construct gated communities. Others wish to reference the mandatory nature of medieval Jewish *ghettos*.

Unfortunately, the term "involuntary segregation" mischaracterizes the causes of black urban residential patterns. It is certainly the case that, still today, lax enforcement of antidiscrimination housing laws, steering, discriminatory lending practices, informational asymmetries, racial prejudice, and other factors strongly constrain the residential choices of blacks in the United States (Massey and Denton, 1993). The notion of "involuntary segregation," however, assumes an absence of choice, whereas the notion of constrained or limited choice sets would be more appropriate. Most importantly, the notion gives the impression that people only live near other poor (or other African Americans) because they have no choice, an implausible proposition. For example, Pattillo (2007) describes the many moral, economic, and cultural factors encouraging middle- and upper-middle-class African Americans in Chicago to move to poor black neighborhoods in the South Side. Conversely, many poor black residents of New York's Harlem or Chicago's South Side, or poor Puerto Rican residents of Boston's Villa Victoria or Chicago's Humboldt Park do not want to leave their neighborhoods, as many studies have reported (e.g., Small, 2004). And many blacks prefer to live among other blacks: the 2000 GSS showcard experiment (to assess racial preferences for neighbors) showed that blacks on average preferred a neighborhood that was 42% black (Charles, 2003, p. 186).

Residential segregation results from a complex combination of institutional and interpersonal, economic and cultural, majority-driven and minority-driven factors. Models in which the agency of either the poor or African Americans plays little or no role obscure more than they illuminate.

CONCLUSION

In the South Side of Chicago, the poorest black blocks exhibit a scarcity of amenities, reveal an abundance of empty lots, and lie several miles away from the nearest white neighbor; in Harlem, they exhibit a preponderance of people and establishments, lie within minutes of Central Park, and boast several express stops for major subway routes. In some cities, residents of poor black neighborhoods struggle to resist displacement; in others—with abundant stocks of prewar housing, struggling economies, or weak public transportation—these neighborhoods see no threat of gentrification, little hope of revitalization. While many poor neighborhoods are difficult places to live, not all of these are difficult in the same way. The strong conception of the *ghetto* glosses over these and other differences by presuming that black urban poverty looks and feels the same, faces the same challenges, and has the same consequences, everywhere. It does not. While often theoretically elaborate, the strong *ghetto* model remains an empirically unrefined conception of contemporary poverty, sustained by extensive field research in a handful of cities and fed by a predilection to search for similarities even in the face of glaring differences.

No one would deny that many conditions *do* recur from one poor black neighborhood to the next. For example, unlike organizational density, the jobless rate is rather consistently high across these neighborhoods (mean, 55.7%; S.D., 5.4%). But fundamentally conceiving of neighborhoods as homogenous institutions undermines a serious effort to assess both similarities and differences. The vast differences in character and context across poor black neighborhoods in the twenty-first century must be *theorized*, not *assumed away*.

The 1990s and early 2000s witnessed many transformations that call for a revaluation of the strong *ghetto* models and a closer look at differences between cities: the historic shift in responsibility for managing the welfare system from the federal government to the states; an almost unprecedented housing boom that gentrified some but not other poor neighborhoods; a subsequent housing bust whose consequences, still uncertain, depend on both national and local management by state actors; a dramatic rise in incarceration, fueled in part by adoptions in some but not other states of three-strike laws and mandatory sentencing; and the remarkable rise of the urban Latino population, which for the first time now surpasses (by more than 3 million) the non-Hispanic black population in metropolitan areas. Understanding these dynamics requires innovative theories, not a stubborn adherence to models originally designed for other groups in other eras.

Notes

[1] The danger is that the reader's images may be influenced less by experience than by the popular media. Recent studies of African-American neighborhoods have sought to dispel many of these images by studying black middle-class neighborhoods, or poor neighborhoods exhibiting low unemployment rates (Pattillo, 2007; Lacy, 2007; Newman, 1999).

[2] Violent crime data on all neighborhoods across all cities are unavailable, as far as I am able to discern.

[3] All tables exclude zip codes with fewer than 100 residents or more than 1,000 establishments (as shown in Table 2) per 100,000 residents. Out of 13,736 zip codes, 181 are excluded. I use a 30% because very few zip codes are more than 40% poor. Using tract data would increase the standard deviations in Table 3 and increase the counts in the second, third, and fourth rows of both panels of Table 5.

[4] Figures for central city neighborhoods are not substantially different (available upon request).

[5] Some traits of poor black neighborhoods, such as the jobless rate or the percent white, exhibit low variances. But several variables typically implicated in strong conceptions of the *ghetto*, such as the unemployment rate, proportion Latino, and residential instability, exhibit great heterogeneity across poor black neighborhoods. (Data available upon request.) A much longer study should examine these issues.

[6] On these issues, see Salamon (1995); Small and Stark (2005); Small, Jacobs, and Masengill (2008).

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