Race, Space, and Exclusion

Segregation and Beyond in Metropolitan America

Edited by
Robert M. Adelman and
Christopher Mele

The Metropolis and Modern Life

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Foreword by Nancy A. Denton

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Preface

Race, Space, and Exclusion takes as its starting point that racial exclusion encompasses both the *physical separation* of minority groups, especially blacks, and the *social processes* of their marginalization. This book addresses persistent and more recent innovative spatial forms of racial exclusion in contemporary metropolises. The purpose of this volume is to examine the connections between longstanding spatial mechanisms of racial exclusion and indirect, elusive spatial practices that have emerged in recent decades. The study of spatial forms of racial exclusion cuts across subareas within sociology and geography, political science, planning, history, and other disciplines as well. The types of theoretical perspectives and research methods used to study exclusion within these disciplines are many and varied. The goal of the book is not simply to catalog theoretical assumptions, approaches, or methods used to understand racial exclusion but to systematically address areas in which varied forms of research overlap, feed into each other, differ, or are similar in their analyses and most importantly in their findings on the contemporary consequences for urban minorities. This volume provides a dynamic and productive dialogue among scholars who work on the topic of racial exclusion and segregation but from different perspectives, theoretical and methodological angles, and social science disciplines. To facilitate the twin goals of pedagogical and scholarly contribution, the editors have organized the book into five sections around specific themes and introduced each with an overview by the editors. In addition, each section will have a collection of web links and teaching tips available on the book's website, www.routledge.com/cw/adelman, which expand upon the book's coverage and spark classroom engagement.

Acknowledgments

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Christopher Mele thanks Robert for signing on to the workshop, for working hard on this book, and sharing great ideas to bring it all together. He would also like to thank his family and friends for all the support along the way.

Photographs

Section 3

Foreword

NANCY A. DENTON

The privilege of writing the foreword to a book titled *Race, Space, and Exclusion: Segregation and Beyond in Metropolitan America* is an occasion to remember the many stimulating discussions that took place at the conference from which it grew. This volume is unique in that it contains thoughtful pieces by the conference participants, each summarizing the results of their own research, as well as their reflections on that research. As such, the chapters are synthetic in their discussion of their topic, rather than narrow, as is often the case in scholarly papers in journals. Reading them and writing this foreword has also provided me an opportunity to reflect on the meaning of the terms "race," "space," and "exclusion." The meaning of each word varies by user and by context, has changed over time, and the consequences that flow from each of the three terms intersect. So taken together they inform new questions that future research might answer to help us move forward to a more just world.

Let me begin with the word "race." Why use that term when in the contemporary United States, as well as in many parts of the rest of the world, race and ethnicity are so intertwined? When the notion of race as a social as opposed to a biological construct has become so widely accepted? When the measurement of "race" in the U.S. Census has changed to appreciate that people increasingly identify with more than one race, and that race itself should be cross-classified with Hispanic origin in order to understand the inhabitants of the U.S.?

To my mind, two main reasons justify using only the term race in the title of this volume. First, the history of metropolitan residential segregation in the United States is fundamentally intertwined with African Americans, more than with any other group. This is not to say that other groups have not historically been segregated and discriminated against, but rather that following the Civil War, a wide assortment of policies, laws, and practices were developed

and instituted to limit the opportunities of blacks. As many chapters in this book clearly demonstrate, those policies and practices have changed dramatically over time, especially as a result of legislation. But the outlines of the segregation they helped to define are unfortunately still present today. Furthermore, the segregation imposed on blacks in urban areas has formed the basis for the segregation of other groups.

A second reason why I think the term race is appropriate is that it clearly directs our attention to skin color and observable traits more than to culture. And in so doing it emphasizes the importance of visible traits in the identification of those to be excluded in a way that ethnicity does not. It also points to the importance of non-African Americans with darker skin colors, e.g., Puerto Ricans and Indians from the sub-continent, who are more often excluded than their lighter-skinned Cuban or Chinese compatriots. While the meaning of race has clearly changed over time, and many groups who were considered "races" in earlier times are no longer considered races today, race has always referred to some physical feature of people, not their language or culture.

At the same time, race is neither a clear-cut concept nor one easily measured. In the United States, the Census Bureau is the main source of information on the race of the population, using categories established by the Office of Management and Budget. Their conventions carry over to other collections of racial information in the public and private sectors. The Census has relied on self-identification of race since the advent of the mail-out mail-back census, which precluded enumerators from classifying people's race based on their observation of the person they were interviewing. In other words, you are whatever race you check on the Census form. Should the Census form be filled out by only one person in the household, then that person chooses the race of each person in the household; they may or may not consult with the others in their household.

Since 2000, the Census form has allowed people to choose as many races as they identify with, up to a maximum of six from these choices: White; Black or African American; American Indian & Alaska Native; Asian; Native Hawaiian & Other Pacific Islander; and Some Other Race. It should be noted that Hispanic is not among the choices: Hispanic people may be of any race, and people are asked about their Hispanic origin *before* they are asked about race. The population choosing more than one race is currently small, but it is definitely growing: from roughly seven million in 2000 to over nine million in 2010, or from 2.4 to 2.7 percent of the total population. Those numbers reflect growth of almost 30 percent in a single decade. While one can applaud the fact that people can specify as many races as they identify with, in reality this ability is problematic in terms of the issues discussed in this book, namely segregation, discrimination, and neighborhood change. For one thing, the tabulation of all the possible combinations of those six races yields 63 categories, and that number grows to 126 if one tabulates people as Hispanic or non-Hispanic.

Needless to say, many of these combinations have few people. For example, in the entire U.S. in 2010, the four-race combination of "American Indian & Alaska Native; Asian; Native Hawaiian & Other Pacific Islander; Some Other Race" had 46 persons, while the five-race combination which included those four races plus "Black or African American" had 44 persons. As these data are tabulated down to the block level for the entire country, one can only imagine how many of the cells in these tabulations have zero people. At first glance that does not seem to matter, but the reality is that the amount of data tabulated for the small geographic areas used in the segregation and neighborhood research described in this book is limited. So the tabulation of this large number of racial categories precludes other tabulations that might be more useful.

A second issue that arises from this way of assessing race is that if discrimination is based on obvious traits such as skin color, then the multitude of combinations confuses matters. For example, we know that blacks have historically been discriminated against, but does that apply to the same extent to bi-racial blacks and whites, or to tri-racial blacks, whites, and Asians? Are we in danger of reifying these racial categories and measuring how much of each race is present as we did with octoroons or quadroons? One clear conclusion that we can draw from all this information about measuring race is to be skeptical of the notion that we should be "race-blind," or as some maintain, that we are "color blind" or "post-racial" as a society. Scholars such as Eduardo Bonilla-Silva, George Lipsitz, and Joe Feagin, among others, have provided definitive critiques of the "race blind" approach, yet it remains popular in the media and among the public. It may not be politically correct to say this, but perhaps the desire to see society as race blind excuses whites from dealing with the reality and consequences of race in contemporary U.S. society?

Like "race," the term "space" also raises important issues. In a globalized and continually globalizing world, to what does "space" refer? What is the geographic scale and hence the size of the "space" referred to? In the mid twentieth century we witnessed the compression of time and distance in terms of travel and communication, but both were costly. Only the relatively well-off could afford to fly or call long distance very often. Now, however, instant communication across the globe is available cheaply to anyone with a cell phone, implying either a strong reduction in the importance of space and distance in people's lives, or at least the opportunity for such a reduction to occur. Even the meaning of simple acts like "going away to college" have changed when students can text with and talk to their parents multiple times a day.

Related to the ease of communication is the change in the meaning of geographic location. While people around the world are still attached to specific countries, regions, states, cities, neighborhoods, it is easy to argue that the impact of these localities on individual lives is decreasing. A geographical area of particular importance to the questions raised in this book is the neighborhood. Definitional issues abound: New ways of measuring neighborhood are

developing, especially as a result of geographic information system technologies; individuals have their own sense of "their" neighborhood; neighborhood size as experienced by children differs from adults, and on and on. Still, for much of the research presented here, the old standbys of census tract and block group remain important. Ironically, though the Internet has made it much easier to access tract and block group data, the replacement of the Census long form with the American Community Survey has also complicated the situation. While it is obviously beneficial to society and to research to have data more frequently than every ten years, to provide reliable small area data the Census combines five years of ACS data. So tract data are issued every year, but the time periods overlap: 2009–2013, which will be released in December of 2014, has four years in common with the 2008–2012 data issued the previous year. Although researchers know (or should know) not to compare data with such substantial overlap, others may not. And there is still a proliferation of data out there, so neighborhood analyses that formerly were based on the same data, now are not necessarily. In the overall scheme of things, the difference between the 2009–2013 and 2008–2012 data may not matter much, but if one is applying for a grant or testifying in a discrimination lawsuit, it may. In addition, scholars, legislators, lawyers, teachers and the like always want the "latest" data, so there are time costs to constantly updating data sources to be the latest, even with little practical substantive benefit.

But surpassing the definitional issues in importance are issues of meaning: What the neighborhood meant to city dwellers a hundred years ago and what it means now are dramatically different. This is especially true for adults, who in the past were pretty much forced to deal with their neighbors for easy non-familial sociability, whereas now they can use Skype or FaceTime to have conversations with anyone anywhere anytime. This is not to say that neighborhoods are not still important: An abundance of research, some by the authors in this volume, about housing values, safety, children's playmates, school attendance immediately come to mind, among other things. And most certainly, the concept of some version of neighborhood is embedded within the study of segregation. All measures of segregation require that two different geographical units be defined: the total unit (metropolitan area, city, suburbs) as well as some sub-unit that covers the entire area (neighborhood, usually defined as census tract by sociologists and block group by geographers).

Another spatial term appears in the title of this volume, namely metropolitan. It raises the issue of suburbs, another key concept to the study of segregation, as reflected in discussions of homeownership and moving to opportunity (MTO) in this volume. Most people intuitively understand that the term metropolitan refers to a city and the areas around it that are economically and socially related to it. Currently, the United States is divided into metropolitan areas, where 84 percent of the population resides; micropolitan areas, home to another 10 percent; and the remainder, home to the remaining 6 percent.

One might question whether the whole concept of metropolitan is losing its meaning, as once extended to include micropolitan areas, only 6 percent of the population live in neither type of area. The addition of the micropolitan areas has, however, greatly complicated our understanding of suburbs. In the past, suburban people were those who lived in the metropolitan area but not in the principal city (or cities) of the metropolitan area. Suburbs are still defined that way, but delineation of the micropolitan areas raises two issues. First, do the cities in the micropolitan areas, which range in size from 10,000 to 50,000 people, also have suburbs? To the best of my knowledge, most research does not consider them suburban, though it would be hard to make a case for why a small metropolitan area with just over 50,000 people in its core city had suburbs, but the micropolitan area with 48,000 in its core city did not.

But for the purposes of this book, a second issue is more important: Nearly all of the micropolitan areas were originally part of metropolitan areas. If their core cities were considered primary cities, then their populations were not counted as suburban. But given the small size of these cities, many were not principal cities of the metropolitan areas of which they were formerly a part. In that case, the populations of those cities were counted as suburban when they were part of the metropolitan area. So the residents of these smaller cities change from suburban dwellers to city dwellers without moving anywhere. And more importantly for the purposes of segregation, the minority populations of these smaller cities once added to suburban diversity and now do not. So part of the changing racial composition of the suburbs is an artifact of the new definitions. An example from my area illustrates the issue: The nearly 5,000 Hispanic and black residents of Amsterdam, New York, who formerly were part of the Albany-Schenectady-Troy metropolitan area suburbs are no longer counted there, but as residents of the core city of Amsterdam micropolitan area. So Albany-Schenectady-Troy now has less suburban diversity—or does it? Did those people in Amsterdam ever consider themselves suburbanites?

The last term, "exclusion," has also changed greatly in meaning over time, most noticeably moving from the obvious and clear (signs saying no blacks allowed) to the much more subtle (five-acre minimum lot sizes), and hence more pernicious because the exclusion can be difficult to identify at all, much less challenge or ameliorate. Exclusion fundamentally reduces the opportunities available to the excluded group; it changes the opportunity structure within which they live their lives. Note that this is not about individual relationships or preferences; rather it is about the opportunities that are available to some people and not to others. Civil rights lawyer john powell pioneered the study of opportunity mapping and HUD has now started promoting it as well. This effort moves discussions of exclusion away from a focus on the color and ethnicity of the residents toward what neighborhood locations provide in terms of access to school quality, good jobs, decent housing, transportation, and public safety. While this provides stark evidence of how the environments

of different groups are not equal, it does not change what scholar George Lipsitz calls the "racialization of space and the spatialization of race." White Americans have different spatial imaginaries from black Americans, a color coding of place that is just as real as the colors on the old Home Owners Loan Corporation maps that initiated redlining, another issue discussed in this volume. As Robert Sampson has shown in his recent book, *Great American City*, there is an enduring neighborhood effect that can be seen across decades. It is easy to point to historical or contemporary neighborhoods that changed dramatically, as the Jews in the Bronx do in a chapter in this book, but the reality is that the vast majority of neighborhoods change quite slowly, a function of normal life-cycle processes rather than invasion and succession. It will be interesting to see how the neighborhoods in which public housing was torn down fare—will it be possible to rebrand them? Convert them to upscale urban enclaves? Would that be positive or negative? For whom?

These three concepts, race, space, and exclusion operate not only singly, but also together, to influence the contemporary scene in metropolitan areas across the United States. As several papers in the volume clearly show, the overlap arises in part because race, space, and exclusion are built into the structures and professions that regulate urban space, namely city and state governments, the planning profession, real estate developers, among others. With no explicit reference to race at all, these groups, simply by following best practices and tradition, are able to easily reproduce the racial landscape. Building on fear of crime or declining housing values or bad schools, those who earn a living from the urban environment or profit from changing it through other means, strive to promote an image that everyone is welcome as long as they can afford it. The landscape of the city is now about consumption, not race or space or exclusion. Governments try to induce inclusion via mixed income requirements in return for financial or other benefits. And increasingly, major investors in the city are from different countries, reflecting increasing globalization, but as one of the workshop participants noted, we may be using globalization to mask segregation and inequality. To paraphrase one of the workshop organizers, the things that happen in contemporary metropolitan areas seem to follow one another, seeming almost pre-ordained, as opposed to being the result of actions by various stakeholders, most of whom profit in some way.

In conclusion, it is interesting to note that this book is being published 100 years after the start of World War I, a war which re-drew boundaries, broke up empires, and created new countries, asking previous enemies to now cooperate. Many of these countries send immigrants to the U.S. today. So even though the United States joined the war only very briefly near the end, and thus it does not hold the place in Americans' imaginations that it does in Europe, the Middle East and Africa, given our history of segregation, we are still affected by it. With "worlds on the move," as a recent book about

international migration was titled, people increasingly immigrate to the U.S. from areas that not only experienced the war directly, but also its ethnically divisive aftermath.

The essays in this book make clear that the segregation of African Americans in metropolitan America remains the bedrock of the topic of race, space, and exclusion. At the same time, they point to a need for more theorizing that will allow the incorporation not only of multiple groups, but of the increasing heterogeneity *within* groups, as well as the need for mixed methods to study contemporary processes of exclusion. Put simply, it is not enough to simply add blacks or other groups into our imaginary, to borrow a phrase from George Lipsitz. Our fundamental concern is not with diversity *per se*, but with how exclusion is really excluding people from opportunity. To the extent that the ideas presented in this book can help people think more clearly, and hence more creatively, about the issues of race, place, and exclusion, the workshop and the book will have made a very valuable contribution to our knowledge. I, for one, am quite sure that will be the case. I am very pleased to have been a small part of the process.

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