History: Faculty Publications and Other Works

Introduction: Urban History, Arnold Hirsch, and the Second Ghetto Thesis

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INTRODUCTION
Urban History, Arnold Hirsch, and the Second Ghetto Thesis

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In the second half of the twentieth century, the United States experienced a new urbanism. Major American cities were transformed as large numbers of African Americans and new immigrant groups migrated to central cities while an equally significant out-migration of middle-class Euro-Americans moved to the periphery of metropolitan areas. By 1970, most Americans lived in suburbs, not cities or rural areas.[1]

By then, many agreed that inner-city poverty was America's most perplexing problem. "The ghetto is the central domestic problem of American life," wrote historian Richard C. Wade in 1968. "Not only does it stand mockingly as symbol of the unfulfilled promise of equality, but it also frustrates the attack on other metropolitan issues."[2] The rapidity of racial succession in urban neighborhoods between 1945 and 1980 resisted careful and clear historical analysis. By 1980, most American historians made a distinction between the *de jure* forms of segregation in the Jim Crow South and the *de facto* pattern of residential discrimination characteristic of the urban North. Arnold Hirsch's *Making the Second Ghetto: Race and Housing in Chicago, 1940-1960* (1983) changed the debate.[3]

Hirsch demonstrated with compelling evidence that the social and spatial structures of a major northern city were determined less by the benign factors of "the market" and more by government complicity and support. Between 1940 and 1970, a state-sanctioned "second ghetto" with a distinctive form of segregation emerged, supported by white, Euro-American "ethnics" defending their "homeowner rights" and downtown elites striving to preserve commercial real estate. This pattern of racial exclusion was, according to Hirsch, "so pervasive, so deep, that it virtually constituted a new form of *de jure* segregation."[4]

The Hirsch thesis challenged not only patterns of residential segregation and racial exclusion. The conflicts Hirsch unearthed in Chicago also spoke to a variety of larger interpretive issues regarding the postwar metropolis in the United States. Several bodies of recent work reflect how *Making the Second*

Ghetto stimulated a variety of new questions. For example, Hirsch implied that the forces contributing to the "urban crisis," deindustrialization, and the emergence of "Reagan Democrats" originated in local resistance to racial integration *before* the antipoverty programs of the Great Society in the 1960s. The turmoil associated with the 1960s could only be understood by the critical but little acknowledged events a decade earlier.[5] Second, Hirsch discovered nearly 500 "communal riots"—violent, racial incidents from 1945 to 1950 largely unreported by the media. These little-known episodes illuminated the emergence of "whiteness" and racially constructed identities among various ethnic groups. As the following essays reveal, Hirsch's analysis previewed elements of recent scholarship on the social and linguistic construction of race. Hirsch was among the first historians to invoke the concepts of "whiteness" and the "merging of 'ethnics' " as analytical tools for understanding racial segregation, a contribution still largely unrecognized by scholars of race and whiteness.[6] Finally, that same violence indirectly questioned interpretations of urban riots and rebellions, a literature that frequently construes crowd behavior as a rational, extralegal—even legitimate—vehicle of protest by powerless groups.[7]

This year marks the twentieth anniversary of the publication of *Making the Second Ghetto*, an appropriate time to assess the influence and meaning of the "second ghetto" thesis. The authors of the following six essays, by admission, have been significantly shaped by *Making the Second Ghetto* and other writings by Hirsch.[8] Each present different, and sometimes conflicting, evaluations on the impact of the second ghetto thesis. The forum concludes with a reaction and comment by Arnold Hirsch himself.

Essays by Ronald Bayor and Raymond Mohl demonstrate how the second ghetto thesis influenced their studies of Atlanta and Miami, respectively. Bayor discovered remarkably similar kinds of racial exclusion and institutionalized segregation in Atlanta and Chicago, developments that call into question the presumption that patterns of racial discrimination in the North departed dramatically from patterns in the South. By contrast, Mohl found that while the second ghetto model was applicable to Miami, it followed a different trajectory. In Miami, the process began earlier with public housing but later with urban renewal. Miami's experience also showed how expressway construction, school integration, and new immigration patterns (specifically the large influx of Cubans between 1960 and 1980) were equally important to the postwar process of racial segregation. Even concepts such as "blockbusting" assumed a different meaning in Miami, evidenced by the role of African American realtors such as Wesley E. Garrison and Luther Brooks.

Amanda Seligman and Thomas Sugrue point out how *Making the Second Ghetto* reflected the influence of Hirsch's teacher and mentor, the late Gilbert Osofsky. In *Harlem: The Making of a Ghetto* (1963), Osofsky emphasized the spatial elements of segregation, devoted little attention to economics or labor, and placed considerable importance on white power. But Hirsch departed

significantly from earlier work by showing how Osofsky's model of an "enduring ghetto" ignored the fluidity of the "ghettoization" process, particularly how specific and individual actors played conscious and distinctive roles in reshaping the neighborhood spaces of postwar Chicago. Along with Heather Ann Thompson, both Seligman and Sugrue contend that Hirsch ignored or at least downplayed the role of black agency in his narrative. Yet, at the same time, he offered new and compelling evidence that residential segregation originated in the public policies, private boardrooms, and family living rooms of white Americans.

These and other American urban historians have argued that Hirsch's model speaks to a larger pattern of urban development in the twentieth-century United States. Carl Nightingale maintains that the value of *Making the Second Ghetto* goes beyond Chicago and the American polity. "Ghettos" and the language employed to analyze and even marginalize the poor—*urban crisis*, *underclass*, *hyperghetto*—have "gone global."[9] According to Nightingale, Hirsch described an emerging nexus of power relationships and local conflicts that help explain contemporary conflicts over global power.

Finally, *Making the Second Ghetto* demonstrates, in the words of Raymond Mohl, "the power of history." Patterns of neighborhood development determine what groups have access to jobs, good schools, reliable public services, and well-maintained infrastructures. Where you live determines what you become. Current legal battles such as those described by Mohl still grapple with the effects of public programs first described and analyzed by Hirsch. The racial and economic balkanization that characterizes contemporary American cities are rooted in the private and public policies that created new and distinctive patterns of racial segregation. The way cities look is the product of the forces described in *Making the Second Ghetto*. As Thomas Sugrue aptly summarizes, in the American metropolis today, "geography is destiny."

NOTES

1. By the mid-1980s, a substantial literature documented how government agencies, private developers, and consumption patterns contributed to the suburbanization of the United States. See Kenneth T. Jackson, *Crabgrass Frontier: The Suburbanization of the United States* (New York, 1985); "America's Rush to Suburbia," *New York Times*, June 9, 1996; Robert Fishman, "The Post-War American Suburb: A New Form, a New City," in Daniel Schaffer, ed., *Two Centuries of American Planning* (Baltimore, 1988); Fishman, *Bourgeois Utopias: The Rise and Fall of Suburbia* (New York, 1987); John R. Stilgoe, *Borderland: Origins of the American Suburb, 1820-1939* (New Haven, CT, 1988); Henry Binford, *The First Suburbs: Residential Communities on the Boston Periphery, 1815-1860* (Chicago, 1984); Michael H. Ebner, *Creating Chicago's North Shore: A Suburban History* (Chicago, 1988); Mark Baldassare, *Trouble in Paradise: The Suburban Transformation of America* (New York, 1986); Ann Durkin Keating, *Building Chicago: Suburban Developers and the Creation of a Divided Metropolis* (Columbus, OH, 1988); Matthew Edel, Elliot Sclar, and Philip Luria, *Shaky Palaces: Homeownership and Social Mobility in Boston's Suburbanization* (New York, 1984); John Archer, "Ideology and Aspiration: Individualism, the Middle Class and the Genesis of the Anglo-American Suburb," *Journal of Urban History* 14 (1988): 214-53; Archer, "Country and City in the American Romantic Suburb," *Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians* 42 (1983): 142-65.

2. Richard C. Wade, "Urbanization," in C. Vann Woodward, ed., *The Comparative Approach to American History* (New York, 1968), 202.

3. Originally published by Cambridge University Press, a second edition of *Making the Second Ghetto* with a new forward was published by the University of Chicago Press in 1998.

4. Arnold Hirsch, *Making the Second Ghetto: Race and Housing in Chicago, 1940-1960* (New York, 1983), 254-5. *Making the Second Ghetto* was reviewed by Allan H. Spear in *Journal of American History* 71 (1984): 166-7; Zane L. Miller, "Villains All?" *Reviews in American History* 12 (1984): 429-34; Joseph F. Zimmerman in *Annals of the American Academy* (1985): 206; Elliott R. Barkan, "Vigilance Versus Vigilantism: Race and Ethnicity and the Politics of Housing, 1940-1960," *Journal of Urban History* 12 (1986): 181-90; Albert S. Broussard in *Journal of Ethnic Studies* 13 (1985): 137-9; Alphine W. Jefferson in *Chicago History* 14 (Summer 1985): 68-69; Alma Tauber in *American Journal of Sociology* 91 (1985): 194. The volume was never reviewed in the *American Historical Review*.

5. Thomas J. Sugrue, *The Origins of the Urban Crisis: Race and Inequality in Postwar Detroit* (Princeton, NJ, 1996), in particular, challenges interpretations that locate the breakdown of the New Deal coalition with Lyndon Johnson's War on Poverty after 1965, such as Jonathan Reider, *Canarsie: The Jews and Italians of Brooklyn against Liberalism* (Cambridge, UK, 1985); Allen Matusow, *The Unraveling of America: A History of Liberalism in the 1960s* (New York, 1984); and Thomas Byrne Edsall and Mary D. Edsall, *Chain Reaction: The Impact of Race, Rights and Taxes on American Politics* (New York, 1991).

6. On Hirsch being among the earliest to use the term *whiteness*, see the ensuing essay by Thomas Sugrue, as well as Hirsch, *Making the Second Ghetto*, 186. Even the recent and provocative assessments of whiteness studies fail to acknowledge Hirsch. See Eric Arnesen, "Whiteness and the Historians' Imagination," *International Labor and Working-Class History* 60 (2001): 3-32; Peter Kolchin, "Whiteness Studies: The New History of Race in America," *Journal of American History* 89 (2002): 154-73. On the social construction of whiteness, see David R. Roediger, *The Wages of Whiteness: Race and the Making of the American Working Class* (London, 1991); Alexander Saxton, *The Rise and Fall of the White Republic: Class Politics and Mass Culture in Nineteenth-Century America* (London, 1990). On the social construction of race, see Barbara Jeanne Fields, "Slavery, Race and Ideology in the United States of America," *New Left Review* 181 (May-June 1990): 95-118. On the social construction of ethnicity, see Kathleen Neils Conzen, David A. Gerber, Ewa Morawska, George Pozzetta, and Rudolph J. Vecoli, "The Invention of Ethnicity: A Prespective from the U.S.A.," *Journal of American Ethnic History* 12 (1992): 3-63.

7. On rioting as a form of civic protest, see Robert Fogelson, *Violence as Protest: A Study of Riots and Ghettos* (Westport, CT, 1980); David O. Sears and John B. McConahay, *The Politics of Violence: The New Urban Blacks and the Watts Riot* (Boston, 1973). For critiques of this argument, see Jim Sleeper, *The Closest of Strangers: Liberalism and the Politics of Race in New York* (New York, 1990); Frederick Siegel, *The Future Once Happened Here* (New York, 1997). While rioting and crowd behavior continue to generate a significant literature, recent overviews devote little analysis to racially oriented communal uprisings. See Paul A. Gilje, *Rioting in America* (Bloomington, IN, 1996). On nineteenth-century riots, see Gilje, *The Road to Mobocracy, Popular Disorder in New York City, 1763-1834* (Chapel Hill, NC, 1987); Iver Bernstein, *The New York City Draft Riots: Their Significance for American Society and Politics in the Age of the Civil War* (New York, 1989); Neil Larry Shumsky, *From Bullets to Ballots: Society, Politics, and the Crowd in San Francisco, 1877-1880* (Columbus, OH, 1991); Thomas P. Slaughter, *Bloody Dawn: The Christiana Riot and Racial Violence in the Antebellum North* (New York, 1991). On the twentieth century, see Heather Ann Thompson, "Urban Uprisings: Riots or Rebellions?" in David Farber and Beth Bailey, eds., *The Columbia Guide to America in the 1920s* (New York, 2001), 109-17; Fred Harris and Roger W. Wilkins, eds., *Quiet Riots: Race and Poverty in the United States* (New York, 1988); Maurico Mazon, *The Zoot-Suit Riots: The Psychology of Symbolic Annihilation* (Austin, TX, 1984); Sidney Fine, *Violence in the Model City: The Cavanaugh Administration, Race Relations, and the Detroit Riot of 1967* (Ann Arbor, MI, 1989); Cheryl Greenberg, "The Politics of Disorder: Reexamining Harlem's Riots of 1935 and 1943," *Journal of Urban History* 18 (1992): 395-441; Dominic Capeci Jr. and Martha J. Wilkerson, *Layered Violence: The Detroit Rioters of 1943* (Jackson, MS, 1991); Ann K. Johnson, *Urban Ghetto Riots, 1965-1968: A Comparison of Soviet and American Press Coverage* (Boulder, CO, 1996). On the Los Angeles riot or rebellion of 1992, see Nancy Abelmann and John Lie, *Blue Dreams: Korean Americans and the Los Angeles Riots* (Cambridge, 1995); Mark Baldassare, ed., *The Los Angeles Riots: Lessons for the Urban Future* (Boulder, CO, 1994); Dennis E. Gale, *Understanding Urban Unrest: From Reverend King to Rodney King* (Newbury Park, CA, 1996); Robert Gooding-Williams, ed., *Reading Rodney King, Reading Urban Uprising* (New York, 1993); Haki R. Madhubuti, ed., *Why L.A. Happened: Implications of the '92 Los Angeles Rebellion* (Chicago, 1993).

8. Ronald H. Bayor, *Race and the Shaping of Twentieth-Century Atlanta* (Chapel Hill, NC, 1996); Mohl, "Making the Second Ghetto in Metropolitan Miami, 1940-1960," *Journal of Urban History* 21 (1995): 395-427, reprinted in Kenneth W. Goings and Mohl, eds., *The New African American Urban History* (Thousand Oaks, CA, 1996), 266-98; Carl Husemoller Nightingale, *On the Edge: A History of Poor Black Children and Their American Dreams* (New York, 1994); Amanda I. Seligman, " 'Apologies to Dracula, Werewolf, Frankenstein': White Homeowners and Blockbusters in Chicago," *Journal of the Illinois State Historical Society* 94 (2001): 70-95; Seligman, *Block by Block: Confronting Neighborhood Decay and Racial Change in Postwar Chicago* (Chicago, forthcoming); Sugrue, *Origins of the Urban Crisis*; Sugrue, "Crabgrass-Roots Politics: Race, Rights, and the Reaction against Liberalism in the Urban North, 1940-1964," *Journal of American History* 82 (1995): 551-78; Heather Thompson, *Whose Detroit? Politics, Labor and Race in a Modern American City* (Ithaca, NY, 2001).

9. On "hyperghettos" and the "underclass," see William Julius Wilson, *The Truly Disadvantaged: The Inner City, the Underclass and Public Policy* (Chicago, 1987); Wilson, *When Work Disappears: The World of the New Urban Poor* (New York, 1996); Camilo Jose Vergara, *The New American Ghetto* (New Brunswick, NJ, 1995); Herbert Gans, *The War against the Poor: The Underclass and Antipoverty Policy* (New York, 1995); Michael Katz, *Improving Poor People: The Welfare State, the "Underclass," and Urban Schools in History* (Princeton, NJ, 1995); Katz, *In the Shadow of the Poorhouse: A Social History of Welfare in America* (New York, 1986), 287; Katz, *The Undeserving Poor: From the War on Poverty to the War on Welfare* (New York, 1989); Katz, "The Urban 'Underclass' as a Metaphor of Social Transformation," and Eric Monkkonen, "Nineteenth-Century Institutions: Dealing with the Urban 'Underclass,' " both in Michael Katz, ed., *The "Underclass" Debate: Views from History* (Princeton, NJ, 1993), 1-23, 335; James T. Patterson, *America's Struggle against Poverty, 1900-1994* (Cambridge, 1994); Thomas J. Sugrue, "The Impoverished Politics of Poverty, *Yale Journal of Law and the Humanities* 6 (1994): 163-79. For other studies, see Ken Auletta, *The Underclass* (New York, 1982); Christoper Jencks and Paul E. Peterson, eds., *The Urban Underclass* (Washington, DC, 1991). On underclass theories obscuring more than they reveal, see Mark Stern, "Poverty and Family Composition" in Katz, ed., *"Underclass" Debate*; Nightingale, *On the Edge*; Mitchell Duneier, *Slim's Table: Race, Respectability, and Masculinity* (Chicago, 1992). For a concise overview of this voluminous literature, see Sugrue, *Origins of the Urban Crisis*, 3-6.

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