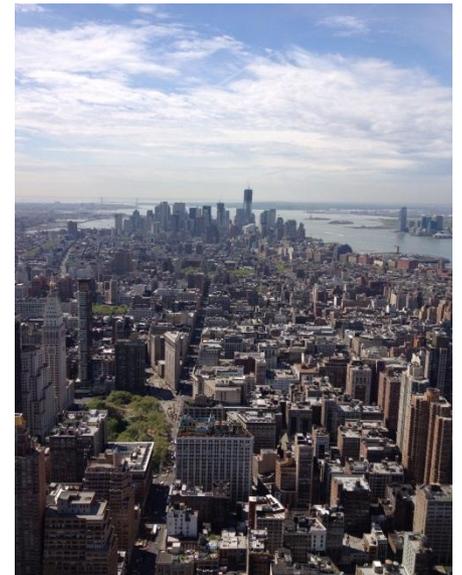


URBAN SOCIOLOGY

Introduction to sociology – session 11
Anne Revillard



Urban sociology

Introduction: drawing on Robert Park to explore urban sociology (the city as a « social laboratory »)

1. The organization of urban space : from « urban ecology » to the study of segregation
2. Urban ethnography as a distinct sociological style
3. Urban sociology as general sociology

The city as a founding object of sociological inquiry for the Chicago school

- University of Chicago, 1915-1935
- Main authors: Albion Small, William Thomas, Robert Park, Ernest Burgess, Louis Wirth
- Using the city as a « social laboratory » (R. Park and E. Burgess, *The city*, 1925)

R. Park: the city as a social laboratory

« The city, from the point of view of this paper, is something more than a congeries of individual men and of social conveniences – streets, buildings, electric lights, tramways, and telephones, etc.; something more, also, than a mere constellation of institutions and administrative devices – courts, hospitals, schools, police, and civil functionaries of various sorts. The city is, rather, **a state of mind, a body of customs and traditions, and of the organized attitudes and sentiments that inhere in these customs and are transmitted with this tradition.** The city is not, in other words, merely a physical mechanism and an artificial construction. It is involved in the vital processes of the people who compose it; it is a product of nature, and particularly of human nature.

[...] There are **forces at work within the limits of the urban community** – within the limits of any natural area of human habitation, in fact – **which tend to bring about an orderly and typical grouping of its population and institutions.** The science which seeks to isolate these factors and to describe the typical constellations of persons and institutions which the cooperation of these forces produce, is what we call human, as distinguished from plant and animal, **ecology.**
[...]

Park, Robert. 1925. "The city: suggestions from the investigation of human behavior in the urban environment." in *The City, edited by R. Park and E. W. Burgess.* Chicago: University of Chicago Press, p.1-2 (my emphasis).

R. Park: the city as a social laboratory

« [...] **Anthropology**, the science of man, has been mainly concerned up to the present with the study of primitive peoples. But civilized man is quite as interesting an object of investigation, and at the same time his life is more open to observation and study. Urban life and culture are more varied, subtle, and complicated, but the fundamental motives are in both instances the same. **The same patient methods of observation** which anthropologists like Boas and Lowie have expended on the study of the life and manners of the North American Indian might be even more fruitfully employed in the investigation of the customs, beliefs, social practices, and general conceptions of life prevalent in Little Italy on the lower North Side in Chicago, or in recording the more sophisticated folkways of the inhabitants of Greenwich village and the neighborhood of Washington square, New York ».

Park, Robert. 1925. "The city: suggestions from the investigation of human behavior in the urban environment." , p.3 (my emphasis)..

R. Park: the city as a social laboratory

3 main ideas:

- « The city » as the departure point for a general sociology
- Urban ecology → the social organization of urban space
- Anthropological methods applied to the modern city → urban ethnography

Urban sociology

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Urban ecology and beyond: studying the organization of urban space

- What is urban ecology?

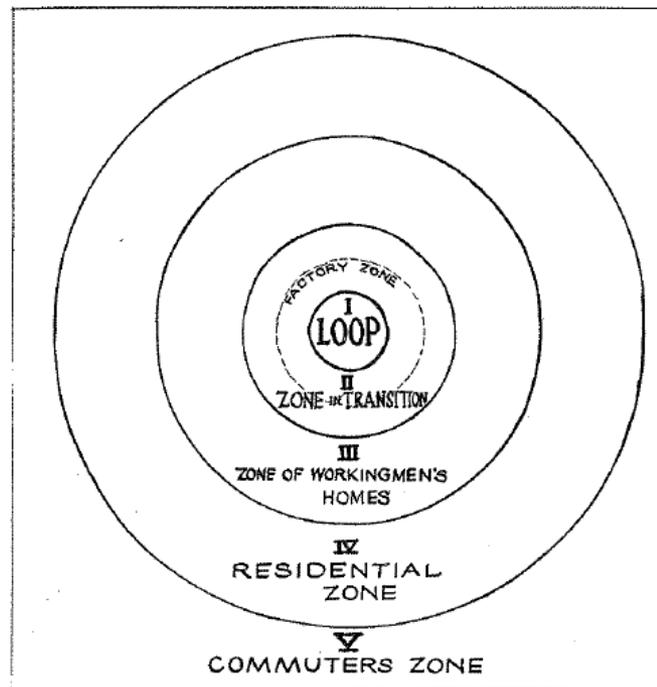
« [...] There are **forces at work within the limits of the urban community** – within the limits of any natural area of human habitation, in fact – **which tend to bring about an orderly and typical grouping of its population and institutions**. The science which seeks to isolate these factors and to describe the typical constellations of persons and institutions which the cooperation of these forces produce, is what we call human, as distinguished from plant and animal, **ecology** » (R. Park, 1925)

- Biological metaphor
- Driving force organizing the urban ecosystem = competition between social groups
- Division of the urban space into several « natural areas » of people sharing the same social characteristics

Urban ecology and beyond: studying the organization of urban space

- What is urban ecology?

Example: E. Burgess's concentric model of « The growth of the city » : « any town or city [tends] to expand radially from its central business district »; « succession » = « the tendency of each inner zone to extend its area by the invasion of the next outer zone »



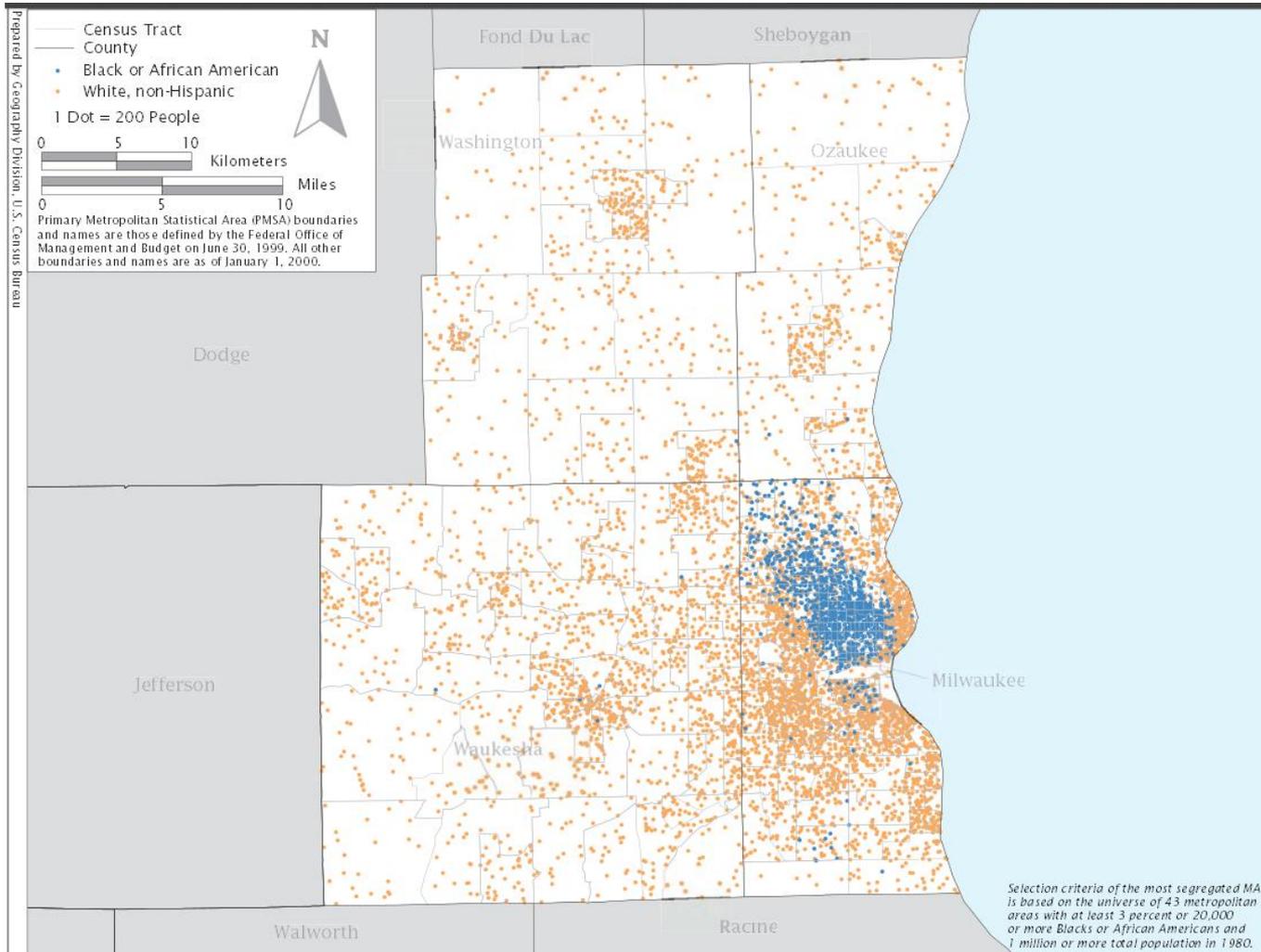
E. Burgess, « The growth of the city », 1925, p.51

CHART I. The Growth of the City

Urban ecology and beyond: studying the organization of urban space

- Massey and Denton, *American Apartheid*, 1993: residential segregation as the « missing link » to analyze the persistence of racial inequality in the US
- Segregation = physical separation between different groups
- Measure of segregation = **dissimilarity index**; which can be interpreted as the percentage of people from the group who would have to move in order to produce an even distribution of the whole population in the given zone.
 - Ex : an index of 81% for Blacks in Milwaukee means that 81% of Black people would have to move in order for there to be an even distribution of Blacks and non-Blacks in every neighborhood in the city

Urban ecology and beyond: studying the organization of urban space



Milwaukee, the most segregated large Metropolitan area for Blacks or African Americans in 2000
(source : US Census bureau
http://www.census.gov/hhes/www/housing/housing_patterns/pdf/Fig5-3.pdf)

Massey and Denton (1993) on racial segregation

- Racial segregation: a class issue? Not quite...
 - W.J. Wilson, *The truly disadvantaged* (1987) : a class perspective on inner-city poverty and segregation (decline of manufacturing jobs in inner-cities, new opportunities outside of the ghetto for middle-class Blacks)
 - vs Massey and Denton, *American Apartheid* (1993): « no matter how much Blacks earned they remained spatially separated from Whites » (p.85)

Metropolitan area	Income category		
	Under \$ 2 500	\$ 25 000-27 500	\$ 50 000 +
Boston	85,1	83,9	89,1
Chicago	91,1	85,8	86,3
Detroit	88,6	85	86,4
Milwaukee	91,3	87,9	86,3
Atlanta	82,2	80,7	83,2
Average for Northern areas	85,8	80,7	83,2
Average for Southern areas	74,4	66,7	72,8

Source : excerpt from Massey and Denton, *American Apartheid*, 1993, table 4,1 p.86

Massey and Denton (1993) on racial segregation

- Explaining the persistence of racial residential segregation
 - Neighborhood preferences?
 - « Discrimination with a smile »

Massey and Denton (1993) on racial segregation

- Explaining the persistence of racial residential segregation :
 - (1) Neighborhood preferences
 - Blacks favor integration but express reluctance to enter all-white neighborhoods, because of fear of white hostility
 - Whites favor integration in principle, but « negative stereotypes about black neighbors remain firmly entrenched in white psyches »
- Schelling, 1978 : how the aggregation of « micromotives » results in segregation at the macro level

Massey and Denton (1993) on racial segregation

« Given the harassment that historically has followed their entry into white areas, Blacks express considerable reluctance at being the first to cross the color line. Once one or two black families have entered a neighborhood, however, black demand grows rapidly given the high value placed on integrated housing. This demand escalates as the black percentage rises toward 50%, the most preferred neighborhood configuration; beyond this point, black demand stabilizes until the neighborhood reaches 70% black, after which demand falls off.

The pattern of white demand for housing in racially mixed areas follows precisely the opposite trajectory. Demand is strong for homes in all-white areas, but once one or two black families enter a neighborhood, white demand begins to falter as some white families leave and others refuse to move in. The acceleration in residential turnover coincides with the expansion of black demand, making it very likely that outgoing white households will be replaced disproportionately with black families. [...] As in the past, segregation is created by a process of racial turnover fueled by the persistence of significant antiblack prejudice »

(Massey and Denton, 1993, p.95-96)

Massey and Denton (1993) on racial segregation

- Explaining the persistence of racial residential segregation : (2)
“Discrimination with a smile”
 - Fair Housing Act 1968
 - Discriminatory practices in the housing market (rental and sales)
“Black clients who inquire about an advertised unit may be told that it has just been sold or rented; [...] their phone number may be taken but a return call never made; they may be shown units but offered no assistance in arranging financing; or they may be treated brusquely or discourteously in hopes that they will leave” (M&D 1993, p.96)
 - Racial steering: “when white and black clients are guided to neighborhoods that differ systematically with respect to social and economic characteristics, especially racial composition” (M&D 1993, p.100)
 - Discrimination in access to credit

Massey and Denton (1993) on racial segregation

« When it comes to housing and residential patterns, therefore, race is the dominant organizing principle. No matter what their ethnic origin, economic status, social background, or personal characteristics, African Americans continue to be denied full access to US housing markets. Through a series of exclusionary tactics, realtors limit the likelihood of black entry into white neighborhoods and channel black demand for housing into areas that are within or near existing ghettos. White prejudice is such that when black entry into a neighborhood is achieved, that area becomes unattractive to further white settlement and whites begin departing at an accelerated pace. This segmentation of black and white housing demand is encouraged by pervasive discrimination in the allocation of mortgages and home improvement loans, which systematically channel money away from integrated areas. The end result is that Blacks remain the most spatially isolated population in US history ».

(Massey and Denton, 1993, p.114)

Urban sociology

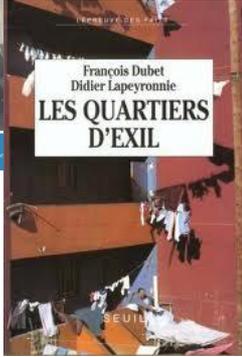
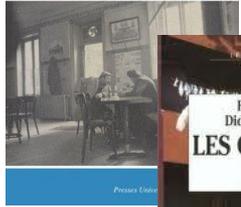
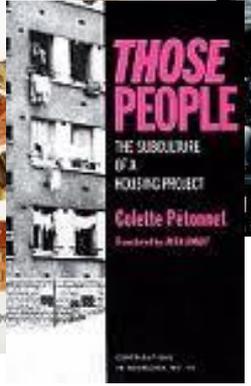
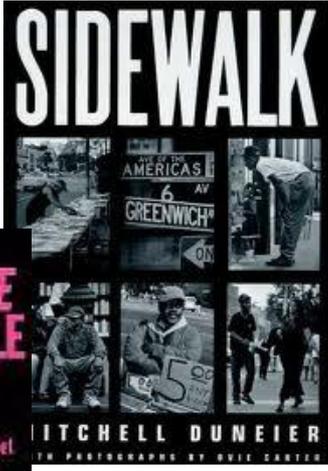
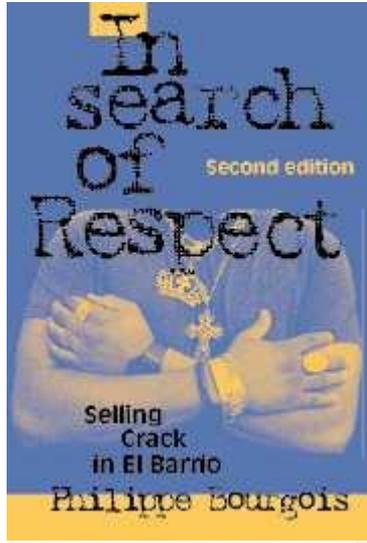
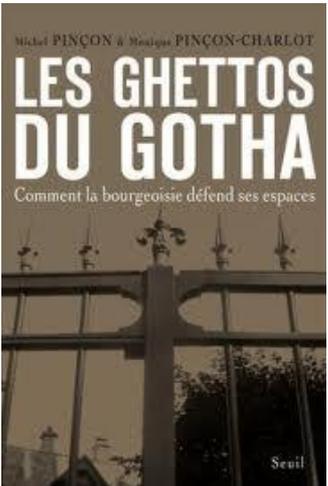
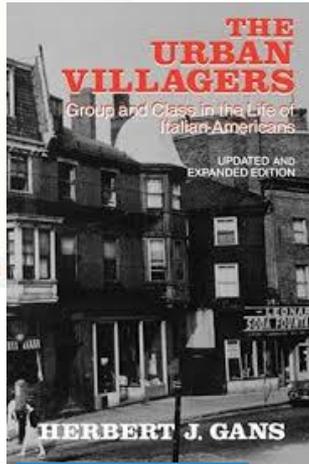
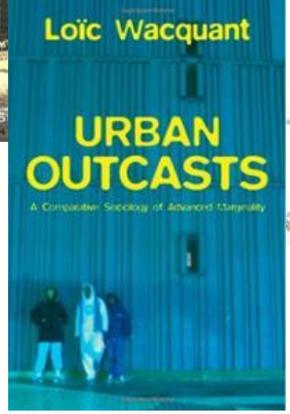
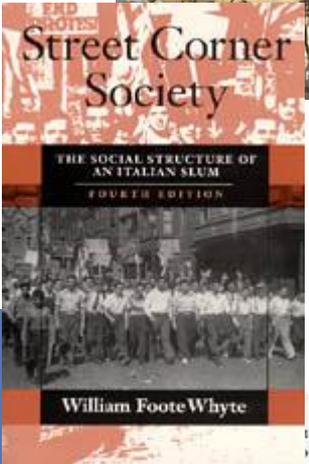
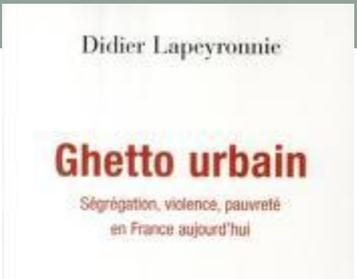
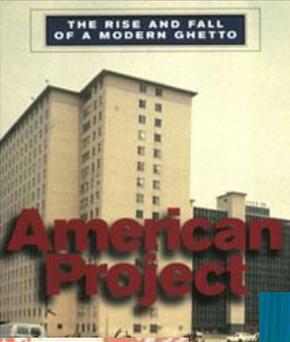
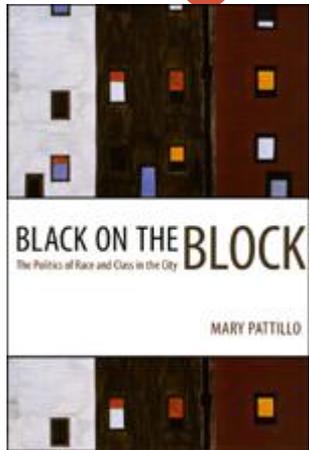
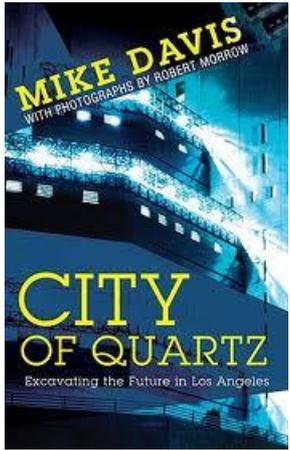
Introduction: drawing on Robert Park to explore urban sociology (the city as a « social laboratory »)

1. The organization of urban space : from « urban ecology » to the study of segregation
2. Urban ethnography as a distinct sociological style
 1. Definition
 2. Examples : Foote Whyte (1943), Bourgois (1995), Desmond and Valdez (2013)
3. Urban sociology as general sociology

Urban ethnography as a distinct sociological style

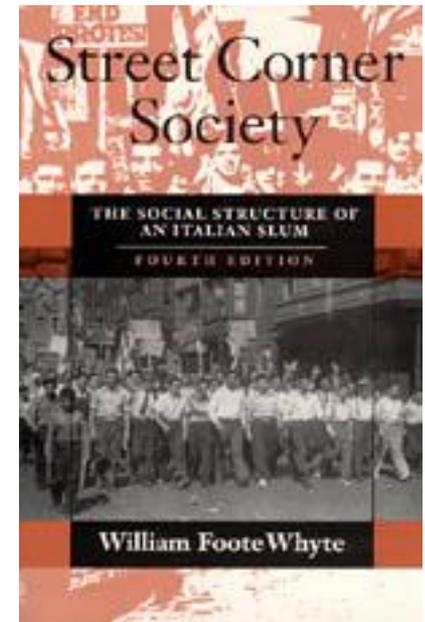
- Drawing on anthropology, following R.Park's recommendation (cf supra): « **The same patient methods of observation** which anthropologists like Boas and Lowie have expended on the study of the life and manners of the North American Indian might be even more fruitfully employed in the investigation of the customs, beliefs, social practices, and general conceptions of life prevalent in Little Italy on the lower North Side in Chicago, or in recording the more sophisticated folkways of the inhabitants of Greenwich village and the neighborhood of Washington square, New York » (*The city*, 1925).
- Urban ethnography implies a sociologist's long immersion (participant observation) within a given urban community (→ issues of access, degree and types of participation...)
- Qualitative research: direct observation, interviews
- Predominately inductive
- Time-consuming, personally engaging... but at the root of the most interesting findings and analyses

Urban ethnography



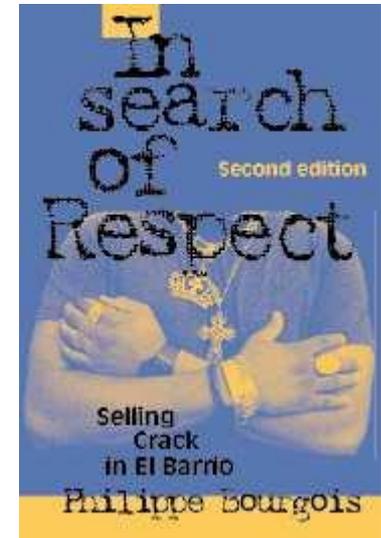
Urban ethnography: a classic: W. Foote Whyte's *Street-corner society* (1943)

- W. Foote Whyte lived 3 years in a poor Italian neighborhood of Boston ("Cornerville") in the end of the 1930s
- Issues of access; key informant: "Doc"
- Against the idea of social disorganization, he analyzes the organization of the community around street corners (the "corner boys"), gangs, social clubs (ex. bowling), political clubs, racketeering ...
- Ex. role of bowling scores in the reassertion of rank and status within the group



Urban ethnography: a more recent example: P. Bourgois's *In search of respect* (1995)

- 5 year fieldwork in East Harlem (puerto-rican neighborhood, El Barrio)
 - Focus on the economic organization of crack dealing and the street culture surrounding this activity
 - Documenting the everyday life of crack dealers (access/key informant: Primo)
 - Analyzing the structural conditions and transformations (economy, gender norms) that favor involvement in crack dealing: decline in manufacturing jobs/shift to service employment:
 - 1st generation migrants: factory and garment industry
 - 2nd generation: lower-end service jobs, often supervised by women
- Selling crack as a way to restore masculine dignity



Combining urban ethnography with quantitative methods: M. Desmond and N. Valdez (2013) on the consequences of third-party policing for inner-city women

“Third-party policing” = the assignment of policing responsibilities to non-police actors such as landlords; Ex: “nuisance property ordinances”:

- Landlords get letters (citations) from the police when their tenants place too many calls to the police classified as “nuisance”
- After a citation by the police, the landlords must take a course of action to ensure the “nuisance” calls will stop (written answer within 10 days describing the course of action)

Methods of inquiry:

- Urban ethnography (Desmond, 2012)
- Qualitative analysis and coding of 911 calls, citations and answers by landlords
- Quantitative analysis (regression), linking this data with other data (poverty, percentage of black residents in the neighborhood, crime rate...).
- Interviews with police officers and landlords

Desmond, Matthew and Nicol Valdez. 2013. "Unpolicing the Urban Poor: Consequences of Third-Party Policing for Inner-City Women." *American Sociological Review*:117-141.

Combining urban ethnography with quantitative methods: M. Desmond and N. Valdez (2013) on the consequences of third-party policing for inner-city women

Main results

- 1/3 of the citations involved cases of domestic violence
- “properties located in black neighborhoods were more likely to receive nuisance citations for domestic violence even after controlling for the prevalence of domestic violence calls made from properties and neighborhoods’ domestic violence rates” (p.132)
- “Courses of action” taken by landlords (ex.):
 - Discouraging tenants to call 911 (notably in cases of domestic violence) (see next slide)
 - Eviction of the tenant (in 57% of the cases involving domestic violence)

Desmond, Matthew and Nicol Valdez. 2013. "Unpolicing the Urban Poor: Consequences of Third-Party Policing for Inner-City Women." *American Sociological Review*:117-141.

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 1. Back in Chicago...
 2. ... Up until now

The city as a founding object of sociological inquiry for the Chicago school

- Studying the growth of the city: urban ecology
- Urban economy, organization and lifestyles
 - Work
 - Deviance
 - Social organization
 - Cultural life
 - Politics...
- Examples of studies:
 - William Thomas and Florian Znaniecki. *The Polish peasant in Europe and America*. (1918)
 - Frederick Thrasher, *The Gang* (1926)
 - Louis Wirth, *The Ghetto* (1928)
 - Harvey W. Zorbaugh, *The Gold Coast and the Slum* (1929)
 - Clifford S. Shaw, *The Jackroller* (1930)
 - Paul G. Cressey, *The Taxi-Dance Hall* (1932)

« The city » as the departure point for a general sociology

Social organizations and subcultures of local urban communities (who holds power? What is the division of labor/tasks based upon? What are the norms and values?) : rich/poor ghettos, ethnic/migrant communities

How deviant activities unfold and are organized within the urban space

Norms, deviance and social control

Social order, norms and culture

Local embedding of (legal or illegal) economic activities

How urban inequalities reflect and reinforce social inequalities: segmentation and segregation of urban space

Sociology of inequalities

The city
as a social laboratory

Economic sociology

Political sociology

Social movements

Public policy

Urban planning/ housing policies and their social consequences

Urban planning and its discontent/urban social movements

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