The volume also provides entrée into how the university interacts with the communities around it. *Undressing Durban* raises countless research questions that could guide young scholars in identifying their own projects, as well as expose undergraduates to urban social science. This is a mission the editors describe in the introduction, and one they achieve admirably.

RACE, SPACE AND RIOTS IN CHICAGO, NEW YORK AND LOS ANGELES, by Janet L. Abu-Lughod. Oxford University Press, 2007. 360 pp. ISBN 0-19-532875-2.

## Reviewed by

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In *Race, Space and Riots in Chicago, New York and Los Angeles,* Janet Abu-Lughod attempts a monumental task: synthesizing research about six major urban disturbances in three major cities over the course of the twentieth century, and connecting them all within a unifying historical-sociological vision. Abu-Lughod's aim is to examine locally specific contextual contingencies that shaped these events, as well as their outcomes, within a broader perspective that sees all of them as symptomatic of ongoing issues within urban America. Drawing on her own extensive knowledge of each metropolis, and employing what she calls "controlled comparisons," Abu-Lughod engages in a wide-ranging discussion that moves back and forth between specific reconstructions of events that precipitated riots and the reactions that followed them, and the larger thematic questions of how the riots reflected the distinctive racial history, politics, and geography of each city.

Some of her findings are not surprising. Many of these disturbances had their specific origins in tensions between local minority populations and police departments that were perceived as oppressive "occupying armies" (p. 143), and the underlying factors that fostered them including persistent social inequalities, intense residential segregation, localized poverty, and blocked opportunities. However, Abu-Lughod is just as interested in highlighting major differences in terms of police response and political effect of riots in all three cities. She argues, for example, that in New York City the black community tended to be better organized and mobilized, and the political structure was also more conciliatory than in the other cases, resulting in outcomes where damages were more limited and riots "paid off" in terms of demonstrable gains in housing, jobs, and schools. In Los Angeles, on the other hand, the militaristic structure of the police department—which relied on fewer officers and tended to withdraw from contested areas during disturbances—and the lack of black political power combined to produce "futile uprisings" (p. 195). They were more intensely destructive and also left the affected communities worse off than before.

Abu-Lughod maintains that New York City, which has managed to avoid a major urban disturbance since the early 1960s in spite of numerous "trigger" events that might have sparked them—the Abner Louima, Amadou Diallo, and Sean Bell incidents, for example—has also been consistently more effective than either Chicago or Los Angeles in responding to the uprisings that have occurred. Abu-Lughod attributes this, in part, to New Yorkers' "greater acceptance of, if not universal enthusiasm for, social diversity." She continues:

> To a limited extent, this may be attributable to the city's fine-grained spatial pattern, knitted together by, and dependent on, a mass transit system that throws together a wide range of people of varied appearances and behavior patterns, who are inadvertently exposed, at least visually, to one another and have thus developed unique forms of, if not tolerance, studied social nonobservance of one another. (p. 272)

The density and heterogeneity of New York has also inevitably affected its policing patterns and its political system, allowing for greater control of space and swifter response, as mentioned above. This assertion well illustrates one major theme of the book, which is simply that "space matters."

The case of Chicago also demonstrates the difference that space can make. In examining conflicts from 1919 to 1968, Abu-Lughod argues that "racism must be recognized as constituting a bedrock element" (p. 47) of that city's geographical patterns of racial settlement. The 1919 riot began with a fight over a contested swimming area on Chicago's South Side and primarily consisted of skirmishes between groups of whites and blacks ranging all along the border of the Black Belt, as well as scattered attacks on black people throughout the city. The 1968 uprising, on the other hand, began on Chicago's majority-black West Side on April 5, the day after the murder of Martin Luther King, Jr. These two disturbances are in many respects quite different. The first was directed toward protecting white spaces (residential, social, workplaces) from black intrusion, while the second was inspired by a lack of progress in civil rights and largely directed against white property and institutions—namely the police. Abu-Lughod, however, sees both 1919 and 1968 as manifestations of the same underlying dynamic of racial containment and expansion: the first riot pushed Chicago toward embracing the so-called "Atlanta Solution," a policy of racial peace through spatial separation, expanding the Black Belt but solidifying its border (pp. 63–64). The 1968 riot, which occurred in the "Second Ghetto" (p. 84) on Chicago's West Side, resulted in the expansion of that ghetto out to the western city limits, while also clearing the way for the Near West Side (the part that was largely burned down) to be redeveloped years later with luxury "lofts" and condominiums. The end result, Abu-Lughod claims, was the Atlanta Solution writ large. Chicago is still profoundly shaped by this outcome.

In spite of its concern for space, however, the book is not very attuned to the nuances of *place*. Space is treated mostly as a physical container or backdrop for particular combinations of socioeconomics and political power. Other than a few excerpts from contemporary journalistic accounts, Abu-Lughod's analysis seems to be largely focused on the formal political, economic, and spatial dimensions of these occurrences. Less attention is paid to the experiential, neighborhood-based perspectives that might be supplied by literary, popular culture, or "underground" sources—as one might find, for example, in Mike Davis's work on Los Angeles.

These criticisms aside, Abu-Lughod should be commended for her scholarly contribution and for drawing attention to these pivotal events as important signs or indicators of "tectonic shifts" (pp. 255, 260) taking place in the racial and political landscape of American cities. In line with this broader vision, her final argument pertains to the impact of mass imprisonment of African Americans as a kind of de facto riot control that has served to drain inner cities of volatile, "riot-prone" populations (p. 292). The biggest wave of returning prisoners to date is due to hit the streets of America in coming decades, and most of them will be returning to cities still afflicted with widespread unemployment,

crumbling infrastructures, inadequate housing, and schools. As Abu-Lughod convincingly argues, the future of urban areas, and the likelihood of future riots, will indeed depend on how American society chooses to deal with enduring issues of racial and spatial inequality.

Bargaining for Brooklyn: Community Organizations in the Entrepreneurial City, by Nicole P. Marwell. University of Chicago Press, 2007. 290 pp. ISBN 0-226-50907-9.

## Reviewed by

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In 1987, William Julius Wilson introduced sociologists to the concept of concentrated disadvantage by documenting the multiple difficulties faced by poor people living in economically depressed inner-city neighborhoods. While its causes have been hotly debated, most agree that the consequences of living in such neighborhoods are not good. In fact, there is a substantial and infinitely growing body of research that attempts to assess the negative effects of neighborhood disadvantage on a range of individual outcomes. A common thread throughout this line of inquiry is the underlying conceptualization of *neighborhood*: a geographically bounded space within which the effects of disadvantage are manifested and exacerbated by close proximity.

The focus on neighborhood effects tends to overlook the broader influences of citywide economic and political forces on poor neighborhoods. However, Nicole Marwell correctly points out in her new book *Bargaining for Brooklyn* that the distribution of resources and opportunities is driven by these wider forces and therefore should be more central to the examination of the causes and consequences of neighborhood-based poverty. For example, the deterioration of American's inner cities beginning in the 1950s can be traced most fundamentally to urban policies favoring suburbanization enacted at the federal level.

One of the responses to such policies has been the emergence of community-based organizations (CBOs) that work to improve the conditions faced by residents in poor inner-city neighborhoods. Ironically, CBOs must negotiate with the very economic and political institutions essentially responsible for neighborhood divestment and decline in the first place. As Marwell argues, focusing on the role of CBOs in negotiating the larger social order of the city sheds new light on how the symbiotic relationship between mainstream social institutions and neighborhood-based organizations can result in access to opportunities and resources previously unavailable to poor residents.

*Bargaining for Brooklyn* is an ethnographic study of eight CBOs located in Brooklyn's Williamsburg and Bushwick neighborhoods. The book tells a number of stories vividly illustrating how these CBOs engage in the larger economic and political arenas of child care, housing, public resources distribution, employment, and public education reform in an ongoing pursuit to improve the lives of local residents. In my mind, these stories and the clear way in which Marwell tells them are one of the major strengths of this book. Within an historical backdrop, the stories detail a variety of achievements and struggles highlighting the complex organizational environments in which these CBOs operate. Sometimes CBO engagement with external institutions succeeds in