

ences their collective efficacy is the topic Sampson turns to next: community-based organizations are a good predictor of collective efficacy in the long term. The same is true for altruism, as Sampson shows through a rather innovative experiment of distributing lost letters and measuring whether people who accidentally found them put them in the mail. He argues that he hence found ‘an enduring culture located on a dimension of social altruism’ (p. 218), but I would like to have seen a more precise definition of culture here, as culture is a ‘fundamental mechanism’ for neighborhood effects. If this is so, then have we not identified a twenty-first-century version of the culture of poverty, wherein some are respectable and others are not?

That not everything can be understood on the neighborhood level becomes clear in the next part of the book, focusing on ‘interlocking structures’: neighborhoods are interdependent (p. 239). Critically discussing *Moving To Opportunities* (a housing program to re-house people from deprived areas to better places), he argues that such interlocking structures cannot be answered, or resolved, through such programs. Studying migration patterns of Chicago residents, Sampson again shows that relative spatial distance influences such patterns strongly and they are linked to the network flows of leadership ties (admitting that individual actions and social composition matter, but that structural sorting may play the dominant role).

This, then, brings Sampson to his conclusion that the traditional approach to neighborhood dynamics is incomplete. Spatial dynamics, spatial distance to other areas, matter too: ‘the spatial-externalities perspective on racial disadvantage moved beyond the traditional emphasis on internal neighborhood characteristics by conceptualizing how extra-neighborhood and citywide spatial dynamics create racial inequalities across a wide range of social processes that are potentially more consequential than the ones already at play within neighborhoods’ (p. 373). Sampson has, in other words, identified an example of what he calls ‘contextual causality’.

Overall, I think this is a powerful, data-rich, important book. The argument of contextual causality and the need to study spatial dynamics beyond neighborhoods internally to understand how neighborhood effects are brought about is a crucial intervention in the field. That said, though, I wonder whether Sampson has really succeeded in shedding light on how such causal effects come about. When Charles Tilly in *Durable Inequalities* in 1998 tried to identify the mechanisms that produce inequalities, he pointed to processes like opportunity hoarding (hinted at when Sampson says that some prevent others from access to their resources) and exploitation (the role of the real estate and finance industry would be an agent here, absent in this study) supported by emulation (fleetingly present but not elaborated upon when Sampson suggests neighborhood reputations matter without showing how stories about places emerge) and adaptation (which may be Sampson’s ‘culture’, but that is certainly the easily used and least well-defined concept in the book). In short, this is a step in the right direction towards showing that the ghetto is produced as a spatial concept beyond its spatial borders—but we remain in the dark when it comes to understanding how this is done in the everyday practice of people’s lives. Sampson’s book represents a good start to, but certainly not the end of, this journey.

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Geoff Harkness 2014: *Chicago Hustle and Flow: Gangs, Gangsta Rap, and Social Class*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press

In *Chicago Hustle and Flow*, Geoff Harkness discusses the rap scene of Chicago, America’s most racially segregated city. As a sociologist, Harkness does not examine rap music itself, but rather its social context. He considers gangsta rap as a social phenomenon and therefore focuses on the daily life experiences of the rappers. An

understanding of music in this way asks for an examination of its production, circulation and reception. Focusing mostly on the environment in which gangsta rap is produced, Harkness's account corresponds with scholarship on popular culture against the backdrop of (il)legality and criminality. He describes situations that we recognize from low-income neighborhoods in other parts of the world, which are also marked by drug trafficking, broken families, youngsters who benefit from gang affiliations, and limited opportunities and social mobility. Through the ethnographic method Harkness has gathered in-depth data about life in these neighborhoods, allowing for a detailed description which gives a nuanced image of gangsta rappers. He shows what is behind the statistics of criminality and materialistic video clips we all know from famous rappers.

In order to allow us to understand the rap scene of Chicago, Harkness employs the concept of microscenes. A focus on microscenes allows for a realistic understanding of, and has an eye for the heterogeneity and influence of changes on, scenes. By brilliantly connecting life stories of different rappers and ethnographic vignettes from his fieldwork, he offers readers a comprehension of the daily realities of young men who live in precarious neighborhoods and are involved in the gangsta rap microscene.

We learn about gangsta rap; its history, development and meaning for rappers. Harkness discusses the music in relation to social inequality. By moving forward from the race-based discussions of the last century, he signals the need for a focus on social class. He involves theories of cultural capital, and clearly shows the contextual nature of this kind of capital through illustrations from the rap scene. First he introduces the two major microscenes present in the rap scene. The backpackers–gangsta divide reveals class-based divisions, and these two ideal types should be seen as the polarized ends of a continuum on which all rappers can be placed. Subsequently, Harkness continues to unravel the symbiotic relationship between gangsta rap and street gangs. Gangsta rap is intertwined with criminality, both in a functional way (to achieve the greater goal of becoming famous and rich) and in a more symbolic way (to secure authenticity). Through a discussion of music recording studios we learn that the construction of authenticity is highly situational. Throughout the book Harkness points towards the American dream as a driving force behind, and explanation for, gangsta rappers' choices and perseverance. Almost all gangsta rappers, unlike the more realistic backpackers, have the unquestionable belief that they will get rich by working hard. They conceptualize working hard by spending long hours in the studios, producing many songs, performing live on stage and networking. Harkness shatters this dream by pointing towards the hegemonic structures that reproduce the status quo of existing power relations and limited opportunities for lower social classes.

When writing about violent settings, scholars must be attentive not to sensationalize the daily hardships of their research participants. Harkness overcomes this danger without playing down the struggles gangsta rappers face. He has written an easily readable book by displaying his informants' feelings and vulnerabilities through personal stories and a wealth of quotes. When his accounts seem to be overly sensationalistic, we realize that boasting about violence is common in the field where Harkness conducted his research and therefore it brings us closer to understanding the reality of Chicago rappers.

Harkness's ethnography can be recommended to students and researchers alike who want to understand what it is like to undertake research in neighborhoods where problems like criminality and trust issues play a role. As is not uncommon in ethnographic writing, the author has taken some personal risks in the course of his fieldwork. His explanation about his research settings and experiences recounted in vignettes show the difficulties of accessing research participants. However, he does not discuss the dangers of his fieldwork, nor the ethical choices made while conducting research. Hanging out at clubs where fights regularly break out and sending money

to rappers in prison should not be uncritically perceived as part of an academic's job, and further scrutiny of Harkness's decisions would have been welcome.

Setting this aside, the book offers a much-needed alternative representation of young men struggling with a daily life of inequality. From the descriptions we get a nuanced image of gangsta rappers, earning college degrees in prison, working hard and taking rapping very seriously. Harkness's detailed depictions and comparisons have a sensory power which at times might well compare to the lyrics his research participants use to convey emotions.

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Edward Relph (2014) *Toronto: Transformations in a City and its Region. Philadelphia: University of Philadelphia Press*

Edward Relph sets a very ambitious goal for this, his latest book on Toronto and one in a series published by the University of Pennsylvania Press called Metropolitan Portraits. The book's narrative is the story of Toronto told as an ongoing transformation of its 'various landscapes and urban patterns' (p. ix). Relph provides a close reading of the entire regional landscape in all of its complexity, from the time of the first European settlement up to the present day, although two-thirds of the book focuses on the last 50 years. In that half-century Toronto has transformed from 'an inward-looking, colonial British, rustbelt city, into one of the largest, densest, most culturally diverse, globally connected, still rapidly growing, sunbelt cities in North America' (p. 11). In Relph's estimation it is 'a great city, not quite the scale of Los Angeles or New York perhaps, but not that far behind them' (p. 170). That 50-year period also roughly corresponds to Relph's time in Toronto. Since moving there in 1967, Relph has pursued the reading of the region's urban landscape and, more than many other observers, he has been particularly well-situated to do so (having lived in both the older city and a postwar suburb).

Throughout his commentary Relph invokes the ideas of two influential twentieth-century Torontonians—Jane Jacobs and Marshal McLuhan. Jacobs left New York City for Toronto in 1968 and became active in local neighbourhood politics, fighting to defend the Victorian city against attack by city planners, traffic engineers and property developers. But while she was fighting the good fight downtown, Jacobs was dismissive of 'the suburbs', places she almost never (as a non-driver) visited. Relph is critical of her disregard for those parts of the region where the large majority of its population lives, a disregard that for several decades was shared by urban opinion-shapers who looked disparagingly from the historic centre of the region out to what they considered its peripheral zones. McLuhan, on the other hand, is lauded by Relph for his work in the 1960s that foresaw that 'margins and boundaries would effectively cease to exist in the electronic gossipy global village' (p. 10). Jacobs—so prescient in some regards—missed the boat on the suburbs, while McLuhan is interpreted as foreseeing the post-suburban global metropolis.

Relph's method is to get out and walk (and drive), and look. The power of this book comes from how he looks and what he sees when he looks. Relph sees the whole region—the entire '100 mile city'—and he sees it 'clearly'. 'Clear seeing' is an approach described in his earlier work *Rational Landscapes and Humanistic Geography* (1981: 176) as 'the unpretentious way of seeing that strives to omit nothing yet imposes nothing' in the way of the observer's biases about landscape and built environments. He believes that 'we have to come to accept places, buildings, people and objects for what they are and as they are' (*ibid.*: 20, emphasis added). What Relph 'clearly sees' is beautifully described in the book under review. For example, in an almost lyrical paragraph describing the experience of driving in the continuous flow of large trucks on the