

Asia. He concludes that a grounded analysis of urban culture will come to find that “there is no such thing as the ‘Pacific Asian City’ ” (p. 231) despite similarities on the surface (rapid economic growth, urban corridors). Part V provides the studies with the most ethnographic detail. The contributions by Smriti Srinivas and Shlomo Hasson are concerned with the symbolic landscape of Bangalore and Jerusalem, respectively. Although for Srinivas, the “mnemonics of space” (p. 272) provide a process by which past and present continuously intersect in new configurations of meaning, Hasson detects a juxtapositioning of three cultures in Jerusalem’s urban landscape: a culture of religion and tradition, a culture of nationalism and modernity, and a culture of globalism and consumerism. A rather topical issue is then raised in Paul M. Lubeck and Bryanna Britts’s essay. They look at the role of the “Muslim City” in the formation of Islamism as a “modern urban movement” (p. 308). The concluding part VI is devoted to urban developments within the United States, linking to issues raised in previous parts of the book. Again, these parts offer rich ethnographic detail. Michael Indergaard reintroduces the question of social justice in the context of “real” spatial demands by high-tech developments in Manhattan’s “Silicon Alley.” The issue of public space and its (legitimate) control is raised by Alexander J. Reichl’s comparative investigation into sex-related adult entertainment in New York and Las Vegas. Leonard Nevarez then reassesses “urban elites” from a poststructural perspective and based on interviews conducted with new economy executives, local business leaders, and political activists in three coastal California communities. Finally, the book concludes with Jan Lin’s contribution, in which he investigates throughout history the relationship between mass culture, urban development, and the symbolic landscape of Hollywood.

There is a good deal of thought-provoking material in this book. It brings together cutting-edge theoretical thinking with rich empirical detail from beyond the usual Western perspective. The book is a welcome challenge to anyone interested in disciplinary boundary crossing and certainly does a good job in giving us an indication toward the directions that urban studies might take in understanding the city at the beginning of the twenty-first century.

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Valerie C. Johnson, *Black Power in the Suburbs: The Myth or Reality of African American Suburban Political Incorporation* (Albany, NY: SUNY Press), 227 pp., \$22.95 (paper).

*Black Power in the Suburbs* is a welcomed addition to the growing literature on the African-American experience in the suburbs. Johnson provides an interesting case study of the black suburban experience in the southern United States. She argues that black political incorporation is complicated by the region’s historic legacy of racism

and impeded by entrenched governing coalitions that have a tendency to maintain the status quo. Johnson finds that these conditions, along with growing class stratification within the black community and emerging demographic trends, have hampered efforts to promote black political incorporation in the suburbs. Johnson's selection of Prince George's County in Maryland as a research site highlights the importance of examining black political incorporation in the context of community demographics, and her analysis serves as a critical case study. Her conclusions about the nature of black political incorporation in a southern community prompt us to consider the extent to which similar research results could be generated in other suburbs of the United States.

In addition to the selection of Prince George's County as a research setting, Johnson's research methodology is noteworthy. The book's argument is developed through an in-depth case study that combines semistructured interviews with black leaders and a wealth of archival data. In essence, Johnson provides future scholars with a methodological approach for studying politics in the black community that can be replicated and used in comparative analysis. Her approach is within the tradition of community studies, and it should serve as a methodological foundation for future research. Despite its strengths, one weakness of this methodology is that it principally focuses on the perceptions of political elites, and Johnson offers sparse data reflective of a broader cross section of perspectives in the African-American community.

The content of the book provides a wealth of information about internal and external factors affecting black political incorporation in Prince George's County. Individual chapters outline the county's political history, its social and economic trends, the experiences of black candidates in local elections, patterns of political appointments in the county, and the politics of suburban education. Together, these chapters present a fairly coherent picture of the African-American experiences in Prince George's County. However, the use of vignettes in the narrative is cumbersome, and other aspects of the book could have been developed more fully to make the author's argument stronger.

One of Johnson's core arguments is that black political incorporation has been hampered due to class stratification within the black community. Despite the merits of this argument, Johnson provides meager demographic data to support this claim. Although chapters 2 and 8 provide detailed information about general demographic trends and compare blacks to whites in Prince George's County, data outlining the parameters of the black middle class and working class are not clearly delineated in the book. As a result, one is left with an unclear sense of both the size of the black middle class and black working class in the research setting, as well as socioeconomic trends for each respective group.

Johnson's discussion of class stratification within the black community is also linked to the broader issue of black political incorporation. After demonstrating how the history of race relations and coalition building in local politics contributed to the underrepresentation of African-Americans in elected and appointed positions in Prince George's County, she then turns to a discussion of class stratification. Johnson argues that, in part, black political incorporation is problematic in the contemporary period because of class divisions in the African-American community. It is argued

that the presence of these divisions weakens African-American constituencies and lessens their ability to address “perennial challenges” such as the expansion of civil rights and the eradication of systematic racism. Instead of pursuing a political agenda focused on issues of importance to the whole African-American community, Johnson argues that black politics in contemporary suburbs increasingly reflects the divergent goals and issues of African-Americans across the socioeconomic spectrum.

Although Johnson concludes that class stratification is problematic for the black community as a whole, her position fails to consider alternative perspectives to this apparent dilemma. For example, Johnson’s argument does not distinguish between politics at the parochial level and politics at the societal level. Although she is correct in asserting that local decisions about things such as education and public services can be discordant because of class conflict in the black community, this does not mean that African-Americans subsequently part ways on broader issues such as civil rights and systematic racism, as Johnson suggests. Despite her findings, it is plausible that class stratification can cause divisiveness in the black community at the parochial level, and a commitment to social justice can be sustained at the societal level. Moreover, Johnson grapples with the concept of the black community and with what might constitute unifying issues for African-Americans as a whole. Yet, it may be passé to think of the black community as a ubiquitous whole. In fact, Johnson acknowledges this throughout her text, although she seems somewhat uneasy about the political implications of divergent interests in the black community. In her argument, Johnson raises concerns about her finding that, at the local level, class interests may occasionally trump race, even in a southern suburb such as Prince George’s County. This concern might have been less of an issue if her argument presumed one of two things. In the black community, class interests are less likely to trump race at the societal level when issues concerning civil rights and systemic racism are at stake. Or, civil rights and systemic racism are issues that are increasingly advanced by broad-based, multi-racial coalitions in the contemporary period. In essence, all politics are not necessarily local.

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Elliott D. Sclar, *You Don’t Always Get What You Pay For: The Economics of Privatization* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell Univ. Press, 2000), 184 pp., \$17.95 (paper).

Elliott Sclar examines privatization and finds it wanting. He presents case studies of local government decisions to contract out a service that generally would have been better done by the public sector. The tie that ultimately binds the studies together is contracting, an aspect of this local government privatization that has largely been glossed over by those who favor privatization. So the reader should choose this book if