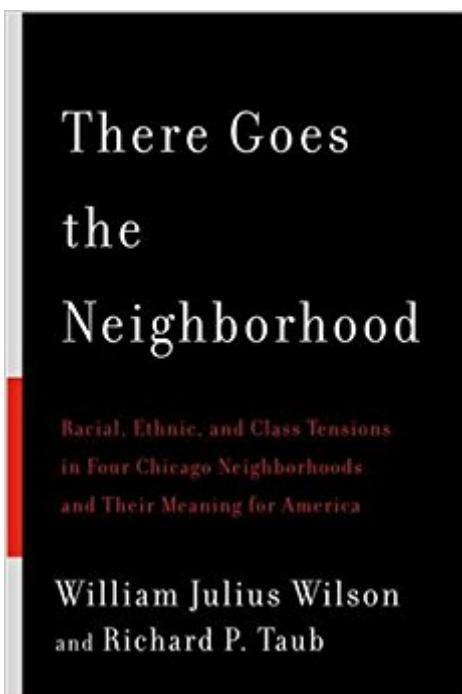


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# There Goes The Neighborhood: Racial, Ethnic, And Class Tensions In Four Chicago Neighborhoods And Their Meaning For America



## Synopsis

A stunning, long-awaited book that looks at the (still) shocking truths of race, ethnicity, and class in America today. William Julius Wilson, among our most admired sociologists and urban policy advisers, author of *When Work Disappears* (âœProfound and disturbingâ•â "Time; âœHis magnum opusâ•â "David Remnick, *The New Yorker*), and Richard P. Taub, chairman of the Department on Comparative Human Development at the University of Chicago, spent three years with a group of researchers studying four working- and lower-middle-class Chicago neighborhoods: African American, white ethnic, Latino, and one in transition from white ethnic to Latino. Their focus: to understand how and why certain urban residents react to looming racial, ethnic, or class changes, and what their reactions mean in terms of the stability of their neighborhood. Using first-person narratives and interviews throughout, *There Goes the Neighborhood* gives voice to attitudes and realities few Americans are willing to look at. Their findings lay bare a disturbing and incontrovertible truth: that the American dream of racial integration, forty-two years after the passage of the Civil Rights Act, still eludes usâ•"and, in fact, may not happen in the foreseeable future. The authors examine the ways in which forces that contribute to strong neighborhoods work against the idea of integration. They explain why residents of neighborhoods with weak social organizations often choose to move rather than confront unwanted ethnic or racial change. Finally, the authors make clear that the racial and ethnic tensions that have become all but inherent to urban neighborhoods have urgent implications for Americans at every level of society. Groundbreaking, authoritative, eye-openingâ•"and certain to rekindle, and permanently alter, the discussion of race relations in our time.

## Book Information

Hardcover: 240 pages

Publisher: Knopf (October 17, 2006)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 0394579364

ISBN-13: 978-0394579368

Product Dimensions: 5.2 x 1 x 7.8 inches

Shipping Weight: 9.6 ounces

Average Customer Review: 3.4 out of 5 starsÂ• See all reviewsÂ• (12 customer reviews)

Best Sellers Rank: #1,030,839 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #104 inÂ• Books > Politics & Social Sciences > Sociology > Race Relations > General #2083 inÂ• Books > Politics & Social

## Customer Reviews

Aside from the irritating and unnecessary practice of using fake names for the neighborhoods explored (a basic knowledge of Chicago and access to Wikipedia makes it easy to figure out which neighborhoods they are), this is a solid ethnographic exploration of race and class in four very different South and Southwest Side Chicago neighborhoods. The researchers participated intensively in neighborhood life and are able to reveal the consistently racist (sometimes shockingly so) attitudes that whites and Latinos carry around with them. The field work was done from 1993 to 1995 - not during the racial upheavals of the '60s and '70s - so it's sobering to see that naked racism is alive and well in one of the most segregated cities in the country. The authors' analysis of the problems is much weaker. They do a good job comparing the varying degrees of racial tension among the neighborhoods and finding explanations for this variation in both the racially-structured competition over resources and the very American confusion of racial difference with class inequality. Yet they don't go deeper into the social structures that actually create these dilemmas. They regard competitive racial identities and the existence of class as almost forces of nature that can never be eliminated, and their prescriptions are therefore remarkably timid: increase federal funding for city programs and try to convince privileged urban and suburban citizens that extending aid to the poor will help the metropolitan area as a whole economically and socially. This may be an attractive agenda to the policymakers who see nothing fundamentally wrong with the severe inequalities and social tensions produced by a racially stratified neoliberal capitalism. But to those who believe that breaking down racial boundaries and ending class divisions are both possible and urgent tasks, a more ambitious program will be necessary.

I think this is a rather weak ethnography which is a surprise given that it's written by two fine sociologists. The book reads like it was rushed to get to print because it's a very shallow analysis of race and class issues in an American city. I didn't really learn much about the neighborhoods other than the old white people and some of the Latinos in these neighborhoods are incredibly racist (which we already know because it's Chicago). I lived in many neighborhoods in Chicago that are similar to Little Village and Brighton Park and they're really not that bad at all! They were vibrant communities that didn't have that much crime, vandalism, and litter. In addition, Avalon Park in the 1990s was a very upscale Black neighborhood. I think lately it's facing some challenges in that middle class AA's are moving to the south suburbs of Chicago like Plainfield. The authors do not do

enough to challenge the racist and classist views of the close-minded and uneducated residents. They make it seem like the residents' views are based in objective reality which clearly they are not. The white residents of Clearing are mad mainly because they do not like change. The Hispanic residents moving to Clearing are actually wealthier than the existing white residents and actually keep their homes and gardens up nicer, but the latter are simply grumpy because they don't like hearing Spanish being spoken or Mexican music. Overall, if you want a much better social science book on Chicago read "Great American City" by Robert Sampson. Finally, I thought the segments on schools were also rather shallow. Not much analysis. If you want a great book on school balance and integration read "Hope and Despair in the American City" by Gerald Grant.

The authors gathered results of information collected by researchers in four Chicago area neighborhoods over the past many years. Unfortunately, the outcome is a rather surface descriptive of racial and ethnic and class interaction among Black, Hispanic and White populations. There are several simple PowerPoint-like graphs comparing sizes of ethnic populations; but, beyond that, important statistics are few, relevant quotes from residents and officials are wanting...and actual differences between the neighborhoods are sketchy at best. Although Wilson and Taub do describe relevant differences about four outlying sections of the city (which are miles apart), a dry "sameness" pervades each of the chapters on each of the neighborhoods. Maybe it's that I'm Chicago-familiar, but I was invariably wondering why the real names of the neighborhoods had to be hidden for this book. As I read, I often tried to figure out exactly where each of the places were/are as there are no such neighborhoods as "Beltway," "Dover," "Archer Park," "Groveland." The authors alert readers to the name-changes; yet, they don't say why this might have been necessary in a serious book of this sort. "Racial, Ethnic and Class Tensions" explained? -More like "described." --Not a bad work. I learned a few things but expected much more detail in what was an overly compact, quick read.

A+: Fast delivery. I would order from them again. The book was just as described - and a great read for class!

Often it is Institutional Review Board at the University from which the research was conducted that requires names be changed. It is not always the desire of the researcher to do so, but they must follow all IRB requirements. An institutional review board (IRB), also known as an independent ethics committee (IEC) or ethical review board (ERB) is a committee that has been formally designated to

approve, monitor, and review biomedical and behavioral research involving humans with the aim to protect the rights and welfare of the research subjects. In the United States, the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) and Department of Health and Human Services (specifically Office for Human Research Protections) regulations have empowered IRBs to approve, require modifications in planned research prior to approval, or disapprove research. An IRB performs critical oversight functions for research conducted on human subjects that are scientific, ethical, and regulatory.[...]

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