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(Review) Urban Outcasts: A Comparative Sociology of Advanced Marginality

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vite idealism and fostered disillusionment in the entire state-building project.

To sum up, this is a welcome and fascinating book on a little-studied aspect of the emergence of the Stalinist system in the late 1930s. Elena Shulman does a masterful job of using the Khetagurova movement to shine much-needed light on gender and mobility issues on the conceptual and also physical margin of the Stalinist Soviet Union on the eve of the Great Patriotic War.

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Urban Outcasts: A Comparative Sociology of Advanced Marginality.
By LOÏC WACQUANT. Malden, Mass.: Polity Press, 2007. 360 pp.
\$79.95 (cloth); \$24.95 (paper).

Loïc Wacquant's book is a response to what he sees as a "moral panic" over the breakdown of law and social order on the European urban periphery, manifested by the widespread presence of rampaging and destructive gangs of youths in the early 1990s in cities such as Lyons, France, and Bristol, England. The question he asks is, to what extent do these incidences of rioting mimic what is happening on the other side of the Atlantic—with specific reference to the riots in Los Angeles following the beating of Rodney King—and represent a process of Americanization and more broadly ghettoization? His answer is that no, they do not, and that while "Advanced Marginality" in Europe and the United States share certain characteristics in common, they are products of very different historical and particularly racial processes.

So what is advanced marginality? According to Wacquant, advanced marginality represents "new forms of exclusionary closure translating into expulsion to the margins and crevices of social and physical space" (p. 232). Furthermore, these new forms of exclusion are neither residual, cyclical, or transitional because they are a function of the diversification and degradation of labor, the delinking of poverty and unemployment from macroeconomic trends, the spatial concentration of marginality in "leprous badlands" (p. 237) that are sites of increasing violence, self-annihilation, and class decomposition.

Having outlined the general conditions of advanced marginality in the West, Wacquant goes on to discuss his two illustrative case studies: the South Side of Chicago, which he refers to as the "Black Belt," and the *banlieues* of the Paris periphery, which he refers to as the "Red

Belt,” in reference to the fact that they were historically the stronghold of the Communist Party. Wacquant argues that in the post-civil rights, post-Fordist-Keynesian era the Black Belt has been transformed from a “Communal Ghetto” that is sharply bounded, multiclass, and politically self-conscious to what he calls a “Hyperghetto,” which has seen jobs, the black middle class, and state support disappear, leaving in its place a dilapidated and isolated community, if we can call it that, dominated by a gun- and drug-fueled “culture of terror” that is exacerbated by a policy of “state abandonment and punitive constraint” (p. 91).

The situation in the hyperghetto, he argues, is very different from that in the *banlieues*, which while housing a declining, stigmatized, and increasingly jobless minority population is nowhere near as large or as socioeconomically isolated, representing “residential islands” rather than a “continent endowed with its own division of labor and (relative) institutional autonomy” (p. 151). Second, whereas the hyperghetto is ethnoracially homogenous—that is, almost completely black—the *banlieues* of Paris are “fundamentally pluriethnic zones” (p. 152), boasting anywhere from fifteen to forty groups of different national origin, the majority of whom are French. Third, Wacquant points out that while the *banlieues*—like the hyperghetto—are areas that are certainly stigmatized and feared, levels of violence and drug use are relatively low. Finally, Wacquant argues that whereas the hyperghetto has been left to rot and implode on itself by public authorities, the state maintains a visible and active presence in the *banlieues*, perhaps most significantly in the form of high levels of publicly owned and maintained housing. In fact, Wacquant argues that the problem is the opposite, that the Red Belt cities suffer from “an overpenetration of public-sector agencies which tend to atomize and isolate their users” (p. 214).

So what then are the larger implications of advanced marginality? For Wacquant, the implications are that we must abandon the hope that the expansion of the economy will absorb the marginalized, long-term poor, and unemployed and organize instead for a guaranteed minimum income. He goes on to argue that because of their “stupendous wealth . . . the rich capitalist societies of the twentieth century have the means for this” (p. 255), something that appears even less imaginable in the context of the current global economic crisis.

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