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For, By And About: Notes On A Sociology Of Black Liberation

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Introduction: Who We Are, What We Do, Why and How We Do It

> The story of the Negro in America is the story of America. It is not a pretty story.
>
> James Baldwin[1]

Sociologists, particularly those who live and work on or in the American context, do so with full knowledge of its realities. They know that in 2018, the US is still involved in military actions abroad that have caused more instability and violence than they have addressed. That in 2018, there are 45 million Americans living in poverty and politicians who still believe access to food is a privilege rather than a right. That in 2018, we defend the rights of corporations to make a profit over the rights of workers to earn a living wage. That in 2018, because of our unwillingness to address climate change head on, we watch the most vulnerable perish in the face of man-made natural disasters. That in 2018, the United States, the leader of the free world, has the dubious distinction of having the highest rate of incarceration – while only 4% of the world's population, is responsible for 22% of the world's incarcerated. That in 2018, we still allow race, gender, class, sexuality, immigration status, and religion to determine how and if we will live or die. And if we were to narrow our focus to black populations, as James Baldwin's crushing commentary suggests, the numbers would paint a grim portrait of a nation unwilling to provide even a base level quality of life and protection to its own citizens.

Most sociologists I have encountered suggest by their own biography that from their earliest memories they had always been asking questions of the social world – the why and how questions that now animate their work and move the discipline forward had at one time been a curiosity, an endless fascination and a nuisance to adults. When asked about their chosen vocation, in their responses, many invoke a kind of inevitability, a predetermined path from which they were unable or unwilling to stray. For black sociologists, the genesis of the vocation is often located in an experience of inequality and the desire to make sense of it. In the discipline, many find a ready set of tools to understand and explain the social world, to make it

legible, to make sense of and interpret their experiences and to do the work of making the invisible visible.

My earliest memories of school involved a long bus ride, one that saw the sky change colors from deep grays to pastels as the sun moved into its morning position. It seemed to transform along with the landscape, from asphalt, fences, harried brown faces and bustling morning activity to sprawling lawns, massive homes, winding roads and minivans. The why's for me came early. Why did I have to travel so far to school? Why were all the kids on the bus black and all the kids at the school white? Why were our homes and neighborhoods and schools so different? It was clear to me even then that this difference wasn't value neutral.

One world was in fact intended to be better. That is why my parents believed attending that school was best for me – because it was better. Our parents took the time to discuss with us their sense of why things were different. And as we got older, those discussions became more frequent and frank and were often accompanied by reading assignments. They were developing in us a kind of scholarly imagination and researcher's approach to answering the questions that arose from our experiences. It was important training for me and I am certain many others whose parents had to face the disappointment in their children's eyes when they experienced inequality first hand.

My decision to attend graduate school in sociology was born out of my work increasing access to resources for poor youth of color in New York. Whether it was the newly hired head of an organization or a long-established funder, I found that our work was most often shaped by the directives of individuals with Ph.D.s. They rarely had a direct connection to the work we were doing, the spaces in which we were doing it, or the young people with whom we were working, but they had the credential and the years of study that qualified them as experts in the field. After a particularly disconcerting shift in organizational priorities, I decided to pursue the doctorate in the hope that I could return to the work I was doing and, with the credential, create spaces where community members themselves were the experts.

Armed with my view of sociology as a vehicle for social change, I entered a graduate program where I was quickly confronted with the reality that I fundamentally did not understand the academy and its role in society or sociology as a discipline. I assumed we would work in and with communities to research a set of issues and questions, analyze the data, develop a set of sound conclusions, share our findings with key constituencies and then set our sights on carrying out the necessary work to bring about change. While I may not have understood then where the conventional work of scholars begins and ends, what I did understand was how privilege worked and how it could be leveraged to achieve certain ends, in this case outside of the academy. I understand now that it is that gap between what is known and what is unknown, what is and what ought to be that most often creates space to imagine what could be. It is in the possibility of what our work could

achieve in the world that has and continues to occupy so much of the conversation about the future of our field – be it in the areas of applied, critical public and/or digital sociologies, among theorists and methodologists, and among those who study everything from aging to xenophobia. This chapter takes up this question of the possibility of a sociology with the intended goal of social change.

The hope is that, in the long term, our work to make the social world legible, to make the invisible visible and known, can, when applied, eliminate the social structures that produce human suffering and in the short term, to help alleviate that suffering. And because I am a black scholar who does work in black communities, I am particularly interested in alleviating black suffering, especially where it is most acute and among the most vulnerable. But this is not my focus alone. It is a common thread among the group of black sociologists whose work I have read, admired and cited, whose talks have inspired my own work, whose mentoring has paved the way for us, whose light has been our north star on this journey, whose example has made it possible for us to be more fully our black selves in the academy.

This focus on alleviating and eliminating black suffering allows us to address the first half of a question that has plagued most black social and political thinkers – "freedom from?" But it is that second half of the unsettled question "freedom to?" that sociologists have left to other scholars in other disciplines – theorizing freedom, theorizing liberation. While that work has long been fomenting in Africana, Ethnic, and Cultural Studies, sociologists have yet to take it up in earnest, despite the fact that calls to do so predate the development of those fields. The question we are left with is if we are invested in not just the solving the intellectual puzzle of racial hierarchy but in eliminating the social structures and ideologies that produce, maintain, and validate it, can our work be marshalled for those ends? What is the possibility of a sociology in the service of black liberation? I argue here that not only is it possible, it is the kind of work in which some are already engaged. At this point, the task is to name it, make its intentions explicit, and to create a space for it in the field. In this chapter, I will revisit some of the discussion and debate on this topic in the twentieth-century work of black sociologists, highlight some contemporary thought on liberation sociology and the work of current sociologists from whom we might draw inspiration, and finally, briefly contemplate a path forward.

Black Sociologists on Black Sociology, Black Sociologists, and the Possibility of a Sociology of Black Liberation

> The paradox of education is precisely this – that as one begins to become conscious one begins to examine the society in which he is being educated.
>
> James Baldwin

In the early part of 1970s, two edited volumes were published that included among their aims to highlight the contributions of black sociologists, to survey the field and the role of blacks in it, and to review the major issues and questions among black sociologists of the time. They were *The Death of White Sociology*[2] and *Black Sociologists: Historical and Contemporary Perspectives*[3]. While Blackwell and Janowitz' collection leveled a critique of the discipline for its erasure of the work of black sociologists and its intervention was aimed at creating such a record, Ladner's text intended to raise the specter of a new disciplinary paradigm based in a black subjectivity and much of its contents were aimed at making the case for a black sociology and developing the building blocks for the same.

In laying out an argument for black sociology, Robert Staples illuminated the ways in which sociology as a discipline had operated from the perspective of the oppressor and in its form and content legitimized the prevailing social order, one he argued was inimical to black people. He insisted that if white sociology could be termed the "science of oppression, Black sociology must be the science of liberation" and that the black sociologist should be "both theorist and activist."[4]Abdul Alkalimat sought to "clarify the relationship between ideology and social analysis for the Black Liberation Struggle," an ideology that he maintained "combines an interpretation of the social world with a moral commitment to change it."[5] Offering W.E.B. Du Bois' life and work as an example of such a commitment, Ron Walters argued that while a scientific approach to the analysis of racism is necessary, it is ultimately insufficient and "at some point he had to act out the moral and ethical implications of what his keen senses told him to be true ... the whole Black truth."[6] This "black truth," a kind of knowledge that exists beyond and augments one's academic training, can be traced to what Walters' terms the black researcher's "field experience in being black" which offers a "better potential understanding of the techniques which are relevant in a given situation," those techniques best suited to understanding and explaining black life.[7] But even those with such "field experience" cannot take for granted that their individual level experience alone is sufficient.

> Treating the substance of Black life as something secondhand, which can be "picked up" at will, or as something "we already know" which does not need systematic and constant elucidation, clarification and development is an insult to the quality and complexity of the Black experience and perpetuates the graduate schools' racist attitude toward the value of the study of Black life in general.[8]

Though it is presented as a critique of the notion of black scholars' lived experience as qualification, what he calls this "Insiders and Outsiders controversy," William Julius Wilson's points provide more refinement and clarification than repudiation. "[There] is no factual evidence to suggest that a sociologist has to be black to adequately describe and explain the

experiences of blacks."[9] He went on to argue that because there is variation in black experiences along any number of social locations, including class, age, and region, it is important to qualify what constitutes an "adequate understanding" of black experiences. Consistent with disciplinary standards, he maintains "conclusions, propositions, and theories must be capable of confirmation and refutation if they are to be admissible as scientific knowledge."[10] And like Walters, he does not consider lived experience a substitute for "knowledge in the context of validation," yet he does see its role in "inventing and postulating hypotheses in the context of discovery."[11]

In his effort to maintain space for non-black sociologists to do research on black populations, he does not contest the distinctive contribution to be made by black sociologists in that area. Nor does he challenge the end use proposed by the proponents of black sociology. "In the process of discovering or developing ideas, the data collected, hypotheses formulated, or theories developed could be designed to achieve any objective," including "to advance the cause of black liberation."[12] In the end, he calls on contemporary black sociologists to continue in the tradition of classical black scholars like Du Bois, E. Franklin Frazier, Charles S. Johnson, Oliver Cromwell Cox, St. Clair Drake, and Horace Cayton who were not "detached observers" but whose work met "autonomous standards of scholarship." In this way, it is clear there is no major quarrel between the two camps. Both are calling for rigorous standards and an accounting for the distinctive perspectives and value black sociologists bring to the work and both allow space for the use of research to achieve social change.

The tension that does exist rests in the goal of an adequate understanding of black life, who may achieve that, and how. Wilson argues that because of the variation in black experiences, a middle-class black sociologist may have more in common with a middle-class white sociologist than a black person with less formal education, a lower income, and less occupational prestige who is living in a poor neighborhood.[13] Staples offers relational accountability as a way to insure adequate understanding, fidelity to black experiences and a sociology that is relevant to the needs of black people. And while he argues for a closing of the "gulf between the black academic community and the black masses," his call could be extended to one of mutuality between all scholars, black and non-black alike, and their black subjects. In that way, a critical and emic approach would be employed and black subjectivity privileged regardless of the researcher, and the "promise of black sociology fulfilled [such that] it may bring about a requiem for white racism and create a community of man where justice and peace once again prevail."[14] It isn't clear to the reader to what previous era Staples might be referring in his conclusion, but the hope for justice and peace remains.

Those advocating for a black sociology or social science of liberation in the mid twentieth century suggested several constitutive elements that are attendant to but also challenge and expand the standard definitions of good research. They include rigorous knowledge production that is generalizable,

reproducible, and able to be validated using ethical methods of inquiry. But the ethical obligation in this approach extends beyond interpreting and analyzing the social world with integrity and excellence and into the realm of social change. Here the role of the researcher is both scholar and activist – to make structural inequality visible and legible *and* to participate in its dismantling. It is centering the knowledge, perspectives and lived experiences of subjects and practicing a kind of radical inclusion of subjects in the design, execution and review of research. It is creating reciprocal relationships between academies and communities, between scholars and subjects, between ethics and practice that are characterized by accountability and are mutually generative and beneficial. These elements can be summarized as:

- Rigor
- Results (Social Impact)
- Relationship (Radical Inclusivity, Mutuality, Accountability)
- Relevance (Work Connected to and Generated with Populations Studied).

And while they may sound lofty or even perhaps idealistic, there is evidence in the work of current sociologists to suggest that they are both reasonable and achievable.

On Contemporary Work

> I know how you watch as you grow older, and it is not a figure of speech, the corpses of your brothers and your sisters pile up around you. And not for anything they have done. They were too young to have done anything. But what one does realize is that when you try to stand up and look the world in the face like you had a right to be here, you have attacked the entire power structure of the Western world.
>
> James Baldwin

Even before this current political moment some have termed post-factual or post-truth, in which many scholars and professional associations find themselves alarmed and defending science, defending data and scholarship, and releasing statements of the same reiterating their humanistic and democratic principles and values, conversations in the discipline had been trending toward a shifting orientation from inward facing to outward facing research[15], engaging multiple publics[16], inclusive principles of knowledge production[17] and methodological approach[18], and of course the commitment to social change and challenging the social order in the realms of critical and feminist sociologies. Similarly, the work of liberation sociology has continued and been taken up by this generation of sociologists. Now in its third edition, *Liberation Sociology*[19] raises the possibility of this kind of work for those currently being trained in the discipline:

> Beyond a desire for a deeper understanding of exploitation and oppression, liberation sociology takes an overt moral stance, which includes identification and empathy with the victims of oppression and a calling for and working toward their liberation from misery and inequality. Sociology can liberate when it applies its humanistic concern and empathetic reasoning to solving the everyday problems afflicting human beings. Liberation sociology can be a tool to increase the human ability to understand deep societal realities, to engage in dialogue with others, and to increase democratic participation in the production and the use of knowledge.[20]

More than just thorough definition and analysis, this volume highlights historical and contemporary scholars in the areas of feminist, queer, and anti-racist social theory with multidimensional approaches that bring together scholars across traditional disciplinary boundaries and silos. Citing the work of some known and lesser known scholars, including Alfred McClung and Elizabeth Briant Lee, Robert Newby, T.R. Young, Maxine Baca Zinn, Patricia Hill Collins, Mary Jo Deegan, Eduardo Bonilla Silva, and Bernice McNair Barnett, the authors demonstrate the influence of this work both within and outside of the academy.

To be sure there are many more scholars whose work has lived into the kinds of challenges liberation scholars put to us in the last century and carried them into the present. One such exemplar is Mary Pattillo, whose work has straddled disciplinary boundaries, involved both theory and praxis and found her embedded in the communities in which she is studying over not just the course of her research, but in the long term. The rigor and excellence in her work is widely recognized, not just as evidenced in awards and citations, but in the ways her work is discussed and how it is used by fellow researchers. Both in written form and in presentations of her work, her deep relationships in and with the communities she studies become readily apparent. She has focused much of her work to date on class stratification among urban black populations and the ways structural forces similarly and differentially impact individuals within this group.

This focus has challenged both how this population is studied and the underlying assumptions and substance of attendant policy prescriptions. More broadly, the work has provided a fuller depiction of the social and political lives of urban blacks, beyond what had been the narrow slice of black life covered in sociological research – the urban poor. Further, she has significantly contributed to the body of work that highlights "the centrality of race to systems of inequality."[21] Her extensive research has had considerable reach with both emerging scholars and the communities in which she lives and does her work.

In reflecting on the discipline, Pattillo has remarked on the contributions of black scholars and the critical importance of their presence and participation. She suggests black scholars' work has necessarily "expanded the

scope of the field" but cautions that "the black community is not a monolith, and so no one should expect a black scholar to represent *the* black position (which does not exist anyway)." She goes on to explain, "nonetheless, if speaking bluntly, I still think that we have changed sociology by first demanding to be at the table (thanks to the pioneers) and now convincing others that we *must* be at the table, especially when *we* are the topic of conversation."[22]

Pattillo's appreciation extends not just to black scholars, but to the black populations she studies. It is the care with which she writes about black families, congregations, neighborhoods and the like that demonstrates her obvious affection for black folks. She finds inspiration in the communities she studies and the reflexivity with which she approaches her work keeps her mindful of the ways she is accountable to the people who have shared their lives with her.

Pattillo is clear that "it is what we do with what they tell us that constitutes our true moment of privilege and power."[23] In her work, she has thoughtfully examined how her presence in a setting has influenced the people, spaces and social processes there as well as the methods of data collection process and the data themselves.[24] It is the level of concern and investment not just for and in moving the discipline forward, knowledge production, and intellectual achievement, but also how this work impacts the communities she studies and her role in the same that distinguishes this kind of scholar.

Pattillo's care is also demonstrated in the level of rigor with which she approaches her work. In responding to praise for the interdisciplinarity of *Black on the Block*, a combination of qualitative sociological methods, archival research, legal analysis, performance and education studies, she said it was "demanded by the research."[25] The willingness to go where the research leads is an expected part of the scholar's role. Stretching into new methods and areas of research to meet the needs of a population is what moves the researcher into another realm of investment and impact. Additionally, Pattillo has expanded beyond her interests in spatial inequality and class stratification to include work on other aspects of urban and racial inequality including schools, crime, prisons, and their devastating effects, and global black experiences.

Pattillo's area of greatest impact in her estimation is in her teaching. Being in the undergraduate classroom is one of her greatest joys and her hope is to send students out into the world more aware, with a better understanding of the issues and questions of our time, and better prepared to engage them – be they redlining, sentencing disparities, access to education and health care, affordable housing, the unfairness of the mortgage tax benefit, or the effects of racial hierarchy and structural inequality more broadly. In this way, students at an elite private institution can acquire critical knowledge of systems of inequality and with that understanding, there

exists a greater possibility of their willingness to recognize, name, and challenge inequality and oppression wherever they encounter it.

Scholars like Mary Pattillo have had a profound impact on the discipline both in what work they have done and how they have done it. Those who do work on class have made it difficult for sociology as a discipline to continue to limit the study of black populations to poverty and pathology and have contributed to a more expansive picture of black social and political life. Their work serves as a model for current and future scholars interested in challenging the prevailing assumptions and modes of the discipline and in balancing intellectual rigor and social impact.

Where We Go from Here

> Not everything that is faced can be changed; but nothing can be changed until it is faced.
>
> James Baldwin

In our time, racial disparities continue to persist in household income, wealth, employment, homeownership, educational attainment, access to affordable health care and housing, exposure to violence, police encounters, arrests and sentencing, and mortality rate – to the relative disadvantage of blacks. Even more concerning than the post-racial narratives of the recent past that relegated racism to a historical artifact and explained away racial inequality with notions of cultural deficiency and the unwillingness of blacks to assimilate into the mainstream, are the current tropes of "reverse discrimination." Not only is it argued that the US is a free and fair society, but that if there is discrimination, whites in fact are the victims and anti-white bias now far exceeds anti-black bias. The most recent presidential election has been cast as a referendum on the unfair treatment of white men and alarms have been sounded that any entity that continues to ignore their issues and interests does so at their own peril.

Also, in this political moment, it seems the visibility of scholarship and scholars has increased. The academy continues to assert its position as legitimate producer and arbiter of knowledge in the face of attacks on established scientific consensus, research and data. This heightened visibility and defensive posture may have the unintended consequence of leading us to a revalorization of objectivity and expertise at the expense of democratic notions of inclusion.

In this time, supporters of the tenets of black liberation sociology as outlined above may have an even more important role both within and outside the academy in making racial hierarchy and its attendant effects visible and balancing the call for rigorous standards and assumed objectivity with a more inclusive and expansive notion of who can participate in this work, how we engage in these processes of knowledge production, and ultimately what end our work serves. And, as Patricia Hill Collins notes, "sociology's

unique social location as a contested space of knowledge construction allows us to think through new ways of doing science."[26] In short, the time couldn't be better for a sociology of black liberation. In this section, I'll briefly outline how we might make use of the tenets of black liberation sociology to guide our approach to the work.

For

In a survey of the field, James McKee argued that the study of race in sociology has been the study of social problems. And while this approach has led us to a skewed depiction of black social and political life, it may also be instructive for understanding what draws many, especially black sociologists, to the field. Many students are interested in urban sociology courses on race, class, gender, sexuality and inequality because of what they have experienced in the social world – having reaped the benefits and/or suffered the disadvantages of unequal social structures. And they are not just interested in understanding inequality, but in challenging and eradicating it. If that is what draws so many to the field, then how do those trained come away with the understanding that the desire to understand systems and structures must be divorced from the desire to change them lest presumed objectivity and scholarly standards be compromised? It is the aspects of the training that still emphasize the goal of objectivity.

Even where the notion of objectivity and its political undergirding has been challenged, scholars are still encouraged to hold a position of neutrality. Unsurprisingly then even those known as public intellectuals often hold a posture of academic impartiality and detachment in their scholarly writing, while they use other platforms for the advocacy work that so clearly springs forth from their research findings. It is in those spaces that scholars can extend their arguments beyond explanation and causal inference and into the realm of strategizing to effect change or recommending prescriptions to address the ills they illuminate in their work. If this kind of constructive thinking was constitutive of the work itself, it would shift the discipline and ultimately the academy.

So much scholarship is left unread and unknown by so many. To be sure, some of that obscurity can be attributed to the inaccessibility of the work and the jargon employed to articulate its arguments. But some of that is also due to scholars' great ability to name, describe, and explain the social structure without addressing the question that remains for every reader or consumer of the work – what do we about it? If that intellectual energy could be marshalled toward both understanding and explaining the social world and its social ills *and* recommending strategies that may begin to alleviate some of their attendant effects, the work might have a greater impact and more relevance to multiple publics as well to the populations of study.

By

Doing the kind of work that has social impact has its challenges. How can we be certain that the work has the intended impact? How can we be certain that the analyses are sound and our resultant recommendations are viable? The tenets of black liberation sociology as outlined by its proponents again may be instructive. A key component of this approach is the relationship between scholars and the communities of study, one that is defined by mutuality and reciprocity. This kind of relationship insures both community participation in the work and accountability to communities for the knowledge that is produced and disseminated.

This model would make it possible for scholars to work collaboratively with those whose everyday knowledge[27] and lived experience add necessary value to every step of the research process. It would also allow scholars to live into the principle of inclusivity in a deeper way and to better use and share skills and training with the communities in constructive ways. Creating knowledge with those experiencing the phenomena being studied and most directly impacted by the findings and conclusions can only decrease the distance between the social world and the academy and make the work more germane and effectual. Theory and praxis would be in a consistent, mutually generative feedback loop. Further, this additional layer of validation can only enhance the rigor of the work. If black scholars have expanded the discourse, challenged assumptions and broadened the scope of the discipline, how much more might an increased level of community participation—community scholars, if you will—move the discipline forward? The hope is that it would lead to better questions, new assumptions, better analytical and conceptual tools, careful analyses, sound results and conclusions, and in the long term vast improvements in the living conditions of poor and marginalized populations. In short, that it brings us closer to ameliorating suffering and eradicating inequality.

About

Importantly, what black scholars have called for and contributed to the field thus far has been a fuller accounting of black social and political life. Because so much of the scholarship on black social and political life has focused on poverty and pathology, we are so often left without a depiction of the various and sundry life worlds that black folks make for themselves. That said, it is not just that suburban, professional, LGBQTI, immigrant, Latinx, and scores of other black populations are understudied, but also, because of this approach and its foundational assumptions and theories, significant aspects of the urban black communities on which scholars have focused have also been missed.

In an article on black placemaking, Pattillo and her co-authors argue "social science scholarship on black urban communities (not to mention

mass media portrayals) so rarely captures the life that happens within them, and thus the matter of black people's humanity."[28] With the concept of black placemaking, they hope to "counter the scholarship that contributes to the unrelenting negative portrayals of black neighborhoods without losing sight of the dialectical relationship between structure and agency, between domination and resistance" and "to analyze and recover the agency of urban blacks often lost in conventional perspectives."[29] In this way, scholars can offer up a humane, a more comprehensive, and more accurate approach to the study of black life worlds in all their complexity. Building on the work of earlier black sociologists like Du Bois, Frazier, Drake and Cayton, Ladner, Wilson, and scores of others, who began with the assumption of black humanity, scholars can make space in their writing for that humanity by lifting up the manifestations of those dialectical relationships in black populations.

Even more than that, it may be worth considering whether or not the lives of black people must always be analyzed through the lens of inequality, with whites more often than not as the default comparison group. In subtle and not so subtle ways, in using this lens, sociologists suggest that the solution then is equality, specifically blacks becoming equal to whites. And in a recent conversation with Pattillo, she suggested that it may be time to rethink that as a goal. She referenced a line by Ice Cube, from his track "True to the Game," in which he asks, "*who are they* [whites] *to be equal to?*" Pattillo pushes scholars to question notions of what equality would and should look like and whether or not it should be the ultimate pursuit, troubling the relentless upward mobility trope that is most often left uninterrogated.

To be clear, eradicating racial hierarchy and the suffering it causes is and must remain the urgent priority. The question here is the basis upon which we challenge racial domination and envision and construct a more equitable social world. In this way, we might take a page from our colleagues in Africana and Cultural Studies who use their intellectual imagination to conceptualize not just equality, but freedom.

A sociology of black liberation would have to have freedom for black people as its end goal and theorizing that liberation at the core of its work. It would have to be concerned with constructing a set of responses to the question of "freedom to____?" that is neither bounded by, dependent on, respondent to, nor a reaction against the existing social order, stuctures or prevailing norms, values, and behaviors. It would require using the best of our sociological imagination in the service of black freedom. The hope is that this creative aspect of the work would lead us to the promised land of peace and justice that Robert Staples envisioned, that we would be working toward that someday Donny Hathaway sang about – the day we'll all be free.

Notes

1 Throughout the text, I use the words of James Baldwin to illuminate the context and the spirit in which this chapter is written.
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3 Blackwell, James. E. and Morris Janowitz (Editors). *Black Sociologists: Historical and Contemporary Perspectives*. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.
4 Ladner, 168, 172.
5 Alkalimat, 174.
6 Walters, 212.
7 Ibid., 202.
8 Ibid., 204.
9 Blackwell and Janowitz, 326.
10 Ibid., 328.
11 Ibid., 328.
12 Ibid., 328.
13 To be sure later research on the black middle class would challenge and complicate such an assertion, see Pattillo 1999.
14 Ladner, 172.
15 See Burawoy, 2005.
16 See Gregory et al., 2016.
17 See Collins, 1986, 1990.
18 See Whyte 1989; Greenwood et al. 1993.
19 Feagin, Joe. R, Hernan Vera, and Kimberly Ducey. 2015. *Liberation Sociology*. Boulder, CO: Paradigm Publishers.
20 Ibid., 26, 37.
21 Pattillo, Mary. 2003. Extending the Boundaries and Definition of the Ghetto. *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, 26:6, 1055.
22 Fenstermaker, Sarah and Nikki Jones. 2011. *Sociologists Backstage: Answers to 10 Questions about What They Do*. New York: Routledge, 18, 19.
23 Pattilo, Mary. 2007. *Black on the Block: The Politics of Race and Class in the City*. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 20.
24 May, Ruben A.B. and Mary Pattillo. 2000. "Do You See What I See? Examining a Collaborative Ethnography," *Qualitative Inquiry*, 6:1, 82.
25 Pattilo, Mary. 2007, 24.
26 Collins, Patricia Hill, 1998. "On Book Exhibits and New Complexities: Reflections on Sociology as a Science," *Contemporary Sociology* 27:10, 10.
27 Collins, Patricia Hill, 1990. *Black Feminist Thought: Knowledge, Consciousness, and the Politics of Empowerment*. Boston: Unwin, Hyman.
28 Hunter, Marcus Anthony, Mary Pattillo, Zandria F. Robinson, and Keeanga-Yamahtta Taylor. 2016. "Black Placemaking: Celebration, Play, and Poetry," *Theory, Culture & Society*, 33:7, 32.
29 Ibid., 33, 35.

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