

James E. Blackwell and Philip Hart. *Cities, Suburbs and Blacks*. (Bayside, New York: General Hall, Inc., 1982) 228 pp., \$11.95.

Because blacks who reside in cities and suburbs are a popular subject among urban specialists, critics must constantly ask the question, to what extent does a recent publication break new ground in terms of creativity and scholarship? Inhabitants have known for many decades that cities and suburbs are not only physical environments in which smoke, dust, heat, noise, filth, and darkness threaten the human organism, they are also social systems in which the circulation of goods and people is a central function. Cities and suburbs can grow and change only if the circulatory system also changes.

Blackwell and Hart attempted to address this theme in *Cities, Suburbs and Blacks*. They chose to focus on black American life by beginning the book with a brief and comprehensive overview. Included in the overview are studies on alienation among black Americans.

The authors selected five cities for their study. The cities selected were Atlanta, Boston, Cleveland, Houston and Los Angeles. The authors reasoned that these cities represent essentially different regions of the country and the areas of the nation in which a substantial proportion of the black population resides. Each city has a significant numerical proportion of blacks in its metropolitan area. Although blacks in these metropolitan areas tend to be concentrated within more or less self-contained sub-communities within the city limits, an increasing number of blacks have moved into their adjacent or nearby suburban communities.

Blackwell and Hart studied black community responses to such critical issues as health problems, housing, economic conditions, justice and education. The priority rankings based on such variables as place of residence, age, sex, income, and level of education are more informative. However, I disagree with the authors' notion that these five cities (Boston, Cleveland, Houston, Atlanta, Los Angeles) represent a national profile of "the black community." Major urban areas such as New York, Detroit, Chicago, Miami, Oakland, New Orleans, and Washington, D.C., were omitted.

Overall, *Cities, Suburbs and Blacks* does make a scholarly contribution to the ethnic studies discipline. This is a good introductory text for such subjects as "Introduction to Black Studies," and "The Afro-American Experience." In addition, this text should be required reading for courses on Black Community Development.

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