A presentation of the urbanization and human ecology theories of Robert Ezra Park

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A PRESENTATION OF THE URBANIZATION AND HUMAN ECOLOGY THEORIES OF ROBERT EZRA PARK

A THESIS
SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY OF ATLANTA UNIVERSITY
IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR
THE DEGREE OF MASTER OF ARTS

BY
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DEPARTMENT OF SOCIOLOGY

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Historians who have been writing the history of the past seventy-five years have access to an important source of data in the many community studies completed by sociologists. These studies differ from other sources of information about national history in that they describe events occurring at a great distance from the places where national power was concentrated. Community studies cannot provide information about the events on the national scene that influences historical processes, but they do describe the effects of these processes on the everyday lives of people. One cannot assume that the effects of the depression in Louisiana were comparable to its effects in Georgia. One must admit that the usefulness of a community study as a source of information about national experiences and responses is limited by the extent of its usefulness. It is important to note, though, that studying the past can give one clues as to the problems confronting that society at
that specific time in relation to the problems it is presently being confronted with.

**Statement of Purpose**

It is this writer's intent to present the historical and outstanding theories of Robert Ezra Park, namely those theories of urbanization and human ecology. An analysis of studies done by fellow sociologists who were taught and influenced by Park will also be presented. The point is to show continuity in community patterns and community studies. By doing this an attempt will be made to show how the study of past forms of American community life can facilitate identifying emerging forms, emerging problems, and potential solutions.

**Major Concepts and Theories**

The theories of "urbanization," with special emphasis on "natural areas," and "human ecology" shall be presented in the context of their application by Robert Park and his students. The concept "Urbanization" connotes the proportion of a population living in urban places, and the changes in social organization that result from such population concentrations.¹ It is a process by which rural

areas become transformed to urban areas. "Natural areas" are those areas resulting from the ecological processes rather than of planning or conscious creation by any government unit.¹ The term "human ecology" represents an attempt to systematically apply the basic theoretical scheme of plant and animal ecology to the study of human communities. "Human ecology" is concerned with the examination of the relationship between man and his environment and man within an environment.² It also concerns itself with how people organize themselves socially to adapt to their habitat.

The theories of community, that is, of urbanization and human ecology presented in this paper, aim at making the significant findings of community studies accessible by presenting these findings within the larger context of our changing society. They also aim at analyzing past community trends to show their possible relation to present trends.

Data Collection

Basically, the data used in preparation of this paper

¹Ibid., p. 78.

were made available through primary sources. These sources include books, articles, and case and community studies. It should be noted that the abovementioned invariably were written and conducted by Robert Park and his students—better known as the "Chicago School." The availability of this data was inexhaustible due to the nature and importance of their studies in that time period as well as in the present.

**Historical Background of Robert E. Park**

One of the best, as well as the most concise and precise, recollections of Park's life and work was written by Ernest W. Burgess, a friend and associate of Park. The biography of Park was written in memory of him and was published in the *American Journal of Sociology*. The article will be presented in its entirety.

Robert E. Park, fifteenth president of the American Sociological Society, died in Nashville, Tennessee, February 7, 1944. Born in Luzerne County, Pennsylvania, on February 14, 1864, he grew up in a Minnesota town on the Mississippi River.

Interested from boyhood in the observation of human behavior, he became active as a student in the University of Michigan in the social, political, and philosophical discussions which were stirring others of inquiring minds. Upon graduation in 1887 he worked for newspapers

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This has reference to the published papers of Robert E. Park which were edited by Everett C. Hughes under the titles, *Race and Culture*, *The Human Community*, and *Society*. 
in Minneapolis, Detroit, and Chicago, first as a reporter then as a writer of special articles of human interest and of social import and later as city editor.

Finding that journalism did not provide the answers to the puzzling questions of human behavior which it often dramatically posed, he returned to his studies at Harvard University (M.A., 1899) under William James and Josiah Royce and then in Germany (Ph.D. Heidelberg, 1904) under Windelband and Simmel.

Returning to the United States, he sought a more active participation in the observation and study of human behavior than was provided at that time in the academic environment. Selecting race relations as a pressing problem of great theoretical and practical importance, he spent the years from 1905-1914 in the South, serving most of this time in an informal capacity as secretary and associate of Booker T. Washington. Together they made the study of the European peasant reported in the latter's book, The Man Farthest Down.

Upon the initiative of W. I. Thomas and at the invitation of Albion Small, Park joined the staff of the department of sociology of the University of Chicago in 1914. He continued teaching as emeritus professor two years after his retirement, in 1936 becoming visiting professor of sociology at Fisk University.

At various times he was on leave of absence from his university work, serving as a staff member of the Americanization Study of the Carnegie Corporation, 1918-1919; as director of the Race Relations Survey of the Pacific Coast, 1923-25; as research professor, University of Hawaii, 1931-32; as lecturer, Yenching University, China, autumn, 1932; and studying problems of race relations in India, Africa, and Brazil, 1933.

Beginning his teaching career at fifty, he developed his own methods of instruction with an emphasis upon research and frequent consultations with each student. His keen sense for the significant in human behavior, his penetrating insight, his stimulating suggestions, his provocative statement of theoretical points, his capacity for stating problems in the framework of a conceptual system, his unswerving devotion to research as central in sociological training, and not least the impact of his vigorous and vivid personality left a lasting impression upon successive groups of graduate students many of whom are now well known for contributions to research undertaken under his guidance.
Park combined in rare degree the capacity for research upon concrete problems and the drive to work out an integrated system of sociology in its functional relations to the other sciences, social, biological, and physical. He conceived of sociology as a natural science but with the necessity of devising methods of investigation appropriate to the study of human beings. The *Introduction to the Science of Sociology*, published in 1921, contained the general outlines of his system of sociology, many features of which he further developed in his projected *Sociology*, a complete collection of his published and unpublished writings upon which he was at work up to the time of his last illness. His outstanding special contributions opened up new vistas for research in the fields of race relations, the newspaper, the urban community, human ecology, and collective behavior.¹

CHAPTER II

ANALYSIS OF PARK'S THEORY OF URBANIZATION:

NATURAL AREAS

In analyzing Park's theory of urbanization one must first view his conception of the city. Park conceived the "natural areas" of a city to be the various sub-communities that he noted in Chicago and other cities with which he was familiar that served as vehicles for urban freedom as well as urban disorganization. It is Park's belief that:

The urban community turns out, upon close scrutiny, to be a mosaic of minor communities, many of them strikingly different one from the other, but all more or less typical. Every city has its central business districts; the focal point of the whole urban complex. Every city, every great city, has its more or less exclusive residential areas or suburbs; its areas of light and of heavy industry, satellite cities and casual labor mart, where men are recruited for rough work on distant frontiers, in the mines and in the forest, in the building of railways or in the borings and excavations for the vast structure of our modern cities. Every American city has its slums; its ghettos; its immigrant colonies, regions which maintain more or less alien and exotic culture. Nearly every large city has its bohematics, where life is freer, more adventurous and lonely than it is elsewhere.
These are the so-called natural areas of the city.\(^1\)

The aforementioned was taken from Park's seminal essay "The City: Suggestions for the Investigation of Human Behavior in the Urban Environment." This essay outlines many of the research projects later carried out with brilliant results by his students as well as it still contains a great many unexplored leads for further research.

"Natural areas" were the key to Park's view of the city. They were the building blocks, the inevitable sub-communities, from which the urban constellation arises. This is inferred from Park's statement that natural areas are the products of forces that constantly work to effect an orderly distribution of population and functions within the urban complex. "They are 'natural' because they are not planned, and because the order that they display is not the result of design, but rather a manifestation of tendencies inherent in the urban situation; tendencies that city plans seeks to control and correct."

Several dimensions in Park's approach to "natural


areas" can be singled out.

(1) **Disorganization patterns.** The analysis should always begin with a pattern of behavior deemed problematic and the perspective on the basis of which it is so regarded must be carefully specified. Since this would presumably always entail threats to the social order of the whole city, preliminary distinctions must be carefully drawn between the extent of the reality of the threat and its perception as such by different inhabitants with differing value systems.

(2) **Distribution.** Here ecological and demographic techniques must be employed. The distribution of the disorganization patterns among various population elements should be determined so that areas having disproportionately high and low rates can be identified for further study.

(3) **Sub-community social structure.** The way in which the disorganization pattern is viewed by the sub-community in which it occurs must be carefully explored so as to discover its relationship to other institutional patterns and sub-cultural values. Special attention must be paid to the
way in which the pattern is transmitted.

(4) Urbanization. The changing structure of the whole sub-community must be studied insofar as it has been shaped by the growth patterns of the entire city. This would include investigation of ecological processes, such as invasion and succession, along with more purely sociological data on the changing social and cultural structure.

(5) Reorganization. Emerging mechanisms through which the city as a whole tries to surpress or contain the problematic behavior should be noted and their interplay with the institutional structure of the sub-community carefully explored.¹

This outline summarizes an approach to "natural areas" which emphasizes dynamic processes in the city. One might start with the "natural area" itself, examining its relationship to the whole city. There are advantages, however, in using some form of disorganization as the point of departure. Beginning with a problem means that the inquiry will be led into exploration of the conditions for its existence. The "natural area" then is always brought into relationship with the processes of urban disorganization and

¹Ibid.
reorganization.

Under the conditions of urbanization observed in Chicago during the twenties some of the sub-communities seemed to be especially lacking in effective social control. All of them appeared to be undergoing some kind of loosening in their moral codes, but this had gone farthest in the slum areas. The spread of disorganization was the direct result of the mobility and individualization accompanying city growth. Social change and social disorganization is measured by mobility, because social change almost always involves some change in position in space, and all social change, even that which is described as progress, involves some social disorganization.¹

The "natural areas" into which the urban community resolves itself are, at least in the first instance, the products of a sifting and sorting process called "segregation." "Every change in the conditions of social life manifests itself first and most obviously in an intensified mobility and in movements which terminate in segregation."² The physical patterns which the changing community successively assumes is determined by "segregation." This

¹Palen, The Urban World, p. 77.
²Stein, Eclipse of Community, p. 199.
physical form, in turn, effects modification in the cultural organization of the community.

This "segregation" into "natural areas" cannot be treated as static phenomenon. There is a constant sorting process which extends even to the sub-communities themselves as well as to the people. There is a tendency for the more successful members to move to better (that is, newer or wealthier) neighborhoods within the immigrant ghettos.¹ The above statement is especially important because it raises the possibility that some kind of developmental models encompassing changes over time are required to understand the urban constellation of "natural areas."

"Every natural area has, or tends to have, its own peculiar traditions, customs, conventions, and if not a language of its own, at least a universe of discourse, in which words and acts have a meaning which is appreciably different for each local community."² It is not difficult to recognize this fact in the case of immigrant communities which still preserve, more or less intact, the folkways of their home countries.

¹Palen, The Urban World, p. 78.
Sociologists have discovered that every "natural area" is, or tends to become, in the natural course of events, a "cultural area."¹ This is not recognizably true in a cosmopolitan area of the city where transient populations mingle in an unrestrained promiscuity. In these cases the very freedom and the absence of convention is itself, if not a convention, at least an open secret. Park assumes that the various urban sub-communities will establish social conventions to regulate the behavior of their members. He recognizes the important possibility that regions appear in which isolation and the absence of shared ties becomes the distinguishing feature of the area. Even in regions where custom no longer reinforces conscience, public opinion and fashion exercises a powerful external control.

The "natural areas" recur because they allow city people to satisfy fundamental needs and solve fundamental problems. So long as the population elements with the relevant needs and problems remain, the areas will probably exist. Once established, these sub-communities have a tendency to perpetuate themselves.

In short, the place, the people, and the conditions under which they live are here conceived as a complex, the elements of which are more or less completely bound together

¹Ibid.
albeit in ways which as yet are not clearly defined. It is assumed, partly as a result of selection and segregation, and partly in view of the contagious character of cultural patterns, that people living together in natural areas of the same general type and subject to the same social conditions will display, on the whole, the same characteristics.¹

Natural areas not only select residents whose needs and problems are congruent with local institutional facilities, but they also socialize their inhabitants, both young and old, along appropriate lines.

Park's theory of urbanization focuses on the pressures that urbanization exerts on communities affected by it. It relates these pressures to problems of control and change in the city so as to elucidate the central structures arising during the transition. Where the population influx is rapid, immense, and heterogeneous, it is likely to sort itself out into the kinds of sub-communities identified by Park. Park suggest that the theory of urbanization be used to analyze distinctive social characteristics distributed throughout the city. In particular it provides a framework for organizing studies of types of deviant behavior as these cluster in various communities.

The difference in sex and age groups, perhaps the most significant indexes of social life, are strikingly

¹Ibid., p. 580.
divergent for different natural areas. There are regions in the city in which there are almost no children, areas occupied by the residential hotels, for example. There are regions where the number of children is relatively very high: in the slums, in the middle-class residential suburbs, to which the newly married usually graduate from their first honeymoon apartments in the city. There are other areas occupied almost wholly by young unmarried people. There are regions where people almost never vote, except at national elections; regions where the divorce rate is higher than it is for any state in the Union, and other regions in the same city where there are almost no divorces. There are areas infested by boy gangs and the athletic and political clubs into which the members of these gangs or the gangs themselves frequently graduate. There are regions in which the suicide rate is excessive; regions in which there is, as recorded by statistics, an excessive amount of juvenile delinquency, and other regions in which there is almost none.¹

The following passage from Park captures something of the subtlety of his insight and seems representative of the views he passed on to his students.

In the freedom of the city every individual, no matter how eccentric, finds somewhere an environment in which he can expand and bring what is peculiar in his nature to some sort of expression. A smaller community sometimes tolerates eccentricity, but the city often rewards it. Certainly one of the attractions of a city is that somewhere every type of individual— the criminal and beggar, as well as the man of genius—may find congenial company and the vice or the talent which was suppressed in the more intimate circle of the family or in the narrow limits of a small community, discovers here a moral climate in which it flourishes.²


²Stein, Eclipse of Community, p. 19.
This passage contains many of the essential themes in Park's conception of urban life. It foreshadows the central problem of social control arising out of the necessity for regulating behavior in these diverse "moral regions" without wiping out their individuality. The city provides supportive sub-communities for the criminally eccentric, as well as for persons whose eccentricities take a more socially desirable form.

Park's theory of urbanization and especially his hypotheses concerning "natural areas" remain extremely useful guides to the general problem of community organization and disorganization in American cities during the twenties. They constitute the setting against which contemporary problems of community organization arise. In studying a modern community, it is necessary to understand the kinds of population influxes that occurred over the last fifty years. Such a modified theory can provide a basis for analyzing the effects of this process at different points in time and space.
CHAPTER III

THE STUDY OF COMMUNITIES CONDUCTED BY

STUDENTS OF ROBERT E. PARK

The most comprehensive approach to the study of American communities was developed at the University of Chicago during the twenties. Here a group of scholars completed a set of empirical studies that leaves one with more sociological knowledge about the city of Chicago than is currently available for any other single American community. While the Chicago sociologist then tended to assume that their findings would have unlimited applicability, it is now known that the process of urbanization they observed had certain special features which are not analogous to contemporary American ghettos. Nevertheless, their interest in urbanization led them to undertake studies that gave shape and substance to most of the current sub-divisions of contemporary American sociology. Such areas as urban sociology, the family, criminology, race relation, social change, sociology of the mass media, public opinion, sociology of occupation,
political sociology, social psychology, social psychiatry all received considerable impetus if not initial definition, from their theoretical and empirical efforts. Under the auspices of Robert Park research was organized so that even the lowly graduate student could conduct field studies that made immediately significant contributions to the rapidly advancing frontiers of social sciences.

The best description of a complicated urban neighborhood and of its various sub-communities is found in Zorbaugh's *The Gold Coast and the Slum*. He tried to show that the lower North Side, a section in Chicago, could encompass several "natural areas" in close proximity but utter isolation socially. The novel problem of social organization that arises when disparate groups must be coordinated in terms of presumed common interests is significant.

Another extremely important study of a "natural area" is Louis Wirth's book, *The Ghetto*. Close attention is paid to a specific sub-community in terms of the effects of urbanization on its social organization. Wirth writes:

The ghetto, the modern Jewish immigrant settlement in the Western World, has arisen out of the medieval

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European urban institution by means of which the Jews were effectively separated from the rest of the population. It represents a case study in isolation and accommodation, and indicates the process involved in the formation and development of local communities in city life. The natural history of this institution shows that it developed as a gradual and undesigned adaptation to a strange habitat and culture, and its disintegration proceeds independent of legal enactment. The Jews in so far as they are a separate ethnic group, are a product of ghetto life, wherever Jews settle in large numbers. The modern ghetto in its location and structure is determined by the unique status of the Jew and by his traditions. His neighbors in the new world tend to be the same as in the old. Eastern ghettos differ from those of the West in that the latter generally have as many local areas of settlement as there are waves of immigrants. As the Jew becomes more conscious of his sub-ordinate position in the ghetto he flees, but he is pursued by fellow-Jew until his new habitat assumes the atmosphere of the ghetto itself. In the course of his migration, his personality changes as the culture of his group fuses with that of the larger world outside.\(^1\)

Some articles by Wirth concerning urbanization and human ecology (the subject matter of this paper) include "Urban Community" and "Human Ecology." The former states:

The era of uninterrupted growth of cities seems to have come to an end. The rate of increase in urban population in the decade 1930-40 was the smallest in our history. There is not reason to expect a marked reversal in the operation of the basic factors that have brought this about, namely, (1) decline net internal migration from abroad, (2) continued drop in migration patterns from rural areas, and (3) continued drop in rate of natural increase. National post-war economic policy is one of the possible decisive factors in the future of cities. The urban population has aged, the sex ratios have decreased, and there has been a startling drop in

\(^1\)Louis Wirth, The Ghetto (Chicago, 1929), p. 98.
the net production and industry toward the fringes of the city and particularly the suburbs has continued and has been accentuated, leaving the central cities of our metropolitan regions with serious problems, owing to the vacuum created at the city cores. Urban housing has been favored by publicly built or aided projects, although, this effort scarcely affects the decline in private residential construction. A trend toward single-family residences in the outlying sections is observable. Urban public services suffered severely during the depression and have not yet recovered, although greater federal aid has mitigated the severity of the depression effects. Urban planning appears to be more widely accepted as a way out of their responsibilities and opportunities (especially in the form of their outside aid), and assure themselves of orderly development. The reconstruction of cities offers one of the greatest possibilities for absorbing the economic shock of demobilization. This calls for action now.¹

In the latter article Wirth exposed:

Human ecology, one of the latest arrivals on the social science scene, has borrowed its conceptual framework and methods from plant and animal ecology. Malthusianism, Darwinism, the social survey movement, and human geography are among the precursors of human ecology, which first received systematic formulation by Park and others about 1915. It strives for the objective depiction and analysis of the spatial, temporal, physical, and technological bases of social life. The capacity for symbolic communication, rationality, relatively great mobility, and formal organization and control and the possession of a technology and culture distinguish human beings from plants and animals; the recognition of these differences makes human ecology a unique social science discipline. It is concerned with localized, or territorially delimited, social structure and phenomena, the community being the core concept. The definition of natural, as distinguished from administrative, areas and of regions has been one of its

chief theoretical and practical contributions. The discovery of the patterns into which social phenomena group themselves and of the coincidence of the patterns has had important implications for social control and planning. Ecological facts, not being self-explanatory, must be understood in the light of sociocultural and psychic phenomena.¹

Along with the studies of "natural areas" like the ghetto, there are a set of studies dealing directly with urban disorganization and its symptoms. Among the best known of these is Faris' and Dunham's *Mental Disorders in Urban Areas*. This research showed that certain kinds of mental disorders tended to be more frequent in selected urban areas than in others and advanced a set of hypotheses as to the relation between the sub-community milieu and mental disorders. The findings that paranoid schizophrenia was concentrated in the rooming-house districts of the city is perhaps the most significant, although their other correlation also deserved attention. Their hypothesis that the social isolation of the rooming-house district is conducive to schizophrenia withdrawal is an effort to relate social structure to personality functioning and to show how the institutional patterns of a sub-community shape life organization. They identified a kind of disorganization, (mental

disorder), examined its distribution in the city so as to link its diverse forms to specific "natural areas," and then explored the ways whereby urbanization disorganizes these sub-communities.¹

A closely related study is Mowrer's *Family Disorganization*, which examines desertion and divorce in Chicago during the twenties. The same approach is employed, so that the relation between "natural areas" and desertion and divorce is charted and a correlation between high divorce rates in more well-to-do areas as against desertion in less well-to-do areas is established. Mowrer interprets the increase of both kinds of family disorganization as the results of urbanization which opens new opportunities to women, creates a sense of restlessness, weakens primary group control, and upholds exaggerated versions of romantic love. To illustrate different sources of incompatibility in the urban family along sexual, cultural, and other lines, Mowrer applies the case study method. Tensions are distinguished due to incompatibility and response, economic individualization, cultural differentiation, and individuation

¹Robert Faris and Warren Dunham, *Mental Disorders in Urban Areas* (Chicago, 1929), p. 64.
of life patterns.¹

In addition to studies directly focused on types of urban disorganization, Park directed his students' attention to special occupations that seemed to reflect the peculiar characteristics of city life. Some of these occupational systems such as the taxi dance hall, studied by Paul Cressy, were of special interest because they seemed to reflect urban disorganization. Donovan's studies of the waitress dealt with occupations and modes of life distinguished by their contrast to rural patterns. Norman Hayner's study, Hotel Life and Personality, deals with the statistics of hotels and hotel population. Various sources for statistics of hotels in the United States are inadequate and contradictory due to a lack of agreement as to the meaning of the term "hotel." Since no definite statistical information is available for the hotel population in general, a special study was made of hotel dwellers in Seattle. This study gave the percentage of occupancy, age composition and that of sex, the weekly and seasonal enables of the population in 437 hotels. There were two and one-half times as many

couples without children as couples with children.¹

In the large metropolitan hotel the guest is characteristically detached from the place in which he sleeps. A restless, lonesome, and unhappy state of mind is encouraged by this anonymity and personality. In some cases it allows an escape from the restraints of more intimate groups, such as the ghetto or the small town. Concerning personality patterns in the hotel environment, a formal etiquette tends to develop in the "better class" hotels. The mores tend to break down in the hotel environment. Men and women, who in their own community command respect, are among the heavy offenders for stealing hotel property. One who continually lives in hotels tend to become either blase or urbane. The tendency toward the development of immunity to the influences of the hotel environment is a usual tendency. One may gradually become accustomed to living in public, eating in public, and all but sleeping in public.²

Still another type of study is that completed by Everett Stonequist in The Marginal Man. Marginality, a specifically urban variant of the human condition, is

²Ibid.
examined in all of its ramifications: cultural, psychological, and sociological. During the twenties in Chicago, everyone experienced some marginality. Although the secondary agencies of the large society permeated these "natural areas" the residents were exposed to different values and felt the conflicts that this engenders.¹

_Caste and Class in a Southern Town_ by Dollard makes another kind of contribution to the theory of communities. The importance in analyzing the covert emotional life of the community is demonstrated, and a highly sophisticated model for doing so is offered. Dollard does not make use of oversimplified theories about "basis" or "modal" or even "status" personality. Instead knowledge of psychoanalytic processes to show how persons with differing characters are forced to adapt to the role-playing alternatives confronting them is employed. This study also deepens one's concept of community disorganization in that it shows how an overtly orderly community can extract tremendous emotional penalties from its members.²


²John Dollard, _Caste and Class in a Southern Town_ (Garden City, N. W., 1957), p. 70.
Among the aspects of disorganization appearing in the slum which intrigued Park and his students, juvenile delinquency aroused the greatest concern. Some of the most important research on this topic was done by Clifford Shaw and his associates. The prevailing theory at that time was that it stemmed largely from the "broken home" and social workers tended to find some kind of family disturbance in the background of every delinquent they encountered. As he began to notice certain patterns that could not possibly be explained by "broken home" he became dissatisfied with previous theories. His observations revolved about the facts that delinquency cases seemed to concentrate in small areas and that active delinquents were involved in networks of gang relationships which apparently influenced their behavior to a considerable degree, even to the point of determining the types of offenses they committed.

One of Shaw's books, Delinquency Areas, is primarily devoted to establishing the existence of similar patterns in other American cities. He presupposes the sociological findings when he assumes that the delinquency areas fall into similar positions because the process of urbanization in each of these cities has been identical with that taking
place in Chicago.\(^1\)

Shaw's other book, *The Jack-Roller*, uses autobiographical material to demonstrate the mechanism whereby a slum socializes its residents to crime and the personal disorganization consequent upon living in a socially disorganized area is vividly shown.\(^2\)

Another type of deviant personality analyzed by the Chicago school is that of the "hobo." Nel Anderson's *The Hobo: A Study of the Homeless Man* is a study of men, who for some reason, have fallen out of line in the march of industrial progress. He found that the trouble with the "hobo mind" is not lack of experience, but lack of vocation. He is always on the move but he has no destination and naturally he never arrives. The "hobo" seeks change solely for the sake of change; it is a habit. The more he wanders, the more he must. The trouble with the "hobo" is that he is an individualist. He has sacrificed the human need of association and organization to a romantic passion for individual freedom. *The Hobo* is unique in so far as it investigates the casual laborer in his habitat, that is to say, in the

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\(^1\)Clifford Shaw, *Delinquency Areas* (Chicago, 1929), pp. 6-8.

region of the city where the interests and habits of casual laborer have been institutionalized.¹

Another facet of Park's sociology was that of race relations. Concern for this subject matter is reflected in the works of E. Franklin Frazier. In one of his less known studies he examines the differences of children in black and mulatto families, which is also the title of the article. This is a synopsis of the article. Although the belief in the hereditary inferiority of the mulatto has been slowly dissipated by the accumulation of scientific knowledge, it is still echoed occasionally in scientific studies. In order to determine how far this belief is substantiated or refuted by census data, Frazier analyzed the 1910 and 1920 statistics for children in over 13,000 Negro families for each enumeration in three cities and three rural counties in the South. On the whole, the mulattoes had a smaller proportion of families without children and there was on the average a larger number of children in the mulatto families. Further analysis of the 1910 statistics for the number of children born living in 10,921 families showed: (1) mulattoes and blacks had about the same proportion of families in which

¹Robert E. Park, Human Communities (Glencoe, Ill., 1952), p. 78.
no children were born; (2) on the whole, the mulattoes and blacks in the same community had the same average number of children born; (3) for the entire group a larger proportion of black families had one or more children dead; (4) the blacks had lost on the average a larger number of their children; (5) the mulattoes had about seven percent more of all their children living than blacks. Differences in the socio-economic status of these two groups as reflected in literary and home ownership seemed to point to cultural rather than biological causes for the differences between them.¹

"Ethnic and Minority Groups in Wartime, With Special Reference to the Negro" was written by Frazier in 1942. In it he examines race discrimination and concludes the following:

Since the first World War, when we were made aware of the conflicting loyalties of minorities set apart from the rest of the population because of race, culture, and national origin, social scientists have given attention to the effect of changes in American life upon these groups. These minorities may be divided into three groups: those actually or potentially identified with our enemies, those friendly to the United States, and the American Negro. The first group is largely loyal to the United States, but it has been the object of much suspicion and discrimination. The pro-Nazi and pro-Fascist opinions of

some German- and Italian-language newspapers and the activities of such organizations as the Bund have made it necessary for the government to suppress some foreign-language newspapers, to intern some of the leaders, and to suppress organizations fostering disloyalty. The most drastic action has been that taken against the Japanese community on the West Coast, which was broken up and both alien and native-born Japanese moved to the interior or interned. The minorities friendly to the United States are all colored peoples; but, because of our traditional attitudes toward colored peoples, they continue to suffer discrimination despite their loyalty to our cause. Unlike his reaction to the first World War, the American Negro has exhibited considerable militancy in regard to discrimination. Although the government has issued orders against discrimination, Negroes are still excluded from employment and training opportunities. Because of the war the inadequate housing of Negroes has become worse, their family life is suffering some deterioration, their colleges have lost students and teachers, and their welfare organizations have felt the strain of extra burdens. There are signs that the Negro masses are stirring themselves against the caste restrictions which are rooted in the South, where there is growing tension between the two races. A few liberal newspapers indicate that liberal southerners are willing to make some concessions, especially in regard to employment opportunities. On the other hand, there are signs that some caste restrictions are being relaxed where the government is concerned and in many places in the North.¹

Another exponent of race relation theories can be examined in the person of Charles S. Johnson. His major inquiry was in reference to the economic, social, and political status of blacks. In his article "The Negro" he expounds on these aspects. He writes:

The depression, the advent of the New Deal, and the war emergency profoundly affected the economic conditions of the Negro population during the past decade. The depression accentuated the marginal economic status of this group and resulted in widespread unemployment and dependence upon governmental aid. The New Deal accelerated the enactment of social and labor legislation which, for the first time, effectively included large groups of the Negro population. The new status given to labor coupled with the development of industrial unions brought new strength and security to Negro workers. The war emergency has resulted in a challenge, strongly supported by the federal government, of the traditional industrial employment policy of the United States with reference to discrimination against Negro workers. The result has been some increases in employment of Negroes in new industries and in higher categories of skill. In education striking advances may be noted over the past decade, although wide differentials between Negro and white educational facilities still exist. The recent Supreme Court decisions which have stimulated southern states to provide graduate instruction for Negro students and to show concern over the equalization of Negro and white teachers' salaries are significant developments. Some improvements in Negro health has been recorded, but it has not been sufficient to offset the decline in the fertility of Negro women which has accompanied urbanization of the Negro population. In politics the Negro has gained new power as a result of the shift of the Negro population to northern areas and the increased influence of economic interests upon Negro political behavior as over against past political sentiment. It is entirely possible that the future economic, social, and political status of the Negro will be as it has been in the past by the economic fortunes of the nation.\(^1\)

Another incident of race discrimination can be seen in his article "Incidence Upon the Negroes" which was written in 1935. In essence the article relates that depression

began ahead of American workers for black people because of their marginal status in both industry and agriculture. In industrial centers Negro unemployment rates were consistently exceeding the rate for whites due to both mass employment on the common labor level of those industries most seriously curtailed and to increased racial competition. Recovery programs tended on the whole to follow regional practices with respect to types of work and relief. In many urban centers larger proportions of Negroes were permitted in the relief rolls in consideration of higher unemployment rates. In rural areas the proportion of relief and amounts spent per person has been less than the white, despite greater need.¹

Louis Wirth's definition of urbanization as the coming together of a large heterogenous population within a relatively small area is placed in the context of the studies of Chicago neighborhoods undertaken by Park's students during the twenties and thirties. These studies explored the kinds of natural areas, social disorganization, social control, and social reorganization that followed the rapid influx of immigrant and rural population elements into Chicago between 1900 and 1930.

The whole set of studies of Chicago and its sub-communities conducted by Park and his students can be viewed as contributions to a single case study of the effects that urbanization in a particular form had on a particular community during a specific interval of time.
CHAPTER IV

HISTORICAL AND CURRENT STATUS

OF HUMAN ECOLOGY

Ernst Haeckel, in 1878, was the first to give the name "ecology" to the study of interrelations and interdependence of species, and by so doing gave them the character of a distinct and separate science.\(^1\) Some scientists describe it as "the new natural history." The term "human ecology" was first introduced by the sociologists Park and Burgess in 1921, and represented an attempt to systematically apply the basic theoretical scheme of plant and animal ecology to the study of human communities.\(^2\) Human ecology is concerned with the examination of the relationship between man and his environment and man within an environment. Within sociology, human ecology is concerned with the question of how people organize themselves socially to adapt to their

\(^1\) Amos H. Hawley, *Human Ecology*, p. 3.

\(^2\) J. John Palen, *The Urban World*, p. 65.
habitat, and in particular to the habitat of cities and their environs.

Human ecology differs in important respects from plant and animal ecology. The interrelations of human beings and interactions of man and his habitat are comparable, but not identical, with interrelations of other forms of life that live together and carry on a kind of "biological economy" within the limits of a common habitat.

For one thing man is not so immediately dependent upon his physical environment as other animals. As a result of the existing worldwide division of labor, man's relation to his physical environment has been mediated through the interventions of other men.¹ The exchange of goods and services have co-operated to emancipate him from dependence upon his local habitat.

Furthermore man has, by means of inventions and technical devices of the most diverse kinds, enormously increased his capacity for reacting upon and remaking, not only his habitat but his world. Finally, man has erected upon the basis of the biotic community an institutional structure rooted in custom and tradition.²

¹Park, Human Communities, p. 155.
²Ibid., p. 156.
Human ecology, in so far as it is concerned with a social order that is based on competition rather than consensus, is identical, in principle at least, with plant and animal ecology. The problems with which plant and animal ecology have been traditionally concerned are fundamentally population problems. Society, as ecologists have conceived it, is a population settled and limited to its habitat.\(^1\) The ties that unite its individual units are those of a free and natural economy, based on a natural division of labor. Such a society is territorially organized and the ties which hold it together are physical and vital rather than customary and moral.\(^2\)

Human ecology is fundamentally, an attempt to investigate the processes by which the biotic balance and the social equilibrium (1) are maintained once they are achieved, and (2) the processes by which, when the biotic balanced and the social equilibrium are disturbed, the transition is made from one relatively stable order to another.\(^3\)

Human ecology must reckon with the fact that in human society competition is limited by custom and culture. The


\(^2\)Ibid.

\(^3\)Palen, *The Urban World*, p. 71.
cultural super-structure imposes itself as an instrument of direction and control upon the biotic substructure.¹

Classical human ecology first came into its own during the 1920's at the University of Chicago. Led by Park and Burgess, the so-called "Chicago School" of sociology produced a prodigious number of studies (some of which are presented in Chapter III) focused on the spatial-social environment of the city. The interest of these Chicago sociologists was not the mapping where groups and institutions were located, but rather in discovering how the sociological, psychological, and moral experiences of city life were reflected in spatial relationships.² In accordance with this idea Park writes:

The city is something more than a congeries of individual men and of social conveniences—streets, buildings, electric lights, tramways, and telephones; something more than a mere constellation of institutions and administrative devices—courts, hospitals, schools, police and civil functionaries of various sorts. The city is, rather, a state of mind, a body of customs and are transmitted with this tradition. The city is not, in other words, merely a physical mechanism and an artificial construction. It is involved in the vital processes of the people who compose it; it is a product of nature, and particularly of human nature.³

¹Park, Human Communities, p. 159.
²Palen, The Urban World, p. 66.
The spatial distribution of people is a major concern for human sociologists. Park states that "human ecology is a study of the spatial and temporal relations of human beings."¹ These relations are affected by the selective, distributive, and accommodative forces of the environment. Ecologists, according to the patterns of distribution, have sub-divided the process of selection. These patterns of distribution have been designated as ecological processes.

Three ecological principles were perceived by Park to play their part in modern and industrial society, succession, dominance, and competition. The term "succession" is used by ecologists to describe and designate that orderly sequences of changes through which a biotic community passes in the course of its development from a primary and relatively unstable to a relatively permanent or climax stage.² In the course of this development, the community moves through a series of more or less clearly defined stages is the fact that gives this development the serial character which the term "succession" suggest. In reference to human ecology Duncan defines succession as the replacement of one

¹G. Duncan Mitchell, A Hundred Years of Sociology, p. 155.

²Park, Human Communities, p. 152.
population group in an area by another.\textsuperscript{1} Park writes:

Although the term succession, as originally employed by sociologists, would seem to be more appropriately applied to movements of population and to such incidental social and cultural changes as these movements involve, there seems to be no sound reason why the same term should not be used to describe any orderly and irreversible series of events, provided they are to such an extent correlated with other less obvious and more fundamental social changes that they may be used as indicies of these changes.\textsuperscript{2}

At every stage in the process a more or less stable equilibrium is achieved, which in due course, and as a result of progressive changes in life--conditions, possibly due to growth and decay, the equilibrium achieved in the earlier stages is eventually undetermined. In such cases competition will be intensified and change will continue at a rapid rate until a new equilibrium is achieved.

"Dominance" is indirectly responsible for the phenomenon of succession. "Dominance," operating within the limits imposed by the terrain and other natural features of the location, tends to determine the general ecological pattern of the city and the functional relation of the different

\textsuperscript{1} Otis D. Duncan, "Residential Distribution and Occupational Stratification," \textit{American Journal of Sociology} V:9 (March 1955): 493-503.

areas of the city to all others.\(^1\) The dominant area in any community is usually the area of highest land values. It is these land values that determine the location of social institutions and business enterprises. Both are bound up in a kind of territorial complex within which they are at once competing and interdependent units.

The two ecological principles, succession and dominance, which operate to establish and maintain such communal order are functions of, and dependent on "competition." "Competition," which is the fundamental organizing principle, functions to differentiate and individualize. In so far as it performs that function it enters into the very constitution of the community or society in which it operates.\(^2\) Another function and effect of competition has been to bring about everywhere a division of labor which will diminish competition.

Because of the research done by Park on human ecology contemporary social scientist developed the following basic theoretical postulates of human ecology. They are as follows:

\(^1\)Ibid.

\(^2\)G. Duncan Mitchell, A Hundred Years of Sociology, p. 158.
1. Man is a biological creature. In order to survive as a species he must feed, clothe, house, and reproduce himself.

2. The raw materials with which survival must be achieved are those of the physical environment. They are restricted, both in amount and in distribution. Many of them tend to change with time. Several of the more basic ones tend to fluctuate from season to season and from year to year.

3. Like other forms of life, man gains his sustenance and maintain himself as a species through adjustment. This adjustment, like that of other life forms, consists of modifying and controlling critical segments of the environment, to the greatest extent possible.

4. Human adjustment is communal; it is accomplished through the co-operation and interdependence of several human beings working as an organized unit.

5. The basic unit of this type is termed "community." Whatever its other functions, the human community is a technique for easing the task of survival.

6. Communal organization, the pattern of interdependence, and the technology by which groups collectively
extract their survival-needs from the environment
tend to be codified and passed along from genera-
tion to generation. The codified system, with its
complementary beliefs, values, and ethics, is
termed "culture."

7. Because man is able to develop and transmit much
more elaborate and effective culture than any other
species, his adaptation to the environment is uni-
que. It is this fact which gives rise to a sepa-
rate discipline of "human ecology," rather than
merely subsuming man as a special case of general
bio-ecology. Thus, adaptations invented by man's
superior mental and other equipment and accumulated
over many generations by his culture building pro-
clivities tends to make human ecology related to,
but nevertheless, different from general or bio-
ecology.

8. The environment to which the community adapts
consists of all forces and conditions external to
the human beings that inhabit the locality. The
forces that emanate from the immediate locality
which the group occupies are referred to the
"habitat."
9. Within the community, man relates himself to his fellows in two basic ways: (1) by a division of labor relationship, which is essentially one of interdependence and co-operation (symbiosis), and (2) a competitive and combinatorial relationship, which tends to sponsor groupings whose function is essentially conservative and preservative at the expense of other groups (commensalism). These two types of relationships occur throughout all animate nature.

10. In the realm of plants and lower animals (the biotic community), symbiotic relationships occur between species. In the human community, functional groupings tend to replace species. The major functional groupings are occupational and industrial. The groupings that interact symbiotically are termed "corporate" groupings, while those that interact commensalistically are termed "bategic" groupings.

11. Communities consists of a series of interrelated and interdependent corporate groupings which cooperate to extract their needs from the environment. They depend for their solidarity,
equilibrium, and continuity upon a competitive balance among categoric groups. Those categoric groups which exercise a maximum of control over the environment and established conditions to which other categories must adapt are termed "dominant" groups. Those who exercise this control in lesser degree are termed "subdominant."

12. The various groupings tend to locate in space and reference to each other and with reference to their dominant position. Also they tend to be functionally related to each other in terms of division of labor linkages and his competitive position. The community may be viewed as having a pattern and structure in, at least, two ways. First, the habitat upon which the community is located tends to become patterned, and there is a "spatial structure." Second, the lines of interdependence and dominance-subdominance tend to be patterned, and there is "functional structure." Human ecology is interested in both types of community structures.

13. Large and complex urban communities tend to develop specialized areas where units with similar functions
are located. Thus, so-called "ecological areas" develop within a city.

14. Simple communities may be independent units. In the modern world, however, communities themselves enter into divisions of labor with each other. This gives rise to community and a real specialization on the one hand and to the phenomenon of dominance-subdominance of communities on the other hand. The nation is a congeries of interdependent communities.

15. In order to function, the various groups must be able to contact each other. They must have lines of communication and transportation. Units needing more of contact with the widest number of other units and who are able to compete most effectively for such sites tend to be located at points of greatest accessibility. All units tend to array themselves with respect to the central most-accessible area in terms of time and cost, and locational interdependence.¹

At the time when sociology was a young science and

¹John D. Reid, "Population and Ecology" (Lecture notes, Atlanta University, 1974).
numerous questions were being raised concerning the subject matter of sociology, Park was influential in pointing out the importance of geographical factors to sociological theory. Numerous writers had become aware that there were social consequences of natural features such as mountains, passes, etc., and that in the early settlements of American lands, for example, the explorers were succeeded by pioneers, who were in turn succeeded by the hunters, who were in turn succeeded by farmers, etc., each taking over land which had been utilized and "made ready" for them by predecessors. The importance of "cultural areas" to cultural anthropologists, the discovery of the importance of geographical and spatial relations for social organization by the rural sociologists, and Galpin's study "Social Anatomy of a Community" led Park to the recognition of the importance of spatial relationships on the local urban level. Lunberg states that the personal prestiges of Park and the researches of many of his students helped greatly in placing the study of human ecology on a firm footing, and making human ecology a distinctive sociological concept.

1Barbara Thomas, "Robert Park" (Lecture notes, Southern University, 1973).
CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION

The conceptions of Park about the variety and functioning of "natural areas" do provide a hypothetical model against which the actual social structure and transitional processes in any community can be studied. Further development of the theory of urbanization requires greater specification as to the conditions under which urbanization occurs in other communities to establish more complex typologies, among which the Chicago pattern will become an important prototype.

Efforts must be made to extend the theory through time so that characteristic effects of present-day population influxes on contemporary cities can be compared with the earlier stages of urbanization so carefully studied by Robert Park.

Sociologists remain interested in urbanization as a disorganizing force but must recognize that its nature as well as its effects will be different because the environing
pressures, the urban influx, and the community differ considerably from their counterpart in the twenties.

Contemporary sociologists are assigned the task of identifying these new problems and interpreting them in terms of a modified theory of "natural areas." This modified theory will have to include analysis of the social structure of urban sub-communities that have appeared since Park's research. It will also have to consider the structural transformations in the traditional "natural areas" occurring since they were studied by Park.

In conclusion, Robert Park's theory about urban social processes must indeed be brought up-to-date, but his keen curiosity about life in the city and his willingness to leave the confines of academic loisters to go out and explore it can hardly be improved upon.
APPENDIX
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