

Race, Space, and Riots in Chicago, New York, and Los Angeles

Janet L. Abu-Lughod

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American society has been long plagued by cycles of racial violence, most dramatically in the 1960s when hundreds of ghetto uprisings erupted across American cities. Though the larger, underlying causes of contentious race relations have remained the same, the lethality, intensity, and outcomes of these urban rebellions have varied widely. What accounts for these differences? And what lessons can be learned that might reduce the destructive effects of riots and move race relations forward?

This impressive, meticulously detailed study is the first attempt to compare six major race riots that occurred in the three largest American urban areas during the course of the twentieth century: in Chicago in 1919 and 1968; in New York in 1935/1943 and 1964; and in Los Angeles in 1965 and 1992. *Race, Space, and Riots in Chicago, New York, and Los Angeles* weaves together detailed narratives of each riot, placing them in their changing historical contexts and showing how urban space, political regimes, and economic conditions--not simply an abstract "race conflict"--have structured the nature and extent of urban rebellions. Building on her previous groundbreaking comparative history of these three cities, Janet Abu-Lughod draws upon archival research, primary sources, case studies, and personal observations to reconstruct events--especially for the 1964 Harlem-Bedford Stuyvesant uprising and Chicago's 1968 riots where no documented studies are available. By focusing on the similarities and differences in each city, identifying the unique and persisting issues, and evaluating the ways political leaders, law enforcement, and the local political culture have either defused or exacerbated urban violence, this book points the way toward alleviating long-standing ethnic and racial tensions.

A masterful analysis from a renowned urbanist, *Race, Space, and Riots in Chicago, New York, and Los Angeles* offers a deeper understanding of past--and future--urban race relations while emphasizing that until persistent racial and economic inequalities are meaningfully resolved, the tensions leading to racial violence will continue to exist in America's cities and betray our professed democratic values.



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