

# 21st Century Chains: The Continuing Relevance of Internal Colonialism Theory

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**Boston College**

**The Graduate School of Arts and Sciences**

**Department of Sociology**

**21<sup>ST</sup> CENTURY CHAINS: THE CONTINUING RELEVANCE OF INTERNAL  
COLONIALISM THEORY**

**a dissertation**

**by**

**CHARLES A. PINDERHUGHES JR.**

**submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements**

**for the degree of**

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## 21<sup>ST</sup> CENTURY CHAINS: THE CONTINUING RELEVANCE OF INTERNAL COLONIALISM THEORY

By Charles A. Pinderhughes Jr.

This dissertation examines Internal Colonialism Theory's importance to a comprehensive understanding of the oppression of African Americans still living in USA ghettos. It briefly explores the 180 year history of Black activist depictions of a "nation within a nation," the impact of the depression-era Marxist notion of a Negro nation, Latin American influences on Robert Blauner, and the pervasive effect of international anti-colonialism and the Black Power Movement upon the development of American academic Internal Colonialism Theory. This appraisal evaluates Blauner's seminal presentation, "Internal Colonialism and Ghetto Revolt," and the major contributions of Robert L. Allen and Mario Barrera in analyzing African American and Chicano internal colonial experiences respectively. It re-assesses colonialism and moves beyond Eurocentric characterizations to elaborate a Continuum of Colonialism, including direct, indirect, external, internal, and "end of" colonialisms.

This analysis addresses the contradiction that the American Revolution supposedly decolonized America without improving colonized conditions for African Americans or Native Americans, and defines internal colonialism as geographically based, disagreeing with the prevailing interpretation which contemplates the existence of diasporic African America as one collective colony. While summarizing the USA's course from settler colony system to today's inner cities of the colonized, this investigation explores African American class formation utilizing a variation of Marable's conception of Racial Domains as historical context through to the present. With the majority of African Americans in ghettos [internal colonies] scattered around the USA, this document outlines the positive and negative means of ending internal colonial situations within the contemporary USA.

While elaborating how Internal Colonialism Theory quite practically fits harmoniously within several differing conceptualizations of American and global racial relations, this perspective offers a framework for more rigorous future discussions and debates about Internal Colonialism Theory, and previews three major international populations to which this assessment of Internal Colonialism Theory can be extended.

### Dissertation Committee:

Co-Chairs: William Gamson & Zine Magubane

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Readers: Eva Garrouette, Shawn McGuffey & Stephen Pfohl

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In particular, Harry Haywood [the foremost advocate of the “Self-Determination of the Negro Nation” position in the 20<sup>th</sup> century] left a great impression on me when I worked with him for a brief time in Atlanta, not long after Black Bolshevik was published. When writing, he stressed to me the critical importance of being crystal clear and saying exactly what I want I want to say, being so precise that my words cannot be easily twisted to say something I did not intend.

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## **PREFACE: HOW I ATTAINED THIS PERSPECTIVE**

In exploring this topic I should acknowledge my motivation for it: in a nutshell, my life experiences “quack like a duck” regarding this subject. Born into a family of five children with professional parents, I grew up from the 4<sup>th</sup> grade on in Boston’s mostly Black Roxbury section. My parents raised us to value strong personal morality and commitment to the welfare of others. In 1963, while I was a sophomore in high school, my parents threw a fundraiser in our home for the Student Non-violent Coordinating Committee [SNCC]. Afterwards I found a bunch of posters that they left behind. Intent on returning them, I visited their Cambridge MA office, and kept going back. I did office work as well as participated in demonstrations like the occupation of the U.S. Attorney’s floor in the Boston Federal Building during the crisis in Selma AL. I also participated in the Northern Student Movement during my high school years, as well as the mass activities of the movement to desegregate Boston schools. In addition, I was a leader on the local and regional levels of an autonomously run Unitarian – Universalist high school group, Liberal Religious Youth [LRY].

While in high school, I embraced non-violence as a principle, and decided to become a conscientious objector, mistaking the tactic of non-violence for an enduring principle. My SNCC encounters in Arkansas, combined with a college work term experience on Chicago’s South Side in the winter-spring of 1968 eroded my attachment to that ideal. My “mistake ” was confusing the battle

against injustice in the society around me with an attempt to change/purify myself.

Upon graduating from high school, I volunteered for SNCC's Arkansas Summer Project in 1965, and then spent a year as the National Social Action Director of LRY. When I entered college the next year, I became very active in Black student, student and anti-war organizing on my campus, Beloit College.

After 21/2 years, I quit school for a movement job, doing power structure research back in Boston. In March 1969, I was hired as a trainee at WGBH-TV, a PBS Boston outlet. Actress and jazz singer Abbey Lincoln had walked off the set of their first national Black drama program, "On Being Black" when she saw an almost lily White studio crew. But when my probation term came to an end, WGBH extended it, saying that I hadn't learned a skill [of course, they'd made no attempt to train me]. I worked coffee breaks, lunch hours and other spare time to teach myself to use the sound boom. When they took me off probation in August 1969, I quit and began working with the Boston Chapter of the Black Panther Party<sup>1</sup> [BPP] fulltime.

In the spring of 1969, in the process of trying to publicize the proposed purchase of Boston's Black radio station, WILD. by Richard Nixon's associates<sup>2</sup>, I

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<sup>1</sup> While there have been many groups labeled as Black Panther parties, from the Lowndes County Freedom Organization in 1965, to present day "new" Panther organizations, I refer mainly to the most widely known version which was founded in Oakland CA in October 1966 by Huey Newton and Bobby Seale as the Black Panther Party for Self Defense.

<sup>2</sup> WILD was part of a four station deal which was being sought by Cypress Broadcasting and Cypress Communications. Initiated in late October 1968, the proposed transaction was on file and under consideration by the Federal Communications Commission in January 1969. The only duplication of Board membership on the two Cypress entities were 3 men from Nixon's law firm,

had begun working with the Black Panther Party part time. Neither the Boston Globe, nor Roxbury's Black newspaper, The Bay State Banner, nor WGBH's Black show, Say Brother, would make public my documented information.

After the Panthers published my expose<sup>3</sup> in a June issue of The Black Panther, I spent all my free time that summer working with the BPP. Once I was fulltime, I was soon transferred because of my innovative propaganda work. I was Lieutenant of Information for the re-constituted New Haven Chapter of the Black Panther Party in 1969 and 1970 during the pretrial phase of the campaign to free Bobby Seale and the New Haven Panthers. I developed The People's News Service, a Panther periodical and organizing tool consisting of mostly local news which was widely copied by other Panther chapters across the country.

After leaving the BPP in September of 1970, I attempted to start a Black bookstore, thoroughly investigating the potential with a professional bookseller as mentor. Eventually the Small Business Administration first granted and then placed on hold my loan application, suddenly claiming that their "internal security division" had a thick file on me and would like to hear my comments. When I refused to answer any questions about my Panther experience, they waited for two months and then told me to go to work in a bookstore for two years and then re-apply.

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Nixon, Mudge, etc. including soon to be Attorney General Mitchell. The three other stations were Black stations WAMO in Pittsburgh, and WUFO in Buffalo, plus WLTO, a country-western station that interestingly became Spanish-speaking a week or so after Nixon was elected President.

<sup>3</sup> Eventually, other Boston Black community groups took up the issue and the proposed sale was cancelled.

While waiting for an answer about the loan, I decided to write a letter of suggestion to the Panthers. Although I was no longer in the BPP, I still thought that they had a better start on what needed to be done for Black Liberation than any other group of the time. I imagined I would make a few suggestions and use some illustrative quotes for a five or ten page letter. Instead of using Mao Zedong's Redbook, I wanted to read the whole articles that the quotes were from. In doing so, I read myself back through citations, from Mao to Stalin, Lenin, Engels and Marx, all the way to Hegel. While I read, I made voluminous notes as I re-assessed my previous 8 years of near constant activism. This resulted in an 85 page "Letter of Criticism and Suggestion to Huey Newton and the Central Committee of the Black Panther Party." It was in the creation of this document that I became a Marxist.

I worked as a voter registration coordinator in Roxbury for a while before deciding to create an independent radical Black newspaper at the same time that I was returning to school. In August 1972, just before beginning my studies, I launched STRUGGLE! Newspaper. While STRUGGLE! was a revolutionary nationalist paper, the editorial board was made up of Black Marxists. Initially it was mainly me, but sooner other Black Marxists were attracted and the paper became noted. Although based in Boston, we focused a lot on national and international issues and politics and exchanged with hundreds of newspapers across the country and around world, including Granma and organs from the Vietnamese Liberation Struggle. Our office was papered with wonderfully colorful



posters from OSPAAAL [Organization of Solidarity of the People of Asia, Africa & Latin America]. In addition to newspaper work, we began to do community organizing.

In thinking of schools, I wanted an innovative program. Upon my petition, Goddard College admitted me to their Third World Studies Program as a graduate student. I chose as an advisor a man whom I met in the Panthers, a self-educated, working class intellectual, Floyd Hardwick. The Third World Studies Program also paired me with the college degree'd James Jackson, a central committee member of the Communist Party USA who was Black. I very extensively re-wrote my "Letter," yet retained my perspective that Third World peoples' battle for social change was paramount, in spite of some tension with Jackson. With my thesis entitled, "A Scientific Socialist Perspective on Black Survival," I earned a Master Degree in Political Science.

By late 1973 STRUGGLE! had attracted enough participation to expand. We engaged in intensive participation in community organizing and related activities, including managing a Bookstore as part of a coalition with a local group, United Community Construction Workers, and strongly participating in African Liberation Support Committee and its innovative decision to expand Negro History Week to Black Liberation Month, as well as several other projects.

At the same time, the Black Marxist Collective of STRUGGLE! entered negotiations with a New Communist national group called the October League [OL]. The OL had a couple rare features not present with most other similar

groups – a very multi-national membership, and a very respectful position on the liberation of oppressed nationalities. Eventually, the Collective merged with the OL and due to some local political friction with another organization, I was transferred to Baltimore. The Boston Busing Crisis broke out just as I was leaving. The crisis so stretched both editorial board members and other volunteers [from a range of organizations and views] to the breaking point that STRUGGLE! ceased publication a year later. Everyone wanted to do organizing work, but took differing sides on the question of should Black children be defended or not used as canon fodder in the anti-segregation battle. The bookstore soon followed, as I had trained a young sister to manage the store, but not how to face down the chauvinism of the construction workers' disregard for her management position.

In Baltimore, I worked at various industrial jobs. I was most impacted by my experiences at now defunct Bethlehem Steel's Sparrows Point Steel Plant and Shipyard. I worked for the shipyard, which came complete with a company union, for 6 months while laid off from "steel side." To get hired by the Steel Plant, I had to test in at craft level into the Electrical Gang. Since they couldn't keep me working because frequent layoffs were already hitting the industry, I transferred twice. I worked in the majority Black Coal Field Mechanical Gang until "finishing side" senior mechanics decided that eating coal dust was better than unemployment. I ended up transferring to the mostly Black Coke Oven Production which was running constantly since the company made money from

selling one of the cancer-causing by-products of coke production, Benzene.

There, the average age that retirees lived was 18 months, although much of their exposure was in pre-OSHA days. Still, girlfriends at the time would mention my “copper-flavor.”

As a member of USWA-2610, I participated in the union and even was elected one of several shop stewards. I saw both the opportunism of labor aristocracy first hand as well as labor solidarity, but there was no lasting impact, except upon me. After several job injuries, and a long layoff. I gave up on production work organizing.

As I was laid off, I moved to Atlanta to advise an October League bookstore and work with the local Black United Front. I wrote most of “The Real Birth of the Blues” while there and worked with Harry Haywood briefly. I remember assisting him with a polemic as organizational storm clouds were gathering. He spoke at length about having his words used against him decades before during a CPUSA organizational crisis. Unfortunately, the organizational problems were not based in a simple, correctable “bad political line.” The October League started to disintegrate, due in part, to some rank and file disillusionment with its staunch, unquestioning alliance with a China fast-moving toward a market economy. It was certainly helped along by some intrigues about corruption and police behavior that I’d not seen since my days as a Panther. I moved back to Boston and worked with Massachusetts Fair Share briefly, but long enough to learn some of the shortcomings of the Citizen Action Group organizing model.

Beginning in 1982, I started focusing on Black book distribution again and founded a mail order and portable display company, Afro-American Book Source. At a time when very few Black titles were carried by most chains and independent bookstores in the White community, I hauled, unpacked, displayed, sold, packed and hauled away a display of about 500 titles of mostly Black and some progressive books. By 1990, as I went through a series of plans for an actual bookstore [bookstore café, actually], I took a part time job teaching Sociology at Boston College. When I realized how much I enjoyed teaching topics and issues I was interested in, I decided to seek my PhD. I eventually let go my bookstore dream, finally recognizing that while I can be a great brainstormer and a fairly good innovator, I'm, at best, a mediocre business person.

In my approach to this subject, I proceed from the observation point of an Anti-Colonial Marxist. By this I mean that my Marxist outlook has been established on the foundation of Anti-Colonial Marxism<sup>4</sup>, a scientific socialist paradigm which analyzes the world and the social change tasks at hand through the eyes of the insurgents in the developing world.

This work has been through several versions. It began as a presentation at the Association of Black Sociologists [ABS]. After I suggested my presentation title to the Black progressives who regularly offer a panel at ABS, three of us ended up presenting on internal colonialism [ABS, 2006, Montreal]. The result

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<sup>4</sup> Prominent Anti-Colonial Marxists include Mao Zedong, Ho Chi Minh, Amilcar Cabral, Frantz Fanon and Kwame Nkrumah.

was an internal colonialism email list of a number of interested sociologists who visualize an anthology on the subject of internal colonialism. I then developed and expanded my notes to produce an area paper, "African Americans and Internal Colonial Theory." When, in discussions and other talks, I continued to find the subject stirring strong interest, I committed to writing this dissertation.

## INTRODUCTION

### THE REAL BIRTH OF THE BLUES

They asked in Freedom's name  
Rendering Justice profane  
What's the source of this music you choose?  
Ripped from a sandy shore  
Four hundred years before  
The modern birth of the blues.

Endured the lash of whips  
On one hundred thousand ships  
Twenty squeezed in the space fit for two,  
A few tried suicide  
Almost two thirds of us died  
Sailing to the birth of the blues.

Sold on the auction block  
Like common livestock  
It was death or slavery we could choose,  
Wrapped us up in chains  
To use our labor's strain  
That's the start of the birth of the blues.

Sang double-meaning songs  
'Bout the masters' wrongs  
And the means of escape for a few,  
Sang 'bout history's tales  
And its lessons unveiled  
That's the sound of the birth of the blues.

Heard Brother Walker's Call  
Foretold of slavery's downfall  
And the Great War starting to brew,  
Told of rebellions tried  
And the many that died  
To nurture the birth of the blues.

Fought in the Blue-Gray War  
To open Freedom's door  
Reconstruction was to be our rule,  
As broad democracy wide  
'Cross Southern countryside  
Tempered the birth of the blues.

Poor Black and poor White  
 Got united to fight  
 For the land the vote and public schools,  
 But the planters still  
 Posed opposition shrill  
 To background the birth of the blues.

Divided White from Black  
 The sellout caught us slack  
 Robbed of forty acres and a mule,  
 The Ku Klux came on strong  
 They brought the Black Codes on  
 Adding pain to the birth of the blues.

Offered trial by rope  
 Many could see no hope  
 Settled for Booker T's no struggle views,  
 While Ida Wells carried out  
 The liberation bout  
 Marking time 'til the birth of the blues.

In Deep South's country air  
 Framed by this social despair  
 Blues singing first started to brood,  
 The minstrels sang their songs  
 Of single lives gone wrong  
 And created the birth of the blues.

And then this moaning spread  
 As rhythm came to be wed  
 As the sound of Chicago grew,  
 Electrically amplified  
 But still a people's cry  
 After the birth of the blues.

We took a united stand  
 'Gainst legal lynchin' fanned  
 To cover the depression's mood,  
 That's how they tried to choke  
 Our longtime burning hope  
 The twin to the birth of the blues.

Montgomery made the call  
 To Black folks one and all  
 To smash segregationist tools,  
 Made Freedom's voices rise  
 With expectations high  
 Beyond the birth of the blues.

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**And then Black people's rage  
Called for massive change  
With the rise of the Black Power view,  
Embraced the Panther's style  
Fighting all the while  
For an end to the birth of the blues.**

**With counterinsurgency's rise  
The people's upsurge died  
Even as our struggle continues  
As electoral votes  
Produce fast failing hopes  
Thus creating the re-birth of the blues.**

(Charles "Cappy" Pinderhughes, 1980, 1998)

**Let us not be bitter about the past, but let us keep our eyes firmly on the future. Let us remember that no blessing of God is so sweet as life and liberty. Let us remember that the stature of all mankind is diminished so long as nations or parts of nations are still unfree. Let us remember that the highest purpose of man is the liberation of man from his bonds of fear, his bonds of poverty, the liberation of man from the physical, spiritual and intellectual bonds which have for long stunted the development of humanity's majority. And let us remember, Sisters and Brothers, that for the sake of all that, we Asians and Africans must be united."**—Ahmed Sukarno at Bandung

(as quoted in Kahim, 43-44)

## **The Reason for This Analysis**

With the demise of the world hegemony of Europe's system of direct colonialism, some have rushed to proclaim the death of colonialism and the rise of the paradigm of postcolonialism. In that narrative, colonialism, like its despicable cousin trans-Atlantic slavery, is portrayed as only history. But for postcolonialism and postcolonial studies there are also other interpretations: as anticolonial studies or obfuscator of economic exploitation, as too radical or not



radical enough, as process or result, as voice for the subaltern or reductive critique of Anglo-American culture (Loomba, 1-6). Yes, writings on postcolonialism are awash with inconsistencies and confusions, with problems of definition, scope and validity. “Postcoloniality is, for some, whatever you want to make of it that will allow individual compromises and opportunisms to flourish” (San Juan-1999, 2). “Indeed, postcolonial studies are Eurocentric, focusing almost exclusively on Europe and its former colonies” (King, 3). Particularly problematic is the question: Is the United States of America postcolonial? (King, Martin, San Juan-1999, San Juan-2000, Sharpe).

So, to capture better the current situation of historically colonized peoples in the USA particularly that of African Americans, I will argue instead for continued use of the theory of internal [or domestic] colonialism [or semi-colonialism].<sup>5</sup> This work will delineate the importance of Internal Colonialism Theory for gaining a comprehensive understanding of the oppression of African Americans still living in the ghettos of the USA. It will aim to move the discussion beyond narrow, European-bound descriptions of colonialism and re-assert an analysis of colonialism that takes proper note of the conditions of the colonized as the starting point for assessing internal colonialism. This project will define internal colonialism as geographically delineated, disagreeing with those who assert that diasporic African America is one collective colony. With

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<sup>5</sup> The terms internal colonialism, domestic colonialism and semi-colonialism appear to this author to be used interchangeably in literature [published since 1960] interpreting the experience of African Americans as “colonized”.

the majority of African Americans in ghettos [internal colonies] scattered around the USA, this dissertation will summarize the USA's course from settler colony system to today's inner cities of the colonized and outline the positive and negative means of ending the internal colonial situation in the contemporary USA.

### **The Current Context of Black Oppression**<sup>6</sup>

*What are some of the specific conditions of 21<sup>st</sup> century African America which accumulate to internal colonialism?*

*Of the more than 35 million Blacks in the USA, most [86.5 percent] live in metropolitan areas. (Darden, 69)*

### **Residential Segregation**

*\*Yet, "Whether blacks live in central cities or the suburbs, they are highly segregated residentially" (Darden, 77). "Residential apartheid is the dominant housing pattern for most African Americans – the most racially segregated group in America" (Bullard, 24). USA residential segregation has changed only moderately since reaching its height in the 1950s & 1960s. "Today blacks are more segregated than any other racial or ethnic group, have experienced segregation longer than any other group, and are segregated at every income level" (Bonilla-Silva-2001, 95) And it is this residential segregation that creates the territorial condition for today's Black colonies.*

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<sup>6</sup> These figures were all established well before the advent of the current economic crisis, which has intensified each of the economic elements noted.

## **Education**

*\*In education, patterns of [de facto] segregation still prevail. “2000, over 70 percent of African American students attended schools where students of color were in the majority; 40 percent of African American students attended schools that were 90 to 100 percent black” (Bullard, 32).*

*\*Black students are suspended at about three times the rate of White students (Edelman-2007, 223).*

*\*Among Blacks 25-34, only 18% are college graduates, whereas Whites are at 35% (Feagin & Feagin, 188).*

## **Poverty**

*\*Black unemployment is more than double that of Whites (Hacker, 109), even when education is controlled for (Teller-Elsberg et al, 62) and underemployment figures are even more disproportionate (Feagin & Feagin, 176).*

*\*In 1999, Black families had only 59% of the income of White families [Latinos excluded] (Feagin & Feagin, 176).*

*\*Black family poverty is three times the rate for Whites (Black Americans, 248), with one third of Black children being raised in poverty according to the USA government’s definition (Feagin & Feagin, 176).*

*\*While in 1996, Black families were on welfare at about 3 times their percent of the USA population, the passage of the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act served to re-concentrate people of color on*

*the welfare rolls in even higher numbers. (Neubeck & Cazenave, 5, 180-183, 217-218)*

*\*\*African Americans are 79 % more likely than whites to live in neighborhoods where industrial pollution is suspected of posing the greatest health danger” (Bullard, 5).*

### **Finance**

*\*\*African Americans are denied mortgages and home improvement loans at twice the rate of whites” (Bullard, 6, 29). And with the targeting of Black communities for sub-prime lending, huge numbers of loans granted have been recognized as unsustainable. “African Americans were 4.1 times more likely to receive a high-cost loan than whites when buying a house“ (Bullard, 28). Furthermore, “subprime loans have gone disproportionately to women, and...African American and Latina women have the highest rates of subprime lending when compared to all other Americans” (Harris, 126). This predatory lending also results in extremely high foreclosure and bankruptcy rates for African American communities.*

*\*Immediately after the end of slavery ”In 1865, blacks owned 0.5 percent of the total wealth of the United States....African Americans owned only 1 percent of total wealth” by 1990 (Bullard, 7). Today, the average White family possesses 10 times the wealth that the average Black family holds (Oliver & Shapiro, 100).*

## **Violence**

*\*"Black teenagers are eleven times more likely to be shot to death and nine times more likely to be murdered than their white counterparts" (Massey, 317).*

*\*Blacks are killed by police at three times the rate of Whites (Hacker, 196).*

## **Prison**

*\*The legal system contributes significantly to internal colonial conditions. Blacks face markedly disproportionate prison sentences compared with Whites.*

**Two-thirds of the people in prison are now racial and ethnic minorities. For Black males in their twenties, 1 in every 8 is in prison or jail on any given day. These trends have been intensified by the disproportionate impact of the "war on drugs," in which three-fourths of all persons in prison for drug offenses are people of color.**

(quotations in original-The Sentencing Project-Disparity)

*"Black youths are 48 times more likely to be incarcerated than white youths for comparable drug offenses" (Edelman-2006, 134).*

*\*At least 21 percent of Black men 20-30 and not attending college are in jail or prison. And more African American men are in jail or prison than are enrolled in colleges and universities [as of 2000, 791,600 to 603,032]. (Bullard, 33) "A black boy born in 2001 has a one-in-three chance of going to prison in his lifetime" (Edelman-2007, 220). Marian Wright Edelman's Children's Defense Fund has labeled the American phenomenon of incarceration as the "Cradle to Prison Pipeline" (Edelman-2007, 219-227).*

*\*Approximately 49% of the American prison population is Black, vs. 13% of the overall population (Mauer). The Black prison population numbers about 1 million (Teller-Elsberg et al, 67).*

*\*There has been a sizable differential in sentences for drugs of choice: Blacks using crack cocaine have been sentenced to significantly more prison time than Whites caught with the same amount of powdered cocaine (Sentencing Project-Cocaine). The sentencing guidelines call for severe sentencing for crack cocaine possession [5 grams] of 1/100 of the amount that powdered cocaine [500 grams] would trigger.*

*\*Once subjected to the prison system as an adult, there are a multitude of restrictions on the ex-convict, from disqualification for student loans to limits on the types of jobs available.<sup>7</sup> While only a little over 6 percent of the American population, African American men are 36 % of the population that has lost the right to vote due to felony conviction (Bositis, 233). These restrictions push many ex-convicts back into the [illegal] underground economy in order to survive.*

## **Health**

*\*"Particularly striking are disparities in the occurrence of illness and death experienced by African Americans caused by higher rates of*

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<sup>7</sup> "Increasingly, laws and policies are being enacted to restrict persons with a felony conviction (particularly convictions for drug offenses) from employment, receipt of welfare benefits, access to public housing, and eligibility for student loans for higher education. Such collateral penalties place substantial barriers to an individual's social and economic advancement." (Sentencing Project, "Collateral Consequences")

*cardiovascular disease [CVD], cancer, stroke, diabetes, AIDS, and a shorter life expectancy” (Browne, 163).*

*\*Healthwise, Blacks live 5-7 years shorter lives than Whites (Hacker, 50)*

*\*Black Infant mortality is more than twice that of Whites (Black Americans, 52).*

*\*Black maternal mortality is almost four times that of Whites (Black Americans, 57).*

*\*HIV death rates for Blacks are 7 [men] to 13 [women] times greater than for Whites (Black Americans, 65)*

The complex of these statistics represents a set of conditions that have strong parallels in external colonies, and former colonies that continue to suffer neo-colonial domination. That external colonialism has existed, there is no dispute. But the concept, the existence of internal colonialism has been hotly debated. I define internal colonialism as being closely related to external colonialism based on features of subordination and oppression, not on majority/minority numbers ratios, geographic distance, capital export, foreignness, legal distinctions, or even voluntary vs. involuntary migration<sup>8</sup>. Internal colonialism is a system of inequality, much more than just an element/component/factor/facet/item/characteristic/feature/incidence of inequality.

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<sup>8</sup> Voluntary migration does not assume movement from a situation of [economic, political, or social] injustice to one of [economic, political, or social] justice, even though the migration may be an attempt to improve one or all of these conditions.

I argue that in the USA there are euphemisms used daily to describe internal colonialism without directly using a term of implied political criticism such as the concept of colony. “Ghetto,” “inner city,” and “reservation” have been expressions we very often employ to reference internal colonies on North American soil. There has been no dispute concerning the existence of ghettos and inner cities in America, or the areas “reserved” for the indigenous population --- but don’t call these areas internal colonies!<sup>9</sup>

Interestingly, we can speak of a colony of Italians, a colony of Dutch [even a colony of artists], yet if we attempt to use the word colony beyond a geographic and cultural association, and in conjunction with oppression and exploitation, somehow, a colony of African Americans becomes a disagreeable concept to some. Of course, many of the analysts fighting the definition of America’s Black ghettos as colonies are not Blacks in residence in these identifiable areas of concentrated exploitation and focused oppression.

The conception of internal colonialism used in this investigation is strongly rooted in the geographic definition of the term. But, let’s disregard the issue of geography for a moment. What Frantz Fanon identified as the de-colonization process appeared to be in full effect in the Black Community in the late 1960s. If there is any aspect of internal colony experience now extant, where is the psychological reaction to it today? While the older members of the Black

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<sup>9</sup> A ghetto is defined by some sociologists as “any urban area, often deprived, which is occupied by a group segregated on the basis of religion, colour, or ethnicity” (Abercrombie et al, 182). For others, there is even distaste with the use of the term “ghetto” and poor substitutes are chosen, such as “economically disadvantaged area.” However, this term does not capture the full meaning of “internal colony” or “ghetto.”



community may have passed through that de-colonization process, Black adolescents are new to the experience. As they mature, they begin to realize the racist nature of the society around them whether consciously or not. Their often angry response to this culture shock is currently channeled to a great degree by gangsta rap. My point is that if we have a psychological feature of being colonized that is continually re-occurring within USA ghettos, what is causing it, if not an internally colonized experience?

In arguing for the use of the concept of internal colonialism, some analysts have taken the “duck definition” approach. [“If it walks like a duck and acts like a duck and quacks like a duck .....”] Based on their personal experience, and in their “gut,” Blacks must be internally colonized: how else can such issues be explained? This study puts aside such subjectivity, however founded it might be, and presents an analytical framework to re-assert the application of Internal Colonialism Theory in contemporary sociological analyses.

### **Some Definitions**

I should mention a few definitional notes.

Since the term “Black” is the vernacular for African American, I capitalize it, as I do for the vernacular of Caucasian [i.e. “of European origin”], “White.” I do this since both are not colors but rather racial and cultural identities [or in the case of Blacks a defined nationality] within the USA.

I reference African Americans as African America to more fully engage the question of a Black nation versus the conception of Blacks as a national minority or oppressed nationality that is not a nation [in the Marxist or formal political definition]. I explore the definition of a nation in chapter 1 and its application to African America in chapter 3.

I have used “@” as a convention to include both sexes, Chicanos and Chicanas, in my references to the North Mexican population colonized by the American conquest of what is now known as the American Southwest.

I do make a distinction between all Internal Colonialism Theory and that which has been argued within the halls of academia, Academic Internal Colonialism Theory. I explore some non-academic roots of Internal Colonialism Theory in parts of chapter 1. However, beginning in chapter 2, I do use the terms Internal Colonialism Theory and Academic Internal Colonialism Theory interchangeably. Perhaps the original root of Academic Internal Colonialism Theory in sociology was C. Wright Mills’ comment to a seminar on development in Rio de Janeiro in 1959. There, he observed that “the developed sections inside the underdeveloped world – in the capitol and on the coast – are a curious sort of imperialist power, having internal colonies, as it were” (154).

## **Review Of The Chapters**

This dissertation examines Internal Colonialism Theory's importance to a comprehensive understanding of the oppression of African Americans still living in USA ghettos. Chapter One starts with a brief exploration of the conceptual roots of internal colonialism including assessments of the 180 year history of Black activist assessments of a "nation within a nation," the impact of the depression-era Marxist notion of a Negro nation, Latin American influences on Robert Blauner, and the pervasive effect of the Black Power Movement upon the development of American Academic Internal Colonialism Theory.

Chapter Two is a review of previous developments in Academic Internal Colonialism Theory applied to the USA. Here, I evaluate both of Blauner's seminal presentations, "Internal Colonialism and Ghetto Revolt," and Racial Oppression in America, as well as the major contributions of Robert L. Allen in Black Awakening in Capitalist America and Mario Barrera in Race and Class in the Southwest which analyze African American and Chican@ internal colonial conditions respectively.

In Chapter Three, I re-assess colonialism and move beyond Eurocentric characterizations to elaborate a Continuum of Colonialism. I evaluate the impact on internal colonies and their populations as a key part of a thorough understanding of this phenomena and its transformations. I also outline the positive and negative means of ending the internal colonial situations in the contemporary USA. I address the contradiction that the American Revolution supposedly decolonized America without changing the conditions for African Americans or Native Americans, and define internal colonialism as geographically based, disagreeing with the prevailing interpretation which contemplates the existence of diasporic African America as one collective colony. While summarizing the USA's course from settler colony system to today's inner cities of the

colonized, I explore African American class formation utilizing Marable's Racial Domains as context historically through to the present.

Chapter Four includes an analysis addressing flawed criticisms of internal colonialism from several quarters [including Bonilla-Silva, Omi & Winant, and Burawoy]. I also offer a framework for more rigorous future discussions and debates about Internal Colonialism Theory.

In Chapter Five, I elaborate how my approach to Internal Colonialism Theory quite practically fits harmoniously within several differing conceptualizations of American racial relations, including Bonilla-Silva's Racialized Social System Framework, Omi & Winant's Racial Formation Theory, and Critical Race Theory. I also note how Internal Colonialism Theory is complementary to World-Systems Theory.

In my Conclusion, after summarizing the previous chapters, I discuss three major international populations to which my assessment of Internal Colonialism Theory can be extended.

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## **CHAPTER ONE: A VERY SHORT HISTORY OF KEY ROOTS FOR THE CONCEPT OF INTERNAL COLONIALISM**

### **Overview**

There are several root sources for the application of the concept of internal colonialism to African America. Over the past 180 years, the popular conception of the Black condition in America as a nation within a nation has repeatedly been asserted by Black activist leadership, as part of the search for genuine solutions to pervasive Black oppression.

The earliest Marxist root was the call for national self-determination for the Negro nation in the Black Belt South by the Communist Party USA [CPUSA]. In addition to popularizing this idea among intellectuals and activists of the day generally, and laying groundwork for the idea's reemergence in the 1960s in nationalist programs, this dynamically changed the practice of the CPUSA during the 1930s, an intriguing predecessor to the accurate and timely application of internal colonialism theory to today's Black community contradictions.

A later developing influence was the surge of independence battles in the developing world, including African, Asian and Latin American liberation movements. The resonance of these struggles backgrounded the USA Civil Rights and Black Power movements.

And Robert Blauner cited several Latin American social analysts as influencing the creation of his version of what I am calling academic internal

colonialist theory. I briefly examine key theses of the theoretical writer among them, Pablo Gonzalez Casanova, especially relative to how these ideas impacted the relevance of Internal Colonialism Theory applied to African America.

### **African America: The Nation As a Race Project in Black Popular Thought**

Throughout African American history, some variation of the internal colonial analysis of the Black condition and situation has been embraced by a number of Black advocates for change. Komozi Woodard has noted that since the time of the Black Convention Movement of the 1800s, the conception of a Black nation has been frequently used:

***Resolved, 1<sup>st</sup>. That we do most cordially rejoice that the bond of brotherhood, which rivets a nation together in one dissoluble chain, has collected so large a portion of our people together to sympathize and commiserate the condition of our brethren recently from Ohio, now in Canada.***<sup>10</sup> –a resolution passed at a preliminary meeting to the 1830 Philadelphia national convention that began the national phase of the Black Convention Movement (italics in original-Aptheker, 102)

**We are a nation within a nation; - as the Poles in Russia, the Hungarians in Austria, the Welsh, the Irish, and the Scotch in the British dominions.** –from Martin Delany's 1852 appendix to his book The Condition, Elevation, Emigration and Destiny of the Colored People of the United States (Delany, 320)

**This people, free and slave, are ... becoming a nation, in the midst of a nation which disowns them, and for weal or for woe this nation is united. The distinction**

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<sup>10</sup> In 1829, a vicious White riot in Cincinnati resulted in half the Black community there fleeing to Canada. (Woodard, 14)

**between the slave and the free is not great, and their destiny seems one and the same. The black man is linked to his brother by indissoluble ties. The one cannot be truly free while the other is a slave. The free colored man is reminded by the ten thousand petty annoyances with which he meets of his identity with an enslaved people, and that with them he is destined to fall or flourish. We are one nation, then. If not one in immediate condition, at least one in prospects.**  
(Frederick Douglass in Foner, 246-quoted in Woodard, 17)

Thus the formulation of African America as a nation attained significant utilization among 19<sup>th</sup> century Black activists.

In January 1918, the burgeoning “New Negro” press as a group became pre-occupied with the idea of self-determination for Africa as well as Black America due in part to a foreign policy proposal by USA President Woodrow Wilson. In his widely noted “Fourteen “Points” address, a presentation of his World War I peace proposals before the U.S Congress, Wilson seemed to offer “the tantalizing prospect of official sanction for a postwar settlement based on application to Africa of the principle of self-determination.” (Hill, xiv-xv) This statement on Wilson’s part, appearing to endorse self-determination of subject populations, was seized upon by the Black press to argue against both Jim Crow segregation and colonialism in Africa. For example, activist Cyril Briggs<sup>11</sup> contended,

**With what moral authority or justice can President Wilson demand that eight million Belgians be freed when for his entire first term and to the present moment of the second term he has not lifted a finger for justice and liberty for over TEN MILLION colored people, a nation within a nation, a nationality**

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<sup>11</sup> Briggs editorialized this position repeatedly in the Amsterdam News and The Crusader. He also helped to found the African Blood Brotherhood in 1921.(Haywood, Hill)

**oppressed and jim-crowed, yet worthy as any other people of a square deal or failing that a separate political existence?**<sup>12</sup> (emphasis in original-Briggs in Amsterdam News as quoted in Haywood, 124).

Later, in November 1918, Briggs explained the purpose of his newly founded magazine: “*The Crusader* dedicates itself to the doctrine of self-government for the Negro and Africa for the Africans” (Hill, 75).

Of course, the Garvey movement’s burst upon the scene was perhaps the key major source of the developing anti-colonial consciousness of World War I era African America. Marcus Garvey, however, preached mass repatriation to Africa of Africa’s descendents then living throughout the Americas. His conception of essentially a mass form of Pan Africanism by-passed the conception of a national African America for the “nation” of Africa.

Still, in 1930, the left-wing group, League of Struggle for Negro Rights unequivocally embraced Black nationhood, stating

**We proclaim before the whole world that the American Negroes are a nation – a nation striving to manhood but whose growth is violently retarded and which is viciously oppressed by American Imperialism.** (as quoted from an organization document by Woodard, 27)

Indeed, for the 1930s and 1940s, Singh has argued:

**The use of the term ‘nation’ by black writers during this period signaled a kind of self-invention and communal imagination that differed from older uses of ‘race’ and pressed a claim to political sovereignty for blacks in the United States similar to that of colonial subjects throughout the world.** (quotes in original-50)

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<sup>12</sup> Cited by Haywood in Draper, 323. Draper quoted from “Liberty for All,” Amsterdam News, 1918 without full date



During this period, the radicalism of African American anti-colonialism became increasingly internationalist and mainstream. (Singh, Von Eschen) By 1945, NAACP President Walter White could be quoted as saying “the struggle of the Negro in the United States is part and parcel of the struggle against imperialism and exploitation in India, China, Burma, Africa, the Philippines, Malaya, the West Indies, and South America”<sup>13</sup> (Von Eschen, 9).

In his essay, “A Negro Nation Within the Nation,” W.E.B. DuBois analyzed the [1935] condition of African America and called for side-stepping Jim Crow segregation with a cooperative economic program “to work through inner cooperation, to found its own institutions, to educate its genius, and....to keep in helpful touch and cooperate with the mass of the nation” thus achieving “a new economic solidarity” (Du Bois-1935, 269).

In 1944, as W.E.B. Du Bois spoke in Haiti about the prospects of colonized peoples after the end of World War II, he asserted:

**There are manifestly groups of people, countries and nations, which while not colonies in the strict sense of the word, yet so approach the colonial status as to merit the designation semicolonial. The classic example of this status has long been China. There are other groups, like the Negroes of the United States, who do not form a separate nation and yet who resemble in their economic and political condition a distinctly colonial status.** (Du Bois-1985, 229)

Du Bois had been in the forefront of critiquing and opposing colonialism, beginning with his doctoral dissertation in 1895 (Rabaka, 92). In 1901, he made

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<sup>13</sup> Walter White, “Kinship of Colored Peoples: Peoples, Politics, and Places,” Chicago Defender, March 3, 1945; as cited in Von Eschen, 9)

his most enduring and prophetic quote on the subject: "The problem of the 20th century is the problem of the color line; the relation of the darker to the lighter races of men in Asia and Africa, in America and the islands of the sea." He brought his discussion of colonialism to the earliest issues of The Crisis<sup>14</sup> (Von Eschen, 9). And he helped launch five international Pan African Congresses in 1919 [Paris], 1921 [London, Brussels and Paris], 1923 [London and Lisbon], 1927 [New York] and 1945 [Manchester, England] (Du Bois-2007, 5, 149, 152-4). For this work, he has often been viewed as the father of Pan Africanism.

Du Bois articulated 12 characteristics common to the "colonial and semicolonial world." (Du Bois-1985, 230) Rabaka summarized them as:

- (1) physical and/or psychological violence**
  - (2) economic exploitation**
  - (3) poverty**
  - (4) illiteracy**
  - (5) lawlessness, stealing, and crime**
  - (6) starvation**
  - (7) death**
  - (8) disaster**
  - (9) disease**
  - (10) disenfranchisement**
  - (11) the denial of "cultural equality"**
  - (12) the denial of participation in political processes**
- (quotes in original-Rabaka, 87)

Indeed, Du Bois "was an intellectual-activist who critiqued colonialism throughout his eighty-year publishing career" (Rabaka, 86).

After World War II, during the early part of the Cold War, the voices tying African American collective interests to African and other developing world

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<sup>14</sup> Du Bois edited The Crisis for the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People [NAACP] from 1910-1934.

peoples' independence struggles were temporarily silenced. Du Bois and Paul Robeson, among others, faced US government revocation of their passports, court assaults on their patriotism, isolating propaganda campaigns and even physical attacks<sup>15</sup>. This repression of Du Bois, Robeson and other African American anti-colonial intellectuals and activists served to temporarily sever the conceptual connection between the African American battle against Jim Crow and emerging international independence movements (Von Eschen), muting publicly asserted analogies of African America to other colonized peoples for over a decade.

Between 1960 and 1966, "a new generation of leaders raised in black ghettos begin to identify the destiny of the black freedom movement with the fate of revolutionary nationalist movements in the Fidel Castro's Cuba, Mao Zedong's China, and Patrice Lumumba's Congo" (Woodard, 43). This new cohort of independent Black analysts and activists began re-popularizing the colonial analogy. They were energized and catalyzed in part by the analysis of writers like Franz Fanon, new African leadership, including Gamal Abdel Nasser [Egypt], Kwame Nkrumah [Ghana], Julius Nyerere [Tanzania], and Sekou Toure [Guinea] and a series of events, including the success of the Cuban Revolution, the achievement of independence by many African countries, and the Congo Crisis, which culminated in world wide demonstrations against the murder of Patrice

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<sup>15</sup> The political suppression of DuBois and Robeson was part of the McCarthy Era attacks on leftists across the USA. While neither one was a member of the Communist Party USA at that time, their unflinching support for anti-colonial struggles and opposition to all forms of injustice earned them the wrath of British and USA Cold Warriors.

Lumumba in the Congo (Woodard, 50, 52-58). Among those who wrote or talked about colonialism in America during this period were an ex-CPUSA member, a minister, and even a psychologist: Harold Cruse, Malcolm X, and Kenneth Clark.

Former CPUSA member Cruse stated plainly in 1962 his view that:

**From the beginning, the American Negro has existed as a colonial being. His enslavement coincided with the colonial expansion of European powers and was nothing more or less than a condition of domestic colonialism. Instead of the United States establishing a colonial empire in Africa, it brought the colonial system home and established it in the Southern states. When the Civil War broke up the slave system and the Negro was emancipated, he gained only partial freedom. Emancipation elevated him only to the position of a semi-dependent man, not to that of an equal or independent being.**

(Cruse-1968, 76)

Cruse devoted a subchapter to the topic “The American Negro: A Subject of Domestic Colonialism.”<sup>16</sup> In it, he persuasively argued that the situation of African Americans “is much more than a problem of racial discrimination; it is a problem of political, economic, cultural and administrative underdevelopment” (76). In presenting his case for the semi-colonial status of Black America, Cruse critiqued Marxist inadequacies and linked the emergence of Black nationalist movements in the USA to African America’s similarities with colonized countries. Key among his points was that the CPUSA misunderstood Garvey and “relegated the ‘national’ aspects of the Negro question to the ‘black belt’ of the South, despite the fact that Garvey’s ‘national movement’ had been organized”

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<sup>16</sup> This chapter, “Revolutionary Nationalism and the Afro-American,” was first published in Studies on the Left, vol.2, no.3, 1962.

first among northern urban Blacks who were a national minority, not a nation, in that location (quotes in original-Cruse-1968, 78). Cruse saw the sole differentiation of African Americans from other colonized peoples as being that Blacks in the USA were inside the country of their oppressors, close by those who dominated them (Cruse-1968 the, 77).

Clark, an African American psychologist and social worker was an expert witness in one of the suits later combined into *Brown v. Board of Education*. From his life-long work in New York City and his professional training, Clark fashioned a grim analysis of the Black urban ghetto whose symptomology echoed Du Bois' 12 characteristics of colonialism and semicolonialism - without a proposal for radical change. In Dark Ghetto, Clark argued, "The dark ghettos are social, political, educational and – above all – economic colonies" (Clark-1965, 11).

Speaking about colonialism at the Audubon Ballroom in Harlem, Malcolm X gave a popular rendition of this analysis, saying:

**You can't understand what is going on in Mississippi if you don't understand what is going on in the Congo. And you can't really be interested in what's going on in Mississippi if you're not also interested in what's going on in the Congo. They're both the same. The same interests are at stake. The same sides are drawn up, the same schemes are at work in the Congo that are at work in Mississippi. The same stake – no difference whatsoever.** (Malcolm X, 126)

Malcolm X was very clear that the USA "had colonized 22 million blacks here on this continent. Because we're just as thoroughly colonized as anybody else." (Malcolm X, 170) In the last year of his life, in nearly every speech he

gave, from the Audubon Ballroom to the Militant Labor Forums to addressing Mississippi Youth, Malcolm X discussed the issues of colonialism and neo-colonialism internationally as part of an understanding of African America's situation in the world. He repeatedly spoke of Lumumba and the Congo, the Cuban Revolution, and Chinese self-determination. Malcolm X named his newly founded organization the Organization of Afro-American Unity, in solidarity with the Organization of African Unity, a regional association of [then recently] independent African countries dedicated to African unity and solidarity and to the eradication of all forms of colonialism.

## TABLE I

### References by African American Activists' to Being Internally Colonized

| DATE | TERM                   | ACTIVIST  |
|------|------------------------|---|
| 1830 | Nation within a nation | National Black Convention Movement  |
|      | “                      | Martin Delany   |
|      | “                      | Frederick Douglass  |
| 1918 | “                      | Cyril Briggs  |
| 1935 | “                      | W.E. B. DuBois  |
| 1944 | Semi-colonialism       | W.E. B. DuBois  |
| 1962 | Domestic colonialism   | Harold Cruse  |
| 1967 | Internal colonialism   | Stokely Carmichael<br>[Kwame Toure], BPP,<br>ALSC, CAP, RAM, RNA,<br>SNCC |

By the time Blauner published “Internal Colonialism and Ghetto Revolt” in 1969, this new wave had expanded the embrace in the black community of a militant vision “of a radically dispersed black nation and the model of the internal colonization of America's black people” (Singh, 193).

### **Defining a Negro Nation As a Project in Marxist Thought**

As applied to African America in the 1960s and 1970s, internal colonialism theory also evolved in part from Marxism's engagement of what it terms the National and Colonial Questions.

Perhaps Lenin gave the best elaboration of the Colonial Question. Internationally, he critiqued the skew to the relations between oppressor and oppressed nations as closely related to the relations between classes within nations. In seeking equality of nations over the long term, Lenin, and later the Third International, argued for support of colonized countries' desires for independence from their respective occupying powers (Lenin-1970). Lenin actually viewed as class collaborators [with their own country's bourgeoisie] those who claimed the mantle of Marxism while supporting their own nation's colonial oppression. In “Imperialism, the Highest Stage of Capitalism,” he stated that through exploitation of colonized lands and peoples, the capitalists of oppressor countries achieved additional profits [beyond the exploitation of their own workers], and often used those profits to bribe “the labour leaders and the upper stratum of the labour aristocracy .....in a thousand different ways, direct and indirect, overt and covert” (Lenin-1920, 677). This stand of Lenin and the

Third International against colonialism anticipated the wave of post World War II independence movements by most of the world's peoples against direct European colonial domination.

The National Question was seen as a more complex matter. For Marxists, the exploration of the National Question applied to any given people allowed for debate about political solutions to their economic exploitation and social oppression. Are X people a nation? Does this oppressed nationality have the right to self-determination as a nation and can that nationality exist as a cohesive independent state? What are the differences between an oppressed nation and an oppressed national minority? What are the democratic demands of each? Both often raise the nationalist banner, but only a nation is equipped to exert self-determination up to and including separation from its oppressor country.

Josef Stalin was a member of an oppressed nationality [Georgian] under the Russian czarist dictatorship in 1913 when he rather incisively defined a nation:

**A nation is a historically constituted, stable community of people, formed on the basis of a common language, territory, economic life, and psychological make-up manifested in a common culture.**  
(Stalin, 60)

Stalin pointed out that nationalist demands initially arise from a lack of democracy for both the oppressed nationality and the oppressed nation. "Thus, *the right to self-determination is an essential element in the solution of the national question*" for an oppressed nation, while a much more genuine



democracy applied through regional autonomy best addresses the situation of an oppressed national minority (*italics in original*-Stalin, 79, 80). However, nationalism has not only great revolutionary potential – its powerful reactionary potential has been widely demonstrated throughout the 20<sup>th</sup> century. In fact, Stalin's huge compromises to Russian nationalism for the sake of forging the survival of the USSR before and during World War II are a continued subject of debate. Regardless of Stalin's major failings, his article from 1913, "Marxism and the National Question," is still the most widely accepted Marxist definition of a nation (Cruse-1968, 220; Franklin, 54n-55n; Robinson, 63).

The earliest USA-related application of the National Question was the call for self-determination for the Negro nation in the Black Belt South by the USA Communist Party [CPUSA].

During most of the 1920s, the CPUSA made weak and ineffective efforts to organize Black workers. For example, in 1925, with only about 50 Black members nationally, the party called for "full equality in the relationship between Black and white workers," and "the right to vote, abolition of Jim Crowism in law and custom, including segregation and intermarriage laws" (Haywood, 142, 188). Due in part to the leadership of Harry Haywood, an African American communist educated in the USSR, the CPUSA in 1929 and 1930 called for the right of self-determination for the Negro nation in the Black Belt South<sup>17</sup> (Haywood, 220-235).

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<sup>17</sup> The Black Belt south is a region of the USA where the population of African descent is much higher than their 13 % average throughout the country. The Black Belt is a crescent shaped area of mainly contiguous counties stretching from the eastern shore of Maryland down through Virginia, the Carolinas, Georgia, northern Florida, Alabama, Mississippi, Louisiana, western

This decision helped bring about a major positive change in the work of the Party among people of African descent, resulting in campaigns during the depression such as Sharecroppers Union organizing, and freeing the Scottsboro Boys. Tens of thousands of Blacks passed through the CPUSA during the 1930s.<sup>18</sup> But with the rise of McCarthyism, the CPUSA went into political retreat, “dissolved the Southern region of the Party” and eventually abandoned its position on self-determination for the Negro nation in the South (Haywood, 585, 624, 628). This change of position, essentially a return to their 1920s’ class-is-always-primary viewpoint, was followed by over a decade of organizational inactivity by the CPUSA on the Black freedom struggle. The CPUSA gave no organized political leadership to the civil rights movement during the 1960’s, the insurgency’s most cathartic period. Since then, the CPUSA has not been a significant leadership force in the fight for the political and economic liberation of African America.

My point here is to illustrate that the effective practice of a significant political organization was radically transformed at least in major part by a sweeping change in its analysis of the oppression of African America. Thus considerable influence and insight was achieved by analyzing the oppressed conditions of African America as substantially an internal colonial situation in the form of an oppressed nation. It is also a precursor for the accurate and timely

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Tennessee, western Kentucky, southern Arkansas, through to eastern Texas. The Black populace of these counties ranges from 20 to over 50 % of the total county population.

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Black\\_Belt\\_\(U.S.\\_region\)](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Black_Belt_(U.S._region)).

<sup>18</sup> See Black Bolshevik by Harry Haywood, pp. 326, 350, 548, and Communists in Harlem During the Depression by Mark Naison, pp. xvii, 3, 280.

application of internal colonialism theory to today's Black community contradictions.

### **Latin American Influences**

**The question facing the acceptance of a new category for the study of development, such as internal colonialism, is clear: How does this category serve to explain the phenomenon of development from a sociological point of view, in its behavioral context?**  
(Gonzalez Casanova, 28)

In his seminal works "Internal Colonialism and Ghetto Revolt," and Racial Oppression in America, Robert Blauner based his assessment of racial oppression in the USA and his decision to use the internal colonialism paradigm in part on the works of "a number of students of Indian-white and Indian-mestizo relations in Latin America," including Pablo Gonzalez Casanova, Rodolfo Stavenhagen, Julio Cotler, Andre Gunder Frank, Eugene Havens & William Flinn<sup>19</sup> (Blauner-1972, 75n2).

One of the earliest sociological writers on the internal colony concept, Gonzalez Casanova assessed some of "the common points between the new

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<sup>19</sup> In Racial Oppression, Blauner noted "**Representative statements are Pablo Gonzalez Casanova, 'Internal Colonialism and National Development,' Rodolfo Stavenhagen, 'Classes, Colonialism, and Acculturation,' and Julio Cotler, 'The Mechanics of Internal Domination and Social Change in Peru,' Studies in Comparative International Development, vol. 1, 1965, no. 4, vol. 1, 1965, no. 6, vol. 3, 1967-1968, no. 12. The Stavenhagen and Cotler papers are found also in Irving L. Horowitz, ed., Masses in Latin America (New York: Oxford University Press, 1970). See also Andre Gunder Frank, Capitalism and Underdevelopment in Latin America (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1967), and Eugene Havens and William Flinn, eds., Internal Colonialism and Structural Change in Columbia (New York: Praeger, 1970)." (Blauner-1972, 75n2) Blauner also cited significant influence from Carmichael & Hamilton [Black Power, especially chapter 1, "White Power: The Colonial Situation"], Albert Memmi [The Colonizer and the Colonized], and Harold Cruse [The Crisis of the Negro Intellectual<sup>19</sup> and Rebellion or Revolution] (Blauner-1972, 75n2, 105nn-108nn).**

nations of Africa and Asia and the old 'new nations' of America, where a dual society still exists and where there has been a process of development and of mobilization which has not yet been completed" (Gonzalez Casanova, 27). Between the pages of "Internal Colonialism and National Development," Gonzalez Casanova focused primarily on theory of both colonialism and internal colonialism, with a moderate discussion of specific application of internal colonialism theory to Mexico. In his discussion, he actively invited further study of internal colonial phenomena, and his appendix "includes a table with the different attributes and variables" of "anthropological findings on the Indians' position in Mexico." (Gonzalez Casanova, 33) The other authors noted by Blauner apparently took up Gonzalez Casanova's entreaty to make concrete assessments, mostly focused on practical applications of internal colonialism theory to specific countries [Stavenhagen-Mexico & Guatemala, Cotler-Peru, Frank-Chile & Brazil, Havens & Flinn-Columbia].

**"The concept of colonialism has been used, above all, as an international phenomenon which explains relations between different peoples and nations."**

(Gonzalez Casanova, 27)

Gonzalez Casanova asserted that "with the disappearance of the direct domination of foreigners over natives, the notion of domination and exploitation of natives by natives emerges" (27). Thus, after independence, at least major elements of colonial structure remained unchanged, continuing colonized relationships between the remaining colonizers [settlers] and the colonized.

Using Mexico as a case example, Gonzalez Casanova described how the economic exploitation of the indigenous population continued after independence much the same as before. He defined the roots of this internal colonialism as lying in the oppressive conditions and structural inequalities that are carried forward either unchanged or intensified from the original colony to its newly independent situation. Gonzalez Casanova tied this phenomenon, repeated in many newly independent nations, to the class structure of these formerly colonized societies. He applied this to all of the culturally plural countries of the Americas, north and south. Gonzalez Casanova actually cited C. Wright Mills as a source for the concept of “internal colonies” (Gonzalez Casanova, 28; Mills, 154).

Gonzalez Casanova distinguished the phenomenon of internal colonialism from traditional urban-rural class structure and domination as well as class structure within industrial society. He pointed out that while traditional rural-urban class structure “resembles foreign colonialism because cultural differences between the city and country are acute,” that

**internal colonialism stands apart because cultural heterogeneity is historically different. It is the result of an encounter between two races, cultures, or civilizations, whose genesis and evolution occurred without any mutual contact up to one specific moment.**

And

**The colonial structure and internal colonialism are distinguished from the class structure since colonialism is not only a relation of exploitation of the workers by the owners of raw materials or of production and their collaborators, but also a relation**

**of domination and exploitation of a total population (with its distinct classes, proprietors, workers) by another population which also has distinct classes (proprietors and workers).** (parentheses in original-33)

Finally, Gonzalez Casanova argued that “*internal colonialism* is above all structural. It is bound to the policy of the national government.” (italics in original-36)

Thus from 1965-1970, Gonzalez Casanova, Stavenhagen, Cotler, Frank, Havens and Flinn identified and defined internal colonialism as a widespread phenomenon in Latin America. In particular, Gonzalez Casanova located the development of internal colonialism and its attendant class structure as tangent with plural or dual economy societies which successfully seek independence from their formerly dominant colonizing countries and which then proceed to reproduce or even intensify the unequal relations between culturally differing populations within the same national space.

### **Internal Colonialism In Modern Black Activist Thought: The Internal Colony Concept Comes of Age**

With the rise of the Black Power movement, an internal colonial analysis of the African American condition became a widespread viewpoint among African American activists. Building on the aforementioned history, Stokely Carmichael [aka Kwame Toure] & Charles Hamilton in their classic Black Power advocated viewing pervasive institutional racism as a form of colonialism, stating “black people in this country form a colony” (5). They also pointed out:

**The economic relationship of America's black communities to the larger society also reflects their colonial status. The political power exercised over those communities goes hand in glove with the economic deprivation experienced by the black citizens.**

**Historically, colonies have existed for the sole purpose of enriching, in one form or another, the "colonizer"; the consequence is to maintain the economic dependency of the "colonized."**

(Quotes in original-Carmichael & Hamilton, 16-17)

And Robert L. Allen asserted in 1969, "that black America will continue to be a semi-colony of white America, although the colonial relationship will take a new form" (Allen-1990, 20). He predicted "that black America is now being transformed from a colonial nation into a neo-colonial nation; a nation nonetheless subject to the will and domination of white America" (Allen-1990, 14).

Carmichael & Hamilton drew on the profound work of Black psychiatrist Frantz Fanon. Fanon was born in Martinique, medically trained in France, and politically matured in Algeria where he explored a Marxist analysis of colonial revolt against European imperialism, focusing on how the colonized were affected. In his classic book, Wretched of the Earth, Fanon generalized developments in the Algerian battle for independence against French colonialism in a manner that was highly applicable to other anti-colonial struggles. He narrated the paths of the natives' mindsets through various stages of the independence struggle.

He noted that before the start of an anticolonial rebellion:

**The colonized man will first manifest this aggressiveness which has been deposited in his bones against his own people. This is the period when the niggers beat each other up and the police and magistrates do not know which way to turn when faced with the astonishing waves of crime in North Africa.** (Fanon-1963, 52)

Throughout Wretched, Fanon narrated the story of the both the thoughts and actions of various sectors [peasants, laborers, lumpen proletariat, trade unionists, intellectuals, nationalist party leadership] of the colonized in great detail yet very transferable to other colonial situations.

Particularly applicable to USA Blacks were Fanon's penetrating observations about the dynamics of the process of decolonization. He described the almost identical phenomenon here in the USA which we label [the psychological aspects of] the Black power movement. [In South Africa, it was known as the Black consciousness movement.] As if describing developments in the years after the call for Black power in 1966, Fanon wrote:

**whatever may be the headings used or the new formulas introduced, decolonization is always a violent phenomenon. At whatever level we study it – relationships between individuals, new names for sports clubs, the human admixture at cocktail parties, in the police, on the directing boards of national or private banks – decolonization is quite simply the replacing of a certain "species" of men by another "species" of men.** (Fanon-1963, 35)



Fanon commented [in 1961]<sup>20</sup> on an aspect of the USA situation as a reflection of the resort to arms by anticolonial freedom fighters in some developing countries:

**Already certain minority groups do not hesitate to preach violent methods for resolving their problems and it is not by chance (so the story runs) that in consequence Negro extremists in the United States organize a militia and arm themselves.<sup>21</sup>**

(Fanon-1963, 80)

In his book Nation Within a Nation, Komozi Woodard explained that in the 1960s “a new generation of Black Power organizations developed” in the wake of the over 585 rebellions in Black communities across the country (Woodard, 71). He continued:

**Despite their differences, at the outset they shared some fundamentals, and their political trajectories established a common pattern. Each organization claimed to be the true heir of Malcolm X; each organization concluded that Black America suffered as an internal colony of the United States; and each demanded black self-determination.** (Woodard, 71)

Most 1960s and 1970s Black radicals and nationalists actively drew upon either Fanon [and other “anti-colonial” Marxists<sup>22</sup>] or the old CPUSA Black belt

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<sup>20</sup> Wretched of the Earth was first published in France in 1961 under the title Les Damnés de la Terre.

<sup>21</sup> This is most likely a reference to Robert Williams, a Monroe North Carolina NAACP community organizer who in the late 1950s, created a National Rifle Association Chapter with Black membership to organize a community defense force against Klu Klux Klan night-riding. In 1961, in the course of some civil rights battles, he was forced into exile in Cuba and later China. (Cruse-1967, 351-354; Allen-1990, 28-30)

<sup>22</sup> I use the terms “anti-colonial Marxists” and “anti-colonial Marxism” to describe what some have labeled as “Third World Marxism”. Because of confusion surrounding the interpretation of the concept of the “Third World” (Horgan), anti-colonial Marxism is a more precise and more accurate description of the contributions of Mao ZeDung, Ho Chi Minh, Frantz Fanon, Amilcar Cabral and other Marxists from developing countries who led post World War II independence movements by most of the world’s peoples against direct colonial domination from 1930 to 1975.

nation theory for their formulations. The Revolutionary Action Movement [RAM] (Ahmad), the Student Non-violent Coordinating Committee [SNCC] (Carmichael, 532-3; Sellers, 254), the Republic of New Africa [RNA] (Woodard, 73), African Liberation Support Committee [ALSC] (Woodard, 173-180), the Congress of African People [CAP] (Woodard, 160-172), as well as the Black Panther Party [BPP] used a variation of the internal colonialism paradigm in their programs for African American liberation. In 1968, the Black Panther Party stated in its 10 point Platform and Program:

**10. We want land, bread, housing, education, clothing, justice and peace. And as our major political objective, a United Nations-supervised plebiscite to be held throughout the black colony in which only black colonial subjects will be allowed to participate for the purpose of determining the will of black people as to their national destiny. (Foner, 3-4; Hayes & Kiene, 162)**

The range of Black nationalist programs of that period included considering the core of the Black Belt south [South Carolina, Georgia, Alabama, Mississippi and Louisiana] as the base territory of the [American] Black nation [RNA], and viewing urban Black communities collectively as a colony or semi-colony [BPP & SNCC]. In fact, it can be argued that the rise of anti-colonial Marxism was a precedent to the formalization of internal colonialism theory in USA academia during the late 1960s and 1970s.

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Most of this foreshadowed Robert Blauner,<sup>23</sup> who presented one of the strongest arguments for the use of internal colonialism theory in academia with his writings in 1969 and 1972.

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<sup>23</sup> I address Blauner as a key influence since he has been treated as a foundational initiator of internal colonialism theory in sociology. Robert L. Allen's book, Black Awakening in Capitalist America, while published the same year [1969] as Blauner's first article "Internal Colonialism and Ghetto Revolt," was both more important than Blauner's work yet also widely ignored [much like key works of W.E.B. DuBois and Oliver Cox].

## CHAPTER TWO: THE DEVELOPMENT OF ACADEMIC INTERNAL COLONIALISM THEORY IN USA SOCIOLOGY

### Overview

Above, I reviewed some roots of Internal Colonialism Theory which extend almost 180 years into the past. Consequently, I identify the eventual embrace of Internal Colonialism Theory since the late 1960s by some academics as the advent of “academic Internal Colonialism Theory.” This terminology serves both to distinguish the academic development of Internal Colonialism Theory from previous iterations and to connect this perspective with its precursors.

The development of Internal Colonialism Theory in American Sociology was lead by Robert Blauner’s efforts beginning in 1969 with his definitive article, “Internal Colonialism and Ghetto Revolt” [along with his 1972 book, Racial Oppression in America]. Also in 1969, Robert L. Allen presented a colonized people’s academic perspective on internal colonialism in his Black Awakening in Capitalist America. In 2005, Allen re-visited his original analysis in his Black Scholar article, “Reassessing the Internal (Neo)Colonialism Theory.” Mario Barrera, together with Carlos Munoz, & Charles Ornelas, connected with Blauner’s inclusion of Chican@s as an internally colonized people within the USA in their 1972 piece, “The Barrio as an Internal Colony.” Later, Barrera further analyzed the colonization of Chican@s in his book, Race and Class in the Southwest. Together, the books of Allen, Barrera, and Blauner represent the

key modern sociological statements to date of academic Internal Colonialism Theory applied to the USA.

### **Robert Blauner and Academic Internal Colonialism Theory**

Robert Blauner presented one of the strongest arguments for the use of Internal Colonialism Theory in academia with “Internal Colonialism and Ghetto Revolt,” which he also refined as a chapter in his 1972 book Racial Oppression in America. Blauner maintained that during the 1960s, “I found that general sociological theory, as well as the more specific ‘theories’ in the race relations field, was pointing in the wrong direction” (quotations in original-Blauner-1972, 2). Blauner disputed the post-WWII generally accepted American paradigm of the superiority of European sociological thought, along with its attendant focus on the analogy of immigration and the economic reductionist perspective (Blauner-1972, 3-11). Instead, Blauner’s framework of choice was that of colonialism (12). In part, Blauner based his assessment of racial oppression in the USA and his decision to use the internal colonialism paradigm on the works of several Latin American authors previously discussed, as well as on those of Carmichael & Hamilton [Black Power, especially chapter 1, “White Power: The Colonial Situation”], Albert Memmi [The Colonizer and the Colonized], and Harold Cruse [The Crisis of the Negro Intellectual]<sup>24</sup> and [Rebellion or Revolution] (Blauner-1972, 75n2, 105n-108n).

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<sup>24</sup> The Crisis of the Negro Intellectual was first published in 1967.

Acknowledging that “the thesis that racial minorities are internal colonies of American capitalism is not original” (Blauner-1972, vii), Blauner applied Internal Colonialism Theory to African America, and beyond to Mexican Americans and Native Americans as well.<sup>25</sup>

**The third world perspective returns us to the origins of the American experience, reminding us that this nation owes its very existence to colonialism, and that along with settlers and immigrants there have always been conquered Indians and black slaves, and later defeated Mexicans-that is colonial subjects on national soil.**  
(Blauner-1972, 52)

He argued that the American

**colonial system brought into being races, from an array of distinct tribes and ethnic peoples. It was European conquest and colonial wardship that created “the Indian,” an identity irrelevant to men who lived their lives as Crow, Sioux, or Iroquois. And as a result of slavery the “Negro race” emerged from the heterogeneity of African ethnicity.**  
(quotations in original-Blauner-1972, 12-13)

Blauner viewed an external colony [in contrast to an internal colony] as “a geographically external political unit” with exploitation of the land - including raw materials - by the colonizing power, where “a formal recognition is given to the difference in power, autonomy, and political status.” While he also spoke of geographic separation as an external colonialism feature, his sense of geographic separation implied an overseas separation. (Blauner-1972, 83)

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<sup>25</sup> Blauner’s article, “Internal Colonialism and Ghetto Revolt” only focused on African American internal colonization. In his book, *Racial Oppression in America*, Blauner explicitly applied his internal colonial analysis to Native Americans and Chican@s as well.

However, Blauner was also focused on features common to both external colonialism and internal colonialism. He identified what he called the *colonization complex*, consisting of at least four or five elements:<sup>26</sup>

1. “a forced, involuntary entry” of the colonized into a dominant civilization
2. the constraint, transformation and destruction of indigenous culture [including “the values, orientations and ways of life”] by the colonizing power
3. the management and manipulation of the colonized by dominant power representatives
4. racism, defined as “a principle of social domination by which a group seen as inferior or different in alleged biological characteristics is exploited, controlled, and oppressed socially and psychically by a superordinate group”
5. “the separation in labor status between the colonizers and the colonized” (84).

Taking this colonization complex into account, Blauner argued:

**Colonization outside of the traditional colonial structure has its own special conditions. In America the group culture and social structure of the colonized are less developed and less autonomous; the colonized are a numerical minority; and they are ghettoized more totally, yet are more dispersed geographically, than people under classic colonialism.**

(Blauner-1972, 89)

But, instead of seeing the so-called “inner city” as the geographic locus of the colony itself, Blauner viewed the Black ghetto as merely “a major device of

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<sup>26</sup> Blauner’s fifth element, labor status separation, was listed in a footnote of his “Internal Colonialism and Ghetto Revolt” chapter since this issue was explored in another essay also published in Racial Oppression in America in 1972.

black colonization.” (85) I see this approach as related to an imprecise definition of the African American colonial existence: was/is all of Black America a single colony, or not? With Blauner, this remained an unaddressed question.

Blauner also linked colonized status to the dependence of American culture and social structure on highly racialized definitions of [White and other] identity, privilege, social order, social mobility and social control. “It is a general law of colonial racial systems that the oppressing group has a license to kill members of the ‘inferior’ race without serious likelihood of punishment.” (Blauner-1972, 39) Robert Allen has pointed out that “the Constitution decreed that slaves were not whole human beings, and a separate system of laws was relied upon in meting out ‘justice’ to any unfortunate slave who provoked the ire of his master” (quotations in original-Allen-1980, 9). For White Americans, the exercise of this license to kill African Americans has extended from slavery through the Jim Crow Era and still exists today in modes such as excessive police violence.

In his chapter, “Colonized and Immigrant Minorities,” Blauner discussed the continuum of experiences of various American ethnic groups:

**Colonialism and immigration are two major means by which heterogeneous or plural societies develop. In the case of colonialism, metropolitan nations incorporate new territories or peoples through processes that are essentially involuntary, such as war, conquest, capture, and other forms of force or manipulation. Through immigration, new peoples or ethnic groups enter a host society more or less freely. These are ideal-types, the polar ends of a continuum; many historical cases fall in between. In the case of American racial minorities, some groups clearly fit the criterion for colonial entry; others exemplify mixed types.**  
(Blauner-1972, 53)



With their forged people-hood and systemic history of oppression, African Americans, [along with Native Americans and Chican@s] most closely fit Blauner's internal colonial model.

In his recent work Still the Big News, Blauner pointed out that, "Every time an over-optimistic social commentator celebrates the eclipse of race and heralds the arrival of the color-blind society, racial divisions and the tensions they breed rise up phoenix-like from the ashes" (Blauner-2001, vii). Blauner continued,

**Much more surprising is the way that European societies in the recent past have been ravaged by the differences of ethnicity, nationality, and religion, which have been at the center of the political struggles that have led to secession, war, and even genocide. Sociologists were not prepared for these developments, in large part because the great European pioneers of social theory [Marx, Weber, Durkheim, Simmel] believed that racial, ethnic, national, and religious loyalties would eventually disappear in modern industrial societies, because capitalist societies are organized into classes and therefore have no room in the long run for such parochial bonds of allegiance.**

(Blauner-2001, vii)

James B. McKee in Sociology and the Race Problem asserted that most sociologists were caught napping by the Civil Rights and Black Power movements because their paradigms for viewing race relations were constructed assuming maintenance of the [then segregated] status quo (1-9). He also cited Blauner for critiquing conventional sociology's major mis-understanding of racialized America (10, 11). Yet McKee avoided any detailed exploration of internal colonialism's validity in apprehending African America's situation, only

stating that Blauner's "call for a new theoretical perspective was in terms too radical for most of the politically moderate sociologists of race relations" (339).

Recently, Stephen Steinberg characterized Blauner's Racial Oppression as "an icon-shattering work that challenged the race relations paradigm, and in doing so, made conceptual sense of the nation's racial crisis" (Steinberg, 16). Steinberg also credited Blauner with beginning "a canon of anti-hegemonic discourse" on the subject of American racial relations (19). Yet, "these bold and revelatory conceptions that cut through layers of obfuscation and shed merciful light on the forces tearing American society apart" did "not a paradigm make." While scholars of color often applauded his efforts, unfortunately among so-called mainstream sociologists, instead of embrace and celebration, Blauner was treated more like Don Quixote – dismissed or disbelieved - and was even blocked for promotion twice in his own department. (Steinberg, 92)

### **Debating Blauner's 2001 [Partial]<sup>27</sup> Recantation**

While we do need to note that Blauner has "given up" on using Internal Colonialism Theory for his current writings, we must examine his rationale for doing so.<sup>28</sup> Blauner admitted, "I became disaffected with, even distrustful of, *all* sociological theory" (emphasis in original-Blauner-2001, x) He elaborated:

**During the mid-1970's I stopped using the colonial analogy. At the time, I was still enough of a Marxist to believe that a good theory must point the way to a**

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<sup>27</sup> In his Still the Big News, Blauner did not directly refute his past analyses using internal colonial theory, stating, "I no longer use the idea of internal colonialism in these recent writings." (p. x)

<sup>28</sup> As Steinberg has pointed out, "It goes without saying that Blauner has a right to revise and update his thinking, but this doesn't mean that he didn't have it right the first time!" (Steinberg, 165n148)

**political practice that resolves the contradiction the theory helps us understand. There was a practical solution to overseas colonialism; the colonizers could be sent back to Europe. And for the most part they were. But I could find no parallel solution for America's domestic colonialism. Such a disconnect between theory and practice suggested to me an inherent flaw in the conceptual scheme itself."**

(Blauner-2001, 189)

Can Blauner be saying that the American settler colony no longer exists because Native Americans have not been able to expel the settlers and their descendents? Has the colonized experience and character of African America ceased because Marcus Garvey's plans for repatriation to Africa were unsuccessful? Surely the Idi Amin approach to colonial relations is not the only model for "successfully" ending direct colonialism. Instead of seeking such narrowly cast "solutions," we should examine the possibilities for how internal colonialism can be ended both positively and negatively. Actually, the very persistence of American racial relations problems points to the potential analytical validity of using internal colonialism as a major component of the American racialized social structure.

I hold that the intractability of solution for American domestic colonialism demands long term insight, repeated assessments and re-assessments, and complex solutions, not merely a try-it-once-and-switch approach. While Blauner has given up using his 1972 perspective, yet the conditions to which his original analysis referred have changed incrementally, not systematically. Thus I strenuously disagree with the notion that the lack of an immediate, simple solution to USA internal colonialism invalidates the soundness or legitimacy of

the concept. In fact, because of this form of colonialism's domestic nature, it is highly likely that the abolition of American internal colonialism will require the sweeping transformation of American society --- a change which seems quite far from the horizon at this juncture.

Academic Internal Colonialism Theory is a construct which has drawn on Marxism for analytical insight concerning the relations of social oppression, not as an automatic recipe for quick and neat political solutions. In fact, much of western Marxism written in the 20<sup>th</sup> century was observational [created and used for analytical purposes], not transformational<sup>29</sup> [created and used for making change].

Blauner continued, "It was also a time when I felt disenchanted with all theory.....Without the crutch of an overarching theoretical framework, my new formulations came from immersion in first hand research" (Blauner-2001, 189) Thus Blauner admitted feeling pre-disposed to setting aside Internal Colonialism Theory. It may be that the unusual difficulties that he encountered as a result of his advocating Internal Colonialism Theory [and other issues in his life] eventually took their toll and helped erode his confidence in his own elaboration (Blauner-1993). Empirical analyses, when pitted against theory [instead of being used complementarily with it] often leave out important historical and even contemporary analytical context. I suggest that the context provided by Internal

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<sup>29</sup> A detailed discussion of these analytical categories for assessing the range of Marxist analysis can be found in my unpublished paper on "The Field of Marxisms."

Colonialism Theory is still vitally important for thorough and accurate contemporary comprehensive assessments of the state of African America.

Let's keep in mind that Blauner's contribution is not the creation of Internal Colonialism Theory but rather the advanced application of it in academic circumstances concerning societal conditions in the USA. The validity of this use of Internal Colonialism Theory should stand or fall on whether it actually represented, or still represents, conditions in the real world. I hold that it has, and continues to, for some peoples, including African Americans, Mexican Americans, and Native Americans in the USA.

Actually, Blauner himself argued in 1972 that "If the analyses of this book have any enduring value in the face of such volatility, it will be because I have succeeded in interpreting the specific crises of the late 1960's and early 1970's in terms of persisting patterns in American social structure" (vii). In fact, the concept of internal colonialism has also been applied in a number of non-American situations.

Part of the lingering residue of conventional colonialism was the application of old colonial boundaries without regard to many centuries of often conflict-filled relations between various peoples. Also, colonial policy frequently made use of these conflicts and even exacerbated them as part of governing strategy by the colonizing power. Often, independence did not change these disparate power relations, as Gonzalez Casanova noted. Thus, international applications of Internal Colonialism Theory to related conditions internationally

have been very wide-ranging, from the Inuit of Canada to the Miskitu of Nicaragua, and to Palestine and Israel (Pino-Robles, Queen’s News Centre, Zureik). In fact, internal colonialism has been used as an important concept in analyzing highly disparate power and social relations within a number of former colonies [or neo-colonies] – Azerbaijan, Bangladesh, Estonia, Indonesia, Iran, Pakistan, Sri Lanka (Asgharzadeh, Haque, Mettam & Williams, Sivaram, Smith & Ng) – among others.

### **Black Awakening in Capitalist America**

**At the time of writing this article<sup>30</sup>, unfortunately, I did not have available Robert L. Allen's Black Awakening In Capitalist America [Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1969], which analyzes ghetto revolts in terms of a conception of internal colonialism similar to my own. Allen, however, deals much more thoroughly with the history and the dynamics of the black movement, class divisions in the black community, and the neocolonial strategies of corporate capitalism.**

(Blauner-1972, 82n)

Allen’s ground-breaking and foresight-full book has presented the most incisive application of internal colonialism<sup>31</sup> theory and African America to date. Released almost simultaneous to the publication of Blauner’s article [later chapter] “Internal Colonialism and Ghetto Revolt,” Black Awakening assessed internal colonialism from a very different angle from that of Blauner. Allen presented a colonized people’s academic perspective on the subject. Where

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<sup>30</sup> “Internal Colonialism and Ghetto Revolt” first appeared in *Social Problems*, 16, no.4 (Spring 1969), 393-408, and was later revised as a chapter of Blauner’s Racial Oppression in America, pp.82-110.

<sup>31</sup> The term Allen used was “domestic colonialism.”

Blauner perhaps felt awkward as a White radical enunciating a framework<sup>32</sup> about oppression of African American people, Allen wrote about African America as an organic intellectual, a scholar who maintained strong roots in his community, including cultivating connections with then current struggles and issues. He asserted

**The fact of black America as a semicolony, or what has been termed *domestic colonialism*, lies at the heart of this study. It is at one and the same time the most profound conclusion to be drawn from a survey of the black experience in America, and also the basic premise upon which an interpretation of black history can be constructed.** (italics in original-2)

Allen provided a succinct historical background about Black Americans which exposed their many commonalities with the colonized from external colonial experiences, including African Americans' long history of embracing various formulations of Black nationalism. Allen's analysis assessed several key features of African American oppression historically, through to the 1960s, as well as the then newly developing feature of neocolonial control of colonized Black America. In appraising the internal colonialism framework, he stated

**It is the central thesis of this study that black America is now being transformed from a colonial nation into a neocolonial nation; a nation nonetheless subject to the will and domination of white America. In other words, black America is undergoing a process akin to that experienced by many colonial countries. The leaders of these countries believed that they were being granted equality and self-determination, but this has proved not to be the case.** (13-14)

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<sup>32</sup> Although stating that he was writing from a Marxist perspective, Blauner did not include any class analysis of Black ghettos, treating all Blacks as a collective group of oppressed persons.

Allen advanced academic Internal Colonialism Theory in two major ways: 1]. he documented the major move from direct to indirect rule of Black American colonial subjects, delineating some of the neocolonial tools being used for managing internally colonized Black communities, and 2]. he evaluated the various class interests within the African American community that operated in contention around that oppression. Allen also clearly defined the Black bourgeois and petty bourgeois class interests which were hijacked by corporate imperialism to carry out these internal colonial management functions.

Historically, Allen noted,

**as with other colonial peoples, the colonized blacks were prevented from developing a strong bourgeois middle class which could engage in widespread economic activity and compete with the white masters. Instead, the blacks were restricted to providing unskilled labor in the production of raw materials [e.g. cotton] for “export” to northern mills and foreign customers.** (11)

Thus, in Allen’s class schema, since the American Civil War, the major classes within the Black community have been primarily Black workers along the with a very weakened Black bourgeoisie which he defined as including the Black petty bourgeoisie as well as Black capitalists. Because “colonial rule is predicated upon an alliance between the occupying power and indigenous forces of conservatism and tradition,” this Black bourgeoisie was constantly pressed to collaborate and attempt to exert control over the majority of the African American population (11). For many decades, this arrangement reduced the need for White America to use physical force to maintain domination and control.



However, with segregation also strongly limiting the Black bourgeoisie, demands for change as represented by the Civil Rights and Black Power movements retained a vigorous cross-class appeal.

But as the urban rebellions of the 1960s raged, Allen saw that in between these uncompromising demands for ending systemic Black oppression, and the militaristic right-wing response of more cops, more jails, more weapons and tougher laws,

**there has arisen a third force: the corporate capitalist, the American businessman. He is interested in maintaining law and order, but he knows that there is little or nothing to gain and a great deal to lose in committing genocide against the blacks. His deeper interest is in reorganizing the ghetto "infrastructure," in creating a ghetto buffer class clearly committed to the dominant American institutions and values. (194)**

Much of Black Awakening is devoted to revealing details of how "a program of domestic neocolonialism is rapidly advancing" (17). Created out of fear of the economic and social consequences for the USA of the Black rebellions of the 1960s, "this program was formulated by America's corporate elite-the major owners, managers, and directors of giant corporations, banks, and foundations which increasingly dominate the economy and society as a whole" (17). This project "to co-opt the black power movement" was dependent on the corporatists connecting with a "new, militant black middle class which became a significant social force following World War II" (17-18). One of the program's goals was "the creation of a class of capitalists and corporate managers within the black community." Why? "A black capitalist class would serve thereby as a

means of social control by disseminating the ideology and values of the dominant white society throughout the alienated ghetto masses.” (212)

In addition to heightening ideological manufacture, an expanded “new” Black bourgeoisie was needed to directly supervise the institutions of government – including welfare, education and public safety [police, courts and prisons] – where mostly White functionaries had previously operated. For this, “The black student is crucial to corporate America's neocolonial plans. It is the educated and trained blacks who are slated to become the new managers of the ghetto, the administrators of the black colony.” (262)

Allen not only documented corporate capitalism’s use of “the rhetoric of black nationalism in helping itself establish neocolonial control of the black communities.” He also examined “how some black militant groups have used the nationalist sentiment of the black masses to advance the class interests of the black bourgeoisie.” (212)

Strategically, Allen viewed this approach as a neo-colonial strategy very similar to that carried out by the USA and Europe in the developing world. He noted that “in the long run, this strategy cannot help but intensify class divisions and class conflicts within the black communities” (245).

Allen’s 2005 article reprised his book’s analysis some 36 years later. In it, he explored how his neo-colonial model has since evolved within African America in several areas, including economics and politics. Allen noted two distinct economic trends: “Black middle-class professionals are being integrated into

corporate America” even as “a growing impoverished, urban population, sometimes called the black underclass, has been largely structured out of the economy and faced with growing hardships – chronic unemployment, homelessness, violence, police brutality, drugs” (Allen-2005, 5). Allen further noted that independent Black capitalists have become more and more marginalized, as many White corporations have begun assertively courting the Black community as a market. Within the last 20 years, “the portion of Black disposable income secured by Black businesses dropped from 13.5% to 7%” a loss of almost 50% (Allen-2005, 6). The actual successful program for the Black bourgeoisie has been the creation of “the black ‘MBA class,’ that is, African-Americans professionally trained in business management and high tech skills, who were hired in technical, professional, and managerial positions by many large corporations” (quotations in original- Allen-2005, 6). Of course, this training is also quite useful for administration of the internally colonized.

And the advances in electoral politics, from a few hundred elected officials “in the early 1960s to more than 9,000” by the 1990s, have been overshadowed by

**the policy of the white power structure, chiefly through the Democratic Party, to keep black elected officials politically and economically dependent upon, and therefore accountable to, the Democratic Party, rather than being accountable to the black community.**

(Allen-2005, 6)

While mainly confirming his analysis and predictions of 1969, in this article, Allen did discuss a new analytical nuance - his statement of comfort with

the concept of coloniality of power, as elaborated by Grosfogel. “I would note that ‘coloniality of power’ and what I have termed *internal colonialism* are closely related, if not identical concepts” (quotations and italics in original-Allen-2005,10). [I will fully address this issue in Chapter 4.]

However, while many sociologists have referenced or argued with Blauner, Allen’s work has received much less attention.<sup>33</sup> Intriguingly, Allen’s application of Internal Colonialism Theory to African America seems to have been mostly avoided by sociological critics intent on attacking Internal Colonialism Theory. But most interesting is that some critics’ claims of the weaknesses [in Blauner’s application] of Internal Colonialism Theory are clearly rebutted by the focus of Allen’s work (Bonilla-Silva-2001, Burawoy, Moore, Omi & Winant-see Chapter 4). Of course, some of both the ignoring and dismissal reactions are typical of “mother country” colonial scholarship – the refusal by mainstream intellectuals to acknowledge distinctive and insightful work by intellectuals from the colonized population when that work does not embrace the status quo, especially on the question of race. These forms of response denial were most systematically directed at the ground-breaking sociology of W.E.B. Du Bois and Oliver Cox. (Steinberg, 12)

Still, regardless of the actual level of his acknowledgment among mainstream sociology, Allen advanced the development of academic Internal

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<sup>33</sup> While viewing the ISI Web of Knowledge, I found some 360 citation sources for Racial Oppression in America, and another 129 for Blauner’s Social Problems article “Internal Colonialism and Ghetto Revolt.” In contrast, Robert Allen’s Black Awakening in Capitalist America drew a total of 52 citations, and Mario Barrera’s Race and Class in the Southwest garnered some 186 citations in the same index.

Colonialism Theory through his assessment of the neocolonial stage of internal colonialism for African America as well as the through demonstrating the necessity for clear class analysis as a key part of apprehending internal colonial conditions.

### **The Chican@s as an Internally Colonized People**

The use of Internal Colonialism Theory by academics has included the article by Mario Barrera, Carlos Munoz, & Charles Ornelas [“The Barrio as an Internal Colony”] and later Barrera’s Race and Class in the Southwest. These works further deepened the sociological application of Internal Colonialism Theory in the USA.

In their 1972 article Barrera, Munoz and Ornelas explored the relevance of Internal Colonialism Theory to the Chican@s of the Southwest USA. In analyzing their internally colonized status, Barrera et al noted Chican@s have become mainly an urban people. They further asserted that

**the barrio is best perceived as an internal colony, and that the problem of Chicano politics is essentially one of powerlessness. Powerlessness, in turn, is a condition produced and maintained by the dominant Anglo society through a number of mechanisms, some of which we have begun to identify. We consider the contemporary situation to be a form of internal neocolonialism, characterized by the predominance of relatively subtle and indirect mechanisms. (466-7)**

While they recognized that, “To be colonized means to be affected in every aspect of one's life: political, economic, social, cultural, and psychological,” in their article, Barrera et al focused their gaze on the political element. (467)

After critiquing the relatively few studies then extant of urban Chican@ politics and the main framework explicitly or implicitly behind those studies [the assimilation/accommodation model], Barrera et al outlined their own internal colonial assessment, utilizing Gonzales Casanova and Blauner as foundational references. However, I view as flawed Barrera et al's focus on the legal status of the colonized as a determinant of internal or external colonialism. They asserted, "a colony can be considered 'internal' if the colonized population has the same formal legal status as any other group of citizens and 'external' if it is placed in a separate legal category" (483). While justifying their use of this explanation, Barrera et al acknowledged its awkwardness, noting that "this definition would classify such groups as the native people of the Union of South Africa as an external colony," of that Boer-dominated society (483). Furthermore, in my opinion, under this definition, in the USA, the segregationist South would have qualified as an external colony [or external set of colonies!], while the outlawing of Jim Crow would have transformed that/those colony/colonies into internal ones.

Barrera et al did briefly explore some basic political dimensions of Chican@ internal colonization, including their laundry list<sup>34</sup> of Anglo society's

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<sup>34</sup> Barrera et al summarily document the mechanisms of political domination faced by Chican@s both historically and more recently as:

- force & outright repression, from Texas Rangers to the KKK, including nonviolent reprisals
- disenfranchising mechanisms, including "poll taxes and literacy tests"
- exclusion of Chican@s from political parties and governmental bodies
- Gerrymandering

tactics for maintenance of internal colonialist relations. Unfortunately, almost half of their article was taken up with detailing and then critiquing the assimilation/ accommodation-framed political studies mentioned earlier. Thus, the most significant analytical work on Chican@ internal colonization would have to be achieved by another work.

Mario Barrera's 1979 book, Race and Class in the Southwest: A Theory of Racial Equality was a qualitatively more significant application of Internal Colonialism Theory to the Chican@ experience. In my view, this ambitious and complex work was much more in-depth and consistently sociological than his co-authored article of seven-years previous. Essentially, Barrera wrote Race and Class as a work of historical sociology using internal colonialism as its key framework. The tome was an excellent historical account of the evolution of the Southwest as a seized colony and the experience of Chican@s as they became subordinately integrated into the newly developing economic fabric of the region. In addition to providing deep historical background and detailed context as he assessed the internal colonization of the Chican@ people, Barrera offered his own blended theory of racial inequality, combining Internal Colonialism Theory with labor market segmentation and class fraction conceptions.

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- changing the rules – movement to city-wide elections after Chican@s won district elections
- “divide and conquer” tactics
- both representative and policy tokenism, “when outright exclusion of Chicanos is not possible”
- cooptation
- “racist mobilization of bias,” from symbols in the media to Chicanos' internalization of prevailing prejudices (488-9)

Barrera defined the root of Chican@ inequality in the USA as beginning with the pre-Mexican American War economic penetration [of that area now known as the Southwest] by large scale economic interests which promoted the drive to war. He argued, “The conquest of the Southwest can only be understood as an expression of a dynamic and expansive American capitalism” (5). After the war, this assortment of “land speculators, developers, and large companies,” including “mining companies, transcontinental railroads, and large agricultural concerns,” helped to systematically displace most Chican@s from their land over the next 80 years (5, 18-33).

Barrera indicated that after the conquest of northern Mexico by the USA in the 1840s,

**during the remainder of the century a social and economic structure crystallized in the Southwest in which Chicanos and other racial minorities were established in a subordinate status. It is into this structure that succeeding generations of Chicanos have been fitted during the 20th century, with some modifications.”** (7)

Barrera asserted that most of the displaced Chican@s became part of this structure which he labeled a colonial labor system.<sup>35</sup> He offered this definition: “A colonial labor system exists where the labor force is segmented along ethnic

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<sup>35</sup>Barrera identified five aspects of this colonial labor system:

- \* *labor repression* – including debt peonage
- \* *the dual wage system* – paying different wages to minority and nonminority workers doing the same job
- \* *occupational stratification* – job segregation by ethnicity
- \* *reserve labor force* – unemployed until needed, keeping wages low and strikes less effective
- \* *buffer role* – concentrating layoffs on the most vulnerable workers (40-48).

These characteristics appear to be applicable to many other colonized experiences as well.



and/or racial lines, and one or more of the segments is systematically maintained in a subordinate position” (39).

Barrera’s assessment was that this particular

**system of colonial labor appears to have been based on racial rather than ethnic distinctions. On the subordinate side were all the racial minorities in the southwest at the time: Native Americans, Asians, Blacks, and Chicanos and other Latinos. On the other side were all the White groups, regardless of ethnicity.**  
(49)

However, the Chican@ people became the main object of this southwestern colonial labor system.

Although by the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, most Chican@s were in the colonial labor force, according to Barrera, overall, Chican@s were spread among four economic sectors or “general economic situations,” whose membership fluctuated according to the state of the economy (53-7):

*-peripheral-* At the end of the Mexican American War, the majority of Chican@s were in this sector, but this number steadily diminished, with fewer and fewer remaining as rural economic outsiders, engaged mainly in subsistence farming and share cropping, until it ceased to exist by the early 20th century.

*-colonized-*The ranks of the colonial labor system greatly expanded as subordinated Chican@ workers were “incorporated into the new capitalist economy of the Southwest,” quickly becoming the majority of the Chican@ work force, including both regional natives and new Mexican immigrants (56, 76).

*-marginal-*Some displaced workers were unable to find a place in the colonial labor system, including dispossessed rural farmers and chronically unemployed urban artisans and skilled workers.

*-integrated-*So few Chican@s “were incorporated into the Anglo capitalist economy on an equal or nonsubordinate basis” during the 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries that Barrera admitted their existence as a sector to be merely “theoretically possible” (57, 76).

While Barrera found these four sectors very useful in explaining levels of Chican@ economic integration in the overall USA economy up through to the present day, I see a problem with his approach. Barrera claimed that “Chicanos in the marginal sector ... are outside the class system in that they have no organic connection to the system of production” (217).

While these sectors are certainly valid categories *in relation to Barrera’s colonial labor system*, I point out that membership in any of these sectors is not outside the actual class system of the overall regional economy, however tangential they may be to the main means of production. For example, the peripheral sector was a rural farm economy not yet integrated into the colonial labor system of which Barrera spoke. Also, instead of a class analysis of the Chican@ lumpen proletariat and/or underclass, he assigned such “workers” to his marginal sector. In my view, the reserve army of labor most definitely has a relation to the economy, but certainly not a comfortable one.

Barrera also introduced the concept of class segmentation into the field of internal colonial analysis, thus showing Chican@s both in connection with and facing division from the classes of the dominant society. He did this by applying the concept of class fractions to segmented labor market theory.<sup>36</sup>

Barrera averred,

**A subordinate class segment in which the segmentation is based on race and or ethnicity can be called a *colonized class segment*. Existence of a colonial labor force in the Southwest in the twentieth century is a reflection of the fact that Chicano [and other racial minority] workers have constituted such a colonized class segment.** (italics in original-101)

I found it interesting that, without explicitly refuting the title thesis of his co-authored 1972 piece, Barrera, in Race and Class, seemed to avoid using clearly specific geographical references to define internally colonized Chican@s other than to reference the entire Southwest. For example, in his book he stated, “Internal colonialism is a variety of colonialism in that it shares with classic colonialism essential characteristics [ethnic/racial subordination, the serving of certain interests] even though there is no clear geographic distinction between the metropolis and colony” (195). This appears to conflict with “The Barrio as an Internal Colony.”

In his section on the varieties of internal colonialism, Barrera distinguished two camps using the internal colonial analysis: non-class differentiated and class

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<sup>36</sup> Barrera defined class segment as “a portion of a class which is set off from the rest of the class by some readily identifiable and relatively stable criterion, such as race, ethnicity, or sex, and whose status in relation to the means and process of production is affected by that demarcation” (101).

differentiated. While Barrera and Allen clearly embrace the class differentiated approach, Carmichael and Hamilton, Prager, and Staples<sup>37</sup> presented the non-class differentiated variety, with Blauner “somewhat ambiguous on the question” (202).

In Barrera's conception of internal colonialism, an internal colony is made up of the subordinate segments of all economic classes [capitalist, professional-managerial, petty bourgeois, and working classes - Barrera's class categories] of the dominated group. Applied to Chican@s, he argued,

**The various Chicano subordinate segments have certain interests in common, their colonial interests, and certain interests in opposition, their class interests. The different Chicano segments also constitute an internal colony in the sense that they share a common culture, at least in part, and this may be reflected in a shared interest in such things as bilingual-bicultural programs in schools. (216)**

According to Barrera, among the Chican@s, colonial interrelationships and commonalities [common across class connections] include economic relationships, common geographical space, common discrimination experience, common language and culture and “a sense of a common historical origin and destiny [the concept of ‘La Raza,’ etc]”. (quotes and brackets in original-103)

So, as each Chican@ class is subjected to structural discrimination, their ties with the Chican@ internal colony are reified. Yet Barrera also offered that a small but increasing minority of Chican@s are becoming substantially integrated

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<sup>37</sup> Jeffery Prager [“White Racial Privilege and Social Change: An Examination of Theories of Racism”] and Robert Staples [“Race and Colonialism: The Domestic Case in Theory and Practice”] offered two articles on internal colonialism without, in my opinion, significantly advancing its theoretical foundation.

into the economy on a non-subordinate basis, since “the segmentation line has been weakening at least since the Second World War” (217).

Barrera concluded,

**For the foreseeable future, the politics of the Chicano community can be expected to revolve around both class and colonial divisions in a complex manner whose outlines we can only dimly perceive in the current period of confusion and redefinition. (219)**

Thus Barrera identified the establishment of a colonial labor system in the Southwest as well as used economic sectors and class segments as means of achieving a complex understanding of the internally colonized experience of the Chican@ people.

## **CHAPTER THREE: A RE-ASSESSMENT OF COLONIALISM AND INTERNAL COLONIALISM**

### **Overview**

In reviewing the context of past analyses of internal colonialism, I found that the very definition of the general idea of colonialism seems to be subject to dispute. Without a clear, commonly accepted definition of colonialism, the concept has been the focus of many competing explanations. Therefore, in this chapter, I start by summarizing the range of definitions and offering my own inclusive version. I present some lesser-noted features of colonies which have importance for this discussion. I also outline the continuum of colonization among external and internal colonies, as well as direct and neo- colonies.

After defining an internal colony, I explore some distinctions between an internally colonized nation and an internally colonized oppressed nationality [that is not a nation]. I review some important common features of internal colonies and note a few examples, concentrating on the USA. Since I view part of the process of identifying the continuing existence of internal colonies as delineating the prescription for their abolition, I outline three approaches to terminating the existence of a colony: assimilation, ethnic cleansing and positive abolition.

And after noting that, with the birth of the USA out of the settler colony system, American internal colonies were also born, I propose a framework for

exploring African American internal colonization by offering a class analysis within my adaptation of Manning Marable's Four Racial Domains.<sup>38</sup>

### **Redefining the Concept of Colonialism**

**A focus on colonialism is essential for a theory that can integrate race and racial oppression into a larger view of American social structure. (Blauner-1972, 12)**

There are a variety of definitions of colonialism. Some are expansive enough to include the phenomenon of internal colonialism, while others implicitly or explicitly exclude the possibility of colonialism being internal to the dominant country or power. Thus, some critics of Internal Colonialism Theory have created or chosen definitions of colonialism which exclude acknowledgement of internal colonies.

Below is a review of an array of definitions of colonialism. I have followed that with my own definition which is inclusive of all the other definitions noted. All of these definitions do accurately describe at least some colonialism or some elements of colonialism.

When I entered "definition of colonialism" in the Google search engine, the first result was "Web definitions of colonialism" with links to 14 differing descriptions of colonialism:

- 1. Forced change in which one culture, society, or nation dominates another.**
- 2. This is the practice or policy of ruling other countries and keeping them dependent on the ruling country.**

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<sup>38</sup> Marable labeled his four domains as "the racial domain of American Negro slavery" (2002, 37), "the racial domain of Jim Crow segregation" (2002, 41), the racial domain of the ghetto (2002, 44-46), and "the New Racial Domain" (2006, 215).

3. Colonialism refers to the practice of occupying land outside of the main nation-state (colony), but under the rule (direct or indirect) of the main nation-state.
4. Control by a country over a colony it has claimed ownership of.
5. Foreign rule imposed upon a group of people, such as the European domination of much of Africa.
6. Control/authority over one culture/society by another. Controlling culture is usually external, controlled usually native.
7. The appropriation of lands, goods, and human resources by foreign nations.
8. Colonialism was an era when the Western and European powers of the world ruled smaller, poorer nations such as those in Africa, Latin America, and the Caribbean.
9. Control of overseas colonies by imperial powers; a foreign power rules a large group of people; the foreign power uses the colony for wealth and has more advanced technology than the people of the colonies.
10. The domination of one country over another by controlling the colony's economic and political systems
11. The rule by a sovereign state over an alien people and land which involves formalized political and legal control, an asymmetrical economic relationship that favors the colonizer, and a social system in which the colonizers are dominant over the colonized.
12. Exploitation by a stronger country of weaker one; the use of the weaker country's resources to strengthen and enrich the stronger country.
13. Colonialism is the extension of a nation's sovereignty over territory beyond its borders by the establishment of either settler or exploitation colonies in which indigenous populations are directly ruled, displaced, or exterminated.
14. The colonial domination policy pursued by the powers of Europe, from the second half of the XIX century to the years following World War II. A colonial system. (underlines added-see Appendix II)

Of these 14, the definitions #1, 4, 6 and 11 do not contain any explicit rigidly limiting geographic reference. Definitions # 8 and 14 are characterized only by specifics [which, for example, exclude the occurrence of Japanese colonialism]. The words "foreign," "beyond its borders" or "another [country]," etc., are the main geographic references in the general parts of # 2, 3, 5, 7, 10, 12, and 13, while #9 stipulates colonies as being "overseas" phenomena. These definitions were drawn from such diverse web sites as Oregon State University's Anthropology Department, the British Broadcasting Corporation, the Gender and Health Collaborative Curriculum Project, University of Colorado's Geography



Department, Union Aid Abroad, History Teacher Dot Net, Princeton University's Cognitive Science Laboratory, and Wikipedia, among others.

The Penguin Dictionary of Sociology (1994), which considered imperialism as identical with colonialism, characterized imperialism as “the imposition of the power of one state over the territories of another, normally by military means, in order to exploit subjugated populations to extract economic and political advantages” (Abercrombie et al, 209).

In contrast, A Dictionary of Sociology, published by Oxford University Press, used the specific as its definition of colonialism: “The establishment by more developed countries of formal political authority over areas of Asia, Africa, Australasia, and Latin America” (Scott & Marshall), whereas the Concise Oxford Dictionary of Politics stated a more generic definition: “The policy and practice of a strong power extending its control territorially over a weaker nation or people” (McLean & McMillan).

And Burawoy insisted that colonialism is “the conquest and administration by a ‘metropolitan country’ of a geographically separate territory” which provides a repatriated surplus to the controlling metropolitan country (quotations in original-Burawoy, 546n6).

Even Robert Blauner offered that

**Colonialism traditionally refers to the establishment of domination over a geographically external political unit, most often inhabited by people of the different race and culture, where this domination is political and economic and the colony exists subordinated to and dependent upon the mother country. (Blauner-1972, 83)**

In fact, Roland Wenzlhuemer's essay in The Encyclopedia of the Developing World, offered several instructive clarifications concerning the conception of colonialism. Noting the frequent conflation of imperialism and colonialism, Wenzlhuemer defined colonialism as including the entire epoch of exploration, colonization and expropriation by European countries of the rest of the world from the late 15<sup>th</sup> century through World War II. He differentiated "preimperialist colonialism" from the [capitalist driven] imperialism of the last 100 years of this epoch:

**While preimperialist colonialism aimed at the formal or informal domination of diverse overseas territories for primarily economic reasons, imperialism intended to create a politically homogenous and centrally administered colonial empire.** (355)

Wenzlhuemer delineated 3 kinds of colonies<sup>39</sup> – base colonies, colonies of domination, and settler colonies. Although he framed these types as distinct, I

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<sup>39</sup> Wenzlhuemer described these 3 kinds of colonies as :

**1. Colonies of domination:** A minority of colonizers exerts direct rule over an indigenous majority; most colonizers are civil administrators, soldiers, or merchants; there is only a small number of settlers; and colonies of domination are mostly the result of military conquest and are subject to economic exploitation. Typical examples include British India, French Indochina, British Egypt, or the American Philippines. The Spanish America is a less typical example because the European immigrants mixed with the indigenous people and a distinct Creole elite started to emerge.

**2. Settlement colonies:** A significant number of colonizers take up permanent residence in an [allegedly] empty or sparsely populated country; in most cases, the indigenous population has not yet developed sedentary agriculture and has either been pushed back by the newcomers or employed on their newly established holdings. In this situation, settlers usually came to stay and often quickly developed a taste for increased autonomy and/or self-government; such colonist societies frequently neglected the rights of the indigenous population or completely displaced it. Typical examples include North America, Australia, Algeria, and South Africa. The

would argue that, as applied by European countries during the last 600 years, actually they often functioned as differing evolutionary stages of colonization.<sup>40</sup> A base colony was set up for mercantile and logistical reasons, frequently with local population cooperation. Various local and dominant country conditions often allowed its evolution to a more invasive form, a colony of domination. A very successful colony of domination sometimes developed into a settler colony, dependent in part on labor conditions/availability, accessibility to natural resources, and the settlers' intensity in pursuing land confiscation, ethnic cleansing and genocidal policies, as well as the purposes which the colony served for its so-called "mother country.". While some colonies may have taken a century or more to move from one stage to the next, other colonies encapsulated two or more stages within a very short period, and still others skipped a stage or remained un-evolved. For example, while 16<sup>th</sup> century England strove to establish base colonies in the Americas, by 1607, the English began establishing settler colonies in North America. (Wenzlhuemer, 357)

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**plantation colonies of the Caribbean [and Brazil] are less typical examples because the colonizers imported vast numbers of African slaves as plantation labourers, and a new social structure emerged.**  
**3. Base colonies:** A merchant company or a country establishes a small [mostly coastal] foothold in a foreign country. Initially, these stations were merchant bases and served logistical purposes. Such colonies often had to rely on the goodwill of the "host" country; later, some of these holdings also served as centres of "informal control" over regions not formally under colonial domination. Base colonies primarily attracted merchants and service personnel from all around the world; typical examples include Malacca, Batavia, Singapore, Hong Kong, and Aden.

(Wenzlhuemer, 355-6)

<sup>40</sup> In addition, this basic framework lacks precision when actually applied. Wenzlhuemer himself identified discrepancies within the definitions of two of the noted three types [see text of footnote 2].

And Jurgen Osterhammel, in Colonialism: A Theoretical Overview, defined colonialism as “

**a relationship of domination between an indigenous [or forcibly imported] majority and a minority of foreign invaders. The fundamental decisions affecting the lives of the colonized people are made and implemented by the colonial rulers in pursuit of interests that are often defined in a distant metropolis.**  
(16-17)

Thus, among numerous European and White American analysts, there is no consensus on the definition of what constitutes colonialism or how to define a colony.

In 1967, Black intellectual activist J. H. O’Dell argued:

**A people may be colonized on the very territory on which they have lived for generations or they may be forcibly uprooted by the colonial power from their traditional territory and colonized in a new territorial environment so that the very environment itself is “alien” to them. *In defining the colonial problem it is the role of the institutional mechanisms of colonial domination which are decisive.* Territory is merely the stage upon which these historically developed mechanisms of super-exploitation are organized into a system of oppression.<sup>41</sup> (emphases in original-8)**

Other analysts of color also saw colonialism differently from some of the more narrow definitions mentioned above. For example, as previously noted, W.E.B. DuBois described the 12 “characteristics of colonial peoples”<sup>42</sup>. Elia

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<sup>41</sup> I argue that the formulation “super-exploitation” is flawed. The concentration of mechanisms of exploitation and oppression with a geographic focus, whether super-exploitative or not, is what defines an internal colony. This is further discussed later in this chapter.

<sup>42</sup> Rabaka summarized these characteristics as:

**1] physical and/or psychological violence, 2] economic exploitation, 3] poverty, 4] illiteracy, 5] lawlessness, stealing, and crime. 6] starvation, 7] death, 8] disaster, 9] disease, 10] disenfranchisement, 11] the denial of “cultural equality,” 12]**

Zureik also embraced a broader, more inclusive view of colonialism in his assessment of The Palestinians in Israel: A Study in Internal Colonialism (5-6).

Robert Allen declared, “colonialism can be defined as the direct and over-all subordination of one people, nation, or country to another with state power in the hands of the dominating power” (Allen-1990, 8). Mario Barrera used the definition:

**Colonialism is a structured relationship of domination and subordination, where the dominant and subordinate groups are defined along ethnic and/or racial lines, and where the relationship is established and maintained to serve the interests of all or part of the dominant group.** (193)

And in Colonialism/ Postcolonialism, Ania Loomba stated “colonialism can be defined as the conquest and control of other people’s land and goods”. She continued, “But colonialism in this sense is not merely the expansion of various European powers into Asia, Africa or the Americas from the sixteenth century onwards; it has been a recurrent and widespread feature of human history.” (Loomba, 8) In her long list of colonialisms, she included the Roman, Mongol, Chinese, Aztec, Inca, Vijaynagar, and Ottoman Empires as well as the Crusades and Moorish invasions of Europe. She did point out, commenting on more recent European colonialism, that “these European travels ushered in new and different kinds of colonial practices which altered the whole globe in a way that these other colonialisms did not” (9). Of course, this more expansive framework makes more clear the narrowness in several of the previously cited definitions.

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**the denial of participation in political processes**

(quotes in original- Rabaka, 87)

Because of the widespread ambiguity outlined above, for this analysis, I offer my own definition of colonialism and its various components. ALL of the above definitions either explicitly or implicitly describe the use by a dominating power of force against, conquest of, domination over, and/or expropriation of a distinct territory and people, resulting in political subjugation and economic exploitation.

Using this as a starting point, I define **colonialism** as the seizure and/or exertion of control over, and management by a dominating nation-state of a distinct territory, and the people within that territory, for the purpose of acquiring available labor power and/or natural resources for use by the dominant power. There are several constituent elements that make up any such arrangement. There is the **colonial territory**, over which control is exercised from the outside. The colonial territory consists of two components – settler-confiscated land and the land on which the **colonized** reside. The colonial territory, and any indigenous or imported population [the colonized] are subjected to the control of the **colonizing power** [the mother country or dominant governing influence exercising political and economic rule from outside the colony's borders], and the settlers or **colonizers** [who are usually, at least in part, the administrative instrument of the colonizing power].

In reviewing all the 2001 Random House Webster Unabridged Dictionary meanings of words utilizing colony as a root, I note that there is *not one word* which represents the oppressed people[s] of a colony [not colonial, colonialism,

colonialist, colonist, colonizationist, colonize, colonizer, etc.] (Random House, 405-406). In use for at least 50 years<sup>43</sup>, the “colonized” [as a noun] is apparently a word invented by the oppressed to describe themselves.<sup>44</sup> [Interestingly, the images in Memmi’s chapter, “Mythical Portrait of the Colonized” bear a very striking resemblance to the stereotypes attached to African Americans by White Americans since the time of slavery (Memmi, Bogle).]

Despite the above-noted highly pro-colonizer slant of the meanings of the word “colony” and its derivatives, the definitions of a colony and of a colonized population are especially important. A **colony** is an identifiable territory which is politically and economically controlled from outside its borders. The colony’s subjugated population [the colonized] does not control its own destiny and is generally subjected to [geographically] concentrated economic exploitation and political oppression. The colonized may be indigenous people[s] whose existence in that territory preceded the creation of that colony, or an imported population forced into the territory against their will, or a combination of the two.

### **Some Less-Noted Yet Important Features of Colonies**

In this reassessment of colonialism, I found some lesser noted features of colonies that merit discussion. Here, I distinguish between seized and forged colonies and the general composition of their population. I briefly explore

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<sup>43</sup> This is as dated from the publication of *The Colonizer and the Colonized* by Albert Memmi in the original French in 1957 as *Portrait Du Colonisé, Précédé Par Portrait Du Colonisateur* .

<sup>44</sup> Albert Memmi contrasted the two conflicting portraits in his book, *The Colonizer and the Colonized*. Fanon also used the term “colonized” in his books *A Dying Colonialism*, *Toward the African Revolution*, and *Wretched of the Earth*.

questions of size limits and direct vs. indirect rule, as well as the colony role in an economic division of labor, the determination of colonies using conditions vs. administrative structures, and the paths from colonial rule to the ending of colonialism.

### **Seized and Forged Colonies**

In analyzing colonialism, we can find at least two kinds of colonies as objects of comprehensive oppression and exploitation: **seized** colonies and **forged** colonies. Seized colonies, territories taken from the control of the indigenous population, would include most of Europe's former colonial possessions [including Angola, Cameroon, Congo, Ghana, India, Indochina, Madagascar, Morocco, Nigeria, Tanzania and Uganda]. In the USA, historically, Native American peoples and Chicanos have been treated as colonized peoples in their own lands, lands that were seized.

A forged colony is a seized colony with a "successful" ethnic cleansing policy toward the people[s] indigenous to the territory and also a repopulation policy. The depopulation caused by ethnic cleansing typically resulted in several options for the colonizers, including significant expansion of settler land confiscation [for individual and commercial use] and the importation of workers [including indentured servants, prisoners, slaves] to supply a significant portion of the colony's laboring population. [Examples of forged colonies include Argentina, Brazil, Guyana, Uruguay, and most islands of the West Indies].



At the time of their kidnapping from Africa, African slaves were from quite varied peoples and cultures speaking numerous languages. Once sold into the collection of colonies called the New World, they became forged into a single oppressed nationality in each of the settler colony systems<sup>45</sup> in which they were enslaved. African Americans thus became such a forged colonized population.

### **Size**

Since Europe's colonial territories had no set size, a colony can be smaller than a self-determining nation. The subject areas designated by European countries as colonies range from the Pitcairn Islands [about 44 sq. km] to Angola [about 1,250,000 sq. km]. The requirement for designation as a European colony or colonial territory seems to have been an external territorial unit [of any size] under the political and economic control of the colonizing country.

### **Direct vs. Indirect Rule**

In a colony, direct representatives of the colonizing power may or may not be present<sup>46</sup>. During external direct colonialism, settlers or colonizers usually administrate the colony, although often aided by a stratum of the colonized. Under indirect control, or neo-colonialism, the colonizing power [or a competing power] strikes up an arrangement with a section of the colonized to administrate the colony to the economic advantage of the dominant power.

### **The Economic Division of Labor**

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<sup>45</sup> Within North America, the 13 colonies which became the USA were a single colony system administrated by England.

<sup>46</sup> The case for indirect rule was heavily debated in Imperial Britain, especially between the World Wars.

As part of the division of labor which they perform for their colonizing power, all colonies are exploited for their resources, including their available labor power. Typically, the colony's economy is significantly distorted and subordinated to that of the dominating power. According to McMichael, "The colonial division of labor, as cause and consequence of economic growth, exposed non-European cultures and ecologies to profound disorganization, given the precipitous way in which colonies were converted into supply zones of labor and resources" (32).

A given colony may [or may not] possess raw material resources of value to the colonizing power. And, when evaluated in isolation, the colony might not be highly profitable for its colonizing power. *The utility and "profitability" of a colony may lie in the division of labor that it performs for the economic relations of the controlling power, or even in the political capital the colony establishes for the dominating power.*

### **Determining Colonies by Conditions vs. Structure**

I distinguish between the conditions of colonialism and the [administrative] structure of colonialism. It is the conditions of colonialism where there is most similarity between the internal colonies of the USA and conventional external colonies. Historically, colonialism has been mainly recognized by Europeans based on administrative function. There seems to be no other consistency in its use, since when we speak of [former] colonies, we must include Hong Kong, Angola and the Pitcairn Islands. Thus, 13 different rebelling settler colonies

came together to form one country [USA]. Yet the British conquered, combined, and annexed various states, cities, peoples and language groups to compress together the single colony of Nigeria. So administrative function appears to be the sole common structural denominator. Yet for the colonized, the situation of their lives is the key determinant of their sentiment for self-determination, for a fundamental change in their life circumstances.

### **From Direct Colonialism to Neo-Colonialism vs. Independence**

There are two main paths from direct colonial rule for an external colony: complete political and economic independence vs. maintaining some form of dependent relations. Among most of the former European colonies inhabited by the vast majority of the world's formerly [directly] colonized peoples, the almost invisible but binding strings of neo-colonialism have replaced the shackles of direct colonialism.

For many an external colony, the arrival of independence was a watershed event. At least [the illusion of full] political independence has been achieved, even though gross economic inequalities and problematic dominant political arrangements remain. These conditions are typically maintained or even intensified by the implementation of neo-colonialism. Neo-colonialism is the removal of direct control by the colonizing power and the subsequent leveraging of political elites by the former colonizing power to accomplish essentially similar political and economic domination as prior to independence.

Frequently the economy of a neo-colony is highly distorted, such as Ghana's one crop economy pre-and post independence (Nkrumah). So the neo-colonial stage of a colony is not the end of the colonized situation of its inhabitants. There remains the battle to transform the neo-colonial situation.

A former external colony that reaches full political and economic independence achieves the end of all colonial conditions [both colonial and neo-colonial]. Full economic independence includes the establishment of mature economic decision-making for the whole of the colony's people, not just for the interests of excess profits to multinationals and/or the local elites. And full political independence of a colony or neo-colony functions primarily for interests inside of and native to that former colony, including broad implementation of inclusive social and economic justice goals and programs for the majority of the former colony's inhabitants.

On Table 3a, I have outlined a Continuum of Colonization from colony to neo-colony to end of colonialism, including both external and internal colonialism.

## **Table II - A Continuum of Colonialism**

### **DEFINITIONS:**

**Colonialism:** The seizure and/or exertion of control over, and management by a dominating nation-state of a distinct territory, and the people within that territory, for the purpose of acquiring available labor power and/or natural resources for use by the dominant power.

**Direct Colonialism:** Colonialism manifested by direct control over and administration of the politics and economics of a dominated nation or people by a dominant nation or people. This direct control is administered by either settlers or officials appointed by the government of the dominant nation.

**Neo-colonialism:** Colonialism manifested by indirect but de facto control over politics and economics of a dominated nation or people by a dominant nation or people. This indirect control is most frequently administered by local elites from the dominated group, conducted through agreements with government and businesses of the dominant nation.

**External colonialism:** Colonialism manifested by control over and management by a dominating nation-state of a geographically separate territory and people.

**Internal colonialism:** Colonialism manifested by control over and management by a dominating nation-state of a geographically internal territory and people.

**End of colonialism** –The end of all colonial and neo-colonial conditions in a colony or colonies and “former” colonies.

## **Table II - A Continuum of Colonialism [continued]**

### **APPLICATION:**

**External Direct Colonies** = Including European colonial “possessions” between WWI and WWII and Japanese-controlled lands prior to the end of WWII.

**External Neo-Colonies** = Including formerly colonial territories that achieved formal “independence,” but currently remain dominated economically and politically by European or American capitalism, such as Cameroon, Columbia, Costa Rica and Côte d'Ivoire.

**Fully Independent Former External Colonies** = Former external colonies which have reached full political and economic independence, achieving the end of all colonial [and neo-colonial] relations, such as Cuba and Viet Nam.

**Internal Direct Colonies** = The colonized and the land on which the colonized reside in a now-independent former settler colony or settler colony system where the internal colonies are administered mostly by members of the dominant population. *[See below the Black Belt South during the Slavery and Jim Crow Racial Domains as well as inner cities during the Colonial Ghetto Racial Domain.]*

**Internal Neo-Colonies** = The colonized and the land on which the colonized reside in now-independent former settler colonies, or a settler colony system, where the internal colonies are administered mostly by members of the dominated population. *[See below the present-day Neo-Colonial Ghetto Racial Domain.]*

**Fully Equal Former Internal Colonies** = Former internal colonies which have successfully experienced or carried out a systematic set of policies that actively transformed the inequality of the internal colonies’ inhabitants, resulting in a genuine equality of condition and outcome among their inhabitants that correspond to at least those of the general population of the dominating country.

## On Internal Colonies

**Even our American brothers, as a result of racial discrimination, find themselves within a great modern nation in an artificial situation that can only be understood in reference to colonialism.<sup>47</sup>**

---Aime Cesaire, 1956

### Definition

While we have euphemisms for internal colonies – ghettos and inner cities, I should offer a definition. Internal colonialism is a **geographically-based** pattern of subordination of a differentiated population - the colonized [differentiated by race, ethnicity, religion, or clan/tribal/national affiliation] within the dominant power or country. This subordination by a dominant power has the outcome of *systematic* societal inequality expressed in the policies of a variety of social and economic institutions, including systems of education, public safety [police and prisons], employment, cultural production and finance. For Barrera, Munoz & Ornelas, “internal colonialism is manifested along many different dimensions: social, economic, political, psychological, cultural and so on” (486). This definition includes the colonized and the land on which the colonized reside in a now-independent former settler colony or settler colony system.

This complex oppressed state of being is also linked to national and international economic and political structures of power and domination. Of course, an annexed or conquered territory contiguous to the territory of the

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<sup>47</sup> Aime Cesaire in Paris in 1956, at the 1st Congress of Black Artists and Writers, as quoted in translation by Nikhil Pal Singh in Black Is a Country, 174.

colonizing power can be considered an internal colony. However, the solution that follows from assessing the existence of an internal colony can be markedly different from that of determining the existence of a nation.

### **Oppressed Nation or Oppressed Nationality?**

The above definition of internal colonies includes oppressed nations within the borders of a dominating nation as well as internal colonies which are not nations and therefore cannot viably seek self-determination as a nation [i.e. independence].

It is not a prerequisite of an internal colony's existence that it be a nation - an internal colony may or may not also constitute a nation. *Every oppressed nation can be called a colony, but not every colony is a nation.*

This analysis applies the previously discussed Marxist definition of a nation: "a historically constituted, stable community of people, formed on the basis of a common language, territory, economic life, and psychological make-up manifested in a common culture" (Stalin, 60).

An oppressed nation is defined as a precise entity, not merely to describe its oppression but also to prescribe approaches to its liberation. If an internal colony exists as a nation, its population has possibilities at their disposal that they otherwise would not have. To argue for the right to self-determination of a nation is to realistically acknowledge the road of political independence as a significant possible [partial] solution to the complex web of oppression and exploitation faced by the population of that colony.



On the other hand, determining the existence of an internal colony does allow for a comprehensive understanding of the nature and depth of the national oppression of a colony's people, *whether they are a nation or not*.-The designation of a defined area as a colony is an indication that a wide-ranging, thorough solution to the extant national oppression is required.

As noted previously, an oppressed nation has a complex nature which includes the common points of language, territory, economic life, and culture as the foundation of a historical community. This complex nature is the prerequisite for its potential viability as an independent nation-state if its population chooses to seek such a status. Only one of these elements need to be absent for an oppressed nationality to fail to qualify as a nation.

Some internally colonized peoples are not concentrated in a single geographic area, but instead are spread out in a diaspora of communities, and thus fail the nation test. For an internal colony or colonies that constitute an oppressed nationality *but not a nation*, full redress must remain within the political sphere of the oppressor nation in the forms of sweeping democratic reforms and substantive administrative changes within the nation-state which controls that internal colony. But these reforms and changes must be much more than simply measures of anti-discrimination aimed at [individual] prejudice in the dominant population.

For an internal colony that is not a nation, internal colonialism as an analysis still points to the necessity for a systemic and systematic solution to the

oppression and exploitation of its population, not merely a reliance on democratic incrementalism. Democratic incrementalism allows all of the prejudices and misconceptions of the non-colonized [for example, in the USA, most of the White population] to be included as so-called legitimized understandings which retard sweeping change and help perpetuate the existence and the disparate conditions of the colony or colonies.

### **Some Important Features of Internal Colonies**

#### **Size and Boundaries**

An internal colony may be no larger than part of a city. In fact, unlike an external colony, an internal colony is not necessarily even a formal administrative unit such as a city, county, state, etc. and therefore its boundaries may not be precisely defined as those of a distinct administrative unit.

#### **Colony Land**

Despite the success of a colony's movement for independence by the colonizing settlers from its Mother country, the land arrangements have typically remained the same [in the former colonies and colony systems now known as the USA, South Africa, Zimbabwe aka Rhodesia, Australia]. Before settler colony independence, there were two types of land: settler-confiscated land and the land on which the colonized resided. If the conditions of the colonized were not fully equalized with those of the settlers and/or the original colonizing power's population promptly after settler colony independence, then the post-independence conditions of the indigenous and forcibly imported peoples

remained colonial. Typically, settler colony independence has brought about a transformation of the colony [or colony system] into settler-controlled independent land and internal colonies - land on which the colonized reside.

Thus, American internal colonies of Native American and African American peoples came into being with the success of the American Revolution.

### **Land Control**

Internal colonies are primarily exploited for their land or labor resources. If resources are discovered on the land actively occupied by the colonized and that population is an impediment to the thorough extraction and exploitation of these resources, movement of the colony is often sought from that specific geographic location. Urban renewal campaigns have provided a similar [economic] motivation for the movement of internal colonies

In my view, the Bantustans of White ruled South Africa and Native American reservations in the USA are examples of using internal colonies for removal and collection of the colonized for better political control, away from the dominant societies' major industries established on settler-confiscated land. Regardless, the labor of the colonized is used to the advantage of the colonizing power. In both external and internal colonialism, there is a highly unequal, systematically exploitative and oppressive relationship between the colonizing power and the colonized.

In the case of internal colonies, the distortions of the colonial economy can take differing forms: In the USA, historically, Native American colonies have long

been treated almost as disposal sites for surplus humanity. Native Americans were repeatedly removed from land with newly acquired [industrial or agricultural] or discovered [raw material] value. Native Americans were rarely the actual object of industrially productive exploitation at the sites of their colonies, although in the Southwest, they were included at points of production as part of the colonial labor system that Barrera so carefully documented (40).

### **Neo-Colonial Relations**

Compared to the evolution of external direct colonialism to external neocolonialism, there is a somewhat similar evolution in the stages of internal colonialism. However, the change from direct colonial rule to neo-colonial control in an internal colony is not as noticeable for two reasons. 1]. External colonies have distinct borders not tangent with the colonizing country. Therefore, even the declaration of nominal political independence is perceived, at least initially, as a highly defined watershed event, regardless of the actual neo-colonial arrangements set in motion. 2]. Because the administrative apparatus of internal colonies are typically much more integrated into the colonizing country's infrastructure, the very notion of the real possibility of independence is often completely absent. The illusory "gains" in the transfer from colony to neo-colony for the internally colonized are much more nominal [the election of a Black mayor in a predominantly Black city, execution of affirmative action court orders to diversify public service employment, etc.].

### **The Flawed Diasporic Colony**

Historically, many advocates<sup>48</sup> have argued for defining all of African America, the entire domestic diaspora inside the USA, as a single colony. However, I view that definition as not a functional one. This conceptual single “diasporic” colony does not have a singular geographic location, and thus could be alleged to exist anywhere within the USA simultaneously. One basic problem with not having an identifying geographic location is that there is no place, no locale in which to carry out democratic reforms and administrative transformations to the level of an independent nation-state. Requiring geographic location as a key element for the existence of an internal colony allows for these adjustments. Instead, I contend that we should view each individual location of such concentration as its own internal colony.

### **Abolishing An Internal Colony**

As previously noted, in 2001, Blauner raised concern for how the conditions of internal colonies could become resolved. Rather than yield to the current intractability of these problems, I prefer to suggest possible futures. I see three major means of ending the existence of an internal colony: 1]. assimilation, 2]. ethnic cleansing, 3]. positive abolition.

Assimilation is one form of ending the existence of or re-locating a colony. This analysis defines assimilation of an entire colony as the elimination in a spontaneous social process of systemic and systematic discrimination/differential

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<sup>48</sup> Since the 1960s, these advocates have included: Robert Allen, the Black Panther Party, Robert Blauner, Carmichael & Hamilton, the Congress of African People, Harold Cruse, and SNCC. All of these proponents used the singular “colony” when speaking about the colonized condition of African Americans.

treatment such that an equality of life outcomes, i.e. an equality of result, exists between a culturally differing nationality and the dominant power population.

Ethnic cleansing is commonly understood as the systematic harassment and/or discrimination through internment, expulsion, or killing of members of an oppressed group by a dominant group to seek ethnic homogeneity in a territory controlled by that dominant population.

Under current social policy and cultural practice in the USA, ending the existence of a colony could take place through either assimilation or ethnic cleansing of its colonized populace. In America, there have been distinct populations which have transformed or “disappeared” by way of both methods.

The inner city Irish, Italian and Jewish ghettos in the USA were comparatively short-lived, diminishing gradually as their inhabitants were able to “become White”<sup>49</sup> and assimilate.<sup>50</sup> However, especially for Blacks, and also Latinos and other people of color, assimilation has been much more problematic. [In fact, people of color and especially African Americans have been defined as just the opposite: non-White.] Barrera, Munoz & Ornelas viewed the alternative of assimilation for Chican@s in very stark terms:

**it would appear possible to escape his colonial status  
by completely taking on the culture of the Anglo**

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<sup>49</sup> See Theodore W. Allen’s The Invention of the White Race, Karen Brodtkin’s How Jews Became White Folks and What That Says About Race in America, Noel Ignatiev’s How The Irish Became White, Matthew Jacobson’s Whiteness of a different color : European immigrants and the alchemy of race, David R. Roediger’s Working Toward Whiteness,.

<sup>50</sup> Enclaves of oppression can change, through economic and political assimilation to become merely cultural enclaves. When the political and economic oppression has been removed from the members of a geographically based cultural group, when they have become substantially equal in life outcomes to non-group members in the larger society, that colony has evolved into a cultural enclave.

**majority and renouncing his language, values, behavioral patterns, and self-identification.....[but] there is no escape from the colonial status for an individual as a *Chicano*. If the Chicano community were to take this approach, the result would be cultural genocide. The choice presented to the Chicano community by Anglo society, then, is a very clear-cut colonialism or genocide.**

(italics in original-485)

North American examples of the ethnic cleansing means of internal colony liquidation include the destruction of some Native American tribes (Josephy, 215, 217,256) and WWII internment of Japanese Americans. While Japanese Americans were “merely” systematically relocated to concentration camps, genocidal attempts on indigenous peoples in the USA and Canada are documented in 500 Nations (Josephy) and Accounting for Genocide (Neu & Therrien).

For African Americans, ethnic cleansing has included the creation of “sundown towns”<sup>51</sup> as well as a systematic pattern of lynchings (Loewen, Dray). Policies of arbitrary sterilizations and medical experimentation have also been clearly documented (Jones, Savitt, Washington). I include the debacle of the response to Hurricane Katrina as a case of attempted eradication of an internal colony through policies that effectively resulted in ethnic cleansing.

The positive or proactive response is to abolish an internal colony using conscious assertive action through a systematic set of policies that actively transform the inequality of the internal colony’s inhabitants, resulting in a genuine

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<sup>51</sup> In sundown towns, Blacks were banished and not allowed to stay in the town after dark. (Loewen)

equality of condition and **outcome** among its inhabitants that correspond to at least those of the general population of the dominating country. This would allow a self-determined voluntary joining of equals of the colonized with the population of the colony's dominant nation-state, based on the full eradication of systemic [institutional] oppression and exploitation. Possible paths for an internal colony's maximization of self-determination while remaining within the dominant nation-state include fully implementing demands of community control, broad democracy in regional autonomous zones and similar such sweeping democratic reforms. In the USA, these reforms would be carried out in conjunction with a comprehensive program of fully funded *collective reparations*<sup>52</sup> redressing the legacies of slavery and Jim Crow segregation.

Collective reparations would be resources given to compensate African Americans for the subjection of their direct ancestors to the systems of slavery and American apartheid for 350 years. Such an offer of reparations would be an acknowledgement of responsibility for those [both long past and recent] harmful acts and would be an attempt to repair the damage from those abuses.

According to Clarence Munford, such a reparations plan "should be broadly construed as encompassing affirmative action, employment equity, race-conscious quotas, parity, minority set-asides, equality of results, free, state-of-the-art health care and, above all, legislated and government-administered

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<sup>52</sup> By "collective reparations," I mean compensation of money and other resources to a collective body or bodies controlled by African American communities primarily for use in transforming the life conditions of today's most resource poor descendents of slaves and Jim Crow victims.



remittances of assets and monies” (Munford, 430-431). Additionally, he calls for a guaranteed minimum income plan, for education, employment and housing enhancements, and for other assistance programs.

### **From 13 Colonies to a Colonial USA**

**From the outset, American Indians were subjected to a series of genocidal wars that ultimately marginalized them to specific reservations, a kind of territorial apartheid, to the point of near extermination.**

(Marable-2002, 30)

**Black Americans are survivors of a very destructive historical process from slavery, Jim Crow segregation, and ghettoization.**

(Marable-2002, 15)

Given the settler colony history of the area which became the USA, how has its colonial status changed?<sup>53</sup> The establishment of the English settlements of Jamestown and Plymouth began the creation of the English settler colony system, which evolved into the USA. This analysis confirms that colonialism has been manifest during the entire time period from 1619 to the present.

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<sup>53</sup> During slavery, African Americans systematically experienced four of the five separate definitions of genocide listed in the United Nations' Genocide Convention of 1948 [and three of those five - again systematically - from 1877 through the late 1960s]. Article 2 of the UN's Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide reads: "In the present Convention, genocide means any of the following acts committed with intent to destroy, in whole or in part, a national, ethnical, racial or religious group, as such:(a) Killing members of the group; (b) Causing serious bodily or mental harm to members of the group; (c) Deliberately inflicting on the group conditions of life calculated to bring about its physical destruction in whole or in part; (d) Imposing measures intended to prevent births within the group; (e) Forcibly transferring children of the group to another group." Resolution 260 (III), <http://www.un.org/documents/ga/res/3/ares3.htm> (3/16/09)

During the era of the 13 colonies, land was divided between settler-confiscated land and the land on which the colonized [Native Americans and African Americans] resided. This direct colonialism persisted until 1781, with the founding of the USA.

But Independence of the 13 colonies from Britain did not end the USA's settler colony nature. Between 1760 and 1800, the colonial relationship with Native Americans and the imported population of Blacks did not disappear, only the administrators changed. *Thus, the American Revolution decolonized the colonizers, but not the colonized.* The two noted categories of land [settler-confiscated land and land on which the colonized resided] remained after American Independence. By 1800, the concept of the 13 colonies had been replaced with the notion of the USA as a free and independent country. Now the colonies proper were the lands on which the colonized resided, even as the [so-called former] colonizers expanded their settler-confiscated territories. Independence from England for the settler colony system was vibrant for the former colonizers, while for the colonized it was almost irrelevant. American internal colonies of Native American and African American peoples came into being with the success of the American Revolution.

Thus the USA [or any "successful" settler colony] evolved, with settler administration of the former colonial territory. In fact, the entire USA, except for its internal colonies of color, has consisted and still consists of settler-confiscated territories. Since the colonies proper were located where the colonized reside, as

the colonized moved, or were moved, between segregated territories within the boundaries of the now dominant nation-state, the communities of the colonized re-formed and grew. So, regardless of ethnic cleansing, American internal colonies have had a portable feature.

### **Classes in USA African American Internal Colonies** **During 4 Racial Domains**

**Through out the long and difficult experience of black people in the United States, and through all the different systems of structural racism, each domain has had its own peculiar characteristics, but all have maintained and perpetuated the hegemony of white over nonwhite.”**  
(Marable-2002, 64)

I want to briefly explore the class development of internally colonized African Americans, using my variation of Manning Marable’s conception of Racial Domains. These domains, and their corresponding approximate dates of existence, are:

- Slavery Racial Domain 1619-1865
- Jim Crow Racial Domain 1865-1970
- Colonial Ghetto Racial Domain 1910-1970
- Neo-Colonial Ghetto Racial Domain 1970-present

**TABLE III –**  
**The African American Class System: A Colonized Experience Under Four Racial Domains**  
**DOMAINS – SLAVERY**      **JIM CROW**      **SEGREGATION**      **COLONIAL**      **NEOCOLONIAL**

**Features**      chattel slavery w/ some free blacks in farming service & craft jobs      American Apartheid: legalized forced separation and systematic differential treatment inner cities/ neighborhoods/      “non-Southern” directly administered segregated inner cities /neighborhoods/      Indirectly administered segregated inner cities /neighborhoods/

**Classes**  
 |      **majority**      tertiary minority      -----      -----      -----  
**Slave**      **majority**      tertiary minority      -----      -----      -----

**Free Labor**      secondary minority      major minority      **majority**      **majority**      **majority**  
 [Working Class]

**Petty Bourgeoisie**      [a few free individuals]      [from a few individuals to a secondary minority]      major minority      secondary minority [within colonies]  
 [managers, professionals & small business owners]

**Farmers** [Peasantry]      major minority [free]      **majority**      -----      -----  
 [sharecroppers, tenant farmers, & farming land owners]

**Black Bourgeoisie**      [a few free individuals]      [from a few individuals to a tertiary minority]      tertiary minority      tertiary minority  
 [Owners of means of production]

**Underclass**      -----      -----      secondary minority      major minority  
 [Lumpen Proletariat]

[This chart adapts Manning Marable’s concept of Racial Domains to Internal Colonialism Theory]

For this analysis, I reference major Marxist class categories to help note the fundamental relationship of each class to the rest of African American society. The Slave Class included house and plantation or field slaves as well as slaves with craft skills [blacksmiths, carpenters, bricklayers]. While their working conditions varied, the slaves themselves were owned and rented out like property, with slaveholders retaining control of terms for rentals, regardless of the slaves' skills. Yet, within this Slave Class, "since the African social structure was completely demolished, the beginnings of class divisions had to be created among the slaves. The most important such division was between 'house niggers' and 'field niggers.'" (Allen-1990, 11-12)

During slavery, about 12 % of the Black population were Free Blacks from a variety of classes, but most were farmers and urban workers. Since Emancipation, most Black Farmers [peasantry] have worked as agricultural laborers, with a few able to purchase their own farmland. The Working Class [proletariat] has consisted of wage workers, including industrial, manual, service and white collar laborers who produce societal necessities by selling their labor power to the Bourgeoisie [Black and White]. The Petty Bourgeoisie has included small business owners, managers and professionals – including accountants, doctors and lawyers. Due to intense competition from White Capitalists, accompanied by periodic suppression of Black economic gains<sup>54</sup> there has been

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<sup>54</sup>For example, one of the most economically advanced Black communities of its day, Tulsa Oklahoma's Greenwood district, known as "the Black Wall Street" was savaged by the 1921 Tulsa Race Riot in which over 300 died. This was perhaps [not including war crimes against

little Black Capitalist or Bourgeoisie ownership of major industrial production [the means of societal wealth manufacture] as a *class* during all four domains.

Primarily developed in urban environs, the Underclass [Lumpenproletariat] has included the chronically unemployed, lawbreakers, members of the underground economy, and welfare recipients.<sup>55</sup>

### **Slavery Racial Domain 1619-1865-**

**Slavery was the only moment in American history when people of African descent experienced full employment: Everybody worked.** (Marable-2002, 16)

From its inception, the North American colonial system included enslavement of Africans and ethnic cleansing of, and land confiscation from, the indigenous population. In the Slave Domain, the Black population swelled from 20 indentured servants in Jamestown in 1619 to about 4 million slaves by the Civil War. Black Americans became a more systematically transformed population than the colonized in most external colonies in Africa and Asia. To the abuses of kidnap and enslavement were added the tactics of almost total destruction and reassembly of Black collective identities. Allen pointed out that

**colonialism is more than simply a system of political oppression and economic exploitation. It also fosters the breakup of the “native” culture. Family life and**

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Native American populations], the biggest instance of domestic terrorism in the USA prior to September 11, 2001.

<sup>55</sup> Many Observers of African American class dynamics use differing categories. For example, both E. Franklin Frazier [in *Black Bourgeoisie*] and Manning Marable [in *Great Wells of Democracy*] reference the Black Bourgeoisie when they are mainly speaking of the Black Petty Bourgeoisie as defined above. This approach is informed by the vernacular in the Black community of “Bourgie” by which is meant a life style, not a specific relation to the means of production.

**community links are disrupted, and traditional cultural forms fall into disuse. Under domestic colonialism this process is even more destructive. Slave families were completely shattered and cultural continuity almost totally disrupted. The blacks who were kidnapped and dragooned to these shores were not only stripped of most of their cultural heritage, they soon lost the knowledge of their native African languages. They were forced to speak in the tongue of the masters and to adapt to the masters' culture. In short, blacks were the victims of a pervasive cultural imperialism which destroyed all but faint remnants [chiefly in music] of the old African forms."**

(quotations in original-1990, 13)

I trust the assessment is unarguable that prior to the American Revolutionary War, the North American Black population was colonized within the 13 colonies.

But after that war, with the invention of the cotton gin, colonized conditions for African Americans intensified as the slave plantation system greatly expanded. The Black USA population swelled by a factor of six from 1790 to 1865, due in part to slave breeding in the face of the outlawing of slave importation after 1809. Southern Black slaves were mostly agricultural laborers, and comprised about 88% of total Black population. Most Free Blacks were located in urban areas and also subjected to systematically disparate treatment. While not directly under a slave regime, Free Blacks in the North still faced local segregationist policies. While most Free Blacks were working class and peasantry, here were also a few Black Petty Bourgeois and Bourgeois individuals [such as shipping company owner Paul Cuffee].

Thus, the African American colonized condition certainly continued through to the Civil War, primarily in the form of a collective colony of the South, colloquially known as the “Black Belt” – the contiguous counties of high Black population stretching from Maryland’s eastern shore to east Texas.

### **Jim Crow Racial Domain 1865-1970-**

**The white supremacist regime under the racial domain of Jim Crow segregation was totalitarian in the purest sense of this political term. (Marable-2002, 42)**

While Reconstruction was a battle for equality, its overthrow began the consolidation of the Jim Crow Racial Domain which retained many aspects of the slavery period, including systematic segregation reified by state laws in education, employment, and business, maintained enthusiastically by law enforcement. Several thousand African American men, women and children were lynched in the process of maintaining these “Black Codes.”

“In the aftermath of slavery and Reconstruction, African Americans were largely an illiterate, landless peasantry” (Marable-2002, 230). Most of the nominally free Black population farmed, as sharecroppers and tenant farmers. A growing minority class, the Black Working Class, mostly located in urban areas, consisted of service workers and manual laborers. But hundreds of thousands of Blacks were effectively re-enslaved through the combination of klan terrorism, segregation laws, debt peonage, and the post-Reconstruction slave labor system outlined by Douglas Blackmon. A small Petty Bourgeoisie developed by



delivering retail, medical, legal and consumer products and services to Blacks under segregation. Through this path, a few Blacks even built up major capitalist enterprises.

As a majority of Blacks remained in the rural South until the 2nd great urban migration of the mid-20th century, the overall Black USA population grew from about 4,880,000 in 1870 to 8,833,000 in 1900 to 18,860,000 by 1960.

### **Colonial Ghetto Racial Domain 1910-1970-**

After 1877, due to the abject conditions for Blacks in that colony located in the American South, repeated waves of out-migration resulted in the growth of communities of the colonized outside the South. Marable pointed out that:

**“In the northern states, by the first half of the twentieth century a third racial domain evolved into a strikingly different pattern of white hegemony and black oppression. The percentage of blacks living in the South fell from 89 percent in 1910 to 53 percent in 1970 as millions migrated to the Northeast and Midwest to escape Jim Crow and acquire a better standard of life. During the same period, the proportion of African Americans living in urban areas rose from 27 percent to 81 percent. (2002, 44)**

While some aspects of southern circumstances were absent in the North, these black communities were still the focus of a myriad of oppressive conditions, including the rigid housing segregation which insured the creation of these transported colonies. This segregation was enforced by “Restrictive covenants, widespread racial discrimination by banks and financial lending institutions, and even the loan policies by the Federal Housing Administration and the Veterans Administration” (Marable-2002, 45). Despite the absence of totally systematic

segregation laws, the sweeping nature of the range of injustices, from rampant police brutality to methodical job segregation, from defacto school segregation to the abusive justice system, these inequities combined to forge the expanding internal colonies outside the South. In these internal colonies, no longer were there resource retrievals based primarily on land. Instead the main “exportable” resource was the labor power of the colonized, or merely the geographic restriction of the colonized from dominant societal participation. When work was available, most Blacks worked in industrial production or service work. But during recessions, Black unemployment surged to at least 2.5 to 3 times the White unemployment rate. The Petty Bourgeoisie continued to consist of business persons and professionals who served the internal colonies’ population. The Underclass emerged as some of the Black population entered underground economic activities to survive urban life without a subsistence farming safety net. As a class, the Black Bourgeoisie remained underdeveloped.

### **Neo-Colonial Ghetto Racial Domain 1970-present-**

**Black middle-class professionals are being integrated into corporate America, but a growing impoverished, urban population, sometimes called the black underclass, has been largely structured out of the economy and faced with growing hardships-chronic unemployment, homelessness, violence, police brutality, drugs.** (Allen-2005, 5)

With the development of what many have called the Second Reconstruction - the Civil Rights and Black Power Movements - there was again a major battle for overall societal equality. The outcome was twofold: There was the official

dismantling of the southern system of segregation which ended the Jim Crow Racial Domain. Yet equality was still not at hand. Instead the Neo-Colonial Ghetto Racial Domain emerged, accompanied by limited acceptance in White society for some Blacks. These elements helped to accelerate the development of the managerial section of the Black Petty Bourgeoisie. Black colonies became increasingly administered by other Blacks, even as some of the most oppressive features of the colonies were barely changed. While the majority in the internal colonies continued to be Working Class, service work greatly increased as opportunities for industrial production work significantly dropped. As industrial production in the USA declined and newer facilities of electronic production were located further away from the colonies, the ranks of the Black colonial Underclass increased. With more general societal acceptance of some Blacks, most of the few Black Bourgeoisie as well as many Black Petty Bourgeoisie, and some of the financially better off Working Class, moved to the suburbs, leaving most Working Class and Underclass Blacks more highly concentrated in the colonies. Parallel to this is the huge increase in Black incarceration rates, mainly impacting the remaining primary residents of the colonies: the Black Under- and Working Classes. These justice system abuses serve to reify the oppressive conditions of the internal colonies. Meanwhile, the Black Bourgeoisie has continued to remain underdeveloped.

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With the above analysis, the course of the African American colonized experience since 1619 is more clearly established. The Black colonial experience was not limited to the time of the 13 Colonies' system, but extended through four Racial Domains to the present day. The application of this internal colonial framework more fully captures the overall Black experience in the USA than incremental empirical assessments of discriminatory conditions in any single period.

On the basis of this new assessment of Internal Colonialism Theory, past critiques of internal colonialism, which have been frequently accepted as convincing, need re-examination.

## **CHAPTER FOUR: ENGAGING CRITIQUES OF ACADEMIC INTERNAL COLONIALISM THEORY AS APPLIED TO THE USA**

### **Overview**

In this chapter, I investigate some major critiques and criticisms of academic Internal Colonialism Theory as applied to the USA. First, I outline a few distinctions between “classic” Internal Colonialism Theory [the past writings of advocates] and my re-assessment, which I’m tentatively calling “new” Internal Colonialism Theory. Then, I explore an array of critiques of classic Internal Colonialism Theory, ranging from Bohmer’s evaluation that Internal Colonialism Theory has some inadequacies of application, to the dismissals of Internal Colonialism Theory by Bonilla-Silva, Burawoy, Moore, and Omi & Winant as well as a mention of some other miscellaneous arguments made against Internal Colonialism Theory. Finally, I attempt to raise the standard for future appraisals of both the classic and new perspectives of academic Internal Colonialism Theory by offering a concise framework for analyses and discussions.

### **Academic Internal Colonialism Theory: Features of the Classic vs. the New**

#### **Classic Internal Colonialism Theory:**

-Many advocates of classic Internal Colonialism Theory define all of an oppressed racial group not only as colonized, but as a single colony, and often see that single colony as a nation.

-Some supporters define colonialism as including racial experience as a central component.

-Classic Internal Colonialism Theory has no answer to the variation between advocates' positions on use of class analysis.

-Classic Internal Colonialism Theory has no answer to the variation between advocates' positions on use of super-exploitation.

-A recent trend is the postmodern approach conceiving internal colonialism as applying to any oppressed group regardless of the geographic factor, thus including, for example, subordination by gender or sex orientation.

In contrast, this new Internal Colonialism Theory presents a clearly defined set of characteristics for identifying and articulating internal colonialism.

### **New Internal Colonialism Theory:**

-Defines a colony as a geographically-based pattern of subordination of a differentiated population with each separate territory as its own colony.

-Utilizes a class analysis to help diagram historical sociological dynamics.

-Describes the continuous developmental course of a colonized people from early European colonization through to the present.

-Allows inclusion of other dimensions of social oppression, such as gender and sexual orientation.

-Outlines a division of labor for a colony in its relationship to the economy of the dominant power, country or people [instead of either using or disregarding super-exploitation as a shorthand reference to class and race exploitation].

-Defines three major means of ending the existence of an internal colony: assimilation, ethnic cleansing, and positive abolition.

-Seeks commonality with other sociological theories of oppression, especially racial.

-Articulates a framework for discussions and critiques of Internal Colonialism Theory.

### **Commentary, Criticism and Denial of Internal Colonialism**

Peter Bohmer has critiqued previous treatments of [classic] Internal Colonialism Theory for inadequacies of application, while observing that “the focus of the theory of internal colonialism on systematic inequalities of power between blacks and whites in the culture, the State, and the economy is absolutely necessary for an analysis of racism as we approach the 21<sup>st</sup> century.” It is my position that such inadequacies of application are merely issues yet to be addressed, not fundamental flaws in the analytical schema of academic Internal Colonialism Theory. Certainly, there have been a range of approaches stressing aspects of various questions within Internal Colonialism Theory, including the use of class analysis, super-exploitation, economic marginalization, and the territorial question, in addition to Bohmer’s concerns about “the economy, the State and gender relations.” However, other critics have made more completely sweeping dismissals of Internal Colonialism Theory. Here, I’ve included discussions of the evaluations of Internal Colonialism Theory by Eduardo Bonilla-Silva, Michael

Burawoy, Joan Moore, and Omi & Winant, along with a summary of some additional more general criticisms.

### **Eduardo Bonilla-Silva**

Concerning the internal colonialism perspective, Eduardo Bonilla-Silva argues:

**it still has some serious limitations. First, because it is centered on racial subordination, it assumes unity among both the dominant and subordinate “races” and thus neglects the class-, and gender-, based divisions among them. Second, by stressing the centrality of economic oppression as the foundation for understanding white privilege, this approach misses the process of economic marginalization that some races may experience at some historical junctures. For instance, how would an analyst in this theoretical tradition interpret the contemporary status of “underclass” African Americans or the almost complete exclusion of American Indians to reservations? Finally neither Blauner nor other writers in this tradition formulate the conceptual tools or analysis needed for a truly structural understanding of racism.** (Bonilla-Silva-2001, 29-30)

Nevertheless, Bonilla-Silva admits, “Notwithstanding these limitations, I incorporate many of the insights developed by authors in this tradition in the alternative framework that I develop in this chapter” (Bonilla-Silva-2001, 30).

I point out that the assumption of “unity among both the dominant and subordinate ‘races’” is actually Bonilla-Silva’s and is not a tenet of the soundness of Internal Colonialism Theory. Similarly, his claim that Internal Colonialism Theory “neglects the class-, and gender-, based divisions” among those same races is also flawed. Certainly, continuing oppression by race exerts a unifying force among the various strata of African America. Both the Black bourgeoisie



and the White American power structure have repeatedly tried to take advantage of that broad but basic nationalism. “Buy Black” campaigns and the successful nomination of a staunch opponent of affirmative action to the U. S. Supreme Court, Clarence Thomas, are examples. However, I think that Bonilla-Silva misconstrues the approach of some internal colonialism analysts on the question of class. In his speeches, Malcolm X repeatedly distinguished between the field Negro and the house Negro, both during slavery and today:

**This modern house Negro loves his master. He wants to live near him. He'll pay three times as much as the house is worth just to live near his master, and then he'll brag about 'I'm the only Negro out here.'.....Just as the slavemaster of that day used Tom, the house Negro, to keep the field Negroes in check, the same old slavemaster today has Negroes who are nothing but modern Uncle Toms, twentieth-century Uncle Toms to keep you and me in check, to keep us under control, keep us passive and peaceful and non-violent.**

(Malcolm X, 11, 12)

And Robert L. Allen pointed out that “Under American domestic colonialism, since the African social structure was completely demolished, the beginnings of class divisions had to be created among slaves” (Allen-1980, 11-12). In a chapter on the 1960s, “Black Power and Bourgeois Nationalism,” Allen also critiqued that “This reformist or bourgeois nationalism – through its chosen vehicle of black capitalism – may line the pockets and boost the social status of the black middle class and black intelligentsia, but it will not ease the oppression of the ordinary ghetto dweller” (Allen-1980, 191). Other analysts using class as

part of their investigation of African American internal colonial conditions include the Black Panther Party, Harold Cruse, and Komozi Woodard.<sup>56</sup>

Bonilla-Silva admits that even for his own work that “the important question of how race interacts and intersects with class and gender has not yet been addressed satisfactorily” (Bonilla-Silva-2001, 47). I do agree that a 21<sup>st</sup> century conception of internal colonialism should be inclusive of the many dimensions to social oppression in the USA today, including discord and dynamics along lines of class, gender and sexual orientation. Analyses of gender and sexual orientation divisions within USA internal colonies and cross-comparatively to those of their “mother country,” I shall leave as projects for another time. Some questions of class relative to African American internal colonies are addressed in the previous chapter of this dissertation.

A properly nuanced approach to “the centrality of economic oppression,” should actually include “the process of economic marginalization.” For example, from the Civil War to the present, a major feature of African American economic oppression has been sweeping job discrimination and extensive un- and under-employment. In fact, I argue that the two examples noted by Bonilla-Silva actually reinforce the validity of an analysis that applies Internal Colonialism Theory. “The contemporary status of ‘underclass’ African Americans or the

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<sup>56</sup> The Black Panther Party undertook class analysis especially on behalf of the lumpen proletariat, and often critiqued the Black bourgeoisie, particularly Black capitalists (Booker, Foner). Harold Cruse used class analysis throughout *Rebellion or Revolution?* and *Crisis of the Negro Intellectual*. Komozi Woodard also analyzed class behavior and initiatives in *Nation Within a Nation*. In *Race and Class in the Southwest*, Barrera noted 2 distinct approaches which he labeled “‘non-class-differentiated’ and ‘class-differentiated’ colonial theories” (quotations in original-202).

almost complete exclusion of American Indians to reservations” are actually specific features of USA internal colonialism today.

Thus, it is clear that Eduardo Bonilla-Silva’s criticisms of Internal Colonialism Theory are flawed.

### **Michael Burawoy**

Burawoy observed that “It is a peculiar feature of studies of ethnicity and race in the United States and South Africa that they have most frequently been devoted to an examination of social life in communities.” With the relative lack of Black worker studies, Burawoy continued, “It is one of the consequences of this general neglect that the black population is seen as an internal colony.” (523) This assessment is clearly in error when evaluated alongside the long standing roots of internal colonialism analysis previously noted. Yet, with this economic reductionist approach, Burawoy did not provide his own substantive critique of racism in America.

Burawoy claimed that Internal Colonialism Theory has an insufficient prescription for change. But that charge can also be made against his form of Marxism being successfully applied to most societies which have been analyzed as having internal colonies. And as a Marxist who has primarily studied western work places, Burawoy apparently did not recognize any Marxist roots of Internal Colonialism Theory. Instead, he criticized internal colonialism as simply “an adaptation of the ideology of an oppressed group.” Burawoy argued that it “virtually ignores divisions within the black community,” a charge that has already

been proved erroneous above. (524) And by equating colony with nation, Burawoy apparently felt able to dismiss the conception of internal colonies in both the USA [ghettos] and South Africa [Bantustans]. Yet, Burawoy's article extensively examined Apartheid South Africa's maintenance of a colonial superstructure in the presence of a transforming economic base. I assert that my internal colonial framework tightly fits this described phenomena.

These, then, are the shortcomings of Burawoy's arguments against Internal Colonialism Theory.

### **Joan Moore**

I realize that, in Joan Moore's promotion of the "dual economy/dual society model," it is highly tempting to level a critical attack on any analysis which very closely resembles it, such as internal colonialism. Her key critiques included "(a) the ambiguity of territorial boundaries, (b) the ambiguity of intermediary elite or bourgeois stratum as vehicle of exploitation, and (c) the ambiguity of what is meant by exploitation" (Moore, 453). I have already pointed out that one feature of many internal colonies is a distinct territory but not necessarily one defined as a specific administrative unit. The intermediary elite that Moore claims is unclear is quite visible in the management of social service agencies, electoral politicians, and Black professional strata described below as "special Blacks". Of course, there has been some significant development of USA neo-colonial management strategy since her 1976 article. And Moore's assessment of the

ambiguity of exploitation in an internal colony is similar to Bonilla-Silva's and Omi & Winant's marginalization concerns.

Again, this criticism is mechanically isolated from an understanding of the role of the internal colony in the dominant power's economic division of labor.

### **Michael Omi and Howard Winant**

In their book Racial Formation in the United States, Omi and Winant attribute four elements<sup>57</sup> to internal colonialism: a colonial geography, a dynamic of cultural domination and resistance, a system of superexploitation, and institutionalization of externally based control (45). While these definitions are stated without citation, Omi and Winant mention studies of "the black and Chicano communities" in footnotes. The Black community studies cited are Carmichael and Hamilton's Black Power and Robert L. Allen's Black Awakening in Capitalist America. Then Omi and Winant use Blauner's Racial Oppression in America as their chief example in arguing the alleged flaws they attribute to internal colonial theory.

Omi and Winant begin their critique using Michael Burawoy's definition of colonialism, which tries to claim colonialism as only a phenomenon external to an

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<sup>57</sup> Omi & Winant's four elements are stated as: "1. A colonial *geography* emphasizing the territoriality or spatial arrangement of population groups along racial lines; 2, A dynamic of *cultural domination and resistance*, in which racial categories are utilized to distinguish between antagonistic colonizing and colonized groups, and conversely, to emphasize the essential cultural unity and autonomy of each; 3. A system of *superexploitation*, understood as a process by which extra-economic coercion is applied to the racially identified colonized group, with the aim of increasing the economic resources appropriated by the colonizers; 4. Institutionalization of *externally based control*, such that the racially identified colonized group is organized in essential political and administrative aspects by the colonizers or their agents." (italics in original-Omi & Winant, 45)

oppressing country. I have already addressed the divergence of opinion about the definition of this concept as well as the fact that it has historically been addressed in a rather narrow fashion. And I have earlier offered a more inclusive definition.

Omi and Winant also raise the argument that Blauner “neglects class cleavages within minority communities, inter-minority group rivalries, and the extensive interpenetration in the U.S. of minority and majority societies” (46). At the start of Blauner’s chapter on “Internal Colonialism and Ghetto Revolt,” he states in an extensive footnote that this chapter was written<sup>58</sup> without benefit of Allen’s Black Awakening. Blauner affirmed that Allen:

**analyzes ghetto revolts in terms of a conception of internal colonialism similar to my own. Allen, however, deals much more thoroughly with the history and the dynamics of the black movement, class divisions in the black community, and the neocolonial strategies of corporate capitalism.** (Blauner-1972, 82n)

In fact, Allen’s book addresses all three charges with its Black community history and class analysis, and assessments of the Black power movement personalities, organizations, and competing programs and interests. And Allen’s elaboration of the initiation and likely direction of neo-colonial control tactics including activity of organizations like the Ford Foundation certainly contradicts Omi and Winant’s implication that interpenetration of USA Black and White societies is widely ignored by internal colonial theorists.

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<sup>58</sup> Both Allen’s Black Awakening and Blauner’s earlier draft of this chapter as an article in *Social Problems*, 16, no.4 (Spring 1969), pp. 393-408 first appeared the same year, 1969.

Omi and Winant claimed “Superexploitation does not encompass contemporary economic developments which include marginalization and permanent dependency for many on the one hand and significant ‘upward mobility’ for some on the other” (46). Interestingly, I did not find the notion of superexploitation in Black Power, Black Awakening, or Racial Oppression.<sup>59</sup> While some other advocates of Internal Colonialism Theory have used the concept (Bailey, Feagin), superexploitation is not a standing principle for most applications of Internal Colonialism Theory. Regardless, the concept of superexploitation as defined by Omi and Winant is too narrow a reading of the economic relations of colonies, internal or external. In fact, I view use of superexploitation in this context to be a poorly chosen shorthand reference to exploitation by both class and by race [or other systematic differentiation]. As I have already noted, both internal and external colonies have functions in the division of labor of the dominant country’s economic and/or political system. Profit is achieved by the operation of the whole, not just by the role of an individual part. While major profits may result cumulatively for the dominant power from its overall economic network, internal colonies are not necessarily the direct source. For example, internal colonies may be used as major repositories for the reserve army of labor – Black Americans have had much experience with this form of economic subjugation. I also addressed the marginalization issue in

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<sup>59</sup> I could not find such an entry in any of these books, including a cross-referenced search of discussions of exploitation, colonialism, neo-colonialism, and capitalism via their indices.

responding to Bonilla-Silva. And I have discussed African American colonial class dynamics in the previous chapter.

Omi and Winant claimed that “None of the protest phenomena Blauner cites [ghetto riots, cultural nationalism, ghetto-based ‘community control’ movements] *necessitates* the internal colonialism perspective as a framework of explanation” (italics added-Omi & Winant, 46). In fact, Blauner said “it is my basic thesis that the most important expressions of protest in the black community during the recent years reflect the colonized status of Afro-America (Blauner-1972, 89). Blauner asserted that these activities show a close connection with the theory, and can all be linked by the single analysis of internal colonialism, *not* that they are explained *only* and *exclusively* by internal colonialism and cannot be linked at all to any other theory. In contrast, Omi and Winant offer separate and isolated alternative explanations for each of the protest phenomena, and thus, in my view, a defective assessment.

With these deficiencies in mind, it becomes clear that Omi and Winant’s disapproval of Internal Colonialism Theory was not well-founded.

### **Miscellaneous Critiques**

There are a few other flawed criticisms of Internal Colonialism Theory that I should touch upon: definition by majority/minority, the “necessity” of geographic separation, and the requirement of formal political domination.

The concept that the subjugated population must be in the majority in order for colonialism to exist simply rewards policies of “successful” ethnic



cleansing. Thus colonialism is abolished by disposing of a portion of the colonized population while importing a non-colonized population in large numbers. Barrera has pointed out that, “a dominant-subordinate relationship between racial/ethnic groups can exist regardless of who is in the majority and who is in the minority” (1979, 195).

The prerequisite of geographic separation was discussed previously in Chapter 3. I pointed out that, in the absence of a commonly accepted definition of colonialism, several characterizations have been offered which explicitly exclude colonialism from ever having any internal form. In addition, a review of developments since the advent of European colonialism in North America shows the persistence of the functions of colonies within the boundaries of the USA.

Requiring formal political domination as part of a definition of colonialism ignores much of the experience of the developing world since World War II: The maintenance of neo-colonialism has been a major fall back for Europe and the USA in their attempts to continue economic domination of many former colonies in Asia, Africa and Latin America. And I’ve noted by example the result when a settler colony declares its independence. The political and economic domination of an internal colony becomes expressed mainly through sub-national channels, whether by formal state/provincial law or rigidly maintained social custom.

Based on this multiplicity of flawed critiques, I offer a tool for clarification of future considerations of Internal Colonialism Theory.

## **A Framework for Future Discussions and Critiques of Academic Internal Colonialism Theory**

After reviewing these flawed critiques of [classic] Internal Colonialism Theory, I concluded that in the past, there has been no criterion or structure for debating Internal Colonialism Theory. As noted above, critics have tended to selectively choose which articulation of Internal Colonialism Theory they preferred to acknowledge, the better to dismiss the entire school of thought. Below, I have attempted to elevate the standard for future assessments of Internal Colonialism Theory by offering a brief but incisive outline for dialogues and debates of the positives and negatives of academic of Internal Colonialism Theory, both classic and new.

### **An analytical framework for discussing Internal Colonialism Theory:**

1. Any serious critique of the application of Internal Colonialism Theory to the USA should engage an historical sociological framework in the process of answering questions such as:

-Were African Americans/Native Americans colonized during the time of the 13 colonies?

-Were Chican@s colonized as a result of the Mexican-American War?

-Assuming these groups were colonized, when did African Americans/Native Americans/Chican@s cease to be colonized peoples? What was the process by which their colonized existence was abolished? What is a comprehensive alternative evolutionary paradigm of African American [also

Native American & Chican@] oppression from the claimed end of their [North American] colonized existence to the present? What is an alternative explanation for what appear to be the continuing symptoms of being currently colonized in these present day populations?

-If it is alleged that these groups were not ever colonized, describe a comprehensive alternative evolutionary paradigm of their oppression from the beginning of that oppression in North America to the present. [And again, what is the explanation for the apparent present day symptoms of current colonized existence in these populations?]

2. Can Internal Colonialism Theory, classic or new, fit *within* the alternative assessment framework offered? Why, or why not?

In this treatise, I have endeavored to address all of the elements of this framework. Thus, I would expect any significant engagement of this elaboration of Internal Colonialism Theory to respond to these same questions.

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With the critics of academic Internal Colonialism Theory addressed, there is also the question of how Internal Colonialism Theory can relate to other paradigms of racial and ethnic relations.

## **CHAPTER FIVE: HOW INTERNAL COLONIALISM THEORY COMPLEMENTS SOME OTHER SOCIAL THEORIES**

### **Overview**

After exploring flawed evaluations by some critics rejecting Internal Colonialism Theory, I feel it is also important to examine the possibilities of Internal Colonialism Theory for aiding the elaboration of some contemporary social theories. I view race as the most pervasive form of human social differentiation, except for the binary-focus of gender relations. So, most of the theoretical analyses reviewed here for compatibility with Internal Colonialism Theory are race-centered. In this chapter, in context with Internal Colonialism Theory, I explore several current sociological theories that directly engage the sphere of racial and ethnic relations, such as Omi & Winant's Racial Formation Theory, Bonilla-Silva's Racialized Social System Framework, and Feagin's Systemic Racism. In addition, I review Internal Colonialism Theory's convergence possibilities with the field of Critical Race Theory and the perspective of World Systems Analysis. While each of these viewpoints has particular strengths, I argue that each can also benefit from utilizing Internal Colonialism Theory as a part of its assessment of the social construction of race and the resulting material effects.

## Internal Colonialism Theory And Three Current Sociological Theories About Race

### Omi & Winant's Racial Formation Theory<sup>60</sup>

*A racial project is simultaneously an interpretation, representation, or explanation of racial dynamics, and an effort to reorganize and redistribute resources along particular racial lines.*

(italics in original-Omi & Winant, 56)

If Omi and Winant's faulty critique of Blauner and internal colonialism is set aside [see chapter 4], I see nothing in the overall analytical schema of Racial Formation Theory that directly indicates any invalidity in Internal Colonialism Theory. And I wholeheartedly agree with them<sup>60</sup> that while the internal colonialism paradigm has significant utility, it shouldn't stand alone (49).

In my view, Racial Formation Theory is a framework for apprehending all racially based hypotheses, regardless of demonstrable validity or lack thereof. Racial Formation Theory offers an overall context within which the socially constructed concept of race in the USA today, and its material consequences, can be deconstructed. I assert that Internal Colonialism Theory fits well within this model.

But because of its broadly cast analytical character, Racial Formation Theory has some weaknesses that have been noted by other analysts in their mostly supportive critiques of Racial Formation Theory. Joe Feagin has stated both agreement with Omi & Winant's Racial Formation Theory and a critique of it since:

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<sup>60</sup> See Omi & Winant's Racial Formation in the United States From the 1960s to the 1990s.

**the racial formation perspective does not view U.S. racial formations as being first and fundamentally about long-term relationships of racialized groups with substantially different material and political-economic interests -- group interests that stem from greatly different historical experiences with economic exploitation and related oppression. (6)**

Feagin further argued:

**Missing in both the mainstream race-ethnic relations approach and much of the racial formation approach is a full recognition of the big picture -- the reality of this whole society being founded on, and firmly grounded in, oppression targeting African-Americans [and other Americans of color] now for several centuries.**

(brackets in original-7)

And after citing Omi & Winant's work as "a theoretical breakthrough in the area of racial relations," Eduardo Bonilla-Silva asserted that the Racial Formation approach overemphasizes ideological processes, and fails to clearly assess the motivations of "races as social collectivities with different interests" (Bonilla-Silva-2001, 30-31).

These issues raised by Omi & Winant and Bonilla-Silva are actually points of strength for Internal Colonialism Theory. In my discussion of colonialism, I specifically articulate changes over time in some of its major features, in particular regarding African Americans, instead of defending any notion about the static character of race in the USA. But I also aver that while interpretations of race have greatly transformed during the last 400 years, the power dynamics of their application have disproportionately focused on some populations rather consistently, including African Americans and Native Americans.

Further, I argue that Internal Colonialism Theory should actually be seen as a racial project *within* Racial Formation Theory. Internal colonial analysis is a project that seeks to give a comprehensive perspective to a geographic pattern of subordination of a differentiated population by a dominant power with the current outcome of systematic societal inequality. At present, internal colonialism is most frequently found in situations of systematic disparities defined along racial or ethnic lines.

Omi & Winant defined racial projects as having at least three analytical dimensions: the political spectrum, the macro and micro level, and historical time (58). Clearly, my re-assessment of Internal Colonialism Theory is a complex combination of these dimensions: a politically left, macro-level, and an historical *as well as* contemporary perspective analyzing the inter-related past and present situation of African Americans specifically, yet highly applicable to some other oppressed peoples as well.

### **Bonilla-Silva's Racialized Social System Framework<sup>61</sup>**

**Historically the classification of a people in racial terms has been a highly political act associated with practices such as conquest and colonization, enslavement, peonage, indentured servitude, and, more recently, colonial and neocolonial labor immigration.** (Bonilla-Silva-2001, 40)

**The commonsense understanding of racism, which is not much different than the definition developed by mainstream social scientists or even by many critical**

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<sup>61</sup> This was part of the title of Bonilla-Silva's chapter 2, "What Is Racism? The Racialized Social System Framework," in his book, White Supremacy & Racism in the Post-Civil Rights Era.

**analysts, does not provide an adequate theoretical foundation for understanding racial phenomena.”**

(Bonilla-Silva-2001, 44-45)

Bonilla-Silva's Racialized Social System Framework is an analysis of contemporary structural racism [instead of prejudiced personal opinions]. He has described this structural racism as “a network of social relations at social, political, economic, and ideological levels that shapes the life chances of the various races,” thus treating racism as a matter of collective racial ideology (2001, 89-90). He also noted that “the foundation of racism is not the ideas that individuals may have about others, but the social edifice erected over racial inequality” (2001, 22).

In his clear outline of his Racialized Social System Framework, Bonilla-Silva stated nothing that is contradictory to the inclusion of internal colonialism as part of the USA's racialized social system. To summarize:

- 1. Racialized social systems are societies that use a set of social relations and practices based on racial distinctions, allocating different economic, political, social, and even psychological rewards to groups along [socially constructed] racial lines, with the aggregate of those relations and practices as the racial structure of a society.**
- 2. In any racialized society, races become the effect of relations of opposition among racialized groups at all levels of a social formation.**
- 3. On the basis of this structure, a racial ideology develops as an organizational map that guides actions of racial actors in society.**
- 4. While most struggles in a racialized social system contain a racial component, and they sometimes acquire or exhibit a distinct racial character, racialization will always produce some form of racial contestation.**



**5. The process of racial contestation reveals the different objective interests of the races in a racialized social system.**<sup>62</sup> (2001, 44)

Despite his flawed criticisms of internal colonialism [see chapter 4], Bonilla-Silva pointed out, “Notwithstanding these limitations, I incorporate many of the insights developed by authors in this tradition in the alternative framework that I develop” (2001, 30). In accepting Bonilla-Silva’s acknowledgement of the strong influence of Internal Colonialism Theory upon his own analysis, I note that his approach apparently does not recognize a *geographic* component to racialized or other-differentiated oppression and exploitation.

As mentioned in chapter 3, there has been a durability of content and a variability of form in the evolution of colonialism over the course of nearly 500 years, and specifically of internal colonialism over 220 years. Although some relational, structural, administrative, and definitional details have changed, the central dissonance between dominating and subordinated population life outcomes has avoided abolition and unfortunately remains robust.

While Bonilla-Silva has pointed out that sharp differences in racial dynamics have evolved from the Jim Crow to the post-civil rights periods in the USA (2001, 12), Internal Colonialism Theory elaborates some powerful, fundamental similarities between these racial domains. Today, in the USA, historically internally colonized populations are still geographically concentrated, and systematically subordinated [via systems of education, public safety,

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<sup>62</sup> This is a condensed re-phrasing of Bonilla-Silva’s words.

employment, cultural production and finance] with very high rates of poverty, and a wide range of disparate conditions and life outcomes [in contrast to those of the dominant population].

And where the Racialized Social System approach lacks a specifically elaborated chronological dimension, Internal Colonialism Theory provides an historically evolutionary framework for contextualizing the durability of these geographically defined areas with systematically subordinated populations, the American internal colonies known as barrios, ghettos, and reservations.

In my view, internal colonialism is part of the continuing “U.S. racial structure,” to use one of Bonilla-Silva’s key terms (2001, 12). Internal colonialism is a particular concentrated result of policies of group supremacy [whether racial, ethnic, religious, etc.]. It has been one very major, specific element of the USA’s racialized social structure – part of “*the totality of the social relations and practices that reinforce white privilege.*” (italics in original-Bonilla-Silva-2003, 9) Thus, the use of Internal Colonialism Theory aids in more precisely describing the comprehensive and focused nature of racial domination, economic exploitation and political oppression faced by specific populations such as African Americans, Chican@s, and Native Americans.

The rationale for the maintenance of these internal colonies is racism, that is, dominant group racial ideology. Bonilla-Silva has defined racial ideology as “*the racially based frameworks used by actors to explain and justify (dominant race) or challenge (subordinate race or races) the racial status quo*” (italics in

original-Bonilla-Silva-2003, 9). It was the development of racial ideology that justified the kidnapping and colonization of Africans as slaves. After the Civil War, American racial ideology was altered to accommodate the abolition of slavery while validating the maintenance of American apartheid [Jim Crow segregation and ghettoization] and thus the open American embrace of continued internal colonization of African Americans for almost 90 years. After the 1960s, American racial ideology transformed again, this time with the protective veneer of denial of the ideology's existence while blame is leveled at the internal colonies' inhabitants for all conditions within. Bonilla-Silva has labeled this current rationalization of USA racial inequalities as "colorblind racism." (Bonilla-Silva-2003)

Since, without conflict and with noted complementarity, both Bonilla-Silva's analysis and Internal Colonialism Theory amplify sociology's theoretical foundation for understanding racial phenomena, I assert that Internal Colonialism Theory can be seen as a notable part of Bonilla-Silva's Racialized Social Structure Framework.

### **Feagin's Systemic Racism<sup>63</sup>**

**Systemic racism encompasses a broad range of racialized dimensions of this society: the racist framing, racist ideology, stereotyped attitudes, racist emotions, discriminatory habits and actions, and extensive racist institutions developed over centuries by whites.** (xii)

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<sup>63</sup> In 2006, Feagin published Systemic Racism: A Theory of Racial Oppression.

**From the first decades of colonial America, European Americans have made oppression of non-Europeans basic to the new society. For the first 90 percent of this country's history [about 350 years] slavery or legal segregation was generally in place. Only for the last 10 percent or so of our entire history have we been free of slavery and legal segregation. Thus, racial oppression makes the United States very distinctive, for it is the only major Western country that was explicitly founded on racial oppression.**

(brackets in original-Feagin-2006, 2)

A past supporter of the analytical use of Internal Colonialism Theory<sup>64</sup>, Joe R. Feagin failed to mention Internal Colonialism Theory in his recent tome Systemic Racism, which focused on the sweeping, systematic application and effects of racism in the US historically through to the present. However, in the book, he did strive to communicate how central and pervasive “white-on-black oppression” has been to USA history, identity, power relations and wealth development.

Arguing that “Oppression of non-European groups is part of the deep social structure” (2), Feagin considered African American oppression by White America to be “archetypal because it is the original model on which whites’ treatment of other non-European groups entering later into the sphere of white domination has largely been patterned” (xi).

Feagin pointed out the failure of most social analysts to “assess how deep, foundational, and systemic this racial oppression has been historically and remains today” (5). He asserted that Systemic Racism is the predominant lens through which the American project has been encountered, explored,

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<sup>64</sup> See Feagin’s “Slavery Unwilling to Die: The Background of Black Oppression in the 1980s.”

experienced and evaluated. He charted that, beginning with an abject failure of conventional analyses to properly contextualize the colonial experience, this systematically myopic view employing Eurocentric frameworks and problematizing Blacks has continued to be utilized through to the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

I've previously noted Feagin's particular critique of Racial Formation Theory as not focusing on long term relationships and not emphasizing the foundational oppression of African Americans in its precipitant effects on general American racial and ethnic relations.

Feagin also maintained that while Systemic Racism's specific features have evolved considerably over time, "critical and fundamental elements have been reproduced" repeatedly which indicate the enduring nature of American racial oppression over four centuries (8).

As for Internal Colonialism Theory, I have not offered it in this document as a panacea, an all-encompassing exploration of racial dynamics in the USA or beyond, but as a tool for understanding particular oppression-related phenomena, most specifically, the issue of geographically-focused racial and other-differentiated oppression. Yet Internal Colonialism Theory's challenge to the Eurocentric notion that America is "post-colonial," [i.e. past the era of its own colonialism] clearly argues for the view that the USA is still thoroughly grounded in oppression of people of color even today – particularly as internally colonized subjects. And Internal Colonialism Theory does explicitly examine "long-term relationships of racialized groups with substantially different material and

political-economic interests ...from greatly different historical experiences with economic exploitation and related oppression.”

A notable weakness in Feagin’s analysis is his lack of exploration of class dynamics in the function and maintenance of his Systemic Racism framework. Feagin did not mention conceptions of class and their functions in defining and maintaining the American racial hierarchy, except for brief remarks about an oppressive White dynamic.<sup>65</sup> And entirely absent are explorations of the role and nature of the various classes within African America in the opposition to or maintenance of its oppression. Thus, I argue that my re-assessment of Internal Colonialism Theory also fits well within the context of Feagin’s framework, and actually adds significant dimension to Systemic Racism with it’s inclusion of class analysis as an important part of its model.

### **Critical Race Theory**

**Critical race theory (CRT) is a framework that can be used to theorize and examine the ways in which race and racism implicitly and explicitly impact on the social structures, practices, and discourses that affect people of color. Important to this critical framework is a challenge to the dominant ideology, which supports deficit notions about communities of color while assuming “neutrality” and “objectivity.” Utilizing the experiences of people of color, a CRT in sociology also theorizes and examines that place where racism intersects with other forms of subordination such as sexism, classism, nativism, monolingualism, and**

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<sup>65</sup> Feagin: “Nothing is more central to U.S. history than the ongoing struggle of working-class and middle-class whites to maintain their unjustly gained material advantages and this psychological wage of whiteness.” (22)

**heterosexism.**<sup>66</sup>  
122)

(Yosso & Solorzano, 121-

Critical Race Theory has forged its analysis in the highly advanced capitalistic USA attempting to capture both the nature of and the fight back against racism in this country. Critical Race Theory often utilizes an interdisciplinary approach to explore intersectional subordination as it applies its social constructionist approach to very real phenomena concerning race. While formally initiated in the late 1980s, mostly by American legal scholars of color [African American, Latin@, and Asian American], Critical Race Theory has grown to be an expansive collection of ideas that challenge the dominant beliefs and hypotheses about race throughout general social theory. Moreover, perspectives asserted before the formal rise of Critical Race Theory, such as the ideas of W.E.B. Du Bois and Frantz Fanon on race, have become adopted as part of this alternative perspective. Accordingly, Internal Colonialism Theory might be expected to easily fit inside Critical Race Theory's wide embrace. In fact, I assert

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<sup>66</sup> Here is the complete version of Yosso & Solorzano's definition of Critical Race Theory in Sociology:

**Critical race theory (CRT) is a framework that can be used to theorize and examine the ways in which race and racism implicitly and explicitly impact on the social structures, practices, and discourses that affect people of color. Important to this critical framework is a challenge to the dominant ideology, which supports deficit notions about communities of color while assuming "neutrality" and "objectivity." Utilizing the experiences of people of color, a CRT in sociology also theorizes and examines that place where racism intersects with other forms of subordination such as sexism, classism, nativism, monolingualism, and heterosexism. CRT in sociology is conceived as a social justice project that attempts to link theory with practice, scholarship with teaching, and the academy with the community. CRT acknowledges that social institutions operate in contradictory ways with their potential to oppress and marginalize coexisting with their potential to emancipate and empower. CRT in sociology is transdisciplinary and draws on many other schools of progressive scholarship.**

that this manuscript was written very much within the spirit of Critical Race Sociology.

Actually, Yosso & Solórzano have offered a specific interpretation of Critical Race Theory in Sociology. After establishing a working definition [see previous footnote], they tendered five tenets that supply an outline for a Critical Race Theory in Sociology:

- (1) The intercentricity of race and racism**
- (2) the challenge to dominant ideology**
- (3) the commitment to social justice**
- (4) the centrality of experiential knowledge**
- (5) the utilization of interdisciplinary approaches. (122)**

All of these elements can be clearly seen as parts of the approach to Internal Colonialism Theory which I have offered here. Moreover, in the big tent which constitutes Critical Race Theory, the promotion of internal colonialism is already accepted as a progressive position “to build solidarity and resistance.” (Delgado & Stefancic-2001, 61)

In fact, Blauner’s 2001 Book, Still the Big News, featured 15 essays divided in to 3 parts, with the first part entitled, “The Emergence of a Critical Race Theory.” This section included both of Blauner’s most relevant pieces regarding Internal Colonialism Theory.<sup>67</sup> Thus, even as he publicly announced his retreat from advocacy of Internal Colonialism Theory, Blauner recognized the intensely close connections of Internal Colonialism Theory and Critical Race Theory.

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<sup>67</sup> Both of these most relevant pieces “Colonized and Immigrant Minorities” and “Internal Colonialism and Ghetto Revolt,” previously appeared in Blauner’s 1972 book, Racial Oppression in America.



Critical Race Theory and Internal Colonialism Theory even share common ancestry in their appreciation of the standpoint of W.E.B. Du Bois. Internal Colonialism Theory's direct inheritance from Du Bois is more narrow, and is primarily concerned with concepts of colonialism, semi-colonialism and colonized peoples' common characteristics. In comparison, Rabaka argued that Critical Race Theory embraces a much broader spectrum of Du Bois' work regarding "an anti-racist, anti-sexist, anti-capitalist, and anti-colonial critical theory of contemporary society, using Du Bois's thought and texts as a paradigm and point of departure" (Rabaka, 27).

Rabaka further asserted:

**What is intellectually amazing and seminally significant is that Du Bois developed a *sexism-sensitive conception of race and racism* almost a hundred years prior to the current critical race theory movement, which is to say that Du Bois's work for all theoretical and practical purposes could [and, I think, should] be considered *classical critical race theory*.**

(italics in original-Rabaka, 40)

Indeed, Rabaka characterized Du Bois as a prime foundational theorist for a branch of Critical Race Theory: "Du Bois offers Africana Critical Theory an ideal point of departure to present and develop its discourse." (23)

Thus I see significant overlap in each standpoint's assessment of race dynamics and domination. In fact, I think we can view them as cousins.

Both challenge the so-called acceptable paradigms, methods, and modes of discourse on oppression generally and on race and class in particular. Both offer a liberatory and transformative method when examining various forms of

oppression. Both utilize multidisciplinary approaches to constructing knowledge and its application. And both value activist, practice-oriented approaches to social empowerment.

In addition, I argue that both are clear:-

-that colorblindness will not resolve racism, but allow it to grow stronger.

-that racism is [primarily] a matter of systems, not just individuals.

-that addressing the complex nature of oppression in America is

necessary, not simply focusing on a single mode. And both Internal Colonialism Theory and Critical Race Theory actively challenge the notion of Sociological business as usual.

Both Critical Race Theory and Internal Colonialism Theory endeavor to promote a framework of/for social justice, and attempt to rectify social inequalities, not merely inquire about the structure of social problems.

While Critical Race Theory is often written for a broader audience than the academy, Internal Colonialism Theory has important roots outside the academy. Where Critical Race Theory conceives of itself as multidisciplinary, Internal Colonialism Theory has also straddled the disciplines of history, sociology, economics and psychology.

Internal Colonialism Theory addresses the interest of Critical Race Theory in its use of a materialist analysis of a particular manifestation of racism [systematic, geographically-focused subordination by race], in its examination of the structures of domination of settler colony societies over indigenous peoples

and in actively seeking positive abolition as a social justice goal for the oppressed groups about which it speaks. Some applications of Internal Colonialism Theory also engage cultural questions, as does Critical Race Theory, in ascertaining symptoms and symbols of oppression within mass media and popular culture [the colonization of culture].

Thus, taking into account all these reasons, Internal Colonialism Theory is clearly in high accord with Critical Race Theory. In fact, of the various theories explored in this chapter, I regard Internal Colonialism Theory as most harmonious with Critical Race Theory.

### **World-Systems Analysis**

**A capitalist world-economy is a collection of many institutions, the combination of which accounts for its processes, and all of which are intertwined with each other. The basic institutions are the market, or rather the markets; the firms that compete in the markets; the multiple states, within an interstate system; the households; the classes; and the status groups [to use Weber's term, which some people in recent years have renamed the "identities"]. They are all institutions that have been created within the framework of the capitalist world-economy.**

(Wallerstein, 24-5)

**The "coloniality of power" is an expression coined by Anibal Quijano to name the structures of power, control, and hegemony that have emerged during the modernist era, the era of colonialism, which stretches from the conquest of the Americas to the present.**

(quotations in original-Martinot)

Here, I examine World-Systems Analysis and my view of Internal Colonialism Theory's relation to it, including where Internal Colonialism Theory

and World-Systems Analysis are complimentary. I also survey the concept of coloniality, along with its tangency and difference with Internal Colonialism Theory.

World-Systems Analysis is a macro-sociological method of social investigation with Marxist roots (Ward, 47) that advocates for social change. The analysis reveals the mechanics of the capitalist world-economy as an historical social system, the dominant one of the last 400 years. An important key in its innovative assessment of inter-related economics, politics and social phenomena on a global scale is the use of the world-system as the unit of analysis “instead of national states as the object of study” (Wallerstein, 16). It asserts a core-periphery framing of unequal exchange and uneven development among countries and regions at least economically interconnected. This analysis is a substantial improvement over the more Eurocentric notions of “civilized world” vs. “the others,” “modern” vs. “primitive,” and even “developed” vs. “underdeveloped” countries.

Yet, while less Eurocentric than some other approaches to social analysis and change, for most of its 35 years of self-defined existence, World-Systems Analysis has focused much more on economic relations within and between core, periphery and semi-periphery regions, countries, and peoples. Since nations are de-privileged in the eyes of World-Systems Analysis, identity politics has also been seen as less important within this approach. In recent years, some analysts using the world-systems framework have worked to link

assessments of global structures of capitalist economic exploitation, the history of racialized colonial administration, and Anibal Quijano's "coloniality of power." This exploration of the continuing influences of colonialism in formerly colonized nations has been strongly articulated by several World-Systems analysts of color, including Quijano, Walter Mignolo, and Ramon Grosfoguel. Quijano, in a 2000 article clarifying his "coloniality of power" concept maintained "the model of power that is globally hegemonic today presupposes an element of coloniality" (533). In his original essay on "Coloniality At Large,"<sup>68</sup> Mignolo affirmed "what I assert is that the metaphor of the modern world-system leaves in darkness the coloniality of power and the colonial difference" (22), while Grosfoguel has argued, "The idea here is to decolonize political-economy paradigms as well as world-system analysis and to propose an alternative decolonial conceptualization of the world-system" (2008b, 2-3).

In the usage of these analysts, Coloniality appears to me to describe the continuing influence of colonialism and/or of a past history of colonialism, a quality or condition that is still infused with Eurocentric elements of culture and logic as well as social, political and intellectual analysis. Yet, the concept of coloniality does not explicitly describe the geographic territory upon which my new conceptualization of Internal Colonialism Theory focuses.

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<sup>68</sup> Mignolo's piece was fully entitled "Coloniality at Large: The Western Hemisphere in the Colonial Horizon of Modernity," published in 2001, and not to be confused with the 2008 collection by Mabel Morana, Enrique D. Dussel & Carlos A. Jáuregui.(eds.) 2008. Coloniality at Large: Latin America and the Postcolonial Debate.

The idea of coloniality certainly has its place in sociological analysis. Still, I do not see it as a substitute for an analysis of the internal colony system of the USA, or of the colonized situations of other systematically subordinated and *geographically* differentiated populations. However, an aspect of the conception of coloniality can be applied complementally with Internal Colonialism Theory. Coloniality has been viewed as neo-colonialism redefined [within the framework of world systems analysis]. “Colonialism gave way to coloniality, that is ‘independence without decolonization’” (quotes in original-Grosfoguel, 24). So, to the extent that coloniality is clearly defined as neo-colonialism [or vice versa], that establishes the clear complementariness of coloniality and internal colonialism.

Unfortunately, this definition of coloniality is one among many. While one can regard neo-colonialism as coloniality, coloniality has also been frequently used to connote *less* than the full-fledged indirect [neo-colonial] subordination of a colony [or former colony] to its current dominant power. This more vague form of coloniality has been diagnostically applied more loosely than the analytical categories of colonialism and my “new” internal colonialism have been. Coloniality is sometimes used to describe [frequently non-administrative] structural survivals of past colonialism in the present. Coloniality has also been used to explain the differences in oppression in the northern USA between a White worker and his immigrant co-worker from a [formerly] colonized country (Martinot). Grosfoguel stated that “‘coloniality of power’ addresses the way

social power relations today continue to be organized, constituted, and conditioned by centuries of Western colonial expansion” (quotes in original-145).

Martinot further argued:

**We all live within a multiplicity of colonialities; subjected in both body and mind. It is not only our labor, or our sexualities and genders that mark colonial relations; it is not only the wars, the mass murder and death squads organized by imperialist classes, nor the subcolonies formed by women, African-American communities, or ethnic identities; it is also the hegemonic mind, the white, or masculinist, or heterosexist, or national chauvinist mind that constitutes and is constituted by coloniality.**

According to Grosfoguel, coloniality “accounts for the entangled, heterogeneous, and mutually constitutive relations between the international division of labor, global racial/ethnic hierarchy, and hegemonic Eurocentric epistemologies in the modern/colonial/capitalist/ world-system” (4). And in Grosfoguel’s World Systems Analysis, he assessed the use of internal colonial analysis, which he labeled as “internal coloniality,” merely as a form of nationalist discourse [10] and as “anticolonial nationalist strategies” (22). This is an unfortunate reductionist use of the meaning of internal colonialism so as to dismiss the concept. However, coloniality, coloniality of power and internal coloniality *are not* the same as internal colonialism, although the coloniality of power advocates would be accurate in describing the cultural and political situation within an internal colony as being strongly characterized by coloniality or a coloniality of power. But one can also reference reflections of coloniality in

African American populations living outside of Black internal colonies [as rural and suburban “minorities”] in the USA.

Additionally, the world-systems conception prefers to measure global capitalism as a system of cores and peripheries, not nation-states with external neo- and internal [neo-] colonies, so Internal Colonial Theory does clash somewhat with some world-systems analysts by speaking to current mass political consciousness which is still focused mainly on nation-states.

In addition, I propose my “new” Internal Colonialism Theory as an adjunct to the conception of “coloniality of power” within World-Systems Analysis. Certainly, although World-Systems Analysis prioritizes assessment of the basic institutions that it recognizes, there is also room for assessing “the multiple states, within an interstate system,” and the common trends within them (Wallerstein, 24). For example, I consider that my model of internal colonialism is highly applicable to most settler colony societies across the globe.

So, with a section of world-systems analysts already articulating an expansion of the analysis into what Wallerstein calls “identities,” Internal Colonialism Theory can definitely address phenomena in the “narrower and more ‘protected’ markets” and other features among what World-System Analysis recognizes as “status-groups” (Wallerstein, 24,36-8).

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Thus, I see Internal Colonialism Theory as quite practically fitting harmoniously within several differing conceptualizations of American racial



relations. Internal Colonialism Theory is quite functional and appropriate used within Critical Race Theory. It can also be inserted in some frameworks without conflict, such as Racial Formation Theory and the approaches to racism of Bonilla-Silva and Feagin, as well as World Systems Analysis and, I assert, other non-economic reductionist forms of Marxist social analysis.

In sum, I feel that this new elaboration of Internal Colonialism Theory has the capacity to situate present-day geographically colonized experiences - in particular, American experiences, and especially those of African America - closer to the sociological mainstream of racial and ethnic relation.

## CONCLUSION

To review, Internal Colonialism Theory has evolved in part from a long-standing critical approach to the African American historical experience. The roots of its use among African American activists are traceable back to 1830 in their conception of “a nation within a nation.” For over 100 years, that phrase was frequently employed by these activists to describe the American Black predicament. The Marxist National Question was an additional influence, particularly as it was applied in the analysis of Black Belt African America’s situation in the 1930s as a “Negro Nation” with a right to self-determination. During the Black Power Movement of the 1960s and 1970s, there was an explosion of popular embrace of the idea of internal colonialism as explication of the Black ordeal in North America, past and present. In fact, every national Black Power organization aimed for their conception of self-determination as an end to Black colonial subjugation. To these developments, Robert Blauner and Robert Allen added their respective analyses of the internally colonized nature of African America. Blauner, the much more widely cited of the two, achieved that status in part because of the compactness of his article, “Internal Colonialism and Ghetto Revolt,”<sup>69</sup> which was more explicitly directed to, and at, the then race-backward field of sociology [in addition to being authored by a White “expert” instead of a

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<sup>69</sup> First published in 1969, in the journal *Social Problems*, a revised version of “Internal Colonialism and Ghetto Revolt” was published as a chapter in his books, *Racial Oppression in America* [1972] and *Still the Big News: Racial Oppression in America* [2001]. The article was also reprinted in no less than 5 anthologies in addition to a standalone pamphlet published by Bobbs-Merrill (Bracey, Meier & Rudwick; Farberman & Goode; Frucht; Meister; Skolnick & Currie).

“movement”<sup>70</sup> participant and recent Black graduate student] than Allen’s book. Allen actually offered a more advanced approach to Internal Colonialism Theory than Blauner, with his Black community class analysis as well as his early assessment of the neo-colonial stage of internal colonialism. But Allen’s book was almost systematically ignored by mainstream sociology even as Blauner’s appraisal was read widely yet viewed askance by most of the discipline.

But the roots and proofs of the validity of Internal Colonialism Theory are by no means limited to African America: Latin American Scholars have documented similar phenomena in such countries as Brazil, Chile, Columbia, Guatemala, Mexico and Peru (Cotler, Frank, Gonzalez Casanova, Havens & Flinn, Stavenhagen). Analysts have also applied Internal Colonialism Theory to the Native American experience (Churchill, Kasari, Kelm, Queen’s News Centre). Moreover, in Race and Class in the Southwest, Mario Barrera made a major contribution to the field with his assessment of the internally colonized experience of Chican@s in the USA exploring the colonial labor system. He utilized the concept of class fractions applied to segmented labor market theory to give nuance to his class analysis of the Chican@s internal colonial experience.

Taking all of this into account, it is clear that the classic definition of internal colony has been dismissed prematurely. However, this re-assessment places Internal Colonialism Theory on even more solid ground.

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<sup>70</sup> The Civil Rights and Black Power Movements were often referred to by participants as “The Movement.” As a result, the name was also used for a monthly California newspaper that chronicled left political activity during the 1960s.

Historically, the definition of a [subjugated] external colony has included the distinct geographic feature of a colonial territory. I have retained this attribute in this re-examination of internal colonialism, insisting that each single internal colony exists within its own contiguous territory, and opposing the notion of a single diasporic colony/nation. By initially defining a direct external colony as consisting of settler-confiscated land and the land on which the colonized reside, I've been able to follow the life course of an external colony evolving into an internal colony [or colonies] within an independent, settler-colony-dominated society.

In charting the evolution of African American colonies – the land on which the Black colonized resided – I examined the complexities of African America's colonized course through 4 racial domains. The Slavery Racial Domain, which spanned the introduction of slavery, the Revolutionary War and Independence through to the end of the Civil War, featured great expansion of the Black population, but systematic maintenance of the vast majority of Blacks as slaves. After Emancipation, for 90 years, the Jim Crow Racial Domain was characterized by the Black majority becoming tenant farmers and sharecroppers along with the development – as a class – of the Black Petty Bourgeoisie [business owner and professional sections], all subjugated by rigidly enforced legal segregation. From about 1910 to 1970, the Colonial Ghetto Racial Domain, with its less rigid de facto segregation in non-south internal colonies, produced great Black Working Class expansion, including in the industrial production and service sectors, and

some growth in the business owner and professional sections of the Black Petty bourgeoisie, along with intensified unemployment which established the Black Underclass as a significant minority class. With the advent of the Neo-Colonial Racial Domain, the number of Black managers in business and government greatly increased as the Black Petty Bourgeoisie began to administrate the internal colonies even as they increasingly left to live in the suburbs, leaving these ghettos to the shrinking majority Black Working Class and expanding Black Underclass. Thus, amplified by a clear class analysis, this examination has presented a brief but comprehensive summary of 4 centuries of Black colonial experience.

### **Where Do We Go From Here? : Exploring this study's implications for sociology and for the possibilities of future research**

The circulation of this re-assessment should significantly influence future discussions of Internal Colonialism Theory. In anticipation of such debates, I've offered a reinforced framework for discussing and criticizing Internal Colonialism Theory and its various advocates, one that insists that critics take a clear position on the history and evolution of colonialism and internal colonialism in the USA, including a description of when and how all USA colonialism was allegedly terminated and giving adequate explanation with thorough historical context for any alternative offered in substitute for Internal Colonialism Theory.

The application of Internal Colonialism Theory today can provide a sharp rejoinder to the culture-of-poverty and other a-historical, blame-the-victim

approaches featuring oppression denial, historical blindness and/or equivocation on the structural nature of racism.

Previously, I noted that the existence of an internal colony may be terminated by three major means: assimilation, ethnic cleansing, or positive abolition. Assimilation and ethnic cleansing are already rather widely defined. Positive abolition has been much less explored. My definition of positive abolition requires the achievement of an equality of result for the life outcomes of internal colony residents when contrasted with the life outcomes of the historically dominant population. The systematic set of policies necessary to attain this circumstance must include implementation of broad democratic reforms, such as electronic participatory democracy, community control, and broad democracy in regional autonomous zones [and encompassing fully funded collective reparations], to enable the internal colony's maximization of self-determination while remaining within the dominant nation-state [if the internal colony does not fit the Marxist definition of an oppressed nation]. Of course, an oppressed nation, one that could function independently as a separate country, might maximize its self-determination by opting for a completely independent government, economy and social infrastructure. In either case [oppressed nation or non-nation oppressed nationality], this equality of result would eventually enable a self-determined voluntary joining of equals of the internal colony's population with that of the dominant power, built upon the complete end of the colony's political subjugation and economic exploitation. However, without an

engaged commitment to the necessary democratic measures, positive abolition of internal colonies will remain an ideal, an unrealized aspiration.

I've focused this work on the origin and nature of internal colonialism as a tool for assessing the current conditions of the populations of America's internal colonies, especially African Americans. However, in my view, this analysis can be accurately and incisively relevant to an expanded range of populations.

Internal Colonialism Theory may be more widely applicable to:

1]. *The native and forcibly imported populations of other former settler colonies and present-day settler-colony states.* From my perspective, to allow settler-colony states such as Australia, Canada, Israel and New Zealand to define as post-colonial their mistreatment since "independence" of their respective subordinated populations is to gift them a major Eurocentric pass substantially ignoring a key component of their own particular oppressive relations.

2]. *The geographically concentrated and systemically dominated immigrant populations in many developed and developing countries.* The concentrated subjugation as well as economic abuse of immigrants is a globalized phenomena reaching across dozens of countries. Since voluntary, as well as involuntary, labor migration was a feature of external colonialism, immigration, even into advanced capitalist countries, does not by itself exclude the

migrants from a continued colonized experience. While World-Systems analysts use coloniality of power to apprehend immigrant conditions of subordination, I would assert that when a clearly geographically concentrated component is part of a differentiated people's oppression – even those living as voluntary immigrants – internal colonialism has there become constituted, and that internal colonialism is a more precise description for this phenomenon. This is the case not only in the USA, with its immigrant communities of Latinos and Asians, but also in Europe with its numerous immigrant districts – the multi-ethnic “suburbs” of France<sup>71</sup> for example – which are subordinated in ways quite similar to the ghettos of color of North America. My definition of internal colony appears to fit well the situation of oppressed nationalities in France [and other European countries]. Likely to be especially engaged in social activism around conditions within these internal colonies are those who Allen has called “the racialized, transnational children of globalization” (Allen-2005, 8).

3]. *The historically subjugated and geographically concentrated peoples in many other countries of the world.* Analysts in many

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<sup>71</sup> The suburbs of Paris and some other French cities burned in the fall of 2005 and again in 2007 in waves of rebellions by children of colonial immigrants to France. The pictures and commentary in the mass media brought to mind a sad irony: here was Frantz Fanon's decolonization process in full effect in the heart of the nation who trained him as a psychiatrist. The insurgency and the conditions that preceded it were extremely similar to the dynamics here in the USA during the urban rebellions of the 1960's [1964-1969] and the Rodney King-inspired rebellions of 1992.



former colonies have used the internal colonial framework to describe highly unequal power and social relationships in their respective countries, including Azerbaijan, Bangladesh, Estonia, Indonesia, Iran, Pakistan, and Sri Lanka. This category includes Gonzalez Casanova's formerly colonized, dual-economy societies where "internal forms of colonialism remain after political independence" (35). He also noted that, "Racism appears in all the colonies where two cultures are found, in Hispanic America, in the Near and Far East, in Africa" (31). I assert that internal colonialism is present wherever that racism is systematized and geographically concentrated upon a differentiated people.

Moreover, detailing the expanded applications of this new assessment of Internal Colonialism Theory to these situations can be considered as potential projects for the future.

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I have shown Internal Colonialism Theory as congruent to three main currents within contemporary sociology [Racial Formation Theory, Bonilla-Silva's Racialized Social System Framework, and World-Systems Theory], discussing both Internal Colonialism Theory's agreements and dissonances with each. In fact, the application of Internal Colonialism Theory can actually be seen as both a racial project within Omi & Winant's racial formation theory and as part of Bonilla-Silva's "U.S. racial structure" (Bonilla-Silva-2003: 9). While

many analysts in World-Systems Theory do recognize survivals of colonialism in their use of the concept of the “coloniality of power,” internal colonial analysis is an obvious aid to clearly identifying specific, historically rooted, comprehensive and geographically focused subordination and oppression. And perhaps most pertinently, Internal Colonialism Theory is highly harmonious to Critical Race Theory and actually an expression of it.

The limitations of this re-assessment of Internal Colonialism Theory are much the same as those stated by Blauner in his 1969 and 1972 works: Internal Colonialism Theory is not a systematic commentary on all forms of race relations, not even merely on all forms of race relations in the USA, but rather an incisive analysis of some particular phenomena within the field. As Singh has noted, “No single argument could possibly condense the full scope of American ‘multiracism’ over centuries of continental expansion, racial slavery, imperial conquest, and international labor migration”<sup>72</sup> (quotations in original-20).

Racial oppression of loosely dispersed oppressed nationalities who live away from their former internal colonies is a different topic for exploration in another document. Outside of America’s internal colonies, some of the various other current analytic frames for assessing racial relations may be more applicable than Internal Colonialism Theory. For example, I see the conception of coloniality of power as still encompassing some of the experiences of those

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<sup>72</sup> Singh credits the term “multiracism” to Vijay Prasad in “Bruce Lee and the Anti-Imperialism of Kung-Fu: A Polycultural Adventure,” *Positions* 11 (1) (2003): 51-90.

oppressed nationalities who live beyond the informal boundaries of the internal colonies where their brethren reside.

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The creation of “Indians” and “Blacks” as distinct collective and self-identified groups has taken place completely within the context of the subjugation, exploitation and oppression of these groups by White America. Formerly, we were Ashanti and Yoruba, Algonquin and Walla Walla. So it is clear that we have been [re-]constructed as internal colonial subjects in the past. Then has America’s internal colonialism disappeared? Not for the Native Americans on reservations. And not for ghettoized African America.

Thus, Internal Colonialism Theory is not just an analytical tool used historically by Black activists and intellectuals. It is also an important means of understanding national oppression in the USA and elsewhere today. This essay is not aimed at narrowly determining political status for the purpose of supporting or opposing a principle of self-determination on the scale of a nation. Instead, I’ve examined conditions which have existed in the past and continue to be present – the historically unbroken chain of Black colonized existence within the boundaries of the present United States of America.

## APPENDIX A

### Definitions of **colonialism** on the Web:

forced change in which one culture, society, or nation dominates another.

[oregonstate.edu/instruct/anth370/gloss.html](http://oregonstate.edu/instruct/anth370/gloss.html)

This is the practice or policy of ruling other countries and keeping them dependent on the ruling country.

[www.bbc.co.uk/worldservice/learningenglish/radio/specials/1758\\_blue\\_plaque/vocpops/george\\_orwell.shtml](http://www.bbc.co.uk/worldservice/learningenglish/radio/specials/1758_blue_plaque/vocpops/george_orwell.shtml)

Colonialism refers to the practice of occupying land outside of the main nationstate (colony), but under the rule (direct or indirect) of the ...

[www.genderandhealth.ca/en/modules/globalization/globalization\\_glossary.jsp](http://www.genderandhealth.ca/en/modules/globalization/globalization_glossary.jsp)

Control by a country over a colony it has claimed ownership of.

[www.apheda.org.au/campaigns/burma\\_schools\\_kit/resources/1074040257\\_16812.html](http://www.apheda.org.au/campaigns/burma_schools_kit/resources/1074040257_16812.html)

Foreign rule imposed upon a group of people, such as the European domination of much of Africa. Current usage of the term applies the idea to ...

[www.icons.umd.edu/reslib/display\\_glossary](http://www.icons.umd.edu/reslib/display_glossary)

control/authority over one culture/society by another. Controlling culture is usually external, controlled usually native. ...

[www.latrobe.edu.au/childlit/Lectures/PLCvocabulary.htm](http://www.latrobe.edu.au/childlit/Lectures/PLCvocabulary.htm)

The appropriation of lands, goods, and human resources by foreign nations. These outside forces become dominant in their control of these ...

[www.sage.edu/academics/schoolofprofessionalstudies/management/programs/definitions.htm](http://www.sage.edu/academics/schoolofprofessionalstudies/management/programs/definitions.htm)

Colonialism was an era when the Western and European powers of the world ruled smaller, poorer nations such as those in Africa, Latin America, and ...

[www.gradesaver.com/classicnotes/titles/poisonwood/terms.html](http://www.gradesaver.com/classicnotes/titles/poisonwood/terms.html)

Control of overseas colonies by imperial powers; a foreign power rules a large group of people; the foreign power uses the colony for wealth and has more advanced technology than the people of the colonies.

[www.historyteacher.net/EuroProjects/DBQ19981999/glossary2499.htm](http://www.historyteacher.net/EuroProjects/DBQ19981999/glossary2499.htm)

the domination of one country over another by controlling the colony's economic and political systems

[home.ica.net/~drw/glosscd.htm](http://home.ica.net/~drw/glosscd.htm)

The rule by a sovereign state over an alien people and land which involves formalized political and legal control, an asymmetrical economic ...

[www.colorado.edu/geography/courses/geog\\_2002\\_sm05/raleigh\\_articles%20for%20classes/terms.doc](http://www.colorado.edu/geography/courses/geog_2002_sm05/raleigh_articles%20for%20classes/terms.doc)

exploitation by a stronger country of weaker one; the use of the weaker country's resources to strengthen and enrich the stronger country

[wordnet.princeton.edu/perl/webwn](http://wordnet.princeton.edu/perl/webwn)

Colonialism is the extension of a nation's sovereignty over territory beyond its borders by the establishment of either settler colonies or administrative dependencies in which indigenous populations are directly ruled or displaced. ...

[en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Colonialism](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Colonialism)

The colonial domination policy pursued by the powers of Europe, from the second half of the XIX century to the years following World War II. A colonial system; A colonial linguistic expression. Term or expression of colonial origin entered in a European language; Colonial life

[en.wiktionary.org/wiki/colonialism](http://en.wiktionary.org/wiki/colonialism)

Date – August 15, 2008

[http://www.google.com/search?hl=en&client=firefox-a&rls=org.mozilla:en-US:official&hs=M0U&defl=en&q=define:colonialism&sa=X&oi=glossary\\_definition&ct=title](http://www.google.com/search?hl=en&client=firefox-a&rls=org.mozilla:en-US:official&hs=M0U&defl=en&q=define:colonialism&sa=X&oi=glossary_definition&ct=title)

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