



Black Picket Fences: Privilege and Peril among the Black Middle Class

Mary Pattillo , Mary Pattillo-McCoy

[Download now](#)

[Read Online](#) 

Black Picket Fences: Privilege and Peril among the Black Middle Class

Mary Pattillo , Mary Pattillo-McCoy

Black Picket Fences: Privilege and Peril among the Black Middle Class Mary Pattillo , Mary Pattillo-McCoy

Black Picket Fences is a stark, moving, and candid look at a section of America that is too often ignored by both scholars and the media: the black middle class. The result of living for three years in "Groveland," a black middle-class neighborhood on Chicago's South Side, sociologist Mary Pattillo-McCoy has written a book that explores both the advantages and the boundaries that exist for members of the black middle class. Despite arguments that race no longer matters, Pattillo-McCoy shows a different reality, one where black and white middle classes remain separate and unequal.

Black Picket Fences: Privilege and Peril among the Black Middle Class Details

Date : Published November 1st 2000 by University Of Chicago Press (first published October 1st 1999)

ISBN : 9780226649290

Author : Mary Pattillo , Mary Pattillo-McCoy

Format : Paperback 283 pages

Genre : Nonfiction, Sociology, Race, Cultural, African American, History, Economics, Anthropology

 [Download Black Picket Fences: Privilege and Peril among the Blac ...pdf](#)

 [Read Online Black Picket Fences: Privilege and Peril among the Bl ...pdf](#)

Download and Read Free Online Black Picket Fences: Privilege and Peril among the Black Middle Class Mary Pattillo , Mary Pattillo-McCoy

From Reader Review *Black Picket Fences: Privilege and Peril among the Black Middle Class* for online ebook

Michelle Farley says

Although I enjoyed this book, it seems a little dated now. I'd love to see an updated study of the same area of Chicago.

Anthony says

After moving to East Harlem and becoming surrounded by a decidedly different demographic than the Morningside Heights population, I wanted to find a book that would offer a modern appraisal of urban poverty and growth in primarily black America. After a brief Amazon search of well-recommended books, I came across *Black Picket Fences* which is a sociologist's case study of black middle class America, set in Groveland, a South Side Chicago suburb where 99% of the population is black. While Pattillo-McCoy lends authenticity to her interviewee's voices, profiling their ambitions, snares, and motivations, many of the potent relations shaping black America are absent from this volume. She notes how a disproportionate share of Groveland's young black males, despite growing up in middle class surroundings, will die from drug abuse or gang-related violence, or end up in jail. Still, we get no insight from her about policing or the relationships communities have with law and order, aside from informal governance that gangs like the Black Mobsters lend to select community functions. I'm certain that such material is more relevant to this narrative, especially to a sociologist who explores themes of violent attraction and mimicking, than her choice of Nike as a case study in urban culture. In sum, the book provided some new insights into black middle class America, but offered no empirical support for her arguments [observational study, only numbers referenced were for area-average household incomes]. I think this starts some conversations, but much of the substance has to be sought elsewhere.

Leslie says

This is an eye-opening account of a middle class, black neighborhood in suburban Chicago. Shows how the black middle class is closely tied with the lower class, moreso than in the white community. I enjoyed the first hand accounts from the citizens of Groveland. Important sociological work.

Brady Dale says

From a roundup review I did at the end of 2013 on *NextCity*.

What I wrote about this book:

Black Picket Fences is a reissue. Pattillo completed her research for the first volume in 1999, and recently revisited her subject cohort in order to issue this update, with an extended

afterword where she catches us up with some of its characters.

Pattillo, a sociologist, takes as her subject the Groveland neighborhood on Chicago's South Side. Her original volume dealt with the pressure of white racism to keep upwardly mobile blacks out of white areas, which meant that the African-American middle class stayed intermingled with low-income people. As such, middle-class black children grow up in a milieu where the temptation to engage in destructive activities is considerably more acute and multi-faceted than it is on white children, making it less likely for black children to reproduce their parents' success. Or, as Pattillo puts it, "The in-between position of the black middle class sets up certain crossroads for its youth."

No doubt many sociologists would quibble with some part of that statement. The book is powerful, though, in the way that Pattillo carefully balances her qualitative fieldwork with supplemental observations from quantitative literature on the same subject. Readers will also appreciate the way she doesn't mince words. ("Liberals bumble when addressing these realities...")

In her follow-up, though, we find that an interesting shift has taken place. In 1999 Pattillo argued that profound segregation in housing makes it harder for black children to build on their parents' achievements. However, in the second edition we learn two things: That very few of the characters Pattillo followed in her fieldwork have taken the wrong road and, apparently, something really has started to shift. The numbers show that U.S. cities have become markedly less segregated than they were in 1999. Time will tell what that means. Hopefully, it's a good sign for everyone.

Nakia says

I read this in college. I think I want to read it again. Gotta see if I ever sold it back or if it's on my bookshelf somewhere.

Jillian says

Very interesting study on the black middle class.

Art says

A good book to read if you want to better understand working / middle class African American culture. Written with a deep understanding and love for the community she documents, Pattillo's work is thoroughly researched and is an important resource for both "serious" scholars and the casual reader.

Gloria says

Pattillo is one of the favorite authors of our instructors. We have read from her works several times. She grew up middle class and wanted to answer the question why did she finish school and become a professional and why did too many of her classmates go down a more dire road? Her answer is the stark differences between the white and black middle classes. The black middle class still has close ties to the lower class. It's an eye opening look at what is going on in America.
