

Marginality, ethnicity and penalty in the neo-liberal city: an analytic cartography

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(Received 28 June 2013; accepted 3 March 2014)

This article draws an analytic map of the research programme pursued across my three books *Urban Outcasts* (2008), *Punishing the Poor* (2009) and *Deadly Symbiosis: Race and the Rise of the Penal State* (in press). In this trilogy, I disentangle the triangular nexus of class fragmentation, ethnic division and state-crafting in the polarizing city at century's turn to explain the political production, socio-spatial distribution and punitive management of marginality through the wedding of disciplinary social policy and neutralizing criminal justice. I signpost how I deployed key notions from Pierre Bourdieu (social space, bureaucratic field, symbolic power) to clarify categories left hazy (such as the ghetto) and to forge new concepts (territorial stigmatization and advanced marginality, punitive containment and liberal paternalism, hyper-incarceration and negative sociodicy) as tools for the comparative sociology of the unfinished genesis of the post-industrial precariat, the penal regulation of poverty in the age of diffusing social insecurity, and the building of the neo-liberal Leviathan.

Keywords: marginality; ethnicity; ghetto; criminal justice; state; symbolic power; dishonour, neoliberalism; Bourdieu

I would like to start by extending my warm thanks to the participants of this conference – it is better to do so at its outset since we will likely have strong disagreements at its end. It is a paradox, but one of the main obstacles to advances in the social sciences nowadays resides in the social and temporal organization of research, with the uncontrolled invasion of schedules, the overload of work and the multiplication of missions without

This text is a compressed and clarified version of my opening keynote to the conference 'Marginalité, pénalité et division ethnique dans la ville à l'ère du néolibéralisme triomphant: journée d'études autour de Loïc Wacquant', organized at the Université Libre de Bruxelles on 15 October 2010.

a matching expansion of the resources needed to carry them out. It explains that we hardly have the concrete incentives, or even simply the time, to sit down and read in depth the works of other scholars, even those that we would need to digest to keep up with our own specialty areas. And we have even fewer opportunities to meet a group of colleagues coming from a variety of fields who have taken the trouble to dissect a body of writings in order to engage in a focused discussion about them liable to help each to advance further along his or her own research path. It is a rare occasion of this kind that we enjoy today, thanks to the energy and talent that Mathieu Hilgers deployed behind the scenes to organize this meeting. I am very grateful to him, as I am to the sociologists, geographers, criminologists and anthropologists who are joining in these discussions, and to the large audience that has come to listen and, better yet I hope, to contribute to our debates through its live questions and reactions.

What I would like to do today is, precisely, to serve as a human switchboard to activate communication among researchers who usually do not encounter one another and therefore do not talk to each another, or do so too rarely and from a distance, about the three subjects that anchor the three thematics of this study day. In the first corner, we have people who study *class fragmentation in the city* in the wake of the crumbling of the traditional working class issued from the Fordist and Keynesian era (that is, roughly the long century running from 1880 to 1980) under the press of deindustrialization, the rise of mass unemployment and the diffusion of labour precarity, at the intersection of what Robert Castel (1996) puts under the notion of the 'erosion of the wage-earning society' and Manuel Castells (2000) calls 'the black holes' of urban development in 'the information age'. These researchers are concerned with employment and labour market trends and with their polarizing and ramifying impacts on social and spatial structures – leading in particular, at the bottom of the ladder of classes and places, to the *unfinished genesis of the post-industrial precariat* in the urban periphery at the dawn of the twenty-first century. But they scarcely engage in sustained discussion with their colleagues who, in the second corner, are studying the foundations, forms and implications of ethnic cleavages.

Grounded in ethno-racial classifications in the USA (that is, in the institutionalization of 'race' as denegated ethnicity), in ethno-national classifications in the European Union (EU) (to wit, the 'national/foreigner' cleavage) and in a varying mix of the two in Latin America and a good part of Africa, (re)activated by immigration and by the cultural differences of which migration can be the carrier, *ethnic division* is nonetheless essential to grasping the formation and de-formation of classes. And conversely: how can one not see that those who are designated – indeed, defamed – across Europe as 'immigrants' are foreigners of postcolonial origins and lower class extraction while others, of upper-class standing, are 'expats', whom everyone wants to attract and not drive out? And how can

one ignore that the collective perception that one has of them, their modalities of incorporation, their capacity for collective action, in sum, their fate, depend a great deal on their social position and trajectory, and therefore on shifts in the class structure in which they become ensconced? This domain of inquiry, which is experiencing an unprecedented boom across Europe, fuelled by the fear of immigration and by the political and media fad over 'diversity', has grown largely autonomous (under the impetus of American-style ethnic studies programmes) and increasingly distant from – even opposed to – class analysis. Thus, an artificial alternative has crystallized, which summons us to make a disjunctive choice between class and ethnicity, to grant analytical preference and political priority to either 'the social question' or 'the racial question' – I am thinking here, in the case of France, of Pap Ndiaye's resounding study *La Condition noire* (2008), which aspires to found 'black studies à la French', which, in my view, is a double mistake, theoretical and practical, and of the book edited by the Fassin brothers, *De la question sociale à la question raciale?* (2006), which speaks volumes about the drift of the progressive 'common sense' of the moment. Now, it is abundantly evident, as Max Weber ([1922] 1978) emphasized a century ago, that these two modalities of 'social closure' (*Schließung*), based respectively on the distribution of material and symbolic powers, are profoundly imbricated and must necessarily be theorized together.¹

Finally, in the third corner, studiously isolated from the other two, we have a group that is very well represented among us today: criminologists and assorted specialists in *criminal justice* issues. They burrow away with zeal in the closed perimeter of the 'crime and punishment' duet, which is historically constitutive of their discipline and continually reinforced by political and bureaucratic demand. Hence, they pay hardly any attention (not enough for my taste, in any case) to shifts in class structure and formation, the deepening of inequalities and the broad revamping of urban poverty, on the one hand, and to the dynamic, and historically variable, impact of ethnic divisions on the other (except under the narrow and limiting rubric of discrimination and disparity, typically conflated). In so doing, they deprive themselves of the means to grasp the contemporary evolution of penal policies, considering that – as Bronislaw Geremek ([1978] 1987) showed in his master work *La Potence ou la pitié* – since the invention of prison and the emergence of modern states in the West at the close of the sixteenth century, these policies have aimed less at reducing crime than at curbing urban marginality. Better yet, penal policy and social policy are but the two flanks of the same politics of poverty in the city – in the double sense of power struggle and public action. Finally, always and everywhere, the vector of penalty strikes preferentially at categories situated at the bottom of both the order of classes and gradations of honour. It is therefore crucial to connect criminal justice to marginality in its *double dimension, material and symbolic*, as well as to

the other state programmes that purport to regulate ‘problem’ populations and territories.

I hope that my presence here can help us overcome – if only for the duration of this meeting – the isolation and even mutual ignorance in which the explorers of these three thematic regions hold one another, so that we may set in motion a dialogue among students of urban relegation as a product of class restructuring, of the reverberations of ethnicity, and of the transformations of the state in its different components targeted at dispossessed and dishonoured populations – first among them its penal arm (the police, courts, jail, prison, juvenile facilities and their extensions). If there is a key argument that I want to lay out today, through my answers about each of the books that are the focus of our three sessions as well as in my concluding talk at the end of this day, it is that we urgently need to link these three areas of inquiry and get the corresponding disciplines to work together: urban sociology and economic analysis, the anthropology and the political science of ethnicity, and criminology and social work, with diagonal input from geography to help us capture the spatial dimension of their mutual imbrications, with, at the end our sightline, the figure of a ‘Centaur state’, liberal at the top and punitive at the bottom, which flouts democratic ideals by its very anatomy as by its *modus operandi*.

I

I propose, by way of both prolegomenon to and frame for our debates, to sketch a rough analytic cartography of the research programme that I have pursued over the past two decades at the crossroads of these three thematics, a programme of which my books *Urban Outcasts*, *Punishing the Poor* and *Deadly Symbiosis* are both the product and summation. These books form a trilogy that probes the triangle of urban transformations with class, ethnicity and state as its vertices and paves the way for a properly sociological (re-)conceptualization of neo-liberalism. So much to say that they gain from being read together, sequentially or concurrently, insofar as they complement and bolster one other to outline *in fine* a model of the reconfiguration of the nexus of state, market and citizenship at century’s start, and a model that one can hope to generalize by means of reasoned transpositions across borders. This revisit is an opportunity to draw up a provisional and compact balance sheet of these inquiries and to specify their stakes, but also to signpost how I adapted key notions from Pierre Bourdieu (social space, bureaucratic field, symbolic power) to clarify categories left hazy (such as that of the ghetto) and to forge new concepts with which to dissect the emergence of the urban precariat and its punitive management by the neo-liberal Leviathan.

Each volume of this trilogy shines light on one side of the ‘class-race-state’ triangle² and probes the impact of the third vertex on the relationship between the other two. And each book builds on the other(s) as both empirical backdrop and theoretical stepping stone.

- (1) *Urban Outcasts* diagnoses the rise of *advanced marginality* in the city, in the wake of the collapse of the black ghetto on the American side and the dissolution of working-class territories in Western Europe, along the ‘class-race’ axis as angled by state structures and policies.
- (2) *Punishing the Poor* charts the invention and deployment of *punitive containment* as technique for governing problem areas and populations along the ‘class-state’ axis stamped by ethno-racial or ethno-national divisions.
- (3) *Deadly Symbiosis* disentangles the relationship of reciprocal imbrication between *penalization and racialization as kindred forms of dishonour* and reveals how class inequality intersects and inflects the ‘state-ethnicity’ axis.

Each of these books labours its own problematic and can therefore be read separately. But the arguments that link them together extend beyond each to make a broader contribution, first to a *comparative sociology of the regulation of poverty and the (de-)formation of the post-industrial precariat* and, second, to a *historical anthropology of the neo-liberal Leviathan* (Wacquant 2012). They offer a way to rethink neo-liberalism as a transnational political project, a veritable ‘revolution from above’ that cannot be reduced to the naked empire of the market (as both its opponents and its advocates would have it) but necessarily encompasses the institutional means required to bring this empire into being: namely, disciplinary social policy (encapsulated by the notion of *workfare*) and the diligent expansion of the penal system (which I christen *prisonfare*), without forgetting the trope of *individual responsibility* that acts as the cultural glue binding these three aforementioned components together (Wacquant 2010a). I briefly summarize the key arguments made in each book before highlighting their common theoretical foundations and their interconnected implications.

1. The political production of advanced marginality: The first book, *Urban Outcasts: A Comparative Sociology of Advanced Marginality*, elucidates the nexus of class and race in the districts of dispossession or *bas-quartiers* of the post-industrial metropolis in its phase of socio-spatial polarization (Wacquant 2008a). I describe the sudden implosion of the black American ghetto after the acme of the civil rights movement and attribute it to the turnaround of local and federal policies after the mid-1970s – a multi-sided shift that David Harvey (1989) captures well as a move ‘from the managerial city to the entrepreneurial city’, but one that assumed a particularly virulent form in the USA as it also partook of a

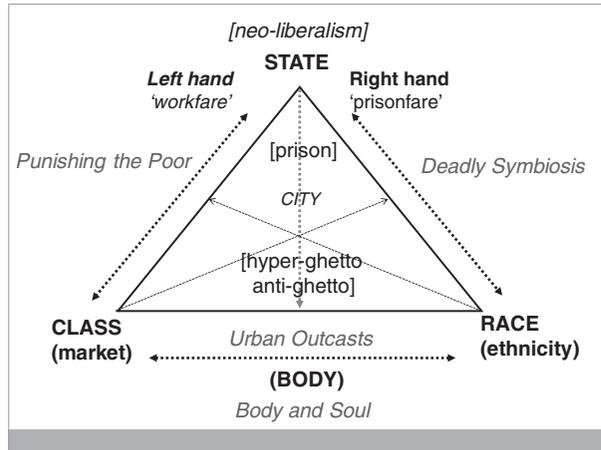


Figure 1. The 'fatal triangle' of the urban precariat.

sweeping racial backlash. This policy turnaround accelerated the historic transition from the *communal ghetto*, confining all blacks in a reserved space that both entrapped and protected them, to the *hyper-ghetto*, a territory of desolation that now contains only the unstable fractions of the African-American working class, exposed to all manners of insecurity (economic, social, criminal, sanitary, housing, etc.) by the unravelling of the web of parallel institutions that characterizes the ghetto in its fully fledged form (Wacquant 2005a).

I then contrast this sudden crumbling with the slow decomposition of working-class territories in the EU during the era of deindustrialization. I show that urban relegation obeys different logics on the two continents: in the USA, it is determined by ethnicity, modulated by class position after the 1960s, and aggravated by the state; in France and its neighbouring countries, it is rooted in class inequality, inflected by ethnicity (for which read: postcolonial immigration) and partially deflected by public action. It follows that, far from drifting towards the socio-spatial type of the ghetto as instrument of ethnic closure (Wacquant 2011a), the dispossessed districts of European cities are moving away from it on all dimensions, so much so that one can characterize them as *anti-ghettos*.³

I thus refute the fashionable thesis of a transatlantic *convergence* of dispossessed districts on the pattern of the African-American ghetto and instead point to the *emergence*, on both sides of the Atlantic, of a new regime of poverty in the city, fuelled by the fragmentation of wage labour, the retrenchment of social protection, and territorial stigmatization. I conclude that the state plays a pivotal role in the social as well as the spatial production and distribution of urban marginality: the fate of the post-industrial precariat turns out to be economically underdetermined and politically overdetermined, and this is true in the USA no less than in

Europe – yet another nick in what the historian and jurist Michael Novak (2008) has nicely called ‘the myth of the “weak” American state’. So much to say that we must urgently place government structures and policies back at the heart of the sociology of the city (where Max Weber [1921, 1958] had properly put it) hanging and bearing over the dyadic relationships between class and ethnicity at the foot of the spatial structure, as shown in Figure 1.

2. The punitive management of poverty as component of neo-liberalism: How will the state react and handle this *advanced marginality* that, paradoxically, it has fostered and entrenched at the point of confluence of the policies of economic ‘deregulation’ and social protection cutbacks? And how, in turn, will the normalization and intensification of social insecurity in territories of urban relegation contribute to redrawing the perimeter, programmes and priorities of *public authority* (I use this expression on purpose)? The two-way relationship between class transformation and state re-engineering in its social and penal missions are the topic of the second book, *Punishing the Poor: The Neoliberal Government of Social Insecurity* (Wacquant 2009a), which covers the left-hand side of the ‘deadly triangle’ determining the destiny of the urban precariat.

State managers could have ‘socialized’ this emerging form of poverty by checking the collective mechanisms that feed it, or ‘medicalized’ its individual symptoms; they opted instead for another route, that of penalization. Thus was invented in the USA a new politics and policy of management of urban marginality wedding restrictive social policy – through the supersession of protective welfare by mandatory workfare, whereby assistance becomes conditional on orienting oneself towards degraded employment – and expansive penal policy – intensified by the concurrent drift from rehabilitation to neutralization as operant philosophy of punishment, and centred on declining and derelict urban areas (the US hyper-ghetto, dilapidating working-class *banlieues* in France, ‘sink estates’ in the UK, *krottenwijk* in the Netherlands, etc.) delivered to public vituperation by the discourse of territorial stigmatization in the dualizing metropolis. This policy contraption will then spread and mutate through a process of ‘treasonous translation’ across national borders, in accordance with the make-up of social space and the configuration of the political-administrative field particular to each receiving country.⁴

Punishing the Poor effects three breaks to roll out three major arguments. The first break consists of decoupling crime from punishment so as to establish that the irruption of the penal state, and thus the great comeback of the prison (which had been declared moribund and destined to disappear in short order around 1975),⁵ is a response not to criminal insecurity but to the social insecurity spawned by the precarization of wage labour and to the ethnic anxiety generated by the destabilization of established hierarchies of honour (correlative of the collapse of the black ghetto in the USA and of the settlement of immigrant populations and

advances in supranational integration in the EU). The second break is to encompass in one and the same model the turnabout of penal policy and the permutations of social policy that are customarily kept separate, in both governmental and scholarly visions. For these two policies are mutually imbricated: they are aimed at the same populations caught in the cracks and ditches of the polarized socio-spatial structure; they deploy the same techniques (case files, surveillance, denigration and graduated sanctions) and obey the same moral philosophy of behaviourist individualism; and the panoptic and disciplinary objectives of the former tend to contaminate the latter. To effect this integration, I enlist Bourdieu's (1993) concept of 'bureaucratic field', which leads me to revise Piven and Cloward's ([1971] 1993) classic thesis on 'regulating the poor' through welfare: henceforth, the Left hand and the Right hand of the state join together to effect the 'double punitive regulation' of the unstable fractions of the post-industrial proletariat.

The third rupture resides in ending the sterile confrontation between the advocates of economic approaches inspired by Marx and Engels, who construe criminal justice as an *instrument of class compulsion* deployed in linked relation with swings in the labour market, and the culturalist approaches derived from Émile Durkheim, according to which punishment is a *language* that helps to draw boundaries, revivify social *solidarity*, and express the shared sentiments that found the civic *community*. It suffices, thanks to the concept of bureaucratic field, to *bring together the material and the symbolic moments of any public policy* to realize that penalty can perfectly well fulfil both the functions of control and communication either simultaneously or successively, and thus operate in concert in the expressive and the instrumental registers. Indeed, one of the distinctive traits of neo-liberal penalty is its teratological accentuation of its mission of figurative extirpation of danger and pollution from the social body, even at the cost of reducing rational crime control, as illustrated by the hysterical revamping of sex offenders' sentencing and supervision in most advanced societies.

I conclude *Punishing the Poor* by contrasting my model of penalization as political technique for managing urban marginality with Michel Foucault's (1975) characterization of the 'disciplinary society', David Garland's (2001) thesis of the emergence of the 'culture of control', and the vision of neo-liberal policy propounded by David Harvey (2005). In doing so, I demonstrate that the expansion and glorification of the penal arm of the state (centred on the prison in the USA and led by the police in the EU) is not an anomalous deviation from or a corruption of neo-liberalism but, on the contrary, is one of its core constituent components. Just as at the end of the sixteenth century, the nascent modern state innovated conjointly poor relief and penal confinement to stem the flow of tramps and beggars then invading the trading cities of Northern Europe (Lis and Soly 1979; Rusche and Kirchheimer [1939] 2003), so at the close

of the twentieth century the neo-liberal state bolstered and redeployed its policing, judicial and carceral apparatus to stem the disorders caused by the diffusion of social insecurity at the bottom of the ladder of classes and places, and staged the garish spectacle of *law-and-order pornography* to reaffirm the authority of a government wanting in legitimacy due to having forsaken its established duties of social and economic protection.

3. The transformative synergy between racialization and penalization: The crescendo of advanced marginality and the turn towards its punitive containment have both been powerfully stimulated and inflected by ethnic division, rooted in the 'black/white' opposition in the USA and centred on the 'national/postcolonial foreigner' schism in Western Europe (with certain categories, such as the Roma, treated as quasi-foreigners even in their home countries). This inflection operates indirectly, through the bisectrix of the 'class-race-state' angle shown in Figure 1 above (and dealt with in chapter seven of *Punishing the Poor*, 'The Prison as Surrogate Ghetto'), but also directly, through the two-way relationship between race-making and state-crafting. This relationship is figured by the right-hand side of the triangle and covered by the third book, *Deadly Symbiosis: Race and the Rise of the Penal State* (Wacquant, forthcoming with Polity Press).

The synergistic connection between ethno-racial cleavage and the development of the penal state is the most difficult issue of this plank of investigations, both to raise and to resolve, and this for several reasons.⁶ First, the study of racial domination is a conceptual quagmire and a sector of social research where political posturing and moral ranting too often take precedence over analytical rigour and the quality of empirical materials (Wacquant 1997a). Next, the probability of slipping into the logic of the trial, which is the sworn enemy of sociological reasoning, already very high when one deals with the slippery and loaded notion of 'racism', is redoubled in the case at hand as we are tackling an institution, criminal justice, whose official mission is precisely to render judgements of culpability. Third, to understand the contemporary connection between race and public power, one must go back four centuries, to the founding of the American colony that would become the USA, without for that falling into the trap of making the present the inert and ineluctable 'legacy' of a shameful past that remains to be expiated. Finally, since ethno-racial division is not a thing but an activity (and a symbolic activity at that – a relation objectified and embodied), it is not congealed and constant; it evolves by fits and starts throughout history, precisely as a function of the operative mode of the state as paramount symbolic power. These difficulties explain why I have twice taken this book back from my publisher to revise it top to bottom (and therefore why even now you can only evaluate it through the articles that offer provisional and preliminary versions of the main chapters).

Deadly Symbiosis shows how ethno-racial cleavage lubricates and intensifies penalization and how, in turn, the rise of the penal state moulds

race as a modality of classification and stratification, by associating blackness with devious dangerousness and by splitting the African-American population along a judicial gradient (Wacquant 2005b). The demonstration proceeds in three stages, which take us to three continents. In the first stage, I reconstitute the historical chain of the four ‘peculiar institutions’ that have worked successively to define and confine blacks throughout the history of the USA:⁷ slavery from 1619 to 1865; the regime of racial terrorism in the South known as ‘Jim Crow’ from the 1890s to 1965; the ghetto of the Fordist metropolis in the North from 1915 to 1968; and finally the hybrid constellation born of the mutual interpenetration of the hyper-ghetto and the hypertrophic carceral system. I establish that the stupendous inflation in the confinement of *lower-class* blacks since 1973 (the black bourgeoisie has both *supported and benefited* from that same penal expansion, which suffices to invalidate the counter-evangelical thesis of the coming of ‘The New Jim Crow’) resulted from the collapse of the ghetto as ethnic container and the subsequent deployment of the penal net in and around its remnants. This carceral mesh was strengthened by two convergent series of changes that, on the one hand, have ‘prisonized’ the ghetto and, on the other, have ‘ghettoized’ the prison, such that a triple relationship of functional surrogacy, structural homology and cultural syncretism has coalesced between them (Wacquant 2001). The symbiosis between the hyper-ghetto and the prison perpetuates the socio-economic marginality and the symbolic taint of the black urban sub-proletariat; and it revamps the meaning of ‘race’ and reshapes citizenship by secreting a racialized public culture of denigration of criminals.

I then expand this model to encompass the massive over-incarceration of postcolonial immigrants in the EU, which turns out to be steeper in most member states than the over-incarceration of black Americans across the Atlantic – a revealing yet little-known fact that is either overlooked or denied by continental criminologists (Wacquant 2005c). The selective targeting and preferential confinement of foreigners issued from the West’s former empires take the two complementary forms of internal and external ‘transportation’ – carceral expurgation and geographic expulsion (dramatized by the bureaucratic-cum-journalistic ceremony of the ‘charter flight’). These are complemented by the rapid development of a vast network of detention camps reserved for irregular migrants and by aggressive policies of detection and exclusion that incite informality among those migrants and normalize the ‘misrule of law’ across the continent as well as export it to sending countries via the ‘externalization’ of programmes of immigration and asylum control (Broeders and Engbersen 2007; Ryan and Mitsilegas 2010). All these measures aim to trumpet the fortitude of the authorities and to reaffirm the boundary between ‘them’ and a European ‘us’ that is painfully crystallizing.⁸ *The penalization, racialization and depoliticization of urban turbulences*

associated with advanced marginality thus proceed apace and reinforce one another in a circular nexus on the European continent as in the USA.

The same logic is at work in Latin America, which is where I last take the reader in order to scrutinize the militarization of poverty in the Brazilian metropolis as revelator of the deep logic of penalization (Wacquant 2008b). In a context of extreme inequalities and rampant street violence backed by a patrimonial state that tolerates routine judicial discrimination by both class and colour and unfettered police brutality, and considering the appalling conditions of confinement, to impose punitive containment on the residents of declining *favelas* and degraded *conjuntos* is tantamount to treating them as *enemies of the nation*. And it is guaranteed to fuel disrespect for the law and the routine abuse as well as runaway expansion of penal power, which one can indeed observe across South America in response to the conjoint rise of inequality and marginality (Müller 2012). This Brazilian excursus confirms that the vector of penalization always aims highly selectively, striking as a matter of structural priority those categories doubly subordinated in the material order of class and in the symbolic order of honour.

II

I come now to the theoretical inspiration for my work, which is not always clearly perceived by my readers (or else only faintly or elliptically), even as it provides the key to the overall intelligibility of a set of investigations, which, without it, might seem rather dispersed if not disconnected. In order to disentangle the triangular connections between class restructuring, ethno-racial division and state-crafting in the era of triumphant neo-liberalism, I have adapted several concepts developed by Pierre Bourdieu (1997) and put them to work on new fronts – marginality, ethnicity, penalty – from the micro-level of individual aspirations and interpersonal relationships in everyday life to the meso-level of social strategies and urban constellations to the macrosociological level of state forms (see Figure 2):

- *Symbolic power* is ‘the power to constitute the given by enunciating it, to make people see and believe, to confirm or transform the vision of the world, and thereby action upon the world, and thus the world itself’ (Bourdieu 1991, 170). It illuminates marginality as social liminality (translating alternately into civic invisibility or hyper-visibility), penalty as state abjection, and racialization as cognitively based violence. More broadly, it exposes how public policies contribute to producing urban reality through their activities of official classification and categorization (one example in France is the invention of the notion of ‘sensitive neighbourhood’ and the nefarious effects that it has induced, not only upon the behaviour of

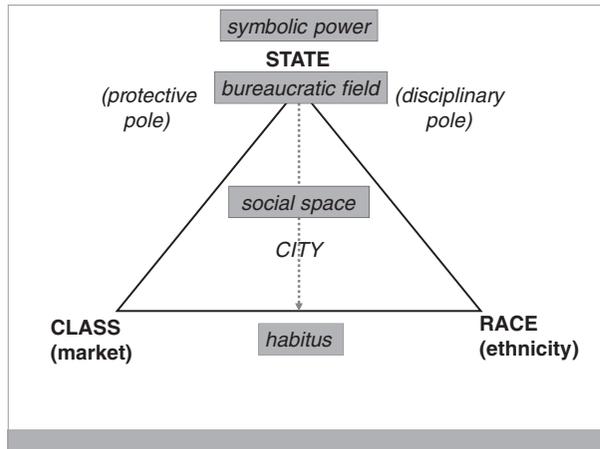


Figure 2. The underlying theoretical architecture.

state bureaucrats, the media and firms, but also among residents of the areas thus denigrated as well as among their neighbours).

- *Bureaucratic field* refers to the concentration of physical force, economic capital, cultural capital and symbolic capital (entailing, in particular, the monopolization of judicial power) that ‘constitutes the state as holder of a sort of meta-capital’ enabling it to impact the architecture and functioning of the various ‘fields’ that make up a differentiated society (Bourdieu 1993, 52). It designates the web of administrative agencies that both collaborate to enforce official identities and compete to regulate social activities and enact public authority. Bureaucratic field puts the spotlight on the distribution (or not) of public goods and enables us to link together social policies and penal policies, to detect their relationships of functional substitution or of colonization, and thus to reconstruct their convergent evolution as the product of struggles about and within the state, pitting its protective (feminine) pole and its disciplinary (masculine) pole, over the definition and treatment of the ‘social problems’ of which neighbourhoods of relegation are both the crucible and the point of fixation.
- *Social space* is the multidimensional ‘structure of juxtaposition of social positions’, characterized by their ‘mutual externality’, relative distance (close or far) and rank ordering (above, below, between), arrayed along the two fundamental coordinates given by the overall volume of capital that agents possess in its different forms and by the composition of their assets, that is, ‘the relative weight’ of ‘the most efficient principles of differentiation’ that are economic and cultural capital (Bourdieu 1994, 20–22). As ‘the invisible reality’, irreducible to observable interactions, that ‘organizes the practices

and representations of agents', social space helps us identify and map out the distribution of the efficient resources (Bourdieu 1994, 25) that determine life chances at different levels in the urban hierarchy, and then to probe correspondences – or, indeed, disjunctures – between the symbolic, social and physical structures of the city.

- *Habitus*, defined as the system of socially constituted 'schemata of perception, appreciation and action enabling us to effect the acts of practical knowledge' that guide us in the social world (Bourdieu 1997, 200), pushes us to reintroduce into the analysis the carnal experience of agents – and marginality, racialization and incarceration are nothing if not *bodily constraint*, manifested most intensely *intus et in cute*. It helps us attend to 'the psychosomatic action, wielded often through emotion and suffering', through which people internalize social conditionings and social limits, such that the arbitrariness of institutions gets erased and their verdicts are accepted (Bourdieu 1997, 205).⁹ It invites us to trace empirically, rather than simply postulate, how social structures are retranslated into lived realities, as they become sedimented into socialized organisms in the form of dispositions towards action and expression. Such dispositions tend to validate and reproduce or, on the contrary, to challenge and transform, the institutions that produced them, depending on whether their conformation agrees with or diverges from the patterning of the institutions that they encounter.

There is, moreover, a relation of logical entailment and a two-way chain of causality running among these different levels (suggested by Figure 2).¹⁰ Symbolic power imprints itself on social space by granting authority and orienting the distribution of efficient resources to the different relevant categories of agents. The bureaucratic field validates or amends this distribution by setting the mutual 'exchange rate' between the various forms of capital that they possess. In other words, we cannot understand the organization of urban hierarchies, including whether and how powerfully they get ethnicized, without putting into our explanatory equation *the state as a classifying and stratifying agency*. In turn, the structure of social space becomes objectified in the built environment (think segregated residential neighbourhoods and the differential distribution of amenities across districts) and embodied in the cognitive, affective and conative categories that steer the practical strategies of agents in everyday life, in their social circles, on the labour market, in their dealings with public institutions (police staff, welfare offices, housing and fiscal authorities, etc.), and therefore shape their subjective relationship to the state (which is part and parcel of the objective reality of that same state). The causal chain can then be retraced back from the bottom up: habitus propels the lines of action that reaffirm or alter the structures of social

space, and the collective meshing of these lines in turn reinforces or challenges the perimeter, programmes and priorities of the state and its categorizations.

It is this conceptual gearing that articulates the ethnography of boxing presented in my book *Body and Soul* (Wacquant [2000] 2004) to the institutional comparison that organizes *Urban Outcasts*. In my eyes, these books are the two sides of a single investigation into the structure and experience of marginality (as indicated at the bottom of Figure 1), approached from two opposite but complementary angles: *Body and Soul* delivers a carnal anthropology of a bodily craft in the ghetto, a sort of phenomenological cross-section, from the standpoint of the ‘signifying agent’ dear to the pragmatists, embedded in an ordinary slice of life seen from within and from below; while *Urban Outcasts* lays out an analytic and comparative macrosociology of the ghetto, constructed from without and from above the lived world that it frames.¹¹

I use these notions as so many theoretical levers to machine concepts that help me to detect new forms of urban marginality, to identify state activities directed at producing it upstream and treating it downstream, and thence for sizing up emerging vectors of inequality in the dualizing metropolis in the age of diffusing social insecurity (see Figure 3). Thus, in *Urban Outcasts*, I lean against the notion of social space to introduce the triad of *ghetto/hyper-ghetto/anti-ghetto* and to dissect the changing socio-spatial constellations that contain the dispossessed and dishonoured populations trapped at the bottom of the ladder of places that make up the city (Wacquant 2008a, 2010b). Marrying Bourdieu’s (1991) theory of symbolic power to Goffman’s (1964) analysis of the management of ‘spoiled identities’, I coin the concept of *territorial stigmatization* to reveal how, through the mediation of cognitive mechanisms operating at multiple

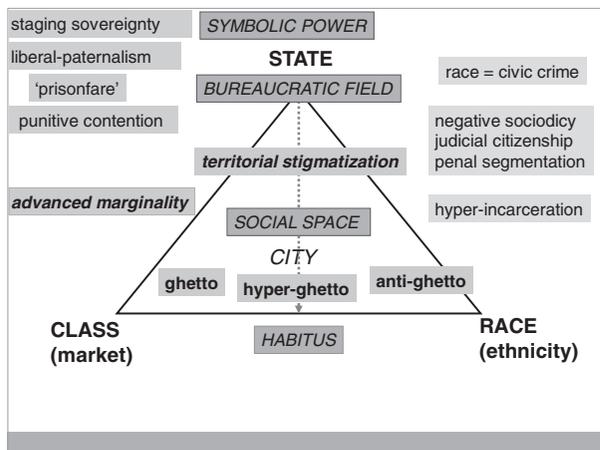


Figure 3. The main concepts developed.

enmeshed levels, the spatial denigration of neighbourhoods of relegation affects the subjectivity and the social ties of their residents as well as the state policies that mould them.¹² In keeping with the precepts of Bachelard's epistemology, I develop an ideal-typical characterization of the new regime of *advanced marginality* (thus called because it is not residual, cyclical or transitional but organically linked to the most advanced sectors of the contemporary political economy, and notably to the financialization of capital) that supplies a precise analytic grid for international comparison.

In *Punishing the Poor* and a suite of articles derived from it (Wacquant 2010c, 2010d, 2011b), I elaborate the notion of *prisonfare* by conceptual analogy with that of 'welfare', to designate the lattice of policies – encompassing categories, bureaucratic agencies, action programmes and justificatory discourses – that purport to resolve urban ills by activating the judicial arm of the state rather than its social and human services. I suggest that *punitive containment* is a generalized technique for governing marginalized categories that can take the form of assignation to a dispossessed district or endless circulation through penal circuits (police, court, jail, prison and their organizational tentacles: probation, parole, criminal justice databases, etc.). I describe the ascendant policy contraption, which relies on the double regulation of the poor through disciplinary 'workfare' and neutralizing 'prisonfare', as 'liberal-paternalist' since it applies the doctrine of *laissez-faire et laissez-passer* at the top of the class structure, towards the holders of economic and cultural capital, but turns out to be intrusive and supervisory at the bottom, when it comes to curbing the social turbulences generated by the normalization of social insecurity and the deepening of inequalities. This contraption partakes of the erection of a *Centaur state* that presents a radically different profile at the two ends of the scale of classes and places, in violation of the democratic norm mandating that all citizens be treated in the same manner. Its rulers use the 'war on crime' (which is not one) as a bureaucratic theatre geared to reaffirming their authority and to *staging the 'sovereignty' of the state* at the very moment when this sovereignty is being breached by the unbridled mobility of capital and by juridical-economic integration into supranational political ensembles.

In *Deadly Symbiosis*, I propose to replace the seductive but misleading notion of 'mass incarceration', which currently frames and constricts civic and scientific debates on prison and society in the USA (I used it myself, rather unthinkingly, in my publications prior to 2006), by the more refined concept of *hyper-incarceration*, in order to stress the *extreme selectivity of penalization* according to class position, ethnic membership or civic status, and place of residence – a selectivity that is a constitutive feature (and not an incidental attribute) of the policy of punitive management of poverty (Wacquant 2011b, 218–219). I recount that punishment is not just a direct indicator of solidarity and core political capacity for the state, as Émile

Durkheim ([1893] 2007) asserted over a century ago in *De la division du travail social*; it is also the paradigm of public dishonour, inflicted as a sanction for individual moral, and thus civic, ‘demerit’.

This leads me to characterize penalty as an operator of *negative sociodicy*: through its ordinary functioning more so than through the glare of the scandals that it alternately unleashes and appeases (Garapon and Salas 2006), criminal justice produces an institutional justification for the misfortune of the precariat at the bottom of the social scale – a justification that echoes the *positive sociodicy* of the good fortune of the dominant effected by the distribution of credentials from elite universities on the basis of academic ‘merit’ at the top of that same scale (Bourdieu 1989).¹³ Penal sanctions and their official recording in judicial files or ‘rap sheets’ (*casier judiciaire* in France, *Führungszeugnis* in Germany, *strafblad* in the Netherlands, etc.) operate in the manner of ‘reverse degrees’: they publicly attest to the individual unworthiness of their bearers and incite the routine curtailment of their life chances, as revealed by the amputation of the social and marital ties, housing options, employment opportunities and earnings of ‘ex-cons’ in nearly every advanced country. It suffices, then, to construct ‘race as civic felony’ (Wacquant 2005b) to detect the deep kinship – which is much more than a similarity or an affinity, even an ‘elective affinity’ à la Weber – between racialization and penalization: both entail an amputation of social being that is validated by the supreme symbolic authority. Racial categorization and judicial sanction produce *state outcasts*, who are all the more diminished as these are more closely conjugated.

III

I apologize if I was allusive when I should have been didactic, and vice versa, but to cover my subject while remaining brief I have had to simplify my reasoning and to compress my arguments. Nonetheless, I hope that these rudiments of analytic cartography will enable you to better understand and, especially, to link together the three works that we are going to debate. I anticipate that I am probably going to react to some of your criticisms aimed at this or that book by pointing out that the answer is already found in one of the other two, or that the question has been reformulated or even resolved by the division of labour among the three tomes. I shall not say this to give myself an excuse to avoid the issue: it is the overall economy of the project that requires it, inasmuch as the whole is more than the sum of the parts that each corresponding group of readers tends to autonomize according to the focus of their sub-field.¹⁴ The empirical progress effected and the conceptual novelties proposed in each book are directly dependent upon those made in the other two. One example: I would not have detected the subterranean link between

penalization and racialization as kindred forms of state *infamia* if I had not first theorized territorial stigmatization as one of the distinctive properties of advanced marginality, and then discerned the functional and structural parallelism between the hyper-ghetto and the prison.

I should make it clear, by way of coda and to reassure you, that I did not sit down, back around 1990, with the extravagant project of writing a trilogy in mind. It is the unplanned unfolding of my investigations, the empirical advances (and repeated retreats) it permitted, as well as the theoretical problems it made emerge (or vanish) that have taken me, over the years, from one to another vertex of the triangle class-ethnicity-state; and it is unforeseen existential connections that have propelled me along the sides that tie them to one another.¹⁵

At the start, there was the shock – inseparably emotional and intellectual – that I experienced in the face of the gruesome urban and human desolation of the vestiges of the South Side, whose lunar landscape stretched away, literally, from my doorstep when I landed in Chicago. This shock pushed me to enter the boxing gym, construed as an observation post, from which I took up the question of the coupling of ‘race and class’ in the American metropolis and set about reconstructing the notion of ghetto from the ground up, in opposition to the gaze from afar and from above that dominates the national sociology on the topic (Wacquant 1997b). In response to the irruption of the panic discourse on the alleged ‘ghettoization’ of working-class districts in France and its ensuing diffusion across Europe, I enriched my historical perspective by adding a comparative axis. This comparison highlights the role of the state in the *production* of marginality, a role that is pivotal yet different on the two sides of the Atlantic. Then, magnetized by the craft of the boxer, I drew up the life stories of my gym buddies and discovered that nearly all of them had gone through prison or jail gates: if I wanted to map out the space of possibilities open to them – or, as the case may be, closed to them – I imperatively had to bring the carceral institution into my sociological line of sight.

It was then I realized that the bulimic growth of the American penal system since 1973 is perfectly concomitant with and complementary to the organized atrophy of public aid and its disciplinary reversion into a springboard towards precarious employment. The historical revisit of the invention of prison in the sixteenth century subsequently confirmed the organic link that has joined poor relief and penal confinement ever since their origin, and it provides a structural basis for the empirical intuition of their functional complementarity. Meanwhile, in *Les Prisons de la misère* [*Prisons of Poverty*] I charted the planetary diffusion of the policing strategy and trope of ‘zero-tolerance’, spearhead of the penalization of poverty in the polarizing city. I showed that it operates in the wake of the ‘deregulation’ of deskilled work and of the conversion of welfare into

workfare: in sum, it partakes of the building of the neo-liberal Leviathan (Wacquant 1999, 2009b, 2010e).

At each stage, ethno-racial division serves as a catalyst or multiplier: it accentuates the fragmentation of wage labour by segmenting workers and pitting them against one another; it facilitates welfare retrenchment and the deployment of the penal apparatus, as it is much easier to toughen up policies directed at welfare recipients and criminals when the latter are perceived as civic ‘outsiders’, congenitally tainted and terminally incorrigible, opposed in every respect to ‘established’ citizens (to invoke a dichotomy dear to Elias and Scotson ([1965] 1994)). But, above all, racial branding turns out to be similar in nature to penal punishment: they are two twin manifestations of *state dishonour*. Thus, without ever setting out to do so, I have come to practise a kind of eccentric (some might say quirky) *sociology of political power*, since in the end I find myself confronted with the question of the state as material and symbolic agency, and dragged reluctantly into theoretical and comparative debates on the nature of neo-liberalism and the contribution of penality to its advent.¹⁶

The ‘deadly triangle’ that decides the fate of the urban precariat is an *ex-post* schema that emerged gradually as I progressed in the investigations of which I recapped the main lines in this article. This explains the fact that the three books that synthesize them were published late (with a lag of nearly a decade, on average, from the data production phase) and also out of order: I had to rethink them and to rewrite them several times over so as to better separate and link them at the same time. This analytic configuration is also what gives more strength and weight to each of them – as our meeting today will hopefully provide the opportunity to demonstrate concretely.

This presentation and my presence here are an *invitation to a generative and transversal reading*, not for the aesthete pleasure of breaking with academic conventions, but so that we may collectively draw out the full empirical and theoretical benefits garnered by connecting the themes of the three sessions of this afternoon. I shall therefore conclude with this analytic *cri du cœur*: scholars of urban marginality, scholars of ethnicity and scholars of penality, unite. You have nothing to lose but your intellectual chains. And you have a world of scientific discoveries to gain as well as a wealth of practical recommendations to interject into the public debate.

Acknowledgements

I would like to thank the Laboratoire d’Anthropologie des Mondes Contemporains, the Groupe d’Études sur l’Ethnicité, le Racisme et les Migrations, the Institut de Gestion de l’Environnement et d’Aménagement du Territoire, and the Faculty of Social and Political Sciences at Université Libre de Bruxelles for their welcome and for their support of this collective enterprise, and Mathieu Hilgers for his

intelligence and persistence in shepherding it. I am grateful also to Karen George for producing on short notice a first-rate English draft translation of the original text in French; to Aaron Benavidez and Sarah Brothers for stellar research assistance; to Megan Comfort and Matt Desmond for sharp editorial and analytic suggestions; and to all the colleagues, students and activists who have contributed to the advancement of this research agenda over the years through their reactions, critiques and suggestions at countless venues in multiple countries. Special appreciation goes to Pierre Bourdieu and Bill Wilson, without whose mentorship this work would have never been undertaken.

Notes

1. I argued this point, a long time ago (Wacquant 1989), in the course of a reinterpretation of the political and scientific controversy stirred up in the USA by the masterwork of my Chicago mentor, William Julius Wilson ([1978] 1980), *The Declining Significance of Race*, as well as in an article calling for the elaboration of an ‘analytic of racial domination’ escaping the logic of trial that construes racialization as one among many competing modalities of the fabrication of collectives (Wacquant 1997a).

2. I use the term ‘race’ in the sense of *denegated ethnicity*: a principle of stratification and classification stipulating a gradation of honour (declension according to ancestry, phenotype or some other sociocultural characteristic mobilized for the purpose of social closure, cf. Wacquant 1997a) that purports to be based in nature; or else a paradoxical variety of ethnicity that claims to *not* be ethnic – a claim that, *infelicititer*, sociologists endorse every time they carelessly invoke the duet ‘race and ethnicity’ that anchors ethno-racial common sense in English-speaking countries.

3. The predicament of lower-class postcolonial immigrants across Europe is that they suffer from the symbolic taint spread by the panic discourse of ‘ghettoization’, which overtly designates them as a threat to national cohesion in every society, without garnering the ‘paradoxical benefits’ of actual ghettoization (Wacquant 2010c, 2010f), among them the primitive accumulation of social, economic and cultural capital in a separate life sphere liable to give them a shared collective identity and an increased capacity for collective action, in the political field in particular.

4. Those who would doubt the relevance of the US workfare regime to non-Anglo-Saxon countries should consult Lødemel and Trickey’s book (2001), neatly entitled *An Offer You Can’t Refuse: Workfare in International Perspective*. Over a decade ago already, it documented the generalized drift of social policies from the rights to the obligations of recipients, the multiplication of administrative restrictions on access, and the contractualization of support, as well as the introduction of mandatory work programmes in six EU countries. In his meticulous review of two decades of programmes of ‘social welfare activation’, Barbier (2009, 30) warns against sweeping generalizations and stresses cross-national as well as intra-national variations in architecture and outcomes; but he concedes that, aside from fostering ‘cost-containment’, these programmes partake of ‘a deep ideological transformation’ that has fostered everywhere ‘a new “moral and political logic” articulated to a moralizing discourse of “rights and duties”’.

For a broader discussion of the political-economic roots and variants of the 'workfare state', see Peck (2001).

5. When Michel Foucault (1975) published *Surveiller et punir* (translated two years later as *Discipline and Punish*), the international consensus among analysts of the penal scene was that the prison was an obsolete and discredited institution. Confinement was unanimously viewed as a relic of a bygone age of punishment fated to be supplanted by alternative and intermediate sanctions in the 'community' (this was the peak of the so-called 'anti-institutional' movement in psychiatry and of mobilization in favour of 'decarceration' in penology). Foucault (1975, 358, 354, 359) himself stressed that 'the specificity of the prison and its role as seal are losing their *raison d'être*' with the diffusion of carceral disciplines 'through the entire thickness of the social body' and the proliferation of agencies entrusted with 'wielding a power of normalization'. Since then, against all expectations, the incarceration rate has boomed practically everywhere: it has increased fivefold in the USA and doubled in France, Italy and England; it has quadrupled in the Netherlands and Portugal and increased sixfold in Spain.

6. The concept of synergy (descended from the Greek *syn*, together, and *ergon*, work) conveys very well the idea that racialization and penalization operate in unison to produce state outcasts, in the manner of two symbolic organs acting together upon the functioning of the social body. When Émile Littré (1877) inserted it into his *Dictionnaire de la langue française* [*Dictionary of the French Language*], he traced the notion to physiology and defined it as 'cooperative action or effort between various organs, various muscles. The association of several organs to accomplish a function'.

7. Recall that the social and legal assignation to the category 'black' in the USA relies on genealogical descent from a slave imported from Africa and *not* on physical appearance, and that it magically 'erases' ethno-racial mixture (which concerns the vast majority of persons deemed black) by strict application of the principle of 'hypo-descent' according to which the offspring of a mixed union belong to the category considered inferior. This symbolic configuration, which prefigures the extreme spatial and social isolation of African-Americans in their society, is virtually unique in the world (Davis 1991).

8. The infamous speech delivered by Nicolas Sarkozy in Grenoble in July 2010 offers a hyperbolic as well as outlandish illustration of this logic of symbolic segmentation and vilification through penalization. Concerned to restore his blown credibility on the issue of public safety with a view to the 2012 presidential elections, the French head of state officially declared 'war on traffickers and offenders' and announced the appointment of a tough police chief to the post of local prefect. He directly linked undesirable foreigners to criminality (even though the incident that prompted his speech involved only French citizens); he singled them out for the full wrath of the state and prescribed enhanced and overtly discriminatory sanctions by the justice system (proposing, in addition to mandatory minimum sentences, to strip of their citizenship 'French nationals naturalized for less than 10 years' if they are convicted of acts of violence towards the police – a measure in direct violation of the French constitution and European conventions). And he launched a police campaign to dismantle 'illegal Roma camps' and to expel their residents en masse, aiming to rack up numbers of arrests and provide video footage for the evening television news. This flash of *law-and-order pornomania* earned France the vigorous diplomatic protests of Romania and

Bulgaria, official remonstrations and threat of sanctions from the EU, and wide international reprobation (from the Vatican, the UN, etc.).

9. It is revealing that Bourdieu (1997, 205) evokes the pivotal passage of Franz Kafka's ([1914] 2011) *In the Penal Colony*, in which the sentence of the condemned is carved onto his body by a torture machine as a grotesque variation on what he calls the 'cruel mnemotechnics' through which groups naturalize the arbitrary that founds them. This scene puts us at the point where the material-cum-symbolic spear of the penal state encounters and pierces through the body of the offender in an official act of radical desecration resulting in physical annihilation: the citizen shall exist only within the historical ambit of the law.

10. For a fuller discussion of the internal relationships between these different concepts, which stresses the barycentric place of symbolic capital in its various incarnations, see Bourdieu and Wacquant (1992).

11. A detailed examination of the life strategies of a 'hustler' in the predatory street economy (Wacquant [1992] 1998) and of the normative twist and practical stretch that the hyper-ghetto imposes on marriage (Wacquant 1996) are two of the multiple points of junction between these two levels and modes of analysis: in both of those case studies, my chief field informants were also boxers. Likewise, the extended judicial enmeshment of my best friend and 'ring buddy' at the Woodlawn Boys Club across two decades provided me with a live analyser of the relationships between marginality and penalty in biographical time and at the microsociological scale.

12. This concept has since been developed theoretically and extended empirically across three continents – cf. Wacquant (2007, 2010b, 2010f), the investigations carried out within the frame of the international and interdisciplinary network on "advanced marginality" (<http://www.advancedurbanmarginality.com/>), and the selective bibliography compiled by Tom Slater, Virgílio Pereira, and Loïc Wacquant (2014) for the special issue of *Environment & Planning E* on the theme of 'Territorial Stigmatization in Action'.

13. I adapt here the duality of 'theodicy' proposed by Max Weber ([1915] 1946) in his 'Social Psychology of the World Religions', which contrasts doctrines that validate 'the external and inner interests of all ruling men' (*Theodizee des Glückes*) with doctrines that legitimize and rationalize the suffering of 'socially oppressed strata' (*Theodizee des Leidens*).

14. It is revealing that the contributions to the symposia devoted to *Urban Outcasts* (by City in 2008, *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research*, *Revue française de sociologie* and *Pensar* in 2009, and *Urban Geography* in 2010) and to *Punishing the Poor* (organized by the *British Journal of Criminology*, *Theoretical Criminology*, *Punishment & Society*, *Critical Sociology* and *Studies in Law, Politics & Society*, *Criminology & Justice Review*, *The Howard Journal of Criminal Justice*, *Amerikastudien*, *Prohistoria* and *Revista Española de Sociología*) reproduce the established separation between disciplines (with, broadly, urban geography and sociology on one side and criminology on the other, while social work and political science are conspicuous by their absence), and deal exclusively with only one of these two books while omitting the other. The collective book edited by Squires and Lea (2012) is a rare attempt to connect the schema of advanced marginality to my analysis of the penal state, but at the price of neglecting the racialization–penalization axis. The tome assembled by

González Sánchez (2011) does cover carnality, marginality, and penalty, but its contributors typically stay within one of these rubrics rather than connect all three. 15. See Wacquant (2009c) for a fuller discussion of the analytic linkages and biographical ties between ‘The Body, the Ghetto and the Penal State’, and the civic motivations that propelled me to disentangle them.

16. A Bourdieusian approach in terms of the ‘rightward tilting of the bureaucratic field’ (itself caught up in the drift of the field of power towards the economic pole) allows me to chart a middle way between the two dominant and symmetrically mutilated models of neo-liberalism as ‘market rule’ or ‘governmentality’ inspired by Marx and Foucault respectively (see Wacquant 2012 and the seven responses to this thesis in subsequent issues of the same journal).

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