

"*Great American City* takes us from the grand theories conjured by its commanding title, down to the iconic street corner to see what it really means when windows are broken. This is a book of big, challenging, provocative, and inspiring ideas, as well as of meticulous, rigorous, and exhaustive data. Sampson has truly shown his shoulders big enough to be counted among Chicago's most venerated social observers, as well as the most astute theorists of place."

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"After *Great American City* we will never be able to view cities in the same way again. This is one of those rare books that deeply affect how we think about the world. It teaches us afresh how the neighborhoods we live in affect us and the people around us. And, there are also immense policy implications. Robert Sampson shows definitively how the fate of the urban poor is so very dependent on the communities in which they live."

George Akerlof, Nobel Laureate in Economics

GREAT AMERICAN CITY

Chicago & the Enduring Neighborhood Effect

by Robert J. Sampson

with a Foreword by William Julius Wilson

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For over fifty years numerous public intellectuals and social theorists have insisted that community is dead. Some would have us believe that we act solely as individuals choosing our own fates regardless of our surroundings, while other theories place us at the mercy of global forces beyond our control. Based on one of the most ambitious studies in the history of social science, *Great American City* argues that communities still matter because life is decisively shaped by where you live.

To demonstrate the powerfully enduring impact of place, Robert J. Sampson presents here the fruits of over a decade's research in Chicago combined with his own unique personal observations about life in the city, from Cabrini Green to Trump Tower and Millennium Park to the Robert Taylor Homes. He discovers that neighborhoods influence a remarkably wide variety of social phenomena, including crime, health, civic engagement, home foreclosures, teen births, altruism, leadership networks, and immigration.

Following in the influential tradition of the Chicago School of urban studies but updated for the twenty-first century, *Great American City* is at once a landmark research project, a commanding argument for a new theory of social life, and the story of an iconic city.

Robert J. Sampson is the Henry Ford II Professor of the Social Sciences at Harvard University, where he moved in 2003 after teaching at the University of Chicago for a dozen years. He is a member of the National Academy of Sciences and fellow of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences.

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