

# Essay on intimate apartheid

[Health & Medicine](#), [Addiction](#)



Challenges of homelessness and drug addiction are common in the contemporary society. Jeff Schonberg and Philippe Bourgois researched on heroin injectors and crack smokers in San Francisco. These scholars noted that the drug addicts in the streets of San Francisco generated income through panhandling, day labor, burglary and recycling. The model of collecting information included the use of black and white photographs, field notes, theoretical analysis and vivid dialogue. It is noted that drug addicts isolate themselves from the mainstream society because they lived in their own self-made cocoons. The “inhabitus” are sharply segregated, and their activities mainly trigger conflicts. This scenario manifests explicitly in special demarcations that Edgewater drew between black and Whites in their camps (Bourdieu 127).

In chapter one, Carter starts coercing money from friends after losing his steady legal source of income. He uses left over cotton wool that others used in injecting themselves and life began deteriorating to a level that his fellow Whites started criticizing him. A group of three dramatic African-American joined him in the encampment, and Reggie portrayed the sense of racism by highlighting that the Whites assumed him when he called out on them for money. He only drank and smoked crack since to him heroin was a loser drug. Furthermore, Felix accuses Reggie seeing him as a racist and a bad businessperson because he has a bad panhandling habit. He is vulgar and violent as he tries to punch on a white driver who stares at him as he urinates facing the transient traffic. Contrary, he kisses an African-American woman who frowns at him showing his intimate love to fellow blacks. He is also not happy seeing Sonny with a white. Felix and Reggie fight turn into a

racial contest as they exchanged words that eventually become humorous (Bourgois & Schonberg 36).

A Yemen cashier portrays racism as he concurs with Reggie on the issue of white boy and Sonny. They exchanged a high five as a sign of solidarity and togetherness. Reggie accuses Sonny of throwing shit on the Whites instead of looking at his brothers (African-American). Reggie is very friendly to the cashier, as he believes they are in the same bracket. When the Arab calls him a nigger, he asks why he is calling him that way yet they originate from the same nut (Bourdieu 231).

Intimate apartheid helps in understanding the maintenance of dramatic barriers among individuals of different ethnic groups who lived together and depended on the same drugs. Both Whites and African-American share drugs, injection drinks and smoke side by side in the same encampments, yet they discriminate on each other on racial grounds. The marginalization of Edgewater homeless and Bourgeois class makes them assert respect and dignity through violence and addiction. They resist subordination by carrying their own valence of power. Ethnic disparities emanate from behavior developed because of personal moral flaws that originate from genetic defects (Bourgois & Schonberg 34).

There is an identifiable difference between the homeless Whites and African-American way of generating income. The Whites look for part time work, engage in passive begging through use of flying signs and scavenge through garbage dumpsters and recycling cans. However, the African American panhandled and engaged in active borrowing. Furthermore, the larger percentage of Africans income was generated through burglary from

construction sites, warehouses and vehicles (Wacquant 184). In this context, the ideas of Edgewater homeless and Bourgeois explored the concept of intimate apartheid extensively.