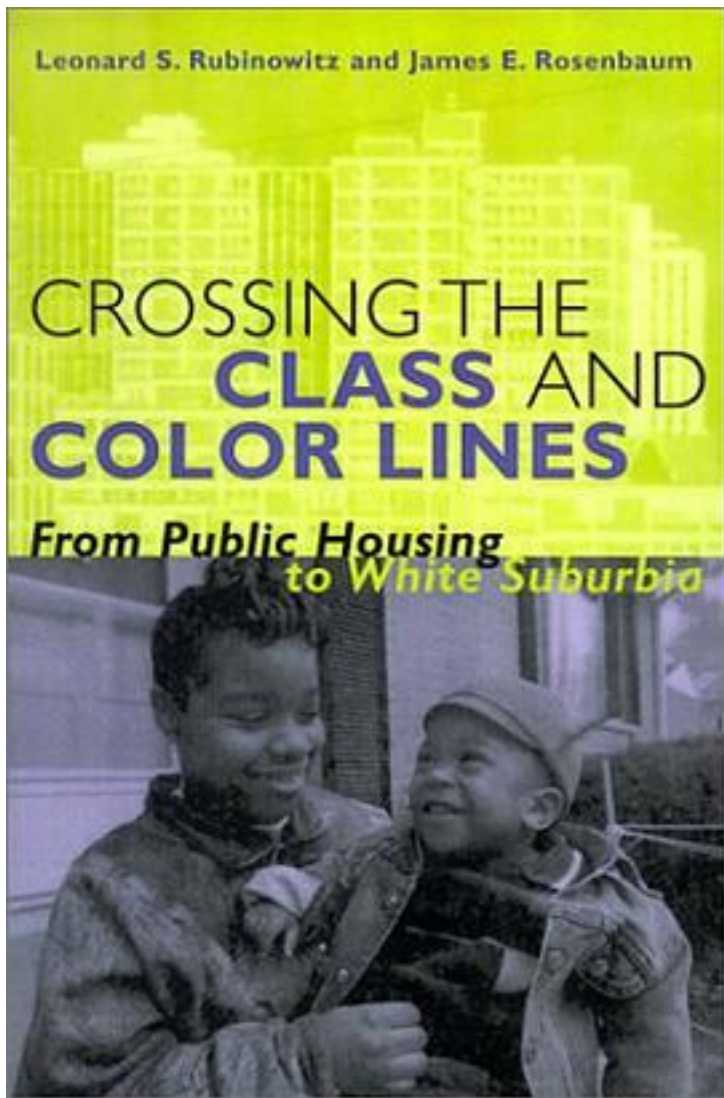


Crossing the Class and Color Lines



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In the United States, it is rare that people of different races and social classes live together in the same housing developments and neighbourhoods. The Gautreaux programme, one of the most innovative and extensive court-ordered desegregation efforts ever, in which thousands of low-income, African-American families voluntarily moved from Chicago's inner city to mostly white, middle-class suburbs, was specifically designed to help redress this problem. This is the story of this unique experiment in racial, social and economic integration that began in 1976 and ended only last year. The book tells of the Gautreaux families' initial discomfort and of the discrimination they felt. Yet it also relates how, against the odds, their lives changed for the better, in employment and education, exploding the notion that poor, inner-city blacks cannot escape the "culture of poverty". Today, with vouchers and certificates replacing public housing, the Gautreaux success story is the most valuable record of the possibilities and limitations of mobility programmes.

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