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Rethinking the “Ghetto Synthesis”: Problems and Prospects in the Black Metropolis

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By

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Master's Thesis

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A Thesis
Presented to
The Faculty of
Western Washington University

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Abstract

This thesis seeks to document the combination of explicit and structural factors which created and still continue to create adversarial conditions for inner-city African Americans. In the process, it considers the utility of the word "ghetto" as a descriptive term and more broadly as an analytical framework. Throughout the twentieth century there were numerous factors working throughout the United States to consign African Americans to an inferior socio-economic position. Consequently, this thesis suggests that poverty in low-income African American neighborhoods as well as the continued persistence of residential segregation across the U.S. is the result of conscious policy choices and an economic system which inherently produces inequality. Through public and private practices which led to the development of a dual housing market, redlining, racially restrictive covenants, and the like, African Americans were beset with a series of structural impediments which have born decidedly negative consequences. As a result, this thesis will attempt to analyze why these trends cannot be attributed to personal failings or individual preference, but are instead the result of conscious policy choices buttressed by an economic system which perpetuates racist outcomes.

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Introduction

In *The Southern Diaspora*, James Gregory cautions against portraying African American urban history as uniformly bleak. A major component of his critique involves the disputed viability of the word "ghetto" and its usage in academic discourse. While the term was once employed almost universally by scholars seeking to document the grim poverty confronting inner-city African Americans, the word has been met with increasing scrutiny by a number of academics.

Chief among their apprehensions is the concern that the term ghetto, and a corresponding analytical framework centered upon it, perpetuates a misleading characterization of African American history. "Ghetto" histories, it is suggested, run the risk of propagating a cultural narrative which singularly frames the African American saga as an experience of hopelessness and despair. Additionally, some caution that the word ghetto potentially conjures stereotypical images of black criminality, welfare dependency, and the like. As a result, a number of scholars avoid the term—using less loaded descriptors instead. By reviving the phrase "black metropolis", for example, Gregory attempts to do just that. In the process he offers a reevaluation of earlier scholarship and the dominant social motifs it helped to create.

In contrast to sweeping depictions of impoverished inner-city living, "black metropolis" evokes "a powerful hopeful space," granting readers a broader perspective. The black metropolis "had enormous problems," Gregory admits, "but more important it had enormous prospects."[1] Implicit in Gregory's observation is the suggestion that a ghetto-centric focus risks emphasizing only the negative aspects of black history—highlighting the problems of a community tightly compressed within walls of racial subordination. In order to redress this potential hazard, Gregory

[1] James Gregory, *The Southern Diaspora: How the Great Migrations of Black and White Southerners Transformed America* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2005), p. 115

calls for a reexamination of existing terminology and a shift toward an academic approach that is equally mindful of the significant accomplishments of urban African Americans.

Joe W. Trotter, raising a similar concern, is critical of what he labels the "ghetto synthesis," defining it as history that emphasizes the "critical role of white racial hostility and prejudice in the development of Afro-American communities…" Accordingly, Trotter takes issue with an approach in which "the main explanatory factor in African American life is the nature of black-white interaction, usually in its most hostile, caste-like variety."[2] His thoughtful book tersely outlines the pitfalls of framing African American history as a singularly reflexive reaction to white aggression. A narrative centered on these conflicts results in a history defined by alterity—one devoid of its own intrinsic motivations and interests. Consequently, as Trotter adroitly points out, the "ghetto synthesis" runs the risk of concealing black agency and reducing African Americans to historical stage props—alienated objects which are only acted upon, not conscious beings actively working to shape their own destinies.

By all accounts, Trotter and Gregory's push for a greater emphasis on agency and black accomplishments should be incontrovertible. It is an unfortunate truism that mainstream culture grants far more attention to the existence of African American poverty than it does to the historical and structural causes underlying it. A 2015 study that analyzed the images accompanying over 474 news stories on poverty found that blacks were featured in over half of the pictures—even though they constitute only a quarter of those living in poverty.[3] As a related study indicated, the effect of

[2] Joe William Trotter Jr., *Black Milwaukeee: The Making of an Industrial Proletariat*, 1915-45 (Urbana, Ill., 1985), p. 273, 265

[3] van Doorn, B. W. (2015), Pre- and Post-Welfare Reform Media Portrayals of Poverty in the United States: The Continuing Importance of Race and Ethnicity. Politics and Policy, 43: 142–162.

such representations is to normalize African American poverty—to make it appear natural and inevitable.[4]

And yet regrettably, contrary to Trotter's well-intentioned observations, one could make a convincing argument that this fixation on black poverty has very little to do with a de-emphasis upon African American agency or accomplishments. If anything, the opposite is true. In fact, agency is habitually touted as *the* cause of black poverty.[5] Correspondingly, African American achievements are frequently highlighted in order to fault the personal failings of low-income blacks. In many cases it is precisely the individual successes of famous African American celebrities which are exploited to shame those on the margins of society and obscure the structural impediments which place them there. "We have a black president and yet people still complain about racism," was an all too familiar refrain during the Obama administration.[6]

Moreover, an emphasis on African American agency is arguably embraced all too well by vast segments of U.S. society. According to those who subscribe to this line of thinking, blacks are wholly responsible for their fates—particularly those who live in abject poverty. A 2014 Pew Research Center study, for example, found that 63 percent of those polled said "Blacks who can't get ahead are mostly responsible for their own condition."[7] Recent election data paints an even uglier picture with nearly 40% of Trump supporters going so far as to call blacks "lazy" and about one-fifth of Clinton supporters expressing the same belief.[8]

Confidence in African American agency is arguably so deeply ensconced in mass political consciousness that it seems as if most Americans imagine blacks possess a form of hyper-agency

[4] http://racialequitytools.org/resourcefiles/Media-Impact-onLives-of-Black-Men-and-Boys-OppAgenda.pdf
[5] See figure one and the discussion below.
[6]http://www.huffingtonpost.com/ali-owens/4-problematic-statements-white-people-make-about-race_b_9212864.html
[7] See figure one.
[8] See figure two.

that amounts to total and supernatural control over their circumstances.[9] Many in the United States are absolutely hostile to the idea that African Americans are in any way affected by a history that includes 400 years of slavery, decades of segregation, and deeply entrenched institutionalized discrimination. Similarly, many discount more immediate factors such as the impact of poor schools, barriers faced by African Americans to homeownership, or rampant disparities in incomes and the labor market. Quantitative studies such as those conducted by the Institute for Policy Studies, for example, found that given current economic trends it would take the average black family 228 years to build the wealth of a typical white family today.[10]

To put it bluntly, it appears to be a deeply held belief that African Americans are unhindered by environmental or social constraints. For blacks, it would seem as if the past has no bearing upon the present—and social and economic conditions do not inform social and economic outcomes. Thus, the impoverishment of African Americans are asserted to be the result of poor, yet conscious individual choices—of people recklessly choosing poverty rather than attributing these hardship to structural racism or the inequities of neoliberal policies. Individual black agency—far from being deemphasized as Trotter suggested—has been elevated to dizzying heights.

One of the less virulently racist memes circulating the internet after the Baltimore uprising, for example, suggested protestors could be dispersed not with teargas, but by "firing job applications" into the crowd.[11] In the ultimate expression of this logic, blacks are described not as

[9] As just one example, consider this blog post in which the author not only blames African American poverty on poor choices and reckless behavior, but also on creating the conditions which perpetuate poverty. http://theracecardproject.com/dont-care-blacks-anymore/
[10] http://www.ips-dc.org/report-ever-growing-gap/
[11] See figures three and four.

being subject to racism or unemployment, but are instead designated as the primary instigators of it—allegedly because of an unwavering commitment to affirmative action and welfare programs.[12]

Some academics may feel confident that scholarship has thoroughly researched and catalogued the historic factors underlying and giving rise to the existence of African American poverty. They may subsequently feel comfortable in branching out into new lines of inquiry. Perhaps they are correct. Given the prevalence of the opinions and ideas discussed above, however, it would be hyperbolic to suggest that the historiography of racialized economic inequality has engrained itself in the broader consciousness of the American public. Gregory and Trotter's analysis while accurately highlighting the tendency to dwell on the problematic rather than the positive, may carry the counter risk of euphemizing exploitative and exclusionary practices which still merit greater discussion.

Extant circumstances, should if anything revive debate over the extent to which the bleaker aspects of African American history have garnered sufficient attention. The record of both the subtle and overt mechanisms used to systematically hinder African American advancement remains concealed by the prosaic accounts of textbooks and the woefully uninformed commentary of the press.[13] This information vacuum has been exploited by an aggressively propagandistic "Alt-Right" which has worked tirelessly to vilify people of color and undermine all efforts at creating a more just and equitable society. The fact that many of my white working class students have been drawn to this ideology is deeply disturbing and one of the reasons for creating this project.

As this thesis will attempt to show, the level and extent of spatial isolation experienced by African Americans during the twentieth century had and continues to have profound effects on the

[12] http://www.frontpagemag.com/fpm/262726/how-liberal-welfare-state-destroyed-black-america-john-perazzo

[13] I, for example, taught A.P. courses such as U.S. History, World History, and Government and Politics for years without ever even encountering terms such as redlining or restrictive covenants. These concepts have been deemed irrelevant or trivial and do not appear on any of these tests, the A.P. curriculum, or in most textbooks.

black population. The magnitude and impact of this isolation is often lost on the American public. Census data, for example, indicates, that as recently as 1970, the average African American lived in a neighborhood in which it would be very unlikely for them to have *any* contact with whites. In 1980 up to a third of African Americans—those living in the most racially concentrated areas—would not have seen a white face even if they were to move to the nearest adjacent neighborhood, or the one adjacent to that neighborhood for that matter.[14]

These problems still persist with many cities throughout the United States remaining heavily segregated. My colleague, 2016 Washington State Teacher of the Year Nate Bowling, made this abundantly clear in relaying a conversation he had with one of the four other finalists for the National Teacher of the Year. This veteran teacher spent over seventeen years working in a Maryland. As Nate points out, "Her school is located five miles from the nation's capital and in her career, she has never taught a white student. Never. Her county and its schools are completely segregated." [15]

Census data studied by the Brookings Institute confirms the anecdote. While residential separation based on race has been declining modestly in large cities, segregation levels are nonetheless disturbingly high. According to the parameters of the study a score of zero would indicate perfect integration, whereas a score of 100 would denote total segregation. In 2015 most of the country's largest urban areas demonstrated segregation levels of around 50-70. As the study notes, "more than half of blacks would need to move to achieve complete integration."[16] Still more

[14] U.S. Bureau of the Census, *Statistical Abstract of the United States* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1976); U.S. Bureau of the Census, Statistical Abstract of the United States (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1986).
[15] http://www.huffingtonpost.com/nathan-bowling/the-conversation-im-tired-of-not-having_b_9130792.html
[16]https://www.brookings.edu/blog/the-avenue/2015/12/08/census-shows-modest-declines-in-black-white-segregation/

troubling is the fact that much of the country's most heavily segregated areas are marked by dire levels of poverty.

As study after study has demonstrated, living within a segregated and impoverished community damages the social and economic wellbeing of those who reside there. Research conducted at Harvard in 2015, for example, indicated that people who grow up in low-income neighborhoods are far more likely to be unhealthy, uneducated, and poor.[17] The limited mobility created by residential segregation has historically resulted in an inability to follow prospective employment opportunities, an incapacity to move to better schools or safer streets, and has generally constrained the prospects of those living in these areas.

Similarly, impediments to black homeownership and the emaciated property values often associated with segregated neighborhoods have severely limited the capacity of African Americans to transfer wealth from one generation to the next. Homeownership is the central source of equity for most American families and as this thesis will demonstrate there were and continue to be an abundance of obstacles preventing blacks from accessing this financial wellspring. For this reason and others, it is perhaps unsurprising that the typical African American household has just 6% of the wealth of the average white family. [18]

Gregory and Trotter are of course aware of the challenges historically confronting African Americans, and they have both made extremely valuable scholarly contributions to this end. This project, for example, does not dispute Trotter's "proletarianization model", nor his argument that African American history was as much shaped by conflicts between labor and capital as it was by racism. To Trotter and Gregory's credit blacks *were* carving out hopeful spaces, and were doing

[17] http://www.equality-of-opportunity.org/images/mto_exec_summary.pdf
[18] https://www.forbes.com/sites/laurashin/2015/03/26/the-racial-wealth-gap-why-a-typical-white-household-has-16-times-the-wealth-of-a-black-one/#4f3f4fbe1f45

so in a social milieu that was fundamentally antithetical to African Americans' existence. Again, both scholars would in no way dispute this obvious reality, but the extent to which this was (and largely still is) the case, has yet to receive serious consideration by vast segments of the public.

To be fair, this is less a fault of the authors than it is a reflection of our stunted political environment. While Gregory and Trotter's critiques were made for the right reasons, these reasons have unfortunately been twisted by the political right. Exemplary African American success stories are today routinely touted as evidence that racism is simply a relic of the past and as proof positive that anyone can make it in America. In fact, as some commentators would have it, African Americans have such a tremendous capacity for success that we are now living in an era of "black privilege." According to those espousing this view, blackness has become a "tremendous asset" that "gives its recipients privileges ranging from landing coveted college scholarships to becoming activists who can build careers on racial grievances."[19] Ideas such as these can only find traction in an environment of stunning historical and political illiteracy.

Historians, in the admittedly limited capacity they have to reach the broader public, can work to rectify this situation. The narrative academics create and the facts that scholars choose to emphasize have at least some bearing on social discourse. If an account centered on the bleaker aspects of African American history risks creating a ghetto synthesis, deemphasizing the overwhelmingly hostile atmosphere in which blacks made valuable strides carries its own hazards. A 2014 study, for example, found that people exposed to African American success stories were actually less inclined to express sympathy for racial inequality. They remained this way even after participants were told these stories were exemplar. As one of the authors of the study pointed out,

[19] The words are Ben Shapiro's. One of my A.P. students was an ardent fan of this conservative man-child and would regularly challenge me using Shapiro's quotes. http://www.cnn.com/2016/03/30/us/black-privilege/index.html

"people don't assume racism is on the decline because they believe African-American success is typical; they need only appreciate that such success is possible." [20]

This should not be cause for paralytic despair, but rather this study seems to indicate the extent to which those without a deeper historical understanding are in some sense primed to accept an overly simplistic conceptualization of U.S. society. As a plethora of other studies have indicated, however, higher levels of education contributes to a corresponding increase in sympathy for racial inequality and a greater understanding of the processes underlying its creation.[21] Thus, this research should make it clear that an emphasis on black achievements without a concise and careful application of critical context potentially lays the groundwork for reactionary and thoroughly ahistorical appraisals of contemporary circumstances.

In light of the obdurate disparities that continue to mar our nation, it is imperative that scholars work to synthesize the historiography of racial inequality and create a comprehensive picture of its causes and consequences. Historians must present this information, and re-present it if necessary until it receives adequate public consideration. At the very least, such a process will encourage renewed discussion of both historic and present day factors which grant privileges to certain segments of the American population while systematically denying them to others.

For many of my students of color, poverty is a painfully debilitating fact of life. Homelessness and food insecurity, for example, are common problems because racialized inequality is deeply entrenched within our country's national fabric. It also shows no sign of abating in the foreseeable future. Unfortunately, attempts to incorporate subtlety into the black

[20] https://www.forbes.com/sites/forbesleadershipforum/2014/05/20/how-african-american-success-stories-undermine-sympathy-for-racial-inequalities/#1e1425c71e3c
[21] Wodtke, Geoffrey T. "The Impact of Education on Inter-Group Attitudes: A Multiracial Analysis." Social psychology quarterly 75.1 (2012): 10.1177/0190272511430234. PMC. Web. 12 June 2017. https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC3883053/

urban historiography may not change this. That, of course, was not the point of Gregory and Trotter's scholarship and their monographs were not meant to be taken as scathing indictments of a thoroughly rotting sociopolitical edifice. Furthermore, to their credit, the word "ghetto" *is* divisive and disdain for the term is well placed. It is almost universally employed as a pejorative or even as a none-too-coded racist epitaph. Given the multifarious forces working to subordinate African Americans, however, there are arguably compelling reasons to continue to employ this contentious term.

It is worth mentioning that etymologically, the term ghetto stems from communities circumscribed by race and occupation—initially referring to settlements located just outside Italian cities explicitly reserved for Jews and certain tradesmen. Modern restrictive racial covenants produced an identical effect through contractual language which expressly forbade selling to prospective black homeowners. Some even had provisions that banned African Americans from entering the neighborhood after nightfall and as a further indignity restricted the housing of cattle in the same contractual section.

There are clearly parallels which warrant usage of the term ghetto if only because no other word in the English language carries the same meaning. How else can one accurately convey the processes of exclusion, segregation, and containment that beset African Americans without using the word ghetto or similar nomenclature? "Black Metropolis", "Urban neighborhood" or other less provocative terms, do not carry the immediate sense of imposed ostracization associated with "ghetto." To the contrary, they imply a voluntary communal space and incorporation into the broader social framework.

If the word ghetto is to be used, however, it should be used prudently. The term should be viewed as a contested ideological construct through which certain spatial and cultural categories

are imposed upon populations and correspondingly populations are imposed upon spatial and cultural categories. There is nonetheless a material reality to the ideological construction of the ghetto: one which is shaped by political forces that exact very real consequences. The ghetto is both real and imaginary. It is the superimposition of a multilayered and contested social space, "a category through which a world is structured… but also a category that is 'real,' that is imposed with force, that has a mandatory quality; a category within which, and according to which, people must live."[22]

The label of "ghetto" is foisted upon people who are compelled to live in places labeled as—and designed to be—a "ghetto." They are simultaneously blamed for the problems which arise there, scorned for not leaving, and yet bound within them. Thus, people are ontologically categorized by the reputed qualities of socially engineered spaces over which they have little control. Keeping this in mind, much as Seligman has suggested, I "use the word 'ghetto' in a narrow sense, to mean a portion of a city that is racially segregated, against the wishes of its in habitants, without any implications about the cultural characteristics of life there."[23]

Is this a return to the ghetto synthesis? Does this mean African American urban history must be characterized solely in terms of hopelessness and despair? No. Gregory, Trotter, and likeminded scholars should not be criticized for demanding a more holistic and nuanced understanding of African American history. These academics made important interventions in a historiography which had hitherto created a very dismal picture of black urban life. After all, there is much more to African American history than crumbling tenements, poverty, and crime riddled streets.

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[22] James Ferguson, *Global Shadows* (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2006), p. 6. Ferguson's comments are actually about Africa, but resonate nonetheless.

[23] Amanda I. Seligman, Block by Block: Neighborhoods and Public Policy on Chicago's West Side (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2005), p. 230

What follows is not so much a defense of the continued usage of the term ghetto or even the ghetto synthesis. Instead, it is an acknowledgement of the conditions which make utilization of such a term and a corresponding framework of analysis both problematic and simultaneously necessary. In this regard, this thesis functions as a survey of the spatialization of inequality—a process through which various exclusionary social practices were codified into a material and spatial formation known as the ghetto. As myriad factors coalesced to isolate African Americans from whites, residential segregation acted as a key component in both creating and perpetuating intractable economic disparities. With this in mind, this thesis seeks to document the combination of explicit and structural factors which created and still continue to create adversarial conditions for inner-city African Americans. An analysis of systemic oppression may require the use of an ugly word to describe similarly ugly circumstances.

Lastly, this thesis will attempt to analyze why, contrary to the opinion of many in America, poverty and residential segregation cannot be attributed to personal failings or individual preference, but are instead the result of conscious policy choices buttressed by an economic system which perpetuates racist outcomes. These arguments will unfold over the course of three chapters which, while addressing separate facets of these aspects, nonetheless reinforce each other through discussion of common overlapping themes.

Chapter one, for example, seeks to document the forces which gave rise to early twentieth century ghettos, beginning with a brief glance at living conditions and race relations prior to the twentieth century. As will be demonstrated, ghetto formation was by no means inevitable and was instead the direct result of recurrent economic crises and a subsequent shifting of ideological frameworks associated with the overthrow of Reconstruction and the rise of the Progressive era. It then describes the sociopolitical factors which contributed to early instances of ghettoization and

ends by describing the eventual solidification of residential segregation in both the North and the South.

Chapter two seeks to examine economic factors which contributed to high instances of black poverty and urban segregation emblematic of what has been labeled "the ghetto." In the process it will analyze how uneven development in the postwar economy created unemployment which disproportionately impacted African Americans while contributing to broader processes of economic exclusion. Secondly, it will investigate the emergence of a dual housing market in which African Americans paid more for inferior housing while frequently being denied access to suburban amenities. This chapter also considers white responses to African American attempts to move to the suburbs and concludes by examining the consequences associated with periods of racial transition.

Chapter three, on the other hand, focuses on federal and local programs which bolstered these processes of economic marginalization. It begins by considering the effects of New Deal policies in creating a bifurcated welfare state that frequently excluded vast segments of the African American population even as it provided generous and largely unacknowledged support for middle class whites. This is followed by an analysis of Cold War budgetary choices focused on projecting U.S. power, while begrudgingly yielding concessions to the Civil Rights movement in order to mitigate negative perceptions abroad. This chapter also includes an examination of the impacts and limitations of liberal reform efforts and concludes with an analysis of the tactical differences manifest in the Civil Rights movement itself. The chapter ends with an examination of the recent suburban diaspora of African Americans and a consideration of possible outcomes for the future.

While many of the authors cited in this text focus on one particular aspect contributing to processes of ghettoization, this thesis instead functions as a survey of the various factors

underlying residential segregation. Thomas Sugrue's influential text, for example, focuses on deindustrialization while Beryl Satter's work examines the impact of inadequate access to credit. The sources and methodology used in this project reflects an attempt to document the numerous practices contributing to the spatialization of poverty in many black neighborhoods, but does not attribute primacy to one particular cause.

As an alternative, this thesis endeavors to examine the manner in which often disparate factors collude, interact, and ultimately compound one another in ways that can be difficult to parse. The resilience of the ghetto, after all, can in part be attributed to the confluence of the sometimes subtle and not-so-so subtle dynamics which create them. While certain factors may carry greater consequences than others, it would be an oversimplification to say that one particular phenomenon bares sole responsibility. There are no easy solutions to these problems and any attempt to attribute causation to a single factor would be misguided.

As a result, this thesis draws upon a wide range of secondary sources which attempt to examine the voluminous factors contributing to poverty and exclusion in many black neighborhoods. An effort was made to give a broad review of all available literature on the ghetto—an admittedly difficult task. Although these sources approach the problems of poverty and residential segregation through varying lenses, this project employs a methodology which attempts to synthesize these approaches while simultaneously noting the many differing ways in which these issues can be analyzed and addressed. In thinking about the approach of this thesis, the term *bricolage* comes to mind: "the construction or creation of a work from a diverse range of things that happen to be available."[24]

[24] https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bricolage

There are multiple frameworks through which residential segregation can be analyzed and this project endeavors to demonstrate the usefulness of each approach. Nonetheless, there are a few commonalities associated with the selection of these sources and to a certain extent, this text (for better or worse) attempts to focus on secondary sources which address some of the less visible practices contributing to processes of ghettoization. The obvious role of the state's asymmetrical use of violence through the criminal justice system, for example, is not discussed in the course of this essay, nor addressed in the selection of secondary sources.

Through its use of primary sources, this thesis attempts to incorporate as much quantifiable data as possible and therefore draws heavily from census figures, legal codes, and precedents. Although the individual voices of historical actors are equally important, my choice to utilize as much statistical information as possible was predicated on anticipated criticisms in part raised while discussing this work with my own students. A few of the oral sources featured in this text, for example, were used in classroom activities and discussions. One complaint raised by students (admittedly a handful) was that these testimonies were simply the subjective opinions of interested persons. While other students usually provided a quick and admiral defense of these sources, in future classroom activities I attempted to offer a robust framework of "impartial sources" to supplement the personal histories used. I tried, by and large, to do the same while completing this thesis.

Therefore, while this essay does utilize a variety of oral histories and written testimonies, it nonetheless strives to buttress these words with as much empirical evidence as can be brought to bear. The firsthand accounts are drawn from both the elites who designed policies and those who were on the receiving end of them. In part because of the importance of this topic and because much of my research draws upon subjects with a rich historiographical legacy, there was

fortunately a wealth of online documentation to draw upon. That being the case, I've found that the most effective condemnation of those in power does not come from the words of the critical, but rather from the powerful actors themselves. Thus, when possible, the use of elite testimony is utilized to show the frequently self-defeating, amoral logic undergirding their highly destructive policy choices.

While statistical data may be hard to dispute, its use alone does not do justice to the human costs associated with the malicious outcomes considered in this thesis. The grim poverty that frequently accompanies residential segregation cannot be fully captured by an abstract list of numbers. Fortunately, there is an online trove of written and oral histories that document the lived reality of those carving out spaces of hope in an environment frequently marked by despair. As a result, this text also makes an effort to incorporate the perspective of those who actually experienced the policies and practices discussed in this essay. Beyond simply painting a vivid picture, these voices offer a unique and often lucid diagnosis of the social ills they document—and can frequently point to a way forward.

Historiography

In the past decades African American urban history has experienced several profound shifts in scholarly emphasis. In the sixties, the seminal works of Gilbert Osofsky and Allan Spear were among the first to devote serious academic attention to the history of black urban life. While flawed in many ways, their scholarship was further developed in the eighties and nineties by authors such as James Grossman, Arnold Hirsch, and Thomas Sugrue. As the contributions of Andrew Wiese, Edward Orser, and Robert Self refined these earlier works, more recent scholarship has sought to correct the discipline's occasionally myopic focus.

With these broad contours in mind, this historiography proceeds in a more or less chronological fashion. In the process it draws upon a wide range of secondary sources which attempt to examine the voluminous factors contributing to poverty and exclusion in many black neighborhoods. An effort was made to give an expansive review of all available literature on residential segregation with an emphasis on major developments in this field of study.

Although these sources consider the problems of poverty and residential segregation through varying lenses, this historiography attempts to synthesize these approaches while simultaneously noting the manner in which the authors have interacted with each other's work. In addition, this project attempts to describe the contextual and intellectual trends that influenced these new interpretations of black urbanization. What follows is a historiographical sketch of influential developments in the study of African American urban history.

Early Works & Seminal Texts: 1960s & 70s

Tracing the progression of Harlem from a promising appendage of New York to an indigent slum, Gilbert Osofsky remains one of the earliest influential scholars of African American urban poverty. Once slated for the development of luxury apartments catering to wealthy whites, Harlem faced economic catastrophe at the hands of a collapsing real estate market in 1904. After encouragement from enterprising black capitalists, desperate white landlords began accepting African American tenants. As Osofsky describes it, "rather than face 'financial destruction' some landlords and corporations opened their houses to Negroes and collected the traditionally high rents that colored people paid."[25]

Shut out from other New York enclaves and facing a swelling tide of southern African American immigrants, many blacks were desperate for viable housing and willingly paid two to three times as much as whites. A desire to generate arbitrage profits coupled with racism caused landlords to neglect their properties while simultaneously overcrowding tenants. The resulting situation led to run-down city blocks with apartments rotting from disrepair. "Largely within the space of a single decade," Osofsky notes, "Harlem was transformed from a potentially ideal community to a neighborhood with manifold social and economic problems called 'deplorable,' 'unspeakable,' 'incredible.'" [26]

Similar processes unfold in much of Allan Spear's work, which documents the formation of an impoverished African American Chicago community from the 1870s to the 1920s. Challenging commonly held assumptions, Spear contends the existence of a black ghetto in Chicago predated the Great Migration of World War I. With the somewhat fluid race relations of the late nineteenth century marking his point of departure, Spear illustrates how an increasing

[25] Gilbert Osofsky, *Harlem: The Making of a Ghetto* (Chicago: Elephant Paperback, 1962), p. 92
[26] Ibid, p. 135

black population strained tenuous social arrangements and served to solidify racial boundaries in the city. The accretion of white hostility resulted in patterns of segregation which were clearly delineated before the advent of hostilities in Europe. As Spear points out, "the southern Negroes who flocked to Chicago to work in the packinghouses and steel mills during the wartime boom found an already well-developed black enclave on the South Side." [27]

Additionally, Spear describes the shifting attitudes of African American leaders who in the more accommodating racial climate sometimes worked towards integration, but later advocated self-sufficiency as white hostility grew during the aftermath of Reconstruction. Both black and white leaders frequently characterized segregation as the actualization of black autonomy and African American neighborhoods were touted as a mark of progress. Despite the accomplishments of many black leaders in this milieu, Spear nonetheless reveals that conditions were far from utopian, noting that "white merchants controlled most of the retail businesses in the black belt, and even the most successful Negro businessmen often operated at the sufferance of white interests."[28]

Contemporary scholars such as Preston Smith have expanded on this work by examining the class dynamics at play in the tactical approaches employed by Civil Rights leaders. As Smith and N.D.B. Connolly point out, many of the African American elites who worked to placate white segregationists frequently did so because of vested material interests.

Finally, Spear explores African Americans' continuous attempts to fight for basic civil rights which were granted to recent white immigrants by default. Recent scholarship by Ira Katznelson and Khalil Gilbran Muhammad have done much to shed light on the impact of this dichotomy.

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[27] Allan H. Spear, *Black Chicago* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1967), p. ix
[28] Ibid, p. 227

Osofsky's and Spear's analyses while trenchantly addressing the development of stark economic and social inequalities nonetheless fall short in many respects. Osofsky, for example, was criticized by later authors for insinuating that African American family life was inherently dysfunctional and responsible for creating the slum-like conditions in which they lived. This line of thinking was and continues to be deeply influential and is perhaps best exemplified by Assistant Secretary of Labor Daniel Patrick Moynihan's *The Negro Family: The Case For National Action*.[29] In the controversial report, Moynihan concluded that high instances of black families headed by single mothers would have a detrimental impact on the economic and political progress of African Americans.

Later authors also asserted that there is an inclination on the part of both scholars to portray the rise of the ghetto in a teleological fashion. Rather than approaching poverty and segregation as possibilities resulting from conscious policy choices, both authors tend to treat these inequities as inevitable. Similarly, both render the experiences of eastern cities in monolithic terms assuming (particularly in their epilogues) that every major northern city experienced comparable processes of ghettoization. Nonetheless, subsequent historians drew much from these authors, sometimes harboring their same shortcomings and occasionally laboring to correct them.

A political and historiographical fixation on cultural deficiencies, for example, proved to be quite resilient. This preoccupation with perceived cultural defects may be due in part to a widely held assumption at the time that the problem of racial segregation was asserted to be solved with the passage of the Fair Housing act of 1968. Many simply ignored the indicators of persistent segregation and focused on cultural explanations. The cultural effects of poverty were adroitly summarized by Oscar Lewis, but were later divorced from any consideration of their economic

[29] Daniel P. Moynihan, *The Negro Family: The Case for National Action*, (Washington, D.C., Office of Policy Planning and Research, U.S. Department of Labor, 1965)

underpinning.[30] Thus, for some academics poverty came to be seen as a product of dysfunctional lifestyles and not the product of economic circumstances. In a modern day testament to the poverty of philosophy, cultural anomies were not viewed as arising from conditions generated by poverty, but were instead viewed as creating these conditions.

Not all scholars, however, fell into this line of thinking. Other academics were clearly influenced by the growing strength of the Civil Rights Movement and a rise in political radicalism. Rather than focusing on the personal failings of impoverished black tenants or even the individual racism of white landlords, the work of radical scholars such as William Tabb or Manning Marable featured a strong emphasis on the structural causes undergirding urban squalor. Tabb's work, for example, may be viewed as an early attempt to address the shortcomings of Spear and Osofsky. Declining infrastructure, unequal access to credit, systemic unemployment, and poverty feature chiefly in the author's critique.

Additionally, Tabb offers an excellent summary of the parallels between colonialism and the political economy of the ghetto. Much like colonies, the author notes that "the ghetto also has a relatively low per-capita income and a high birth rate. Its residents are for the most part unskilled. Businesses lack capital and managerial know-how. Local markets are limited. The incidence of credit default is high. Little saving takes place and what is saved is usually not invested locally."[31] As with colonies under mercantilism, the developing economy (in this case the ghetto) is encouraged to produce a single commodity, often a raw material, for the benefit of the mother country. In this case, Tabb suggests that the raw material is cheap, unskilled, labor-power extracted for the benefit of the manufacturing sector. Acting as a reserve army of labor to be drawn upon

[30] Oscar Lewis, *La Vida: A Puerto Rican Family in the Culture of Poverty—San Juan and New York* (New York: Random House, 1965)
[31] William K. Tabb, *The Political Economy of the Black Ghetto* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1970), p. 22

during times of scarcity, the maintenance of an inexpensive surplus of workers could be used to keep labor supply high and depress the cost of wages. The result in both the colonial relation and the economy of the ghetto is nonetheless the same: economic dependence marked by unequal power relations and financial subordination.

This is not to say that culture and ideological considerations need be completely absent. As Maribel points out, racism under capitalism allows working class whites to benefit psychologically in the face of material and financial exploitation. According to Maribel and others, racist ideology is often employed to pacify low income white families who, no matter how poor, can always declare, "at least we don't live like blacks."[32]

Continuities and Changes in the Historiography: 1980s & 90s

While ostensibly disputing Osofsky's "culture" thesis Douglas Massey and Nancy Denton nonetheless present a modified version of this argument in asserting the centrality of residential segregation in creating "a structural niche within which a deleterious set of attitudes and behaviors—a culture of segregation—has arisen and flourished."[33] For Massey and Denton residential segregation even trumps economic factors such as deindustrialization which the authors feel would have been less deleterious if African Americans were allowed residential fluidity. When jobs left, African Americans were unable to follow as easily as whites who fled to the suburbs in which factories sometimes relocated. "Barriers to spatial mobility are barriers to social mobility," the authors note, "and by confining blacks to a small set of relatively disadvantaged

[32] Manning Marable, *How Capitalism Underdeveloped Black America* (Cambridge: South End Press, 1983), p. 73.
[33] Douglas S. Massey and Nancy A. Denton, *American Apartheid: Segregation and the Making of the Underclass* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1993), p. 8

neighborhoods, segregation constitutes a very powerful impediment to black socioeconomic progress."[34] Segregation is viewed as a lynch pin of sorts which exacerbates and supports other factors contributing to racial inequality in the United States. In their view, progress will be stymied until residential segregation is redressed.

Building upon and in some ways complicating the prior efforts of Osofsky and Spear, James Grossman examines the shifting aspirations of African Americans in early twentieth century Chicago. While initial experiences in the North may have been somewhat liberating for southern blacks, the process of immigration was markedly ambivalent. Far from finding acceptance, African Americans were frequently excluded from unions and quickly found their skills did not always transfer into Chicago's urban economy. Yet these determined migrants were by no means naïve in journeying north and as Grossman is careful to point out blacks were well aware of the uncertainties migration brought.

Rather than viewing Chicago as a mythical paradise, Grossman contends African Americans were far more realistic about the fate that awaited them. To this end, total social integration and acceptance was not the goal, but rather an aspiration to be left alone and possibly integrate components of southern black culture into the North. In many ways blacks made a pragmatic decision to trade the unlikely prospect of owning land for more tenable opportunities in labor employment. Far more explicitly than Spear and Osofsky, Grossman suggests that African Americans understood their rights and fully comprehended the contradictions encountered in urban migration.[35]

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[34] Ibid, p. 14

[35] James R. Grossman, Land of Hope: Chicago, Black Southerners, and the Great Migration (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1989), p. 185.

Subsequent developments are explored by Arnold Hirsch, Thomas Sugrue, and Edward Orser. While engaging earlier works, their scholarship can also be viewed as a critique of Reagan era policies and the rise of conservatism. Unlike Grossman's early twentieth century focus, these authors examine the origins and processes which gave rise to indigent African American neighborhoods in the postwar North.

Whereas Osofsky and Spear attributed earlier patterns of segregation to private white hostility and market forces, Hirsch and Sugrue cite active government intervention as one of the primary determinants of ghetto formation. In addition, Hirsch notes quantitative, chronological, and qualitative differences which merit use of the term "second ghetto." First, the postwar ghetto was considerably larger and developed at a more rapid rate. Second, its period of expansion fell roughly between 1940 and 1960 (in contrast to the "first" ghetto's World War I proliferation). Finally, the second ghetto produced a far greater concentration of African American homogeneity. The result was racially bifurcated communities with a more stringent degree of segregation than the previous era.[36] While Orser also acknowledges the role of government policy, much of his book focuses on the effects of speculative capital and white flight in making and remaking patterns of segregation.

All three authors, however, offer caution against treating segregation monolithically. In contrast to Osofsky and Spear, Hirsch, for example, notes that the formation of the second ghetto was neither an inevitable consequence nor a problem perpetuated by its residents. Sugrue also maintains that urban distress is by no means unavoidable and sustains hope for rehabilitation. Focusing on poverty in America's declining manufacturing centers, this scholar makes several valuable contributions to Hirsch's investigation of the historic roots of urban privation. Of

[36] Arnold R. Hirsch, *Making the Second Ghetto* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1983), p. 254.

particular note is Sugrue's assertion that economic decline predates the rioting and unrest of the 1960s. Instead, the author suggests that the nascent atrophy of the country's industrial centers began in the 1940s and 50s. The telltale signs of this period included a production shift to largely non-unionized, low-wage suburban and southern locales, automated facilities, and more onerous demands on workers. While noticed by some commentators, criticism was either deflected towards explanations which blamed the victims or stifled completely by growing antiradical tendencies, neoclassical economic orthodoxy, and the ideological forces of the post-war consensus.

Robert Self further explores the impact of deindustrialization.[37] Synthesizing the earlier efforts of Sugrue, Hirsch, and Orser, Self describes the effects of white flight on inner-city African American life. Ironically, rather than insulating themselves from the effects of urban decay the evacuation of white suburbanites merely expanded the ghetto and exacerbated existing problems. Barred from living near potentially gainful employment opportunities, blacks were essentially cordoned into dying neighborhoods with struggling school systems and declining infrastructures dependent upon an emaciated tax base. The reverberations of these dire circumstances would frequently greet suburbanites in blaring headlines which stoked already existing fears and added to a prevailing sense of imminent terror that penetrated even the most lily-white suburbs.

New Directions in African American Urban History: 2000-Present

Several authors, however, have criticized the field's nearly exclusive focus on *problems* of the inner city. This, along with a new academic exploration of black experiences in the suburbs represents an alternative direction for African American urban history. Gregory's discussion of

[37] Robert O. Self, American Babylon: Race and the Struggle for Postwar Oakland (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2003).

Harlem, for example, does much to correct what is perhaps the most glaring shortcoming of Osofsky: his almost complete dismissal of the Harlem Renaissance. In his overwhelmingly positive treatment of Harlem, Gregory notes that, "ghettos for those who lived in them, these impoverished and imprisoned spaces would nonetheless be responsible for the production of an evolving complex of cultural forms that would facilitate the transformation of American racial systems." [38]

Harlem, far from a singularly uniform pit of despair, had qualities that attracted many African Americans. The infusion of black artists into Harlem, while a hallmark of segregation, also created conditions which allowed the Renaissance to unfold. As Gregory explains, segregation in Harlem was not completely exclusionary and facilitated an exchange of ideas between races and ethnicities. While Harlem may have been a predominantly black neighborhood and may have carried the stigmatizing nomenclature of "ghetto" it was, nonetheless, a dynamic environment which interacted positively with other communities. A high concentration of African Americans within the neighborhood created an autonomous space, but was porous enough to facilitate cultural exchange.

In addition, Gregory in expanding upon the earlier work of Grossman describes the importance of African American media outlets such as *The Defender* and *The Afro-American*. The success of these papers with their nearly global outlook signified a potential for wide scale mobilizations and the solidification of a common national identity. The inclusion of popular culture into the black press served as a further indication of progress. Enormous photos of African American musicians suggested a semblance of cultural normality and parity with white culture. The appearance of such trivial matters indicated both a demand for black celebrity and expanded

[38] James Gregory, The Southern Diaspora: How the Great Migrations of Black and White Southerners Transformed America (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2005), p. 116.

cultural horizons. African American media was moving beyond a simple barebones dissemination of information into the realm of informational luxury. This new flamboyancy, in other words, denoted social and economic development.

Whereas Gregory's work attempts to bring additional clarity to certain cultural issues, Margret O'Mara's essay *Suburbia Reconsidered* attempts to reassess the inner-city focus of Hirsch, Sugrue, and Orser. Arguing against the notion of suburbs as primarily white enclaves and noting a diaspora of immigrants and African Americans from the inner-city, O'Mara presents a review of four recent contributions which expand upon Sugrue's earlier scholarship. In the process, O'Mara suggests that the overwhelmingly critical nature of scholarly work on suburbia has obscured some of its positive developments. Also central to O'Mara's critique is an opposition to the tendency to treat urban and suburban scholarship separately without exploring connections between them. Thus in many ways, the pieces O'Mara cites complicate the picture presented by Sugrue, Hirsch, and others. O'Mara, for example, notes how the dominant conceptualization of inner-city black poverty—perhaps best encapsulated by the vertical articulation of public housing complexes—is challenged by the more horizontal suburban-esque iterations of poverty found in the West. The result is a more complex picture of residential segregation.

Andrew Weise features prominently in O'Mara's review and makes another significant intervention in the literature with his emphasis on an emerging suburban diaspora. In so doing, the author also pushes to erode the clear-cut lines drawn between the inner-city and the suburbs. As his text illustrates, African Americans experienced both continuities and changes—spreading into new geographical spaces, yet nonetheless confronting many of the same problems and familiar patterns. Wiese, for example, notes a movement of African Americans to the suburbs which he

describes as "the next Great Migration." [39] So expansive was this transition that census data placed fully 1/3rd of African Americans within a suburban setting.[40] While this produced substantial advances for many in the black middle class, results were ambivalent for working class African Americans. As those with the financial means to do so left for the suburbs, the inner-city blacks left behind faced declining tax revenues and an accompanying shortfall in much needed social services.

Additionally, those moving into formerly all-white neighborhoods in the late twentieth century met uncertain prospects and perhaps the specter of a horizontally expansive, newly decentralized ghetto. Weise points out that "most black suburbanites in 1990 lived in older inner-ring suburbs, which exhibited a variety of fiscal shortcomings, such as high taxes, mediocre services, low-performing schools, commercial disinvestment, and anemic rates of property appreciation."[41] Far from creating widespread integration, in the 1990s, "the majority of black suburbanites lived in racially segregated neighborhoods" and "the familiar stratification of metropolitan areas into white and black spaces… expanded… over a greater area." [42]

Although Weise, Gregory and O'Mara have suggested new directions in the study of African American urban history there has correspondingly been a revival of older modes of analysis which were once written off as anachronistic or irrelevant. Though nearly half a century old, some of the central arguments made by radical scholars such as Tabb and Marable can still be found in the scholarship of contemporary authors such as Beryl Satter, Mathew Countryman, Kevin Gotham, and N.D.B. Connelly. While linkages between ghetto segregation and colonialism

[39] Andrew Wiese, *Places of Their Own: African American Suburbanization in the Twentieth Century* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2004, p. 255.
[40] Ibid.
[41] Ibid, p. 258.
[42] Ibid.

have frequently been dismissed as radical hyperbole, there are nonetheless several scholars who have exhibited a renewed interest in this line of analysis.

Connolly, for example, views segregation in Miami as a form of internal colonialism designed to extract wealth from its non-white inhabitants. Governed by local elites, yet nonetheless beholden to northern investors, the result was a kind of mitigated indirect rule designed to exploit local resources—frequently land and property—in order to generate enormous profit. As Connolly describes this, "Jim Crow in South Florida binds the history of the US metropolis to the history of resource extraction in the formally colonized and postcolonized world." [43] Racism and segregation (de jure or de facto) as others have pointed out, could be immensely lucrative. And Connolly notes the arbitrage potentials generated by a population which has been cordoned off into an artificially inflated and crumbling housing market. "Racially dividing real estate," Connolly writes, "generated wealth because it limited the mobility of consumers, thereby confining demand, manufacturing scarcity, and driving up prices on both sides of the color line."[44]

Although Satter does not explicitly use the term colonialism to describe the exploitative processes at work in the political economy of the ghetto, her descriptions of the motives underpinning speculative real estate capital in the latter half of the twentieth century certainly evokes this line of thinking. Noting, for example, "the riches that could be drawn from the seemingly poor vein of aged and decrepit housing and hard-pressed but hardworking and ambitious African Americans," Satter's description in some ways echoes earlier works. [45] Intertwining personal family history within the backdrop of the Civil Rights movement, Satter presents an acute

[43] N.D.B. Connolly, *A World More Concrete: Real Estate and the Remaking of Jim Crow South Florida* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2014), p. 249.
[44] Ibid.
[45] Beryl Satter, Family Properties: Race, Real Estate, and the Exploitation of Black Urban America (New York: Henry Holt, 2009), p. 6.

analysis of discriminatory lending practices and the devastating impact of racially iniquitous credit policies.

On the one hand, Satter's historiographical intervention offers a word of caution against those who would posit the causes of urban blight to a "culture of poverty" or similarly to individual shortcomings and widespread complacency. On the other hand, Satter argues against (or perhaps supplements) Sugrue's emphasis on deindustrialization and outsourcing as catalysts in ghetto formation. Noting that African Americans frequently had adequate incomes, Satter suggests obstructionist lending policies forced blacks to rely on speculators intent on bilking families and maximizing profit. While Satter acknowledges the effects of deindustrialization, she nonetheless suggests African American access to traditional forms of credit would have done much to mitigate inner-city squalor.

Gotham, in contrast, much like Tabb and Marable, asserts that the problems are rooted more in the structural contradictions of capitalism. As is the case with several other authors to be discussed in this historiography, Gotham's work can be seen as a direct response to the ascension of neo-liberalism and its corresponding impact on investment and government institutions.

Using Kansas City as a case study, Gotham examines racially based segregation and its origins as a federal policy. A significant portion of the text is devoted to a historic analysis of the specific forms of capitalist development which contributed to postwar ghettos. Gotham's main historiographic contribution, however, is his insistence that race and racial discrimination are integral components of uneven development. While Gotham acknowledges that historians have analyzed the effects of racial discrimination, he asserts that they have done so in a largely reactive manner. Although race is a prominent theme in the works of notables such as Hirsch and Sugrue,

Gotham contents these historians have nonetheless failed to adequately integrate race "into their accounts and theories of uneven development."[46]

To this end, Gotham wishes to incorporate a nuanced analysis of race which takes into consideration it's socially constructed and historically protean nature. Gotham, therefore, argues there are no timeless definitions for what constitutes race and racism. As a result, he makes an effort to historicize the development of certain racial categories and the role the real estate industry played in institutionalizing the socio-spatial relations evident in racial discrimination. In the process, Gotham defines and draws careful distinctions between concepts such as racism, discrimination, and institutional racism. Throughout the text, for example, the author analyzes the shifting racial discourse of the real estate industry which increasingly relied upon coded references as a way to escape accusations of overt discrimination.

Finally, Gotham points out that the effects of racial segregation are far more profound than acting as a simple geographic demarcation of intolerance or social stigmatization. Rather, racial segregation as Self and others demonstrate has significant material consequences including "access to quality education, employment opportunities, and other tangible resources."[47]

Access to these tangible resources is the central subject of Ira Katznelson's scholarship.[48] In some ways building upon the earlier works of Spear, Katznelson demonstrates the discriminatory design and implementation of policies which overwhelmingly benefited whites while leaving African Americans to fend for themselves. In the process he suggests these programs were an early form of white affirmative action designed by Southern politicians to maintain racial hierarchies and keep African Americans in a subordinate position. Katznelson's historiographic

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[46] Kevin Fox Gotham, *Race, Real Estate, and Uneven Development: The Kansas City Experience, 1900-2000* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2002), p. 4.
[47] Ibid, p. 13
[48] Ira Katznelson, *When Affirmative Action Was White* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 2005).

contribution introduces a chronologically broader conceptualization of affirmative action programs which aims to correct ahistorical critiques of modern programs. While a new American Middle class was fashioned during and after World War II, African Americans were deliberately excluded from this process by Southern Democratic politicians and their complicit Northern allies. The outcomes of these policies, Katznelson suggests, had far weightier effects on contemporary racial inequalities than slavery and Jim Crow segregation.

Much as Gotham critiques luminaries such as Hirsch and Sugrue for inadequately incorporating race into their analysis of uneven development, Smith, Whitaker, Connelly, Muhammad, and Thompson also suggest the authors may have fallen short in their failure to portray multi-racial class fissures and conflicts within the Civil Rights Movement. These authors highlight the tendency of black elites to coopt early social democratic programs in favor of pro-market policies which failed to address the needs of many working class African Americans. While this is in no way a rejection of scholarship which emphasizes the role played by white elites and the federal government in shaping housing policy, Smith nonetheless suggests "it is equally important to examine the complicity of the African American elites, who represented blacks' housing interests, to determine whether their actions, directly or indirectly, obstructed blacks' access to adequate and affordable housing."[49]

Smith, for example, draws a distinction between bourgeois, market inclined leaders and their militant counterparts through his use of the term *racial democracy*. This term encompasses an ideology which was directed towards enacting political rather than economic reforms—an ideology which operated within and embraced a capitalist framework. Demands for equal access

[49] Preston H. Smith II, *Racial Democracy and the Black Metropolis: Housing Policy in Postwar Chicago* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2012), p. xv

to housing aid and markets were sufficient, rather than social democratic policies, which "argued that citizens should have access to decent housing regardless of their ability to pay for it."[50]

Connolly highlights these complex tensions in his discussion of the role played by African American elites in the creation of southern ghettos. Not merely the consequence of oppressive white elites, Connolly describes the manner in which black property owners profited and even contributed to racial segregation in the Jim Crow South. Simultaneously pulled by both racial and class interests, African American elites articulated the goals of the Civil Rights movement in terms of access to property and ownership, rather than earlier transformative social visions which called for more egalitarian economic arrangements.

Perhaps even more damning is Smith's assertion that many black leaders did not avoid social democratic policies because of political expediency, but were rather motivated by private gain. Many accepted social stratification as normal and even helped to perpetuate policies which were detrimental to the black working class. The point of Smith and Connolly's work, however, is not to place blame for the ghettoization of African Americans on the failings of black leadership, but rather to highlight the multifaceted, class-stratified nature of the black community and its corollary within the civil rights movement. Many African American leaders who expressed distain for the black poor, as with much of the country, simply absorbed and internalized dominant ideological narratives which have become integral components of American society.

The origins of these ideological narratives feature heavily in the work of Khalil Muhammad as he traces the genealogy of linkages between race and crime that resulted in socially entrenched ideas of black criminality. Among Muhammad's many historiographic contributions is his assertion that the North was a central component in the emerging statistical discourse which helped

[50] Ibid, p. xiii

to shape modern ideas of race and crime. According to the prevailing historical narrative it is as if notions of black criminality emerged from and were confined solely to an atavistic Jim Crow South. In contrast, Muhammad points to the use of Northern urban crime data in refashioning blackness as intrinsically felonious. Crime in turn became a proxy through which ideas of black inferiority could be discussed within a supposedly tolerant and pluralistic liberal political framework. Furthermore, by providing a veneer of "objective" statistical data, crime statistics could also shield those who called for discriminatory policies against charges of overt racism.

Even black elites to some extent internalized this discourse though, like some of their liberal counterparts, they attempted to attribute criminality to culture and class. In fact, Muhammad asserts that the links between race and crime have become so entrenched that even Civil Rights activists who bravely fought for equal protection within the criminal justice system, while transforming discourse on black criminality, nonetheless failed to dissolve the still firmly ensconced links between race and crime.

Thompson paints a similarly complicated picture and suggests that the scholarly focus on white flight has myopically painted white responses to liberalism and the Civil Rights movement as uniformly hostile. Not all whites, of course, were opposed to African American neighbors and Thompson suggests black and white alliances in the latter half of the twentieth century resulted in Civil Rights advances even during the conservative ascendency of 1980s. Coalitions between progressive whites, as well as working and middle class African Americans, for example, ushered inner-city electoral victories that kept the liberal vision alive amidst "the vast sea of conservatism swirling around them." [51] These multi-ethnic alliances underscore a more persistent commitment to social justice programs than is often acknowledged.

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[51] Heather Ann Thompson, *Whose Detroit? Politics, Labor, and Race in a Modern American City* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2001), p. 6

Many whites, however, clearly resisted African American incursion. Seligman, for example, considers the various responses white homeowners took to African American movement into racially homogenous neighborhoods. Seligman, supplementing earlier work by Orser and others, argues that the term "white flight" is too narrow and does not capture the range of actions whites employed during periods of racial transition. Rather than simply leaving like a flock of migrating geese, whites instead actively fought against black incursion. As Seligman describes it, "the term 'white flight' reduces residents' behavior to a single decision and omits the larger context in which they operated."[52] Some, for example, joined community associations determined to halt black advancement. Others organized protests and lobbied local officials for urban renewal programs. A few even profited from racial transition through blockbusting and other exploitative practices.[53] When all else failed thousands of whites turned to violence and intimidation. In short, whites used an assortment of tactics which cannot be reduced to a simple mass exodus.

Offering a bird's-eye view of the racial transition discussed by Seligman, Gordon employs the latest in GIS (Geographic Information Systems) technology to chronical the debilitating effects of segregation and urban decline in postwar St. Louis. Gordon, as with Hirsch, Sugrue, Smith, Gotham, and Satter, asserts that the emaciation of St. Louis's urban core was not the work of market forces simply expressing the preferences of individual consumers. Rather, the mass departure of whites and subsequent deterioration of inner-city St. Louis resulted from deliberate policy choices which encouraged segregation and residential decay. "A variety of private and public policies" Gordon writes, "including explicitly racial zoning, state-enforced restrictive deed covenants, and redlining by banks and realtors—overlapped and reinforced one another over the

[52] Amanda I. Seligman, *Block by Block: Neighborhoods and Public Policy on Chicago's West Side* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2005), p. 213

[53] Ibid, p. 152. Seligman even uses Mark Satter's story to problematize the use of the term in her chapter on blockbusting.

course of the twentieth century." [54] The results of these premeditated decisions, Gordon argues, were dire and carried consequences which extended well beyond the geographic boundaries of inner-city America. Much as others have suggested, these circumstances were by no means inevitable and could have been avoided.

What makes Gordon's work stand out from Self's or other's portrayals of urban crisis, however, is the text's use of GIS mapping which helps render the effects of inner-city deterioration in stark visual terms. The magnitude of economic decline and segregation created by the aforementioned policies is often difficult to grasp and Gordon's frequent use of full-color illustrations creates a powerful lens which brings the reality of these policies into sharp and indisputable focus.

[54] Colin Gordon, *Mapping Decline: St. Louis and the Fate of the American City* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2008), p. 5

Introduction Appendix

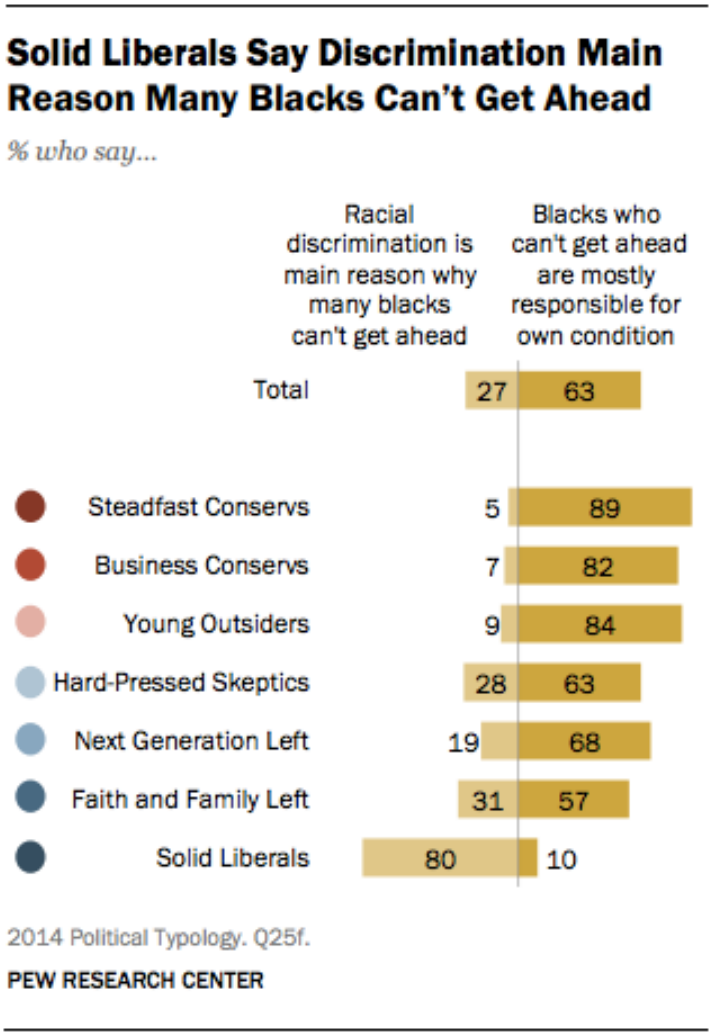

Figure One
Racial attitudes of based on ideology[55]

[55] https://www.vox.com/2014/6/27/5847194/only-7-percent-of-conservatives-say-racial-discrimination-holds-back

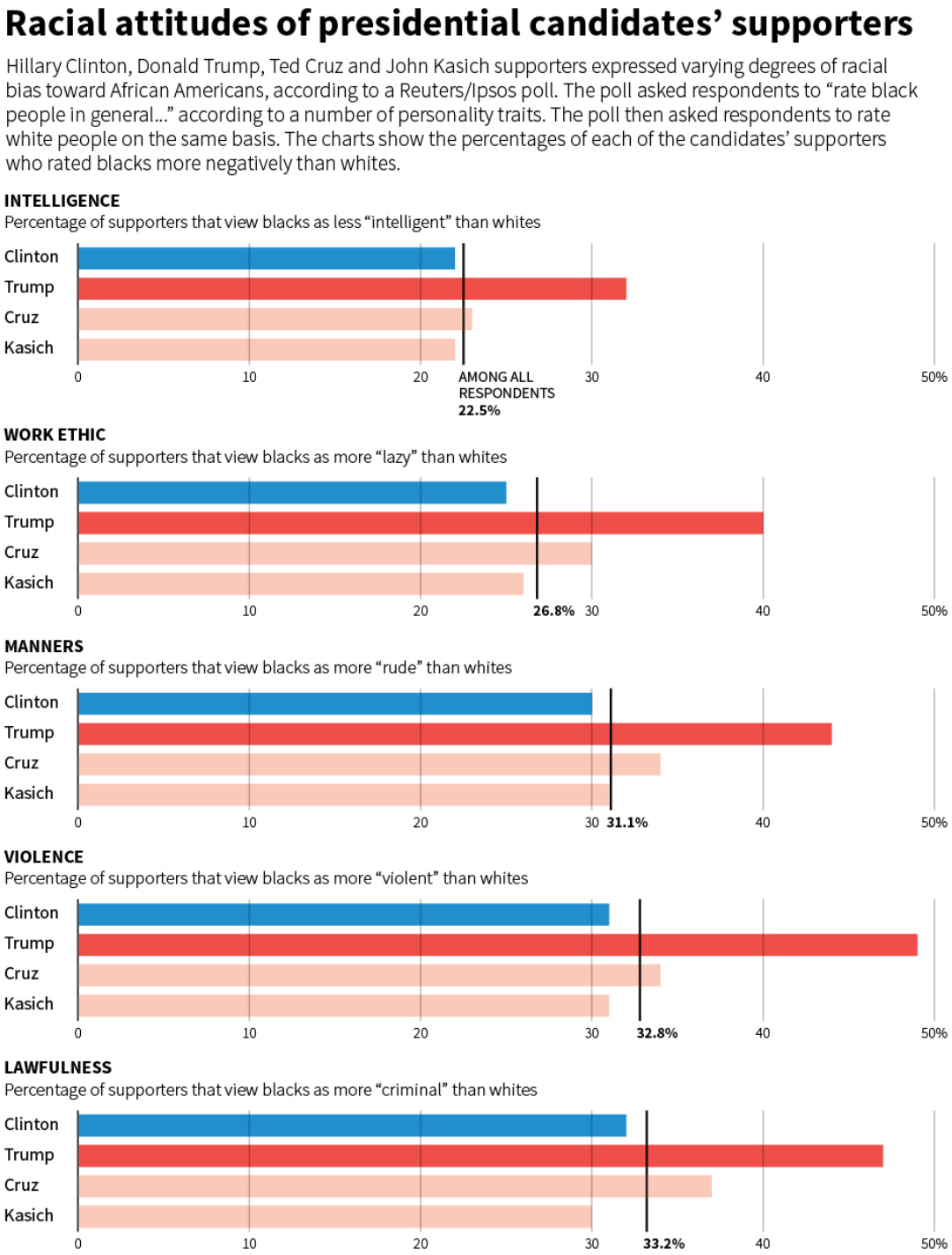

Figure Two
Racial attitudes of presidential candidate's supporters[56]

[56] http://www.reuters.com/article/us-usa-election-race-idUSKCN0ZE2SW?feedType=RSS&feedName=topNews&utm_source=twitter&utm_medium=Social

Figure Three
A Popular Meme Circulating During the Baltimore Uprising[57]

Figure Four
A Variation on the Above Meme[58]

[57] https://makeameme.org/meme/theyre-firing-something
[58] https://memegenerator.net/instance/56633872/anchorman-birthday-breaking-news-police-ended-riots-in-ferguson-after-job-applications-were-disperse

Chapter I:
The Material and Ideological Underpinnings of Early Ghettoization

(1865-1945)

Introduction

This chapter seeks to document factors contributing to the rise of early twentieth century ghettos, beginning with a brief examination of living conditions and race relations in the late nineteenth century. While it would be a stretch to claim racial interactions were completely harmonious, blacks and whites did live together in integrated communities for much of the nation's history. Racism was clearly a part of the American social fabric, yet many also held at least a rhetorical enthusiasm for principles of equality.

Although marred by the bitter legacy of slavery, the eradication of bondage carried the potential to actualize the country's putative commitment to Enlightenment ideals. The massive infusion of both federal funding and the accretion of national government power associated with Reconstruction, for example, provided an infrastructure capable of mitigating—if not eliminating entirely—efforts to politically and economically subordinate African Americans. At the very least, Reconstruction offered the prospect of a far more equitable future. Yet, this did not come to pass.

As this chapter demonstrates, ghetto formation was by no means inevitable and was instead the direct result of social pressures generated by recurrent economic crises and a subsequent shifting of ideological frameworks associated with the overthrow of Reconstruction. In a milieu of economic turmoil buttressed by a massive propaganda effort sustained by vengeful southern elites, public opinion turned against newly freed African Americans and support for government organizations such as the Freedman's Bureau fell by the wayside. The rise of the Progressive era brought a sea change in race relations and a new emphasis on segregation as a scientific solution to problems associated with growing racial tensions.

Additionally, this chapter describes the sociopolitical factors which contributed to early instances of ghettoization and ends by describing the eventual solidification of residential segregation in both the North and the South. At this early stage of American style Apartheid, state and local political forces worked with impunity to ostracize the African American populace and did so with the tacit support of the federal government. Much like the earlier Venetian enclaves which sought to isolate Jews from the broader population, twentieth century black neighborhoods were codified as a mechanism of social control.

Use of the term "ghetto", while problematic, remains appropriate, if only to describe the intentionality underlying what can only be viewed as concerted exclusionary processes. Similarly, while these bleak events in no way encompass the totality of the African American experience, it is a history that remains largely unknown to the public. If placing disproportionate emphasis on these events runs the risk of creating a ghetto synthesis, perhaps it can be forgiven if it succeeds in bringing these rank injustices to light.

From Integration to Disintegration, 1865-1901

Given the United States' deeply entrenched history of racism, it is perhaps understandable that many assume conditions for African Americans have always been marked by segregation and extreme social isolation. The historical record, however, presents a more complicated picture. While dire poverty was certainly the lot for slaves and most working-class blacks, they nonetheless tended to reside in close proximity to whites. Anecdotal evidence abounds and even astute high school students know that the first martyr of the American Revolution—Crispus Attucks—was a working class African American who was protesting alongside white Bostonians. Similarly, African American elites also lived and interacted among whites in both antebellum and postbellum

settings. These black professionals, far from facing total exclusion, often enjoyed close economic and social ties with the community as a whole.

As Egerton and others have pointed out this was still more apparent in the decades following the Civil War and this era offered the promise of a far more egalitarian America than is often acknowledged. "Reconstruction," Egerton notes "constituted the most democratic decades of the nineteenth century, South or North, so much so that it amounted to the first progressive era in the nation's history."[59] The period witnessed the rise of a number of reforms and a vibrant African American political culture which would not be matched until the Civil Rights movement. Blacks were elected to office on both the local and national levels, held important government positions, and generally lived alongside whites. Although conditions were far from utopian, the formation of ghettos were by no means an inevitable outcome of these shortcomings.

Even the South, often considered the quintessential locus of American racism featured close racial interactions—with blacks and whites living in relative proximity to one another. While much of the South was of course rural, African Americans residing in these bucolic localities often did so in a milieu marked by notable diversity. The same was true in urban settings. While Antebellum Charleston, for example, had neighborhoods in which African Americans did indeed comprised 45% of those living there, this was due to the fact that blacks comprised 44% of the city's total population and were thus spread equally throughout the city—not concentrated into ghetto enclaves.[60]

Massey and Denton go as far as asserting that later Jim Crow laws were not responsible for racial segregation, but merely regulated black and white social interactions. In fact, the authors

[59] Douglas R. Egerton, *The Wars of Reconstruction* (New York: Bloomsbury Press, 2014), p. 21
[60] Bernard E. Powers, Jr., *Black Charlestonians: A Social History, 1822-1885* (Fayetteville: University of Arkansas Press, 1994), p. 24

assert that Jim Crow was so effective at regulating interracial interactions, it rendered ghetto construction in the South largely superfluous.[61] The North, in contrast, faced with the increasing immigration of African Americans eventually utilized the ghetto for the expressed purpose of containment and the regulation of black and white interactions.

Nonetheless, there are some broad parallels between slave quarters in antebellum Charleston and African American ghettos of the twentieth century that warrant discussion. The merits of these comparisons have their limits, yet similarities exist all the same and deserve some exploration. Certain subsections of Charleston, for instance, did feature neighborhoods with higher concentrations of African Americans than others. This was true of slave housing, which as Powers writes, "sometimes formed enclaves" which were predominantly black. In one such place known as Clifford's Alley, for example, "seventy-six slaves and one white lived in wooden houses, on both sides of the street."[62] There were other examples in Charleston as well where according to a 1856 grand jury complaint, "as many as fifty to one hundred negroes, or persons of color, [were] residing… and not a single white person on the premises."[63]

Powers' descriptions of these homes parallel some of the worst sections of post-industrial Detroit, however this early African American enclave was not viewed by those who lived there as a form of enforced isolation. On the contrary, these spaces were seen as relative heavens of liberty and possibly even a means of emancipation. Far from the eyes of watchful slave masters, African Americans residing in these quarters could enjoy a modicum of privacy and autonomy—coming and going as they pleased—much to the dismay of many local whites.

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[61] Douglas S. Massey and Nancy A. Denton, *American Apartheid: Segregation and the Making of the Underclass* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1993), p. 16.
[62] Bernard E. Powers, Jr., *Black Charlestonians: A Social History, 1822-1885* (Fayetteville: University of Arkansas Press, 1994), p. 25
[63] See figure one. Richard Wade, *Slavery in the Cities: The South 1820-1860* (London: Oxford University Press, 1967), p. 70

As Powers explains, "the possibility of establishing a private residence in the city away from whites and the masters particularly, coupled with the quasi-independence of the hiring-out system, gave the urban slave family advantages that were rarely obtained on the plantation." [64] Away from the prying eyes of the masters some slaves in these areas were able to go into business for themselves, work independently, and eventually pay for their own manumission. Barring the relative isolation of these slave quarters, however, most blacks lived and worked in close proximity to whites. The picture was much the same throughout the South and the postbellum years were also marked by an absence of African American ghettos.

The postbellum West and Midwest also lacked the degree of social isolation associated with twentieth century ghettos. Kansas, for example, had a number of promising illustrations of black and white integration. Commerce between African Americans and whites was robust and joint business ventures were not uncommon in the decades immediately following the Civil War. Middle class blacks were able to establish a lively business community which was frequented by both African American and white clientele.

Additionally, elementary schools in Topeka were initially integrated—almost 100 years prior to the landmark court case which unfolded there.[65] The state was also notable in that it was not marked by episodes of racial violence during Reconstruction. This was not the result of a laissez-faire policy towards race relations, however, and African Americans worked jointly with white politicians to create an egalitarian milieu. "Several influential state officials," Cox writes,

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[64] Bernard E. Powers, Jr., *Black Charlestonians: A Social History, 1822-1885* (Fayetteville: University of Arkansas Press, 1994), p. 26

[65] *Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka*. See figure two for an example of an integrated basketball team.

"attempted to combat racial discrimination in Kansas between 1866 and 1876" and these efforts were matched by interracial social movements that applied direct tactics when necessary.[66]

A burgeoning population during Reconstruction encouraged the development of black owned enterprises, increasingly dynamic social structures, and economic self-sufficiency. The variegated culture of Topeka demonstrated that ghettos and isolation were by no means inevitable. In fact, census data indicates that only fifteen percent of African Americans resided in areas that were three-fourths black. Most, on the other hand, lived in regions where African Americans constituted one-eighth of the population.[67]

While Kansas was known as a hotbed of populist foment, similar scenes abounded in many Northern cities until the end of Reconstruction. The political landscape, however, began to change as Northern industrialist Republicans increasingly tried to placate emerging Southern white business leaders in hopes of defeating the nascent labor movement. More importantly, Reconstruction was under assault by white supremacists determined to establish an environment in which African Americans were clearly subordinate. These hate-fueled bigots not only targeted black people, but also the institutions and federal programs which encouraged social advancement.

As Egerton points out, "Reconstruction did not fail… it was violently overthrown by men who had fought for slavery during the Civil War and continued that battle as guerrilla partisans over the next decade."[68] At the same time, white Northern voters failed to follow through with far-reaching reforms which could have provided a stronger basis for the development of racial

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[66] Thomas C. Cox, *Blacks in Topeka, Kansas, 1865-1915: A Social History* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1982), p.25

[67] U.S. Department of Commerce. Bureau of Census. *Tenth Census of the United States, 1880.* Vol. I. Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1883.

[68] Douglas R. Egerton, *The Wars of Reconstruction* (New York: Bloomsbury Press, 2014), p. 19

equality. Instead, many Northern whites—exposed to lurid Southern propaganda—felt they had done enough and believed African Americans could pull themselves up by their own bootstraps.

By 1901 the hope created by Reconstruction for a more racially equal America had clearly come to an end. What came next was a dramatic rise in residential segregation. According to the National Bureau of Economic Research, between 1880 and 1940, the odds of a white person living next door to a black essentially fell by half.[69]

Northern Ghetto Formation: 1901-1945

Although African Americans were already thriving in the North prior 1901, thousands more began to migrate from the South both before and during the period known as the Great Migration. One important push factor underlying this exodus was an increasingly hostile political environment created by Southern white legislatures. Emboldened by the end of Reconstruction, the goal of these state-level officials had been to reduce African Americans to a position of near slavery.

Crop lien systems, for example, caught destitute blacks in a system of endless debt while Southern legislators concomitantly worked to establish stiff penalties for the violation of labor contracts. The result was a kind of legalized enslavement known as the convict lease system. Owing to the Thirteenth Amendment's establishment of prison-based servitude "as punishment for crime whereof the party shall have been duly convicted," plantation owners and other private parties were able to purchase imprisoned blacks from the state.[70] These legally empowered neo-

[69] Trevon Logan and John Parman, *The National Rise in Residential Segregation.* Cambridge: National Bureau of Economic Research, 2015. Accessed May 15, 2017. http://www.nber.org/papers/w20934.pdf
[70] U.S. Const. amend. XIII

slaveholders could then force African Americans to work without remuneration for as long as the terms of their lease provided.

As Douglas A. Blackmon describes it, "this slavery did not last a lifetime… But it was nonetheless slavery – a system in which armies of free men… were repeatedly bought and sold, and were forced to do the bidding of white masters…"[71] The extent of this system was stunning and Kimberly Phillips asserts, "By 1900, as much as one-third of all sharecroppers in Alabama, Mississippi, and Georgia were being held against their will."[72]

Additionally, black mobility was limited through various legislative tactics such as "Enticement Laws" which "prevented labor agents and other employers from enticing black workers away from one job for another."[73] The goal of these laws was to guarantee a subordinate and low wage labor force unable to take advantage of favorable market conditions by relocating. Sharecroppers, for example, who discovered they were working with famers who were either intentionally bilking them or paid less than others were unable to seek better terms elsewhere. In this way white farmers could maximize their profits through the use of cheap, desperate workers.

Similarly, contract enforcement codes were used to prosecute sharecroppers who were unable to fulfill the strict terms set by their would be employers. As an Alabama statute from 1897 read, "Any person who enters into a contract in writing… and thereby obtains money… and… refuses or fails to perform such act or service, must on conviction be punished…"[74] Thus, sharecroppers who could not meet the often onerous demands of their employers—such as

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[71] Douglas A Blackmon. *Slavery by Another Name: The Re-Enslavement of Black Americans from the Civil War to World War II*, (New York: Anchor Books, 2008), p. 4

[72] Kimberley L. Phillips, *Alabama North: African American Migrants, Community, and Working-Class Activism in Cleveland, 1915-45* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1999), p. 22

[73] Ibid, p. 21

[74] The General Assembly of the State of Alabama. *Code of Alabama.* Atlanta, Ga.: The Foote & Davies company, printers, 1897..https://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=nyp.33433009075833;view=1up;seq=9 (accessed May 18, 2017).

fulfilling impossibly high crop yields—were potentially subject to imprisonment. African Americans who had the means and ability to leave the South left in part because of this antithetical climate.

Other factors driving the Great Migration included falling cotton prices and a shift towards less labor intensive crops in the South which decreased demand for black tenant farmers. "As cotton prices continued to fall after 1890," Phillips notes, "landowners turned from producing cotton and rice to growing trees for the lumber and turpentine industries, which reduced the demand for black agricultural workers."[75] This transition, while painful, provided many African Americans with formative exposures to wage labor systems and a skillset which could be applied in Northern milieus.

With opportunities for wage labor increasing, African Americans took advantage of the work they could find to earn extra money. These experiences as temporary laborers paved the way for a Southern exodus as those in rural areas had increasing contact with an economic modality which was far more prevalent in the North. "The emergence of industrial cities such as Birmingham provided black men with virtually unlimited access to unskilled jobs" and experience in these positions eventually allowed African Americans to utilize their capacities in a Northern setting. [76] As European migration ebbed in the United States, black workers were courted by industrialists and began moving to northern cities in ever greater numbers. This was particularly true as the flow of Eastern and Southern European workers was curtailed during World War I and by the 1924 Immigration Act.

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[75] Kimberley L. Phillips, *Alabama North: African American Migrants, Community, and Working-Class Activism in Cleveland, 1915-45* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1999), p.30
[76] Ibid, p. 40

While the Progressive era is often known as a period of reform which sought to increase democratic representation and consumer protections, it was also a period of growing racist sentiment bolstered by supposedly scientific evidence. The origin of these racial invectives can be found in the publication of the 1890 census which revealed African Americans constituted 30 percent of the country's prison population. An ensuing national discussion which ignored the discriminatory laws responsible for this wave of mass incarceration was used by social scientists as objective proof of biologically rooted black criminality.

In contrast, recent white immigrant groups were deemed worthy of reform efforts and viable candidates for social welfare. As Muhammad describes it, "From this moment forward, notions about blacks as criminals materialized in national debates about the fundamental racial and cultural differences between African Americans and native-born whites and European immigrants."[77] The effects of this discourse was to render African Americans unfit for access to social programs while simultaneously justifying calls for increased racial violence. "At its worst," Muhammad writes, "the stigma of criminality was an intellectual defense of lynching, colonial style criminal justice practices, and genocide." [78]

The ensuing discourse often painted blacks as atavistic predators who should be isolated at all costs. Physical violence and rhetoric often went hand in hand with some white politicians invoking "the image of the black rapist" in order to defeat calls for a more integrated society.[79] Thus, according to these politicians African Americans should be kept away from whites (particularly white women) because they apparently possessed an innate proclivity towards sexual violence. These tropes about black criminality and lasciviousness were so ensconced in the

[77] Khalil Gilbran Muhammad, *The Condemnation of Blackness: Race, Crime, and the Making of Modern Urban America* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2010), p. 104
[78] Ibid, p. 279
[79] Estelle B. Freedman, *Redefining Rape* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2013), p. 112

national consciousness that they still persist to this day. A recent *American Psychological Association* study found, for example, that "people have a tendency to perceive black men as larger and more threatening than similarly sized white men."[80]

In this regard, the North—*not the South*—was a central component in the emerging statistical discourse which helped to shape entrenched ideas of race and crime. Thus, perceptions of intrinsic black criminality did not solely emerge from an atavistic, lynch-happy, Jim Crow setting. While the Reconstruction South played no small part in disseminating myths of super-predatory black rapists, Northern urban crime data, played a far greater role in refashioning blackness as intrinsically felonious. "Northern black crime statistics," Muhammad writes, "and migration trends in the 1890s, 1900s, and 1910 were woven together into a cautionary tale about the exceptional threat black people posed to modern society."[81] While there were early efforts by African American luminaries such as W.E.B. DuBois and Ida B. Wells to undo notions of black criminality, by the Progressive era black criminality had already become "the most significant and durable signifier of black inferiority in white people's minds since the dawn of Jim Crow." [82]

Although the illicit activities of whites were often described in terms of individual failings, black crimes were (and often still are) described as a kind of racial pathology. A similar process had unfolded for earlier ethnic groups, but while Italians, Irish and Poles lost their criminal identities, African Americans' became increasingly solidified. As DuBois observed at the time, "the ancestors of the English and the Irish and the Italians were felt to be worth educating, helping and guiding because they were men and brothers, while in America a census which gives a slight

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[80] Wilson, John Paul, Hugenberg, Kurt, and Rule, Nicholas O. "Racial Bias in Judgments of Physical Size and Formidability: From Size to Threat." *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* (2017 March 13). http://www.apa.org/pubs/journals/releases/psp-pspi0000092.pdf (accessed May 15, 2017).
[81] Khalil Gilbran Muhammad, *The Condemnation of Blackness: Race, Crime, and the Making of Modern Urban America* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2010), p. 178
[82] Ibid, p. 104

indication of the utter disappearance of the American Negro from the earth is greeted with ill-concealed delight."[83] Nonetheless, criminality became associated with class among whites, while African American criminality became firmly attached to notions of race.

Progressive social scientists, Muhammad points out, were "using crime statistics to demonstrate the assimilability of the Irish, the Italian, and the Jew by explicit contrast to the Negro."[84] The shift in status experienced by once marginalized white ethnics and access to New Deal social welfare programs (which Katznelson has labeled a kind of white affirmative action) allowed for social and economic advancement for white ethnics. African Americans, on the other hand, who were repeatedly denied access to such programs were left to fend for themselves—a fact conveniently forgotten for those who assert that Irish, Italian and Polish immigrants pulled themselves up by their own bootstraps.

Crime in turn became a proxy through which ideas of black inferiority could be discussed within a supposedly tolerant and pluralistic liberal political framework. Furthermore, by providing a veneer of "objective" statistical data, crime statistics could also shield those who called for discriminatory policies against charges of overt racism. Even black elites to some extent internalized this discourse though—like some of their liberal counterparts—they attempted to attribute criminality to culture and class.

As the Progressive era unfolded, any semblance of fluid racial interactions which may have previously existed in the North quickly evaporated. Race riots are the most overt manifestation of increasing racial turmoil, as was the rising propensity for white parents to refuse to enroll their children alongside African American students, and growing resistance to rent or sell housing to

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[83] Du Bois and Elijah Anderson. *The Philadelphia Negro: A Social Study.* Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1996. https://muse.jhu.edu/ (accessed May 16, 2017), p. 387

[84] Khalil Gilbran Muhammad, *The Condemnation of Blackness: Race, Crime, and the Making of Modern Urban America* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2010), p. 181

blacks in white neighborhoods. Even African American elites were not immune to these prejudices and soon found it impossible to find housing commensurate with their social standing.

For African Americans living in integrated neighborhoods, targeted acts of violence sent a clear message that black neighbors would not be tolerated. In the aftermath of World War I, whites unleashed a campaign of terror against northern black homeowners in which fifty-eight black homes were bombed in the city of Chicago alone between 1917-1921.[85] An exodus towards the emerging ghetto soon followed as African Americans realized that blacks living in white neighborhoods would be subject to frequent hostility. Residential segregation became increasingly ossified and entrenched as white boundaries were solidified by force.

Along with these overt acts of violence, whites also employed structural and legal mechanisms to hold African American incursion at bay. One such mechanism was the creation of "neighborhood improvement associations" ostensibly designed to maintain property values, but almost inevitably used to preserve or establish racially homogeneous neighborhoods. Chief among the tools employed by these associations were restrictive covenants which expressly forbid homeowners from selling houses to African Americans, Jews, and other social groups deemed less than desirable.

Some contractual stipulations even prevented African Americans from entering or remaining in a neighborhood after sundown (putatively so that black servants could be employed, but had to leave at the end of the day). Even "tolerant" Seattle featured these contractual

[85] John Gibbs St. Clair Drake and Horace R. Cayton, *Black Metropolis* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1945), p. 178-79

stipulations with some deeds explicitly stating that the property in question could not be sold or rented to anyone except members of the "Aryan race."[86]

Additionally, neighborhood improvement associations were frequently spearheads for collective actions against African Americans and their supporters. Neighborhood associations organized boycotts against white-owned businesses that served black clients, lobbied local governments for zoning laws which targeted African American boarding establishments, and sometimes simply collected money to buyout black homeowners.

These tactics found added support from the National Association of Real Estate Boards (NAREB) whose 1924 code of ethics stated, "a Realtor should never be instrumental in introducing into a neighborhood… members of any race or nationality… whose presence will clearly be detrimental to property values in that neighborhood."[87] State power, in the form of courts, were employed to enforce these contracts which were not struck down by the Supreme Court until 1948.[88] Nonetheless, the response to this decision was slow and the NAREB did not officially remove all references to race in its code of ethics until February of 1952.[89]

As whites struggled bitterly to hold the periphery of emerging ghettos in check, the result was an ever increasing influx of African American migrants into tightly constricted areas. Population pressures created unsanitary conditions, a strain on the stock of viable housing, and exorbitant prices. Degradation followed and social anomies proliferated. "The progressive

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[86] Gordon and Mary Schneider. *Warranty Deed for Property within the State of Washington.* Seattle: September 31, 1946. http://depts.washington.edu/civilr/images/segregated/covenants/Aryans/Aryans_only800-96dpi.jpg (accessed May 19, 2017).

[87] National Association of Real Estate Boards. *Code of Ethics.* Pamphlet. June 22, 1928. National Association of Realtors. http://inmannews.wpengine.netdna-cdn.com/wp-content/uploads/2014/04/coe1928.pdf (accessed May 15, 2017).

[88] Shelley v Kraemer. 334 U.S. 1. Supreme Court of the United States. 1948. *Supreme Court Collection.* Legal Information Inst., Cornell U. Law School, n.d. Web. 16 Jan. 2012. http://www.worldlii.org/us/cases/federal/USSC/1948/63.html

[89] *National Association of Real Estate Boards. Code of Ethics. Pamphlet. 1952. National Association of Realtors. http://archive.realtor.org/sites/default/files/COE1952.pdf (accessed May 15, 2017).*

segregation of blacks continued in subsequent decades," Massey and Denton note, "and by World War II the foundations of the modern ghetto had been laid in virtually every northern city."[90]

Technology, it should be pointed out, also played a role in the formation of ghettos. The lack of segregation prior to the twentieth century (in both the North and the South) is perhaps based in part on a lack of large scale transportation technology which would allow the sort of long distance travel necessary for the construction of neighborhoods bifurcated into socio-racial enclaves. Walking predominated and work required spatial proximity—thus all urban workers needed to reside near the sight of production and total segregation was untenable.

While working class African Americans were frequently overrepresented in the most downtrodden neighborhoods prior to the 1900s, African Americans were never concentrated into racially homogenous locales. As Massey and Denton note, "Although blacks at times clustered on certain streets or blocks, they rarely comprised more than 30% of the residents of the immediate area; and these clusters typically were not spatially contiguous."[91] Furthermore, those with the economic means to improve their housing conditions could do so.

New transportation developments coupled with the demands of an increasingly industrialized economy allowed for the spatial fragmentation of cities into racially and socio-economically demarcated neighborhoods. With the prevalence of trains, automobiles, and the like, affluent whites at the turn of the twentieth century could begin to distance themselves from the tenement structures associated with industrial centers. Those with ample financial resources could reside in elite, racially homogenous neighborhoods far removed from the factories and the bustling working class which lived in close proximity to them.

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[90] Douglas S. Massey and Nancy A. Denton, *American Apartheid: Segregation and the Making of the Underclass* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1993), p. 31
[91] Ibid, p. 20

As daunting as white hostility may have been, this was not the only factor pushing African Americans towards greater isolation. Internal fissures within the black community also proved detrimental. Tensions between the African American working class and black elites, for example, were occasionally strained in the early twentieth century, particularly in those areas on the receiving end of the Great Migration.

To begin with, the motivations driving middle class African Americans to leave the south were often very different from working-class blacks. Whereas low income migrants tended to be interested in monetary betterment, those from the higher economic strata usually sought an enhanced social milieu. Often a desire for improved race relations was of primary consideration and financial concerns were of secondary importance.

For many in the black middle class, the North and the West were perceived as ideal. News editorials and word of mouth disseminated a picture of both Northern and Western states that was highly appealing and while blacks were aware that racism did exist, it was perceived as less virulent than the south. Integrated schools, for example, were available in California—something unthinkable in places like Georgia or Alabama. As a result, *the Chicago Defender* frequently urged African Americans to leave the South. "Every black man for the sake of his wife and daughters especially should leave even at financial sacrifice," one editorial suggested. "We know full well that would mean a depopulation of that section and if it were possible we would glory in its accomplishment."[92]

Additionally, Phillips notes that, "the role of black kin and friendship networks" were also important factors underlying migration, as well as the "experiences, and values of African

[92] *The Chicago Defender*. "Farewell Dixie." Chicago: Oct 7, 1916, p.12 http://pqasb.pqarchiver.com/chicagodefender/doc/493299279.html?FMT=ABS&FMTS=ABS:AI&type=historic&date=Oct+7%2C+1916&author=&pub=The+Chicago+Defender+%28Big+Weekend+Edition%29+%281905-1966%29&edition=&startpage=12&desc=Farewell%2C+Dixie+Land (accessed May 19, 2017).

American culture, such as self-reliance, independence from oppression, and taking care of kin." [93] A secure financial basis allowed for the integration of a wider range of concerns—or at any rate, the ability to act upon those concerns. Cultural and familial concerns, for example, acted as a powerful anchor even during times of economic stagnation. Even as wages fell during the 1920s, one African American migrant recalled, "This is when the South all came up here and it turned into a new world."[94]

These differing motivations coupled with an increase in migration occasionally led to strains on existing African American communities in both the North and the West. "As instances of violence and segregation rose after 1916," Philips writes "many longtime black residents correlated these increases with the growth of the African-American migrant population." [95] With a palpable shift in race relations, some African American elites began to blame the victims of this increased hostility and longed for the bygone days where second class citizenship was ostensibly more palatable. As a result, many of the black bourgeoisie openly shunned and criticized recent migrants for their supposedly atavistic tendencies.

Cleveland Gazette editor Harry C. Smith, for example, bemoaned "the loud-mouthed Negro" and linked migrants' behavior with the rising tide of anti-black attitudes.[96] African American working class culture, for example, was frequently demonized in the black press and attributed to the increase in white hostility. The boundaries and social norms established by whites

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[93] Kimberley L. Phillips, *Alabama North: African American Migrants, Community, and Working-Class Activism in Cleveland, 1915-45* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1999), p. 16

[94] Bertha Cowan, interview by Eleanor Jackson, Cleveland, January 16, 1987, transcript, St. James A.M.E. Oral Historical Project, Western Reserve Historical Society, Cleveland.

[95] Kimberley L. Phillips, *Alabama North: African American Migrants, Community, and Working-Class Activism in Cleveland, 1915-45* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1999), p. 163

[96] Smith, Harry C. "Doings of the Race"; *Cleveland Gazette*, Cleveland, Ohio, October 21, 1916. The Ohio Historical Society, Cleveland Gazette Archives. http://dbs.ohiohistory.org/africanam/html/nwspaper/gazette22.html (accessed May 15, 2017)

had been carefully codified over the course of many years, and it seems as if the new migrants threatened the relatively privileged position of the black middle class.

The increasing ossification and expansion of northern ghettos in the 1920s also brought about internal divisions within the African American community and long terms shifts in black leadership and tactics. Whereas earlier Northern African American business owners and professionals potentially catered to a mixed clientele of whites and blacks, ghetto entrenchment created a new elite which specifically served African Americans and benefited from the profits to be made from the dual economy of the ghetto. The frequently higher prices paid by blacks living inside the ghetto translated into a financial windfall for an African American cadre with a vested interest in maintaining the ghetto. Thus, during periods of early ghetto expansion, integrationist movements sometimes fell by the wayside towards those who sought a more accommodation-oriented stance.

Conclusion

By 1930 ghettos that would persist for decades to come in Northern cities had already established very clear boundaries. While these areas were not entirely racially homogenous, the Great Depression did much to increase the degree of segregation in these neighborhoods. Although economic prospects were bleak in Northern cities they were even grimmer in the South, prompting the continued immigration of southern blacks in search of work. With construction grinding to a halt due to the economic downturn and the eventual entry of the United States into war, housing shortages were critical. The result was an even greater concentration of African Americans confined into an already severely constrained housing market.

Whereas the expansion of the ghetto may have in the past relieved constriction to some extent, economic collapse had rendered this an impossibility during the Depression. Because there was nowhere else for whites on the periphery of the ghetto to move, they simply held their ground exacerbating ghetto housing shortages. In order to accommodate this influx of new African Americans, residences were subdivided and then subdivided again at an alarming and unsanitary rate. Properties often lapsed into states of duress, and yet owing to limited supply of housing, African Americans ended up paying more for these frequently substandard abodes.

Although economic prospects improved during the war, the housing situation did not. As war production swelled, the increasing demand for workers meant an even greater influx of southern African Americans into Northern cities. Nonetheless, the United States' gargantuan manufacturing capacity was directed entirely towards military ends and no new homes were built to accommodate this immense migration. Population densities grew in both white and black neighborhoods and would not be mitigated until the end of the war.

As many African Americans returned home from fighting the openly racist Nazi regime, some of these former soldiers drew comparisons between the Jewish ghettos they had recently liberated and the living conditions they experience in the United States. The term "ghetto", while used in a pejorative sense today, nonetheless maintains the capacity for this powerful critique. As chapter one has hopefully worked to demonstrate, the processes and factors underlying residential segregation were by no means accidental and were part of a concerted effort to cordon and isolate the black population in a highly intentional manner. While problematic, the word ghetto may prove useful in highlighting these processes of exclusion.

Nonetheless, to Gregory and Trotter's credit this history by no means covers the gamut of the African American experience and should be viewed within a broader context. As unpromising

as the future may have appeared, this early period also offered a number of success including the election of numerous blacks to state and federal positions. Additionally, World War II witnessed the birth of a nascent Civil Rights movement which will be discussed in the preceding chapters.

Chapter I Appendix

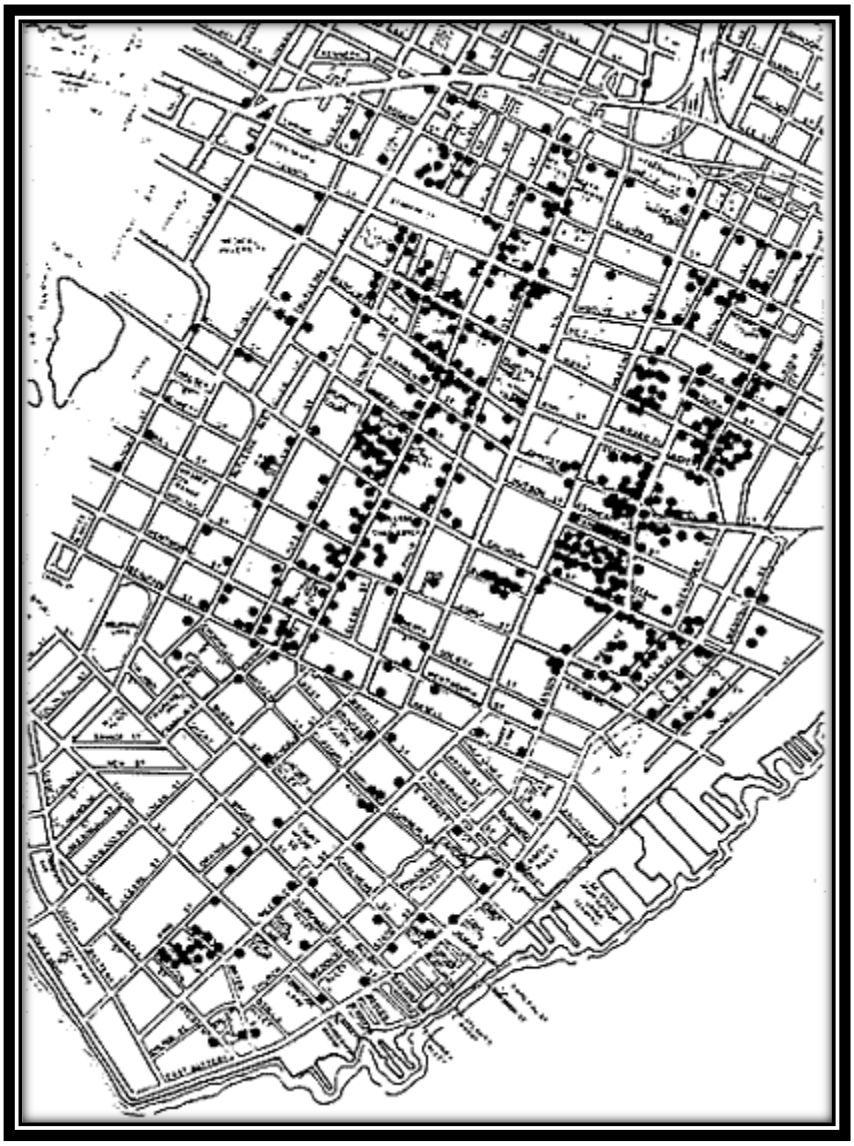

Figure One
Concentration of Free Blacks in Charleston During the Late Antebellum[97]

[97] http://www.sciway.net/hist/chicora/freepersons-3.html

Figure Two
Basketball Team, Paxico, Kansas[98]

[98] A studio portrait of six members of the Paxico Rural High School basketball team of Paxico, Kansas. The team included both white and black students. The date is between 1900 and 1919.
http://www.kansasmemory.org/item/209367

Chapter II:
Uneven Development and the Political Economy of the Ghetto
(1945-1973)

Introduction

This chapter seeks to document the innumerable factors which contributed to high instances of black poverty and urban segregation emblematic of what has been labeled "the ghetto." Beginning with mid twentieth century efforts to further entrench segregated neighborhoods, this chapter will analyze how uneven development in the postwar economy created unemployment which disproportionately affected African Americans while contributing to broader processes of economic exclusion. While economic production swelled in the aftermath of World War II, the benefits of this growth were not spread evenly. Even as much of the country benefited from a nearly three decade long economic expansion, some areas began an intractable slip into deindustrialization and poverty. African Americans bore the brunt of these painful dislocations.

As factories moved to the suburbs a dual housing market emerged in which blacks paid more for inferior housing while frequently being denied access to suburban amenities. Although whites were regularly granted access to cheap government-backed loans, African Americans were systematically denied these opportunities through exclusionary processes such as redlining and predatory lending practices like installment contracts. The impacts of these disparities, however, were more than economic. Migrating factories and declining property values created a shrinking tax base that resulted in less funding for schools and other cuts to necessary social services. Quality of life and opportunities were severely limited for African Americans left to rot in decaying inner-city urban cores.

However, deindustrialization is not the whole story, as even middle class African Americans who possessed the financial wherewithal to move were subject to many of the same processes of exclusion. Racially restrictive covenants, steering, and other methods also worked to undermine those who had the economic means to leave in search of safer streets and better prospects. Poverty was by no means a universal black condition and even the most successful African Americans were made to endure any number of daily ignominies.

Finally, this chapter also considers white responses to African American attempts to move to the suburbs and concludes by examining the consequences associated with periods of racial transition. The term "white flight", for example, conceals a range of responses—from violence to proactive political resistance—made by whites bitterly opposed to integrated neighborhoods.

To note Trotter's words of caution, however, a singular emphasis on events such as these may carry the risk of creating a "ghetto synthesis" in which "the main explanatory factor in African American life is the nature of black-white interaction, usually in its most hostile, caste-like variety."[99] Consequently, this chapter will also examine African American political successes such as a rise in the number of black officials elected on a local level. It is likewise worth pointing out that not all whites viewed African Americans with hostility and some worked hand-in-hand with their black neighbors in an attempt to create politically inclusive coalitions which in some cases successfully gained power in an era of national conservative ascendency.

Uneven Development in the Postwar Economy: North Eastern Cities, 1945-1973

Postwar ghetto formation can be linked in part to shifting patterns of industrialization and uneven development associated with the diffusion of capital.[100] This concept of uneven

[99] Joe William Trotter Jr., *Black Milwaukeee: The Making of an Industrial Proletariat*, 1915-45 (Urbana, Ill., 1985), p. 265

[100] Kevin Fox Gotham, *Race, Real Estate, and Uneven Development: The Kansas City Experience, 1900-2000* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2002), p. 7.

development refers to the tendency of countries to develop (industrially and economically) at an uneven pace—leading to both advanced and developing economies within a global capitalist network. The term also refers to internal dynamics manifest within capitalist countries themselves as capital moves in search of greater returns creating patterns of investment and disinvestment in which some spaces are privileged and others neglected.

Thus, while certain geographic segments or productive sectors of an economy may be vibrant others may exist in an immiserated, impoverished state—even in the most advanced and industrially dominant countries. Within these impecunious spaces, for example, the distribution of wealth, availability of commodities, and productive output is lacking in uniformity despite capitalism's supposedly universalizing drive towards efficiency and technological innovation. Gotham describes this process as it has unfolded in the U.S. by noting that, "inner cities lose population, wealth, and jobs while suburban areas experience economic development and population growth."[101]

As the manufacturing sector began a long often painful process of reorganization, productive facilities across the nation were frequently relocated in an effort to maximize profitability. In order to avoid progressive taxation and high wages, many corporations in the heavily unionized North closed factory doors and moved to the right-to-work South where a cheaper more compliant workforce translated into greater returns on investments. In lieu of this kind of long distance exodus, other businesses simply fled to newly developing suburbs which also offered the prospect of non-union labor and similar tax abatement programs as incentive. Municipal governments eager to attract new businesses and ensure long term expansion were all

[101] Ibid.

too willing to create heavily subsidized corporate sanctuaries which quickly began to deplete inner-city resources.

This flight of urban capital had seismic implications for working class African Americans. The potential for financial gain offered by factory work had been a heavy pull factor for many blacks during World War II, drawing a great number to inner-city enclaves located in close proximity to manufacturing centers. Relatively high paying employment offered the promise of improved living conditions as well as greater economic and social stability. For a fleeting period corporate profits and overall living standards seemed to grow in tandem and many predicted unprecedented, even unending prosperity, yet this quickly proved to be illusive for both African Americans and eventually the U.S. working class as a whole.

Whereas the postwar economy was a booming time for many in the labor force and corporate profits were at an all-time high, the exodus of industrial capital had an almost immediately catastrophic impact on those at the bottom of the economic chain. The rapid inner-city deindustrialization which marked the postwar period led to staggering job losses for urban African Americans and a profound financial hemorrhaging that worsened with prolonged bouts of stagnation beginning in 1973. "Poorly educated and unskilled black workers," Countryman explains, "were most vulnerable to these changes in the labor market."[102] The loss of these factory jobs left many working class African Americans impecunious and rendered access to employment precarious. While large scale economic restructuring proved to be a favorable development for many whites—especially those who were willing and able to relocate—many black workers "found themselves unable to take advantage of the growth in job opportunities in the suburbs."[103]

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[102] Matthew Countryman, *Up South: Civil Rights and Black Power in Philadelphia* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2006), p. 50
[103] Ibid, p. 53

In short, the postwar period was a time of remarkable growth from which many African Americans were largely excluded. Nonetheless, segregation into ghettos cannot be attributed solely to deindustrialization and a simple absence of income. While deindustrialization relegated many into a position of poverty—limiting access to adequate housing and creating circumstances which potentially increase the likelihood of crime—this was certainly not the case for all African Americans.

As a 1969 report by the Department of Health, Education and Welfare pointed out, in 1960 only 12 percent of whites with incomes levels above the poverty line resided in low income areas. In contrast, two-thirds of blacks with above poverty incomes nonetheless lived in high-poverty communities.[104] In other words, African American families could frequently afford decent homes in white neighborhoods, but were denied the ability to do so because of restrictive covenants, steering, credit discrimination, and other factors.

North Eastern Cities and the Dual Housing Market, 1945-1973

A persistent housing shortage coupled with the development of exclusionary suburbs was another catalyst for the growth of ghettos. Wartime and postwar migration massively expanded the black population within a political and economic milieu that failed to provide housing to accommodate the increase. Countryman notes that, "a major factor in black workers' near-total exclusion from the suburban industrial boom was the lack of suburban housing available to blacks."[105] One of the primary tools used to exclude African Americans were racial covenants

[104] U.S. Department of Health, Education and Welfare, *Toward a Social Report* (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1969), p. 37.
[105] Matthew Countryman, *Up South: Civil Rights and Black Power in Philadelphia* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2006), p. 50

which were employed by neighborhood associations to expressly forbid the selling of homes to African Americans, Italians, Jews and other immigrant groups.

Suburban contractors such as William Levitt, for example, created communities which catered to an all-white clientele and refused to sell to blacks. Again, even places like Seattle featured restrictive residential communities such as *Innis Arden*. According to a 1941 brochure for the community, "No person other than one of the white race shall be permitted to occupy any property in said addition..."[106] Unable to move to such locales, the prohibitively costly commute for inner-city African Americans made employment in newly built suburban factories untenable.[107]

These strict impositions against more viable forms of housing resulted in the circumscription of African Americans to particular urban enclaves. Even when Levitt's obvious and odious practices were outlawed, tactics that yielded analogous results persisted. Steering, for example, was a widely used procedure in which real-estate agents limited African Americans to viewing homes only in black neighborhoods. This could be accomplished in a non-confrontational manner wherein the issue of race was never explicitly addressed, but was obvious nonetheless.

These and other more subtle methods were incredibly effective in maintaining racially homogenous neighborhoods, if only because they left no paper trail to serve as unequivocal proof of discrimination. "This system of financial and social segregation," Winslow observes "concentrated some of the country's poorest and least educated citizens in some of America's worst neighborhoods at the same time that other government policies were systematically encouraging transfer of capital out of the cities."[108]

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[106] See figures 1-3.
[107] To say nothing of the lack of fair employment laws.
[108] George Winslow, *Capital Crimes* (New York: Monthly Review Press) 1999, p. 136

A burgeoning African American population in the North confined to a limited housing stock quickly led to a market in which demand far exceeded supply. Because African Americans were unable to rent or purchase accommodations in white areas this limited movement to already crowded ghettos. The net effect was an artificially created housing crisis which led to steeply inflated prices, thus paradoxically raising demand for the least desirable forms of housing and rendering even substandard homes prohibitively expensive.

Taylor, sums this up tersely writing, "The rise of this dual housing market did not reflect the 'free market' principles touted throughout the 20th century as a distinguishing feature of American exceptionalism and the motor of the American Dream; instead it demonstrated the existence of a racialized political economy where Blacks paid more for everything from housing to automobiles to groceries to eye glasses." [109] The proliferation of rent-to-own stores in many low-income areas today stands as a testament to these practices.

Parsimonious maintenance and the overcrowding of tenants for profit quickly led to the creation of slum-like environs which served to create and perpetuate white stereotypes about blacks. Many Chicagoans watching the deterioration that inevitably accompanied periods of racial transition blamed African Americans for the blight. As the head resident of the Chicago Commons settlement observed in 1945, the deplorable conditions caused by housing shortages "are producing such congestion… that it… is impossible for them to live decently. The inference [in the neighborhoods] is that that is the way Negroes like to live."[110]

Recent scholarship, however, reveals that the physical deterioration that supposedly became the hallmark of African American neighborhoods in fact began before the arrival of black

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[109] Keeanga-Yamahtta Taylor "Back Story to the Neoliberal Moment", *Souls: A Critical Journal of Black Politics, Culture, and Society*, Vol. 14, no. 3-4, (2012), p. 187

[110] Lea Taylor to Dorothy Rubel, June 16 1945, Metropolitan Housing [and Planning] Council Papers; U.S. Commission on Civil Rights, Hearings, p. 685.

families or periods of racial transition. As Seligman details, Chicago's West Side had already experienced profound deterioration and neglect prior to the end of World War II. Efforts by white residents to rebuild infrastructure and direct city funds to the area were largely unsuccessful. Despite the efforts of white residents to improve the crumbling West Side, Mayor Daley ultimately directed resources to other sections of the city. Thus, Seligman notes "By the time white West Siders had to decide whether to remain in homes next door to black neighbors, they had already spent many years losing battles to shore up their deteriorating environs."[111]

Even so, urban renewal programs were seldom geared to impact those most in need of aid. While offering lavish subsidies to wealthy investors in the futile hopes of sparking economic revival, the clearance of "blighted areas" displaced the poorest of citizens without providing viable housing or employment alternatives. Thus, neighborhood "revitalization" programs which demolished substandard dwellings exacerbated the existing housing shortage by displacing residents without constructing new homes to meet burgeoning demand. As Gordon describes it, "The intent and effect of local public policy… were to tilt the playing field dramatically in favor of those who were already winning." [112]

At its height, the housing crisis created a situation in which African Americans living on public assistance actually paid two to three times more than their white counterparts for housing that was frequently substandard. Health and safety issues were an obvious consequence including fires and a massive rat infestation which yielded 29 tons of rodents in 1940 alone.[113] The denouement of the postwar boom, however, ultimately led to an expansion of African American

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[111] Amanda I. Seligman, *Block by Block: Neighborhoods and Public Policy on Chicago's West Side* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2005), p. 5

[112] Colin Gordon, *Mapping Decline: St. Louis and the Fate of the American City* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2008), p. 13

[113] Metropolitan Housing [and Planning] Council, The 1942 Annual Report (Chicago: n.p., 1943), p. 8-9.

neighborhoods as greater purchasing power allowed blacks to move into formerly all-white enclaves at steeply inflated prices. Racial animosity subsequently proliferated, leading to frequently violent white resistance of black encroachment.

While racism was clearly one factor driving African American marginalization, economic imperatives were perhaps equally influential. As Satter has pointed out, "the reason for the decline of so many black urban neighborhoods into slums was not the absence of resources but rather the riches that could be drawn from the seemingly poor vein of aged and decrepit housing and hard-pressed but hardworking and ambitious African Americans… the problem was that the pickings were too easy, and the scale of profits too tempting, for many of the city's prominent citizens—attorneys, bankers, realtors, and politicians alike—to pass up."[114] Ghettos, while clearly a sign of economic impediment for some, proved to be an enormously profitable venture for others—particularly for those charging steeply inflated rents or speculators selling homes on contract.

White Flight and White Fights, 1945-1973

Conversely, racial hostility also frequently had an economic underpinning. A primary reason white homeowners fought so vehemently against community integration was the perception that it resulted in widespread depreciation. "Residents believed that racial change meant inevitable decline in socioeconomic status of neighborhoods," explains Orser. "Not only did the prospect of neighborhood decline threaten them socially; its corollary was that property values inevitably would fall."[115] Even the slightest hint of African American inclusion into a white neighborhood would often trigger endemic flights and panicked sales at below market prices. Stories of rapid

[114] Beryl Satter, *Family Properties: Race, Real Estate, and the Exploitation of Black Urban America* (New York: Henry Holt, 2009), p. 6
[115] W. Edward Orser, *Blockbusting in Baltimore: The Edmondson Village Story* (Lexington: University of Kentucky Press, 1994), p.101

home devaluation spread quickly and fueled the process. "News of even a few instances… where houses worth ten thousand dollars were reported to sell for thirty-five hundred dollars—spread like wildfire through the neighborhood and induced panic of major proportions because the threat seemed so clearly devastating to residents' financial well-being." [116]

The fearful descriptions of integration offered by white residents demonstrate the extent to which economic and racial fears frequently blended together in a complex, mutually reinforcing manner. Invariably, anecdotal accounts of African American families moving into a neighborhood evoked imagery of invasion or theft. "They came the back way," one Baltimore resident remarked, as if to suggest an unlawful or unexpected intrusion into some kind of personified cultural boundary—a social burglary of sorts laden with implications of thievery and violation.[117]

If not robbery, the imagery elicited was that of an invasion by parasitic vermin or perhaps a decomposing army of undead corpses, "It was a creeping thing from Monroe Street…" another recalled. "It kept crawling and crawling… it started to creep across the bridge, and they all moved in because everybody got so frightened." [118] Some of the comments could pass for dialogue in a B-rate horror film. One resident, for example, recalled thinking, "Oh my God, they're over the bridge now; our street will be next!"[119] The application of such fanatical hyperbole underscores the extent to which many suburban whites lived in total fear of blacks and clearly viewed them as both a social and economic threat.

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[116] Ibid, p. 106

[117] West, Marie. Interview by Lucy White, 8 December 1997. Transcript. East Baltimore Oral History, Langsdale Library. http://cdm16352.contentdm.oclc.org/cdm/singleitem/collection/p16352coll16/id/13/rec/10 (Accessed May 16, 2017)

[118] Kane, James. Interview by Talmadge Ford III, 12 December 1997. Transcript. East Baltimore Oral History, Langsdale Library. http://cdm16352.contentdm.oclc.org/cdm/singleitem/collection/p16352coll16/id/2/rec/4 (Accessed May 16, 2017).

[119] Ruff, William. Interview by Thomas Savage, 25 November 1997. Transcript. East Baltimore Oral History, Langsdale Library. http://cdm16352.contentdm.oclc.org/cdm/singleitem/collection/p16352coll16/id/2/rec/13 (Accessed May 16, 2017).

To be fair, not all whites flocked to the banner of segregation. Thompson, for example, suggests that the scholarly focus on white flight has myopically painted white responses to liberalism and the Civil Rights movement as uniformly hostile. Circumstances were, of course, more complicated. Inner-city America in the late 60s and early 70s was a contested space in which competing ideological visions vied for supremacy. With liberalism beginning to wane many still hoped for the triumph of Johnson's Great Society Programs or even radical revolutionary agendas. True, there were vast segments of the white population which embraced the law-and-order politics of a growing conservative movement, yet this was not the whole picture. Political coalitions between progressive whites, as well as working and middle class African Americans were formed—sometimes resulting in profound victories. These multi-ethnic alliances underscore a more persistent commitment to social justice programs than is often acknowledged.[120]

Nonetheless, many whites clearly *did* resist African American incursion. And a word of caution is warranted here as well. While the term "white flight" is frequently employed to describe the vast exodus of whites from the inner city, Seligman argues that the term is too narrow and does not capture the range of actions whites employed during periods of racial transition. Rather than simply leaving like a flock of migrating geese, whites instead actively fought against black incursion.

As Seligman describes it, "the term 'white flight' reduces residents' behavior to a single decision and omits the larger context in which they operated."[121] Some, for example, joined community associations determined to keep blacks at bay. Others organized protests and lobbied local officials for urban renewal programs. When all else failed thousands of whites turned to

[120] Heather Ann Thompson, *Whose Detroit? Politics, Labor, and Race in a Modern American City* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2001).
[121] Amanda I. Seligman, *Block by Block: Neighborhoods and Public Policy on Chicago's West Side* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2005), p. 213

violence and intimidation. In short, whites used an assortment of tactics which cannot be reduced to a simple mass exodus.

Blockbusting, North Eastern Cities 1945-1973

A few whites even profited from racial transition through a technique called "blockbusting." Orser describes this as "the intentional action of a real estate speculator to place an African American resident in a house on a previously all-white block for the express purpose of panicking whites into selling for the profit to be gained by buying low and selling high." [122] In order to facilitate racial transition in a neighborhood, realtors would purchase a few homes in a predominantly white area located on the periphery of the ghetto and then rent them out to African American families.

To hasten the process, investors could subdivide these homes in order to accommodate multiple tenants—the more odious the better in order to stoke white fears of neighborhood depreciation. Recent southern migrants desperate for housing were a common choice by these blockbusting agents because they were frequently impoverished and viewed as atavistic. Additionally, agents would occasionally expedite racial transition by hiring black women to push strollers through a white neighborhood in order to create the impression that racial transition was in process.

Once an African American moved into a neighborhood speculators would offer to buy houses quickly (and cheaply) from white owners fearful of impending social and economic depreciation. Although whites could and did employ violence or intimidation to drive back African American settlers, economics factors inevitably carried the day. As white residents began to flee

[122] W. Edward Orser, *Blockbusting in Baltimore: The Edmondson Village Story* (Lexington: University of Kentucky Press, 1994), p. 84

in great numbers, other white residents would be willing to sell at even lower prices in the interest of expediency—thus further depressing housing prices (for whites) in a kind of self-fulfilling prophecy. In effect racism was used as a tool of capital—often manifesting as a complex form of capital itself—whereby an investment in hyper-racialized motifs (recent southern black migrants or an African American woman pushing a pram) yielded an ideologically productive force that generated racist angst, white flight, and the eventual extraction of an inflated surplus from depressed housing prices.

Meanwhile, middle class blacks who were otherwise denied access to housing outside ghetto areas were now offered access at arbitrage prices. Blockbusters could make additional profits by acting as lenders to African Americans seeking to relocate. Denied access to credit by white banks, black families paid extortionate down payments and were often forced into high interest "installment contracts" leaving them at the mercy of blockbusting investors.

Hirsch clarifies this point as he explains, "Providing financing and new housing to a literally captive market, they sold dearly to blacks and made profits on both transactions."[123] Given the bleak housing options African Americans faced, those who could afford to pay these inflated prices (and even those who couldn't) made tremendous sacrifices and jumped at an opportunity for improved living conditions. One effect of this phenomenon was that the ghetto was itself internally segmented by class divisions with middle class African Americans frequently occupying the expanding periphery and the poorest blacks concentrated in the interior where housing was often in the worst condition.

Some would maintain that blockbusting was simply a legitimate business procedure that approached all parties as equal and autonomous participants—operating in a framework that

[123] Arnold R. Hirsch, *Making the Second Ghetto* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press), p. 32

provided needed services to both black and white clientele alike—consequentially rendering such practices beyond moral consideration. The argument is made, for example, that pioneering blockbusters were supplying underserved African Americans with pathways to desirable housing they were otherwise denied.

A few apologists for blockbusting might even contend that fleecing bigoted white suburbanites to provide African Americans with desirable housing was the fulfillment of a sardonic, yet nonetheless warranted form of justice. After all, had these individuals simply embraced or even begrudgingly accepted their new neighbors, they would have placed themselves in a far better economic and morally upright position. As Orser adroitly points out, "Blockbusting depended upon white bias, which—protestations to the contrary—often rejected settlement by any African American, regardless of class."[124]

While there is little to gain from lamenting the misfortunes of the prejudiced, it should be kept in mind that the detrimental effects of blockbusting were indiscriminately applied to racists and supporters of inclusion alike. Even liberal-minded whites who welcomed their new black neighbors with open arms were eventually forced to contend with declining property values and its associated economic consequences. In some cases this led to ruinous circumstances where more accepting whites eventually sold their homes for 30% of their original purchase price. These economic imperatives "led many to feel they had no choice but to relocate" regardless of their feelings towards African Americans.[125]

Additionally, working class whites were themselves sometimes victimized by the process of neighborhood transition. In the case of Chicago, "the space that was rented to one white family

[124] W. Edward Orser, *Blockbusting in Baltimore: The Edmondson Village Story* (Lexington: University of Kentucky Press, 1994), p. 89
[125] Ibid, p. 120

at $25 per month was able to house three black families at $100 a month." [126] Eviction was an inevitable consequence and impecunious whites were thereby thrown into an already turbulent and highly competitive housing market. With slumlords able to gain ample profit from subdividing apartment units and renting to blacks, whites of more modest income were often the casualties of economic imperatives which left them with nowhere to go.

Perhaps a more pressing point of consideration is the usually bleak economic conditions faced by African American homeowners and tenants affected by blockbusting. Subjected to above market prices, black homeowners often found they were strapped for cash and frequently struggled to make ends meet—despite their usually middle class incomes. Already underwater, the demands imposed by steep housing payments made it difficult to maintain these secondhand properties. Neighborhoods created by blockbusting faced the prospect of becoming dilapidated as homeowners were increasingly unable to make needed repairs—further contributing to declining housing prices and massive equity loss.

Renters in these integrated enclaves faced similar difficulties, notably substandard living conditions imposed by slumlords who viewed them as expendable commodities ripe for exploitation. "Sometimes, especially in sections with larger homes," Orser writes, "blockbusters might divide a newly acquired property into smaller units rented by people with lesser economic means than area homeowners, thereby profiting from the revenue as well as creating a situation of overcrowding that area whites viewed with alarm… houses once occupied by single families [were] bought by speculators, stuffed with poor people, and 'milked.'"[127]

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[126] Arnold R. Hirsch, *Making the Second Ghetto* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press), p.35
[127] W. Edward Orser, *Blockbusting in Baltimore: The Edmondson Village Story* (Lexington: University of Kentucky Press, 1994), p. 89

Although building codes did exist, they were enforced unevenly (or not at all) by agencies which were frequently understaffed. Furthermore it was often cheaper and more profitable for slumlords to simply pay court mandated fines than to repair the dilapidated housing they offered to disadvantaged tenants. In the case of Chicago, a mid-century investigation discovered that the city's worst slumlords were fined an average of only $32.06 for each complaint that was successfully prosecuted.[128] Correspondingly, according to a report by the *Chicago Commission on Human Relations,* savvy blockbusters could easily extract over $10,000 a year from a single unit.[129]

The discriminatory effects of these policies, however, vary with historical context. Thus, the lax enforcement of safety codes in the early years after World War II proved detrimental in that substandard housing created hazards which resulted in hundreds of preventable deaths. Paradoxically, however, the enforcement of these codes more recently has led to rampant gentrification and expulsion of African Americans from affordable housing.

Declining Revenues, Growing Demands: Spatial Dynamics of the Ghetto

Blockbusting also carried additional consequences beyond the immediate neighborhood it was practiced in. As more African Americans moved in, an equal proportion of whites moved out, thereby stimulating demand for segregated housing. Developers and mainline realtors could further bilk these disaffected whites and make still greater profits through the construction of new suburban communities far removed from the integrated neighborhoods. Business interests, Orser writes, "now stood to benefit by white relocations to existing housing in the outer ring and to new

[128] Smith, James. "Building Code Violations." *Chicago Defender,* April 1 1958, p. A 11
[129] Chicago Commission on Human Relations. 1962. *Selling and Buying Real Estate in a Racially Changing Neighborhood: A Survey*.

house sales in the exploding suburbs beyond."[130] The growth of these suburbs, which acted as a tax siphon that depleted municipal revenues, proved to be an additional detriment to both nascent and established African American communities.

Ironically, rather than insulating themselves from the effects of urban decay the evacuation of white suburbanites merely expanded the ghetto and exacerbated existing problems. The immediate result of this white exodus was a corresponding decline in property values that created substantial revenue losses for metropolitan governments. As Self points out, "gaps between the urban and suburban per capita revenue from municipal property taxes widened, creating vast inequalities that functioned to reproduce racial disadvantage—especially in key property tax-supported urban services like education and health and welfare."[131]

Municipal governments incapable of drawing funds from sparsely taxed suburban counties, nor able to depend upon the now absent manufacturing sectors of the World War II era faced epic revenue crises and were forced to rely upon the anemic property taxes generated by declining inner city neighborhoods. Programs for the poor and indigent effectively drew funding from people who were themselves poor and indigent. Those inside these urban slums would only grow more desperate and take equally desperate measures as a result.

Practices of exclusion, such as steering and restrictive covenants, transformed the suburbs into what Self describes as an "economic noose" which effectively entrapped African Americans within the confines of a decaying urban prison. The resulting resource and revenue extraction which accompanied the growth of the suburbs effectively constricted or choked the development of inner-cities much like a rope tightening around a neck. "Trapped in declining cities…" Self

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[130] W. Edward Orser, *Blockbusting in Baltimore: The Edmondson Village Story* (Lexington: University of Kentucky Press, 1994), p. 87

[131] Robert O. Self, *American Babylon: Race and the Struggle for Postwar Oakland* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2003), p. 269

writes, "poor African Americans required a greater share of public resources but received a lesser."[132] Barred from living near potentially gainful employment opportunities, African Americans were essentially cordoned into dying neighborhoods with struggling school systems and declining infrastructures dependent upon an emaciated tax base.

Undoubtedly compounding this problem was the fact that many African Americans, unemployed as a result of newly relocated manufacturing centers, were now desperately in need of public assistance. This further strained overly atrophied budgets. Already burdened by discrimination on all fronts and a shrinking inner-city economy, prospects were bleak leading to "pandemic levels of inner-city unemployment and social disorganization…"[133] Insolvency was a very real threat for some cities and in the case of Oakland the federal government was forced to acknowledge the city was on the verge of collapse.[134] The reverberations of these dire circumstances would frequently greet suburbanites in blaring headlines which stoked already existing fears and added to a prevailing sense of imminent terror that penetrated even the most lily-white suburbs. In 1968 a Harris poll, for example, revealed that 81% of respondents felt that there had been a breakdown of law and order in the country. A majority blamed "negroes who start riots" and "communists."[135]

Beyond the obvious effects of shrinking, overburdened, or non-existent public services, Gordon suggests that suburban accretion also created structural foundations which helped facilitate a nascent conservative movement. The spatial organization of the suburbs created a milieu which favored parochial interests, homogeneity, and a paranoiac desire to defend suburban privileges at

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[132] Ibid, p. 269
[133] Matthew Countryman, *Up South: Civil Rights and Black Power in Philadelphia* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2006), p. 52
[134] Donna Jean Murch, *Living for the City: Migration, Education, and the Rise of the Black Panther Party in Oakland, California* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2010), p. 17
[135] Harris, Louis. "The Harris Survey." *The Cincinnati Enquirer*, September 9, 1968. https://www.newspapers.com/newspage/104550134/ (Accessed May 17, 2017).

all costs. As Gordon describes it, the suburbs "helped to reshape modern American conservatism as a peculiar amalgam of complacency on the part of those now ensconced in suburbs and anxiety on the part of those (in the City or its inner suburbs) who were not there yet."[136] These individualistic pretensions manifested in national policies that left those who could not clamor aboard suburban life-boats to face an unforgiving torrent of deindustrialization and other market-driven calamities.

Redlining

An additional impediment to inner-city development lay in the practice of redlining—a state sanctioned process through which potentially enriching forms of capital were systematically withheld from urban black neighborhoods. Redlining refers to a discriminatory pattern of disinvestment and obstructive lending practices that acted as a barrier to home ownership among African Americans and other people of color.[137] Banks used this procedure to deny loans to homeowners and would-be homeowners who lived in neighborhoods that were deemed to be financially hazardous. This in turn resulted in neighborhood economic decline and a lack of access to basic commercial services such as banking and shopping.

The origin of the term stems from policies enacted by the Home Owners Loan Corporation (HOLC) and the Federal Housing Administration (FHA). As part of their official mandate, these agencies determined whether areas were fit for investment by banks, insurance companies, savings and loan associations, and other financial services companies. Zones which were to receive preferential lending status were marked in green shading and intermediate areas in blue shading. In

[136] Colin Gordon, *Mapping Decline: St. Louis and the Fate of the American City* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2008), p. 9

[137] Gaspaire, Brent. "Redlining." Blackpast.org. http://www.blackpast.org/aah/redlining-1937. (accessed May 17, 2017). That's right. I used myself as a source. Howzabout them apples?

contrast, areas that were deemed financially unsound, were physically demarcated with red shading on a map—hence the term "redlining."

Eschewing an objective economic appraisal, the decision to redline was frequently based on the area's racial composition rather than income levels. As a consequence, neighborhoods that were deemed unfit for investment were left underdeveloped or in disrepair. Attempts to improve these neighborhoods with even small-scale business ventures were commonly obstructed by financial institutions that continued to label the underwriting as too risky or simply rejected them outright. When existing businesses collapsed, new ones were not allowed to replace them, often leaving entire blocks empty and crumbling. Consequently African Americans in those neighborhoods were frequently limited in their access to banking, healthcare, retail merchandise, and even groceries. One notable exception to this was (and still is) the proliferation of liquor stores and bars which seemingly transcended the area's stigma of financial risk.

Redlining also led to an appreciable dearth of employment opportunities in these neighborhoods as prospective small scale employers were disinclined to locate there. Crime often followed in the wake of these declining neighborhoods making future investment less likely. These developments created a cycle which seemingly justified the initial redlining practices. Perhaps more troubling were the actions of those who had the capital and the means to improve these areas yet opted to do otherwise. Oftentimes real estate speculators who owned large tracts of land (sometimes containing enormous complexes) in these deteriorating enclaves simply chose to let them lay fallow and rot until land values rose high enough to warrant selling for a hefty profit.

Although redlining was institutionalized by the above mentioned federal agencies, it should be noted that the practice was first initiated on a smaller scale by elements of the private sector in the 1920s. In fact, the acceptance of these policies at a federal level was arguably the result of the

persistent lobbying efforts of these industries. Consequently, it is important to emphasize the role of private interests, particularly the banking and finance sectors, in establishing and perpetuating racial residential segregation.

While the state did work to buttress market forces, the machinations for residential segregation frequently originated within the realm of capital. Rather than viewing private industry as simply responding to racism, stereotypical assumptions about African Americans, or market based demands for exclusionary housing practices, the real estate interests frequently helped to create and encourage these problems. As Gotham describes it, "land developers and real estate elites used restrictive covenants to create a market for their commodity, to stimulate consumer demand for racially exclusive neighborhoods, and in effect, established the precept that the value of housing is dependent on the race of the occupants."[138]

While the practice of redlining was almost universal before 1968, the Civil Rights Act passed that year theoretically outlawed redlining. Nonetheless its impact was felt long after that date. In a series of Pulitzer Prize winning articles which appeared in 1988 under the title "The Color of Money," *Atlanta Journal-Constitution* reporter Bill Dedmen described how Atlanta banks still discriminated by the racial designation of neighborhoods. [139] His article illustrated how these banks were nearly twice as likely to lend to homeowners and prospective home buyers in low-income white neighborhoods as in affluent black areas.

Land Contracts and Predatory Lending in the Post War Period

[138] Kevin Fox Gotham, *Race, Real Estate, and Uneven Development: The Kansas City Experience, 1900-2000* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2002), p. 23
[139] Dedmen, Bill. "The Color of Money." *The Atlanta Journal-Constitution*, May 1, 1988. http://powerreporting.com/color/ (accessed May 17, 2017).

Because the FHA refused to insure mortgages in redlined areas African American families looking to purchase homes were forced into a seedy world of predatory lenders who coaxed blacks into precarious credit agreements. Tempted by the prospect of owning a home (and faced with no other viable financing options), African Americans frequently signed convoluted, legally binding contracts to purchase substandard housing at astronomically inflated prices.

Typically, these transactions involved massive down payments and hefty weekly installment plans in which the title would remain in the hands of the speculator, not the prospective buyer. Included in the provisions were onerous contractual stipulations in which defaulting on payments or obligatory fees resulted in a reversal of ownership. Fulfilling the prescribed demands was further complicated by the fact that it was sometimes difficult for the owners to determine how much their payments had accumulated. "Under the terms of most installment land contracts, the seller could repossess the house as easily as a used car salesman repossessed a delinquent automobile. With even one missed payment, a contract seller had the right to evict the 'homeowner' and resell the building to another customer."[140]

Thus, by only missing a single payment, ownership would revert to the white speculator and the process could begin anew. These repossessed properties could then be 'resold' to another equally desperate African American purchaser for even greater profits. As Hirsch notes, "At least one speculator retrieved more than 150% of his original investment in less than a year simply by evicting those who missed installments and collecting successive down payments."[141] According to Satter's father an estimated 85% of properties purchased by blacks were sold on contract

[140] Beryl Satter, *Family Properties: Race, Real Estate, and the Exploitation of Black Urban America* (New York: Henry Holt, 2009), p. 3
[141] Arnold R. Hirsch, *Making the Second Ghetto* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press), p.32

"robbing Chicago's black population of one million dollars a day."[142] Such mortgaging practices are by no means remnants of a bygone era. Similar predatory lending methods were at the root of the financial immolation of the housing market of 2007-08.

Whites on the other hand, as Tabb pointed out, were receiving FHA-backed mortgages for little money down and at a total cost which was frequently cheaper than paying rent. Because blacks could not benefit from FHA guaranteed credit, Tabb argues these policies amounted to discriminatory subsidies which benefited middle class whites while excluding the poor. Put bluntly: In 1962 "the federal government spent $820 million to subsidize housing for the poor (this total includes public housing, public assistance, and tax deductions). That same year at least an estimated $2.9 billion was spent subsidizing housing for middle-and upper-income families."[143]

An additional effect of contract sales was that the financial squeeze often resulted in an expansion of the ghetto. African Americans burdened by installment contracts faced economic constraints which created perverse financial incentives. In order to save their homes even well-meaning black "owners" were economically motivated to subdivide their property, cram in additional tenants, skip maintenance and do anything to afford payment and avoid default. Dilapidation and overcrowding were a likely result as homes fell into disrepair. Thus, African Americans were themselves often forced into the role of a middling slumlord.

Similarly, Satter's own father tried to be a responsible landlord and was met by financial devastation as a result. Consequently, these arrangements underscore the moral ambiguities and complexities of urban housing in which there were "slumlords who milked their properties and landlords who struggled to maintain them, willfully destructive tenants and also tenants whose

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[142] Beryl Satter, *Family Properties: Race, Real Estate, and the Exploitation of Black Urban America* (New York: Henry Holt, 2009), p. 4

[143] William K. Tabb, *The Political Economy of the Black Ghetto* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1970), p. 17

sincerest efforts at decent living were thwarted by their landlords' criminal neglect."[144] Neighborhoods under such conditions quickly deteriorated leading whites to believe that blacks were the cause of this blight rather than the invisible land contracts and discriminatory lending practices which provided the underlying structural basis for urban squalor.

Conclusion

The end of World War II brought about an unparalleled period of new home construction as production shifted towards consumer based goods and investors sought profit in the pent up demand for housing. With newfound purchasing power, wartime savings, and FHA home loan programs, middle class whites looking for cheap, spacious housing began an exodus from the inner-city. Meanwhile, southern African Americans continued to migrate to the North during the 1950s and 60s. The mechanization of agriculture effectively ended the sharecropping system, creating a push factor which was matched by a demand for laborers in the North. The outflow of whites to the suburbs, combined with a growing black population created conditions for ghetto expansion in the two decades following World War II.

Residential segregation had a profound impact upon African Americans that can still be felt to this day. Although many working class whites were also subjected to the effects of early postwar deindustrialization they were largely equipped with the tools to handle this transition. Blacks, on the other hand were unable to follow prospective employment opportunities in the growing suburbs, nor climb the residential hierarchy by leaving to better neighborhoods. Residential segregation for African Americans meant an inability to move to better schools, safer

[144] Beryl Satter, *Family Properties: Race, Real Estate, and the Exploitation of Black Urban America* (New York: Henry Holt, 2009), p. 11

streets, or cleaner neighborhoods and thus severely limited the prospects of those subject to its effects.

Residential segregation also created political isolation and a decreased ability to muster the social force necessary to demand improved services and public programs. In less segregated areas, coalitions between ethnic groups could be built resulting in greater, pluralistic demands for public programs and services. For African Americans living in segregated areas, calls for increased services were frequently met with opposition, because African Americans were the only group to benefit.

Many of the same techniques used to ensure neighborhood segregation persisted as the ghetto expanded during the postwar era. What differed, however, was the pace and extent of the expansion which was far greater than that of the prewar era. The continued prevalence of racism was of course a key factor in ghetto accretion with a resounding 84% of Americans in 1942 replying "yes" to the question "Do you think there should be a separate section in towns and cities for Negroes to live in?"[145] This was more than simply a passive acceptance of existing racial bifurcations as is evidenced by the fact that 61% of whites in a 1962 poll asserted that "white people have a right to keep blacks out of their neighborhoods if they want to, and blacks should respect that right."[146]

These attitudes extended towards realtors as well who, in many cases were even more committed to excluding blacks from white neighborhoods with some 91% of Chicago's Real Estate Board supporting the exclusion of blacks from white neighborhoods during the 1950s.[147] Though

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[145] Gordon W. Allport, *The Nature of Prejudice* (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday Anchor, 1958), p.74

[146] Howard Schuman, Charlotte Steeh, and Lawrence Bobo, Racial Attitudes in America: Trends and Interpretations (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1985), pp. 74-75.

[147] Rose Helper, Racial Policies and Practices of Real Estate Brokers (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1969), p. 339

these practices were outlawed in the latter half of the twentieth century, these trends would prove to be highly resilient in the decades to come.

Far from manifesting as some kind of accident or happenstance of historical circumstances, the postwar residential segregation of African Americans was the result of repeated and renewed efforts to maintain second class citizenship for the black population. The physical and social ostracization of African Americans was the result of a conscientious process—as something that was done with clear intentionality—for this reason the term ghetto and a framework of analysis centered upon its construction, while admittedly problematic, is still salient. With this in mind, the final chapter will endeavor to catalogue a concluding set of detrimental policy choices while attempting to avoid the pitfalls of a "ghetto synthesis."

Chapter II Appendix

Figure One
Innis Arden Brochure Cover[148]

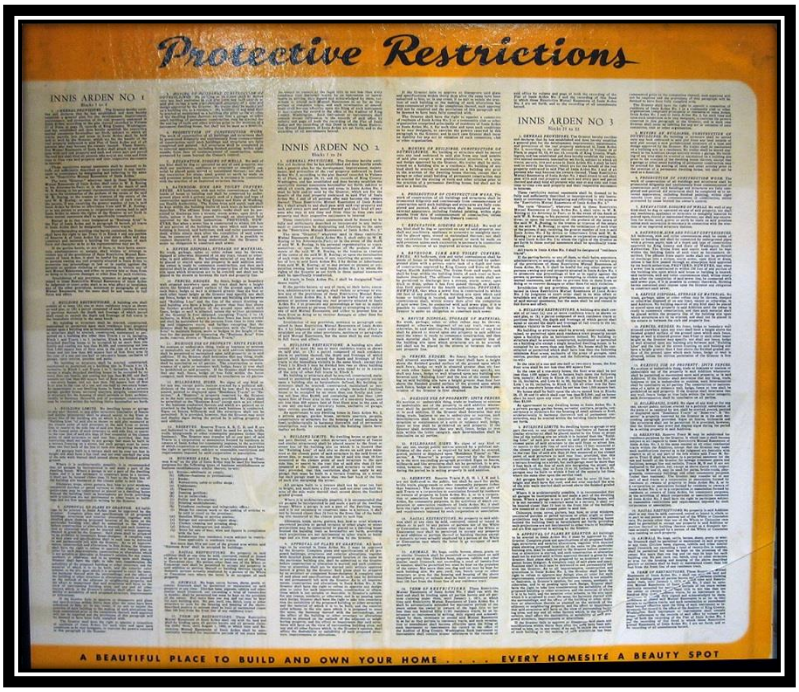
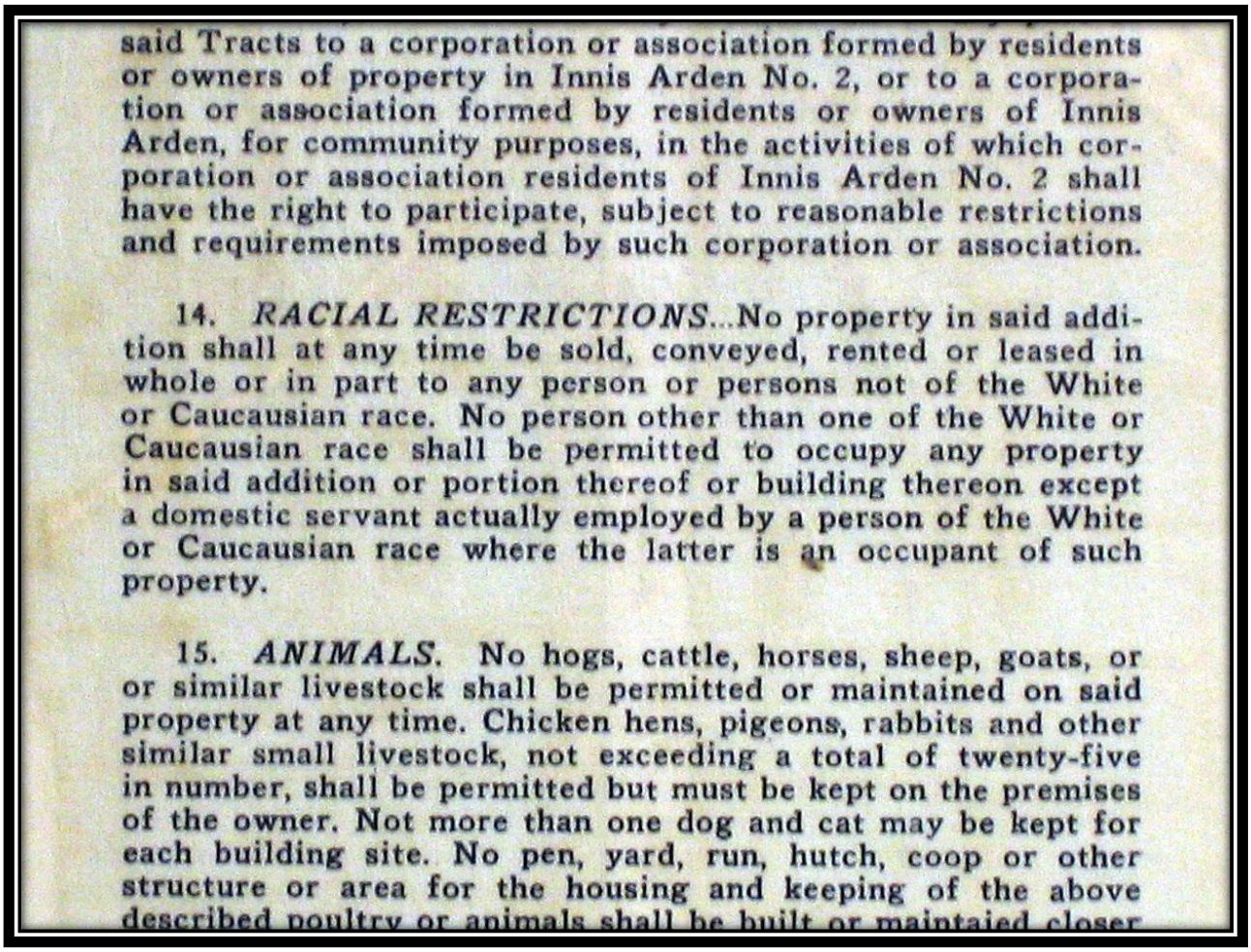


Figure Two
Innis Arden Brochure Details[149]

[148] Hugh Russell. Innis Arden Brochure. Seattle: 1941. http://depts.washington.edu/civilr/Innis%20Arden.htm (accessed May 19, 2017).
[149] Ibid.



said Tracts to a corporation or association formed by residents or owners of property in Innis Arden No. 2, or to a corporation or association formed by residents or owners of Innis Arden, for community purposes, in the activities of which corporation or association residents of Innis Arden No. 2 shall have the right to participate, subject to reasonable restrictions and requirements imposed by such corporation or association.

14. *RACIAL RESTRICTIONS*...No property in said addition shall at any time be sold, conveyed, rented or leased in whole or in part to any person or persons not of the White or Caucausian race. No person other than one of the White or Caucausian race shall be permitted to occupy any property in said addition or portion thereof or building thereon except a domestic servant actually employed by a person of the White or Caucausian race where the latter is an occupant of such property.

15. *ANIMALS.* No hogs, cattle, horses, sheep, goats, or or similar livestock shall be permitted or maintained on said property at any time. Chicken hens, pigeons, rabbits and other similar small livestock, not exceeding a total of twenty-five in number, shall be permitted but must be kept on the premises of the owner. Not more than one dog and cat may be kept for each building site. No pen, yard, run, hutch, coop or other structure or area for the housing and keeping of the above described poultry or animals shall be built or maintaied closer

Figure Three
Innis Arden Racial Restrictions[150]

[150] Ibid.

Chapter III:
The Politics of Exclusion from the Post War Era to the Present

(1945-Present)

Introduction

This chapter focuses on federal and local programs which bolstered processes of economic marginalization aimed at the African American populace. It begins by considering the effects of New Deal policies which benefited both low and middle income whites while frequently excluding huge segments of the black population. Easy access to FHA backed home loans, for example, supplied greater mobility to white families while programs such as Social Security provided financial stability for elderly whites. African American sharecroppers, on the other hand, were excluded from programs like this and were left to their own devices.

This is followed by an analysis of Cold War budgetary choices focused on projecting U.S. power, while granting concessions to the Civil Rights movement in order to mitigate negative perceptions abroad. The Civil Rights movement proved to be a crucial battlefield during the Cold War as the Soviets were quick to point out the mistreatment afforded to blacks in the United States. As the U.S. looked to shore up support for capitalism in developing countries in Africa, the federal government arguably took the demands of Civil Rights activists far more seriously. This proved to be a double edged sword, however, and many Southerners argued that greater rights for blacks would cave into the demands of communists.

The contradictions implicit in these practices are further explored with an examination of the impacts and limitations of liberal reform efforts as well as the various tactical differences manifest in the Civil Rights movement itself. While the Civil Rights movement did result in many tangible gains for middle class African Americans many in the working class (particularly those in low skilled occupations) were left behind. Paradoxically, advancement for middle class African

Americans in some ways proved detrimental for the urban underclass. It was not merely white flight which acted as a syphon on inner city resources, but also the eventual exodus of middle class African Americans to the suburbs.

Finally, the chapter ends with a look at the relatively recent migration of African Americans to the suburbs and the persistence of ghettoization. As will be shown, the continuation of policies which have resulted in the marginalization of vast segments of the black population necessitates a renewed debate over the continued viability of the term "ghetto." While the spatial dynamics of residential segregation have to some extent transformed into the horizontal expanses of suburban sprawl, there nonetheless remain a number of crucial continuities in the experiences of African American marginalization. While the appearance and location of the ghetto may have changed many of its aspects and the processes underlying its formation have remained the same.

Federal Policy and Public Housing, 1932-1980

In addition to dealing with individual acts of racism, African Americans also had to contend with the vast power of the federal government as it too seemingly worked towards a policy of ghettoization. Early federal housing programs, for example, explicitly reinforced segregation by maintaining existing racial compositions already circumscribed through de jure or de facto local mechanisms. "Harold Ickes, Roosevelt's secretary of the interior," Countryman observes, "decided that the racial composition of individual housing projects should be determined by the 'prevailing racial composition of the surrounding neighborhood' as part of his efforts to deflect the real estate industry's opposition to public housing." [151]

[151] Matthew Countryman, *Up South: Civil Rights and Black Power in Philadelphia* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2006), p. 75

Obstruction to integrated public housing by southern politicians and private interests was widespread and vociferous. As Winslow notes, "The national Association of Real Estate Boards, the National Association of Home Builders, and the U.S. Chamber of Commerce—labeled the limited public housing programs of the New Deal a Bolshevik plot."[152] In the subsequent effort to fight the plan "real estate, construction and business interests are believed to have spent $5 million (about $30 million in 1995 dollars) to shape federal housing legislation."[153] Although the 1949 Federal Housing Act reversed the federal government's overtly segregationist stance with a requirement that new projects be developed "on a nondiscriminatory and non-segregated basis, without regard to race, religion and national origin", the damage had already been done and in many instances the Public Housing Authority refused to change its racist policies despite the existence of the 1949 statute.[154]

While providing a measure of economic stability for tenants, the structurally exclusionary design of these projects suggests a public housing policy geared more towards containment than one genuinely interested in ending social inequality. Public housing programs for African Americans acted as a kind of Keynesian racial and economic policy wherein the worst excesses of free-market capitalism were mitigated while leaving basic operational structures intact. Rather than eliminating African American slums the effect was to redirect them into governmentally managed facilities isolated within a broader, hostile, and exclusionary milieu which was allowed to operate with impunity.

As the projects in northern cities such as Chicago towered to ever greater heights those who were able fled to the suburbs as part of a systemic pattern of white flight. Assisted by the

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[152] George Winslow, *Capital Crimes* (New York: Monthly Review Press) 1999, p. 133
[153] Ibid.
[154] "Provisions of the Housing Act of 1949." *Monthly Labor Review* 69, no. 2 (1949): 155-59. http://www.jstor.org/stable/41831843 (accessed May 17, 2017).

lending practices and support of the *Home Owners Loan Corporation* and *Federal Housing Administration*, government facilitation of this development was so significant that Hirsch contends "it virtually constituted a new form of de jure segregation."[155]

Even in the rare cases when the Public Housing Authority did make tentative movements towards desegregation, attempts to build projects in predominantly white neighborhoods were met with bitter opposition by homeowners who claimed such projects would depress housing values and create crime. As Countryman explains, "Backed by the Democratic Party councilmembers and ward leaders from the slated neighborhoods, the homeowners' groups were able to force the city to shift the proposed sites to areas of the city that were less white and therefore less controversial…"[156]

Quarantined to already decaying and predominantly African American sections of the city, this enforced isolation was also maintained at the behest of local business interests under the guise of economic revitalization. Building in politically fractured and disorganized inner-city slums was simply the sight of least resistance. "The real tragedy surrounding the emergence of the modern ghetto is not that it has been inherited," Hirsch notes, "but that it has been periodically renewed and strengthened."[157]

The shortcomings of the New Deal did not end with housing policies and this much lauded period of reform was unfortunately replete with policies designed to benefit whites, but leave African Americans to fend for themselves. Katznelson has even suggested these programs were an early form of white affirmative action. While a new American Middle class was fashioned

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[155] Arnold R. Hirsch, *Making the Second Ghetto: Race & Housing in Chicago 1940-1960* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1983), p. 255
[156] Matthew Countryman, *Up South: Civil Rights and Black Power in Philadelphia* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2006), p.78
[157] Arnold R. Hirsch, *Making the Second Ghetto: Race & Housing in Chicago 1940-1960* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1983), p. 9

during and after World War II, African Americans were deliberately excluded from this process by Southern Democratic politicians and complicit Northern allies. The outcomes of these policies, had a profound effect on contemporary racial inequalities.

Conservative critiques of affirmative action invariably fixate on mid-sixties Civil Rights reforms and consequently avoid the deeply discriminatory policy outcomes of earlier New and Fair Deal programs geared towards whites. Thus most discussions of affirmative action ignore the fact that public housing mandated segregation (and limited construction to heavily impoverished areas); home loan programs excluded African Americans; Social Security left out African American farmworkers; and local control of Veterans benefits made it all but impossible for blacks to receive access to programs they were entitled to. "At the very moment when a wide array of public policies was providing most white Americans with valuable tools to advance their social welfare," Katznelson notes, "—insure their old age, get good jobs, acquire economic security, build assets, and gain middle-class status—most black Americans were left behind or left out." [158]

As Sugrue points out, "Southern whites, whether die-hard Democrats or disaffected Dixiecrats, constrained New Deal liberalism from its inception."[159] The ability of this regional alliance to influence policy in such a drastic matter was itself based on African American disenfranchisement. With blacks effectively denied rights of citizenship in the South through spurious measures such as literacy tests and the like, white Democrats were granted a political monopoly. This political monopoly was buttressed by the further ignominy that while African Americans could not vote, they were still counted for purposes of representation, thus granting white Democrats an even greater share of power (much like the infamous 3/5ths compromise).

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[158] Ira Katznelson, *When Affirmative Action Was White* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 2005), p. 23

[159] Thomas J. Sugrue, ''Crabgrass-Roots Politics: Race, Rights, and the Reaction Against Liberalism in the Urban North, 1940–1964,'' *The Journal of American History* 82, no. 2 (1995).

Reinforced still more by the archaic apportionment of two senators per state regardless of size, the South possessed an insurmountable veto power which left it nearly indomitable.

Yet, it should be noted, the effects of this arrangement extended beyond negatively impacting African Americans and ultimately proved detrimental to white workers and the nascent labor movement. Labor union support of the Democratic Party eventually conflicted with its goals of organizing workers, particularly those in the South. Fears that organizing drives in Dixie would upend the racial order led to stiff resistance and virulent anti-labor legislation by a coalition of Republicans and Southern Democrats. Thus, measures such as the Taft-Hartley Act, which effectively broke the back of organized labor in the U.S. were supported by Southern politicians who (correctly) saw unions as potentially empowering African Americans and destabilizing the white monopoly on political power. In the short run, however, the primarily white northern workforce was able to benefit from earlier policies which had helped secure higher pay and benefits, while the southern black workforce was shortchanged yet again.

Cold War Priorities and the Civil Rights Movement

The shortcomings of U.S. policy were also evident in its postwar spending priorities. As Winslow notes, "instead of embarking on a crusade against poverty, racism, poor housing, rotting cities, dangerous working conditions, and dismal schools, the United States launched a very heated Cold War that would consume trillions of tax dollars over the next half-century".[160] While this emphasis on the projection of U.S. military power indicates a corresponding lack of interest in aiding impoverished African American communities, postwar federal policy did not completely disregard the existence of black poverty or social inequities. Yet, the attention directed towards

[160] George Winslow, *Capital Crimes* (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1999), p. 130

these problems were by no means altruistic and were, nonetheless, connected to Cold War concerns.

As the U.S. competed both ideologically and economically with the rise of global communism, American racism was a weak link in its putative commitment to freedom and democracy. These contradictions first became evident during World War II and the fight against the openly racist Nazi state. The U.S. in condemning Nazi atrocities often myopically overlooked its own, a point not lost upon the world or U.S. Civil Rights leaders.

Similarly, while criticizing Russia and China as totalitarian regimes, the U.S. exercised broadly repressive powers over its African American population that was on par with some of the worst political dictatorships—particularly in the South. The deprivation of basic human rights for a large segment of its population was an obvious contradiction which belied America's position as the leader of the free world. Dudziak notes that, "at a time when the United States hoped to reshape the postwar world in its own image, the international attention given to racial segregation was troublesome and embarrassing".[161]

The impacts of these policies were broadcast globally and often experienced personally as numerous foreign dignitaries were themselves subjected to subhuman treatment while visiting the United States. To this end, Civil Rights leaders used these contradictions to press for reforms by arguing that racism and discrimination hampered U.S. efforts in the Cold War. With emerging countries facing the choice of aligning with America or Russia, international opinion, therefore, became a factor in the formation of domestic policy.

Correspondingly, however, right-wing segregationists were also aware of the power of the Cold War to shape legislation and similarly used it to their own ends. If the threat of international

[161] Mary Dudziak, *Cold War Civil Rights: Race and the Image of American Democracy* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2002), p. 12

communism could be used to justify civil rights reforms it could also be used to combat them. Arguing that greater equity for African Americans would be tantamount to "caving in to the demands of communists" became an all-too effective component of conservative rhetoric.

Thus, criticism of America could result in one being labeled a subversive, often rendering civil rights groups cautious in their criticisms of U.S. policy. "Class-based inequality" or an analysis which linked economic and social disparity remained largely off the agenda of the civil rights movement because it "was a feature of capitalism, an economic system Americans were proud of."[162]

Conservative use of anti-communist rhetoric often stymied civil rights efforts to move beyond formal, legalistic reforms. This limited approach failed to address deeper structural issues which arguably persist until the present today. Nonetheless, foreign pressure generated by Cold War perception of racial tensions did press the federal government to take steps towards racial equality in order to make the government's claims about the superiority of capitalism viable.

Liberal Reform Efforts in the Post War Era

This is not to say all liberal politicians actively worked to undermine the interests of African Americans and yet, it would be an understatement to say attempts to help fell painfully short of their goals. Additionally, many liberals implicitly supported structural inequity by supplying an illusion of equality framed by ineffectual legal structures and protections. Occasionally given broad powers of regulation, liberal politicians balked at the prospect of confrontation and instead charted a course of conciliation if not outright collaboration with racist employers.

[162] Ibid, p. 252

The shortcomings of this approach are evident in the thoroughly unimpressive results of local, state, and federal attempts to curb discrimination inside the City of Brotherly Love. Between 1947 and 1951, for example, the Fair Employment Practices Commission in Philadelphia (FEPC) was bombarded with over 800 complaints of discrimination and found evidence to back these claims in nearly 250 instances.[163] Evidence at this early date would have constituted a clearly overt example of racism such as an employer openly admitting "I don't like black people" or posting in an employment advertisement that "blacks need not apply."

The fact that employers were so transparently discriminatory and made virtually no effort to conceal these practices speaks to their ubiquity, and yet in every single instance, the Fair Employment Practices Commission agreed to a negotiated settlement—frequently with the employer in question simply promising to follow ordinances in the future. Instead of enforcing the law, the FEPC essentially opted for voluntary compliance. One could readily make the case that a sterner course of action—such as a public hearing which culminated in stiff penalties—would have pressured other employers to make sweeping changes. It could be argued that by keeping matters private, the FEPC simply contributed to the perception that these practices were acceptable and would be tolerated.

Ironically, far from fixing the problem, the greatest impact of this kind of collaborationist approach was to actually improve the ability of offenders to conceal discriminatory hiring practices—as is evidenced by the fact that overt acts of racism became increasingly difficult to document. As Countryman explains, "the number of cases where the FEPC/CHR found probable cause of a violation fell from 118 in 1950 to 42 in 1954 and then to 7 in 1959." Ostensibly this

[163] Fair Employment Practices Commission, "Annual Report, 1951." Philadelphia, 1951. Fair Employment Practices Commission, *Philadelphia Municipal Archives.* http://www.phila.gov/phils/docs/inventor/textonly/archser/S148.htm#148.2 (accessed May 17, 2017).

should be a cause for celebration and proof positive of the efficacy of these policies. Nonetheless, what the decline in fact revealed was that "the city's employers had learned how to avoid blatant violations of the FEPC ordinance while not fully integrating their workforces."[164]

Instead of open hostility, prospective workers were greeted with veiled niceties and a more refined variant of discrimination. Black applicants would be tested, interviewed, and conducted through an empty hiring process wherein the end result was determined the moment the African American candidate walked in the door. Employers quickly learned that interviewees could be told they wouldn't get the position for a variety of putatively justifiable reasons.

These are by no means historic anomalies and recent studies have confirmed the persistence of similar discriminatory hiring practices—as well as more overt forms. A noteworthy 2003 study, for example, concluded white felons were more likely to be hired than were black applicants with no criminal records.[165] Similarly, a 2002 M.I.T. and University of Chicago study found that applicants "with a black sounding name" were 50% less likely to receive a call to an interview after submitting a resume which was on par or identical to a candidate with "a white sounding name."[166]

These impediments, undoubtedly commonplace, remain largely hidden from the public eye until they are occasionally brought to light by some diligent social scientist. Identifying the impact of this kind of systemic discrimination, however, can be even more problematic as employers have increasingly relied upon quantifiable, yet contextually isolated data to defend their hiring practices. Companies that utilize scientifically engineered aptitude tests to justify supposedly merit-based,

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[164] Matthew Countryman, Up South: Civil Rights and Black Power in Philadelphia (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2006), p. 61

[165] Pager, Devah. 2003. "The Mark of a Criminal Record." *American Journal of Sociology* 108(5):937-975.

[166] Bertrand, Marianne and Sendhil Mullainathan. "Are Emily and Greg More Employable Than Lakisha and Jamal? A Field Experiment On Labor Market Discrimination," *American Economic Review* 4 (2004): 991-1013.

colorblind employment policies may nonetheless conceal overriding realities of systemic discrimination. A fixation upon "equality of opportunity" which frequently ignores deeper structural problems encapsulates what was perhaps the single-greatest shortcoming of liberal attempts to combat racism.

In one notable example which occurred in 1955, the FEPC, refused to intervene on behalf of two African Americans who applied to an all-white ARCO facility in Virginia after it was disclosed that the two black applicants merely tested lower than other prospective white employees. A surface level treatment of the issue would find this to be a satisfactory outcome, however, as Countryman points out, "simple reliance on merit hiring in a labor market in which most white workers enjoyed a competitive advantage in educational background, skill training, and family and community networks made it nearly impossible to prove that a given company maintained racially discriminatory hiring policies…" Aptitude tests, while ostensibly objective, nonetheless conceal existing social and racial inequalities while incorrectly assuming a level playing field. By citing test scores which were devoid of any and all social context companies were able to "justify their failure to desegregate their workforces."[167] The result of "even-handed" attempts to regulate hiring practices was to obscure structural inequities and create the impression of a colorblind meritocracy.

Similar limitations were apparent in efforts to regulate blockbusting and other nefarious real estate methods where, again, policy efforts fell far short of the mark. Philadelphia's Commission on Human Relations (CHR) formed in the early 50s held almost "the ideal combination of legal authority, organization, funds and community support for an effective attack on racial and religious prejudice and discrimination" and yet ultimately the CHR used that power

[167] Matthew Countryman, *Up South: Civil Rights and Black Power in Philadelphia* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2006), p.63

in ways which were wholly ineffective.[168] While it is apparent that the CHR had a grasp on the overall processes involved in exploitative real estate methods, their approach signified a total disregard for the amoral imperatives of market forces. Instead, the organization attempted to simply educate those engaging in discriminatory real estate practices while going to great lengths to avoid taking punitive actions. This educational approach included flyers, voluntary seminars on the evils of blockbusting, and statistical data which explained how discriminatory methods hurt the very businesses that perpetuated them.

As noble as this endeavor may seem, there are several glaring problems with the underlying assumptions of this approach. First, as discussed, blockbusting and similar practices were carried out because they were incredibly profitable. Even if, for example, a few individual real estate agents could be reached on a personal level and made to see the error of their ways, those who persisted in unscrupulous practices would hold a financially competitive advantage over those who did not take this course. The unavoidable result of this disequilibrium would be financial enervation on the part of the moral parties and growth on the part of those less burdened by ethical considerations. On a long enough timeline the blockbusters would have the financial means to eliminate and/or subsume those operating on a moralistic basis.

Secondly, these education programs often operated under the naïve assumption that real estate agents were unaware their actions were harmful towards African Americans. Or that realtors would want to change upon learning about the deleterious effects of their practices. The fact that the real estate trade association balked at even the relatively minor reforms suggested by the CHR

[168] Ibid, p. 69.

(such as publishing a brochure on discriminatory home buying practices) underscored the need for aggressive regulation at the very least.[169]

That the FEPC and CHR largely failed in their appointed tasks was one of many factors which persuaded a significant portion of African Americans that the system was broken. Convinced of the bankruptcy liberalism, some began to look for other solutions. This is perhaps most apparent in the growth of radicalism among working class African Americans. As Orser explains, "both nationally and locally, frustration and conflict increasingly became the dominant note, as victories seemed more symbolic than real, and as deeper problems of discrimination, injustice, and economic disadvantage persisted."[170] The failure of liberal activists to achieve gains which effected deep structural inequalities eventually led to the formation of more radical organizations with a revolutionary agenda.

Nonetheless, this leftward shift was not a total departure and there were clearly tactical continuities with earlier movements. As Self points out, the first seven demands of the Black Panther Party's Ten Point Program, for example, "had been central to various Popular Front, labor, and liberal civil rights political platforms in the 1930s and 1940s."[171] Although the Black Panther Party is often characterized as exhibiting overzealous militancy there were many parallels between its strategies and earlier approaches of the Civil Rights Movement. This is particularly clear with the BPP emphasis on using law as a tool to advance African American interests. The Panthers regularly familiarized themselves with existing legislation and court decisions as a weapon against police brutality. "Openly carrying guns," Self writes, "party members also toted statute books and

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[169] Commission on Human Relations, "Annual Report, 1956." Philadelphia, 1956. Commission on Human Relations, *Philadelphia Municipal Archives.* http://www.phila.gov/phils/docs/inventor/textonly/archser/S148.htm#148.2 (accessed May 17, 2017).

[170] W. Edward Orser, *Blockbusting in Baltimore: The Edmondson Village Story* (Lexington: University of Kentucky Press, 1994), p. 139

[171] Robert O. Self, *American Babylon: Race and the Struggle for Postwar Oakland* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2003), p. 227

legal manuals in their Volkswagen Beetles and Ford Falcons, often reading the Constitution, citing court decisions, and enumerating rights for blacks detained by the police."[172]

Easily the most impressive legacy of the Black Panther Party was its practical revolutionary activity. The achievements of the BPP include an impressive array of social programs—some of which are still operative today—including free breakfast programs, medical clinics, grocery giveaways, free clothing and shoe distribution, free Ambulance networks, Liberation Schools, Research centers, and free sickle cell anemia testing. As former Seattle Panther Aaron Dixon notes, the Panther programs were aimed at "providing necessary assistance" to the most vulnerable elements of the population while "drawing attention to racial injustice."[173] Remarkably, the collective memory of these programs is almost wholly absent from mainstream discourse while far smaller acts of Panther violence are universally known.

Beyond providing basic necessities, the relatively small ranks of the Panthers stood as a powerful inspiration to many—proving that change was possible in a time where traditional tactics seemed to be failing. "They envisioned a reawakened ghetto," Self writes, "alive with possibilities, confident and assertive of a newfound capacity to shape the world." [174] Despite their eventual collapse, the Panthers remain a testament to the potential power of collective action and radical emancipatory politics.

Class Fissures in the Civil Rights Movement

[172] Ibid.
[173] "Aaron Dixon" interviewed by Janet Jones, Trevor Griffey, and Alex Morrow, *Seattle Black Panther Party History and Memory Project*, May 2 and July 13, 2005. http://depts.washington.edu/civilr/aaron_dixon.htm (accessed May 17, 2017).
[174] Robert O. Self, *American Babylon: Race and the Struggle for Postwar Oakland* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2003), p. 233

Obviously, not all African Americans shared the goals of the BPP, and the Civil Rights Movement was far from unified in its tactical approaches and aims. Many black elites, for example, coopted early social democratic programs in favor of pro-market policies which hurt some of the most vulnerable members of the black community and ultimately contributed to processes of ghettoization. This of course, does not absolve the role played by white elites and the federal government in shaping housing policy. Instead, as Smith points out, "it is equally important to examine the complicity of the African American elites, who represented blacks' housing interests, to determine whether their actions, directly or indirectly, obstructed blacks' access to adequate and affordable housing."[175]

For wealthy Civil Rights leaders, critiques of U.S. society often elided the problematic effects of capitalism. These black leaders frequently embraced a tacitly conservative ideology which, while acknowledging and combating the effects of racism nonetheless internalized many of the arguments proffered by their white bourgeois counterparts. Some Civil Rights elites, for example, blamed poverty on personal carelessness, character faults, and individual acts of irresponsibility. While recognizing and even bravely fighting against racism, they nonetheless expressed a belief that capitalism was at its core a meritocracy, albeit one twisted by stains of widespread and deeply entrenched bigotry. As a consequence, what was commonly advocated was not a fundamental retooling of the socio-economic structure of American society—a twofold assault upon capitalism and racism—but rather a simple assault on legalistic fetters that helped to perpetuate racism.

The goals of the Civil Rights movement were often articulated in terms of access to property and ownership, rather than earlier transformative social visions which called for more

[175] Preston H. Smith II, *Racial Democracy and the Black Metropolis: Housing Policy in Postwar Chicago* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2012), p. xv

egalitarian economic arrangements. "They articulated," Connolly writes, "a 'freedom dream'—ownership—that many still associate with the most ambitious forms of civil rights struggle."[176] Put simply, many African American elites believed that a politically equal playing field would redress the more glaring economic outcomes apparent in the black community. Advocating "open housing" policies, for example, in which African American workers would not be denied the legal right to purchase a home in a white neighborhood would remedy black confinement to urban ghettos. Correspondingly, a self-help movement worked to pool black capital in order to compete against or work on par with white owned businesses.

Yet, this focus on mere political empowerment left many African American leaders blind or indifferent to economic contradictions which had a profound impact on the black working class. Facing a limited supply of cheap housing and wages that could not keep abreast with the rising costs of homeownership, Smith contends that the failure of African American elites "to challenge the contradictions of labor and housing markets under U.S. postwar capitalism meant they could never adequately confront housing inequality for black working-class citizens." [177]

Perhaps more troubling was the fact that some black leaders avoided redistributive policies because they stood to benefit from economic inequality. Connolly, for example, asserts that black property owners frequently formed alliances with their white counterparts. Working in tandem and based on common class interests landlords of all races worked together to maintain the profitability of segregated neighborhoods and stymie efforts to improve the living conditions of African American tenants. "Separate, yet one," Connolly writes, "like the fingers of the hand, property owners' collaboration worked less as some kind of conspiracy than as a simple cohort of

[176] N.D.B. Connolly, *A World More Concrete: Real Estate and the Remaking of Jim Crow South Florida* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2014), p. 352
[177] Preston H. Smith II, *Racial Democracy and the Black Metropolis: Housing Policy in Postwar Chicago* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2012), p. xiv

entrepreneurs protecting shared interests from contrasting social positions."[178] Miami's premier African American Civil Rights matriarch, for example, was by all accounts a slumlord, who nonetheless scored a number of impressive Civil Rights victories over the course of her ninety-one years of life.

Suburbia and the Neoliberal Ghetto: The Late 1970s to the Present

The impacts of the class fissures present in the Civil Rights Movement were evident in the trajectory of black communities through the conservative ascendency of the 1980s and beyond. In the latter portion of the twentieth century working class African Americans experienced both continuities and changes—migrating to new locations while confronting familiar problems in the process. Wiese, for example, notes a movement of African Americans to the suburbs which he describes as "the next Great Migration."[179] So expansive, in fact, was this transition that census data from the close of the century placed fully 1/3rd of African Americans within a suburban setting.[180]

The recent suburban diaspora of African Americans is perhaps best explained as the spatial actualization of the imperatives of neoliberalism and its corollary ideology of colorblind racism. The troubles faced by black communities in the late twentieth century underscore a highly problematic feature of both liberalism and capitalism: namely an imperative to reduce everything to quantifiable market relations. The operant logic of these paradigms conceptualizes all conceivable phenomena within a binary calculus of costs and benefits. Consequently, essential

[178] N.D.B. Connolly, *A World More Concrete: Real Estate and the Remaking of Jim Crow South Florida* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2014), p. 321
[179] Andrew Wiese, *Places of Their Own: African American Suburbanization in the Twentieth Century* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2004), p. 255
[180] U.S. Census of Population and Housing: 2000, data posted on the website of the Lewis Mumford Center at the State Unversity of New York at Albany, http://mumford1.dyndns.org/cen2000/data.html--1990: 8.5 million; 2000: 11.9 million.

needs of society such as health care, education, and housing become objects of a sterile rationality of value, price, and profit. State efforts to alleviate distress or provide basic services are viewed as counterproductive (and even immoral); whereas human suffering is perversely transformed into a positive social force: that of incentive.

Under neoliberalism, even the state is subjected to the reductive logic of market rationality. Whereas earlier state models tended to advocate some form of economic regulation, this formula is reversed under neoliberal protocol. In other words, rather than a state which regulates the market, under neoliberalism you have market regulation of the state. The economy is used to gauge the efficacies of governmental policy and the market "enables us to falsify and verify governmental practice."[181]

As an example of this phenomenon, consider the manner in which GDP is used to assess the merit of federal programs. A large GDP (with no consideration of its distribution) is often uncritically touted as an indicator of successful government practices, while concomitantly detrimental environmental or social effects receive secondary, if any consideration. Similarly, a thriving stock market is thought to be a good overall indicator of the nation's health and stability (often despite the fact that many will still face pecuniary hardships).

With the Keynesian system that was dominant in the post war era, racism and uneven development were managed, shaped, and directed by the state. Under the neoliberal policies of the past four decades the management of uneven development and racism have become largely privatized with state intervention directed towards supporting the market. Whereas the Keynesian model of the ghetto allowed for state imposed cordoning of African Americans (supported by a minimal amount of social services used to maintain reserve army of labor), exclusionary processes

[181] Michel Foucault, *The Birth of Biopolitics* (New York: Picador, 2003), p. 32

are largely guided by market driven imperatives under neoliberalism. The result has been a new dispersion of African Americans away from inner city urban cores to the suburbs and beyond. Decentralized forms of discrimination and austerity programs driven by market rationality have encapsulated this new era of migration.

While the latter half of the twentieth century did provide significant advances for many in the black middle class, this new "great migration" to the suburbs was unfortunately marked by a degree of ambivalence similar to previous periods. Far from a universal triumph, Weise points out that "most black suburbanites in 1990 lived in older inner-ring suburbs, which exhibited a variety of fiscal shortcomings, such as high taxes, mediocre services, low-performing schools, commercial disinvestment, and anemic rates of property appreciation."[182] In light of these developments, it is worth considering if this African American migration indicated an unprecedented step towards social progress or merely the changing face of the ghetto.

Rather than witnessing widespread integration, Wiese notes that in the 1990s, "the majority of black suburbanites lived in racially segregated neighborhoods" and "the familiar stratification of metropolitan areas into white and black spaces… expanded… over a greater area."[183] In many respects African Americans looking for the American Dream of suburban homeownership were instead faced with an American nightmare—albeit one with slightly different scenery. Blacks moving into formerly all-white neighborhoods regularly confronted declining property values, instability, increased costs of maintenance, and declining services. These problems were exacerbated by the fact that many African Americans were subject to predatory lending practices that yielded financially devastating consequences.

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[182] Andrew Wiese, *Places of Their Own: African American Suburbanization in the Twentieth Century* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2004), p. 258
[183] Ibid, p. 258

As with earlier ventures into white neighborhoods, blacks looking to buy suburban homes faced the prospect of highly inflated housing prices and a market which was extremely resistant to sell. A 1970 report released by a Baltimore group called "the Activists" who examined this issue released a study examining the differential between the purchase and sale price of a home. The report concluded that the average markup in areas experiencing racial change "had been double" that of more racially stable areas (54 percent compared to 26 percent). [184] In some cases when other factors were considered the markup was as high as 80 percent.

This difference between the fair market value of a home and the exorbitant price paid by African Americans is often referred to as "the black tax." One result of this "black tax" was that it was considerably more common for African Americans to be part of duel income families than their white counterparts. In order to achieve economic stability in the suburbs, black families literally had to work twice as hard and do so in a milieu which limited their opportunities for employment. "New African American residents" to the suburbs writes Orser, "were less likely to be in professional, technical, and managerial capacities… [and] more likely to be manufacturing or transportation operatives, service workers, or laborers." [185] Thus, income levels for these families were often significantly lower than their white counterparts.

To make matters worse, middle class African Americans who had purchased these homes to escape the seedier elements of inner-city living were habitually confronted with unwelcomed surprises. As housing prices diminished after an initial period of artificially inflated prices, low-income residents were eventually able to buy access into these formerly exorbitant neighborhoods.

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[184] Activists, Inc. *Baltimore Under Siege: The Impact of Financing on the Baltimore Home Buyer (1960-1970)*. Text. Baltimore: University of Baltimore, 1971. Langsdale Library, Special Collections Department, BNI collection, series VI, box 1, folder 42.
http://cdm16352.contentdm.oclc.org/cdm/singleitem/collection/p16352coll6/id/24/rec/1

[185] W. Edward Orser, *Blockbusting in Baltimore: The Edmondson Village Story* (Lexington: University of Kentucky Press, 1994), p. 144

The socioeconomic character of these neighborhoods began to change allowing for an influx of indigent populations who brought with them all the problems associated with poverty.

Ironically, the early African American pioneers in these suburbs were settled with additional financial burdens that would prevent them from maintaining stability within the neighborhood. This created a seemingly bizarre paradox. Although by 1980 most African Americans within the suburbs owned their own homes (one of the hallmarks of the middle class) they were largely unable to leave and were essentially trapped by declining equity and factors associated with the "black tax." Housing values outside of the Baltimore suburb of Edmondson, for example, doubled, making it prohibitively expensive for residents to leave. If it was not already abundantly clear, by 1980 it was apparent that African Americans in declining suburbs like Edmondson were enduring far greater hardships than those whites who had fled.

Much as Self has noted with earlier periods of racial transition, white flight frequently brought a decline in various public and private services—an observation apparently confirmed by many suburban pioneers. As several Baltimore pioneers explained, this was certainly the case with the Edmonson Shopping center.

Once acknowledged as a landmark of stability and prosperity, the shopping center was marked by a period of degenerative ghettoization.[186] "During the 1970s and 1980s" writes Orser, "the decline and deterioration of the Edmondson Village Shopping Center became a symbol in popular perceptions for an increasingly negative image of the area as a whole."[187] Originating as a "heaven" for which many residents purchased "most everything" the shopping center slowly decayed into an unseemly thoroughfare for crime and vice. As one resident described, "They have a lot of ruffians up there; they have a lot of dope addicts; they have a little bit of everything; when

[186] See figures one and two.
[187] Ibid, p. 176

you come out of the bank, the younger people take your money—they do everything. People are scared to go up there."[188] Similar depictions abound, seeming to place Edmondson of the 1980s somewhere between a slum and suburb.

Prince George's County and the Paradox of Black Prosperity, 1990-Present

This is not to say that all African American suburbs deteriorated into lawless wastelands. Quite tellingly, however, those that flourished tended to be populated by some of the most affluent African Americans in the country. Even so, Andrew Wiese's study of Prince George's County in Maryland reveals that the wealthiest African American suburbs were not without their problems. There, prosperous black residents still faced some familiar challenges including a modern—yet abated—form of redlining.

As previously discussed, redlining generally occurred in predominantly black areas that were arbitrarily deemed unfit for investment. Tellingly, this problem arose in Prince George's County despite the existence of a markedly wealthy population. Not quite as detrimental as traditional forms of redlining, the single largest complaint made by residents was that there was an absence of high-end retail stores and fine-dining establishments. Consequently, it was commonplace to see BMWs parked at a Prince George's County McDonalds—mainly because fast food was the only available option despite the six and seven figure incomes of neighborhood inhabitants.

[188] DeVaugn, Myrtle. Interview by Michael Tranoff, 29 July 1979. Interview 127, transcript. Baltimore Neighborhood Heritage Project, University of Baltimore Archives
http://archives.ubalt.edu/burha/pdfs/R0019_BURHA_S10_B03_F046.pdf

As Wiese describes it, "Rising socioeconomic status and a booming black middle class, notwithstanding, white-owned retailers remained hesitant to invest money in the county."[189] A quick trip through the region today on Google Maps nonetheless reveals a landscape replete with stunning homes and well-kept lawns. That investors would avoid the area is baffling. In addition, basic services such as an ample number of banks or financial institutions, were also in short supply and "large parts of the county inside the Beltway displayed serious signs of commercial flight and disinvestment."[190] These problems are notable examples of the many affronts African American professionals have to endure in order to achieve the sense of middle class 'normalcy' enjoyed by white professionals as almost an afterthought.

In uniformly Caucasian neighborhoods, for example, white homogeneity is seldom considered or dwelled upon. In fact, racial consistency of this type is arguably interpreted by those living in the community as the absence of race. As a result, white residents are granted an anonymity that African Americans new to the area are denied. Even in the most liberal suburban enclaves, where acceptance may be offered to those of a similar class, many African American professionals complained of a sense of anomaly and tokenism. As one woman summarized the situation, "I don't want to be a novelty… I wanted a neighborhood where the kids would run toward me rather than away from me."[191]

This fact underlies one of the key differences which distinguish Prince George's County from other suburbs. Whereas white suburbs are historically a construct of an escapist pathology based on an ideology on exclusion, this middle class black suburb is at its core predicated on

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[189] Andrew Wiese, *Places of Their Own: African American Suburbanization in the Twentieth Century* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2004), p. 279

[190] Ibid.

[191] Dent, David J. "The New Black Suburbs (Magazine Desk)." *The New York Times Magazine* (1992): The New York Times Magazine, June 14, 1992. Web. http://www.liberatormagazine.com/community/showthread.php?tid=505

creating a sense of inclusion—of finding a community to be part of. "We always wanted to be in a community with a large number of black professionals and to feel part of that community…" one Prince George's County resident remarked.[192]

Middle class white parents frequently consider moving to suburbs as a way to shield their children from exposure to crime, drugs, and poverty because white suburbia has traditionally catered toward a psychology of fear and paranoia. The ontology of white suburbia is arguably predicated on the assumption that the world is filled with hostile undesirables who must be kept at bay. Thus, white suburban enclaves are to some extent is intrinsically exclusionary. In contrast, residents of Prince George's County seem to desire a space where one is wanted. Inhabitants, for example, frequently comment on building an experience of positive exposure—a place where their children could "know and socialize with black people who bust the negative stereotypes… There's a dentist on the block, a couple of lawyers, an airline pilot, a college professor, an entrepreneur… My daughter needs to be exposed to that."[193]

Conclusion

Certain trends in the early 1970s seemed to indicate that an end to ghetto segregation might have been in sight. African Americans, much like their white counterparts were beginning to leave the inner-city and move towards the suburbs, while simultaneously the pace of inner-city white flight decreased. Additionally, the northward migration trend of African Americans actually began to reverse with the South gaining a not insignificant number of black migrants between 1970 and 1980. Economically, the early 1970s also saw a decrease in black poverty, with 1973 then marking its lowest level in the history of the United States. By the end of the decade, however, many of

[192] Ibid.
[193] Ibid.

these trends had been reversed with record levels of poverty and unemployment for African Americans. While overall black-white segregation did decrease somewhat, this was by a paltry 4% in the North, and 6% in the South.[194] Thus, as a whole, segregated residential configurations largely persisted throughout most of the decade.

The long pattern of African Americans living in the inner-city surrounded by white suburbs persisted with little variation. By 1980, for example, only 23% of northern blacks lived in a suburban setting as compared with 71% of whites.[195] These statistics are somewhat misleading however, given the fact that in many cases these black "suburbs" were simply neighborhoods located outside city limits. For those instances in which the moniker of suburb was actually appropriate, these tended to be older, declining areas still located in close proximity to the central city. Facing an emaciated tax base, deteriorating revenues, and poor social services these suburbs tended to exhibit many of the same problems associated with traditional inner-city ghettos. Relatively higher rates of suburbanization in the south (33%) were due in part to a long standing tradition of African Americans living in the city periphery in order to avoid confrontation with whites.

Most importantly, it should be pointed out that while blacks clearly experienced a migration to the suburbs, suburbanization does not necessarily entail integration. In many cases it merely involved an expansion of segregated ghettos across city lines. As with older patterns of racial transition, an increased black presence often resulted in white flight and the development of a new black suburban neighborhood. While in the past the mere presence of one or two black families would almost inevitably begin a process of racial transition, during the 1970s this was not

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[194] Douglas S. Massey and Nancy A. Denton, *American Apartheid: Segregation and the Making of the Underclass* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1993), p. 64
[195] Ibid, p. 67

necessarily the case. Nonetheless, an analysis of census track data indicates whites continued to consistently avoid neighborhoods with large populations of African Americans or those neighborhoods with population trends moving in that direction.[196] The same is largely true today.

Although in some cases segregation and isolation levels within the suburbs were slightly lower than that found in the inner-city, they were nonetheless a far cry from integration. On average, 69.9% of African Americans living in northern suburbs in 1980 would have had to move to a different residence in order to obtain racial parity with whites.[197] For suburban areas in which black isolation and segregation levels were lower, this was almost inevitably due to a small African American population. Today, most major metropolitan areas still maintain segregation levels that hover between 50-70%.[198]

While segregation levels have decreased modestly in the past decade, the United States is far from an integrated country. Even as African Americans have expanded into suburban expanses in a way that was once unimaginable, the continued persistence of residential segregation and familiar patterns of exclusion suggests that usage of the term ghetto and an analytical framework built to that end may unfortunately remain prescient for quite some time.

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[196] Nancy A. Denton and Douglas S. Massey, "Patterns of Neighborhood Transition in a Multiethnic World," *Demography* 28 (1991): 41-64.
[197] Douglas S. Massey and Nancy A. Denton, "Suburbanization and Segregation in U.S. Metropolitan Areas," *American Journal of Sociology* 94 (1988): 602-604,610-12.
[198] http://www.censusscope.org/us/print_rank_dissimilarity_white_black.html.

Chapter III Appendix

Figure One
Edmondson Village Shopping Center Circa 1962[199]

[199] https://baltimoreheritage.org/redline/edmondson-village/#.WUMMmdIrKpo

Figure Two
Edmonson Village Shopping Center Today[200]

[200] https://www.flickr.com/photos/baltimore_retail/18200129492

Conclusion

The origin of this project stems from questions I've had since childhood. According to the FBI's *Preliminary Semiannual Uniform Crime Report*, my hometown of Tacoma is currently ranked as the 9th most dangerous city in the country.[201] Based on criminal data my community was rated worse than places like Detroit and Baltimore. In some ways this is surprising and probably an inaccurate appraisal. In other ways it's not. The city has long been plagued by high levels of unemployment, drug use, crime, and poverty. It is also home to the second largest set of public housing projects west of the Mississippi and they have faced their fair share of problems—as well as some notable triumphs. I went to elementary school in those projects and spent a good portion of my life living just a few blocks away from them. My high school was labeled a "dropout factory" in a 2007 *USA Today* article and was rated as one of the ten worst schools in the state.[202]

Growing up, I heard people describe certain neighborhoods in Tacoma as "the ghetto," and admittedly I accepted usage of the term uncritically—but I also had questions. While it would be a stretch to describe the city as being segregated on par with places like Chicago, its high poverty areas do contain a disproportionate number of people of color.[203] I was always curious why that was the case and wanted to know what dynamics were at play in the socio-economic composition of my neighborhood.

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[201] https://ucr.fbi.gov/crime-in-the-u.s/2016/preliminary-semiannual-uniform-crime-report-januaryjune-2016
[202] https://usatoday30.usatoday.com/news/education/2007-10-30-dropout-factories_n.htm
[203] According to Census data Tacoma is ranked as the 218th most segregated city in the country. http://www.censusscope.org/us/print_rank_dissimilarity_white_black.html. This ranking is due in part to a concerted effort made by city officials and members of the Tacoma Housing Authority to ensure that segregation would not take place.

At the close of this paper I feel as if I have a reasonable, if incomplete, understanding of a few of the problems I set out to comprehend. In contrast, I have only more questions about some of the others. With regards to explaining the notable degree of poverty and relative instances of segregation experienced by people of color in my city, I have some answers. Throughout the twentieth century there were numerous factors (almost too many to document) working throughout the United States to consign African Americans to an inferior socio-economic position. These forces simultaneously worked to isolate blacks from white neighborhoods.

In other words, the privation which exists today in many black communities was no accident. Poverty in low-income African American neighborhoods as well as the continued persistence of residential segregation across the U.S. is the result of conscious policy choices and an economic system which inherently produces inequality. In short, "ghettos" are not caused by individual shortcomings or an inability to thrive in the country's supposedly level and meritocratic playing field. Through public and private practices which led to the development of a dual housing market, redlining, racially restrictive covenants, and the like, African Americans were beset with a series of structural impediments which have born decidedly negative consequences.

Blacks living in segregated, low-income areas throughout the country face declining infrastructure, poor schools, a lack of transportation options, and a dearth of viable employment opportunities. Some of these problems are startlingly anachronistic. Both my hometown of Tacoma and Detroit, for example, have dealt with contaminated drinking water and the prospect of widespread lead-poisoning in children.[204] While my school district had the resources to provide bottled water to the effected children and the city was at least partially able to address these

[204] http://www.thenewstribune.com/news/local/education/article73952142.html

infrastructural deficiencies, other areas have not been so fortunate. The continued existence of problems such as these are nothing short of criminal.

What is perhaps more troubling is that these ailments have a long and sordid history. A cursory glance at our past shows things did not have to be this way. There were many opportunities to prevent the most glaring of these inequalities but unfortunately those in power chose to do otherwise. The U.S. now carries the ignominious distinction of simultaneously being the wealthiest and yet most unequal country in the industrialized world—a problem which is further compacted by flagrant racial inequities.[205] As an educator and would-be historian I feel as if I should have at least a basic understanding of the dynamics undergirding this disturbing paradox. This thesis hopefully speaks to this end.

With regards to the term "ghetto", on the other hand, I am still marked by ambivalence. Many take umbrage with the phrase for reasons which are very understandable. Nonetheless, the word does speak to processes of exclusion which are otherwise difficult to encapsulate in a single utterance. There is also a tremendous body of twentieth century scholarship which utilizes the phrase to press for a more just and equitable society. To end the practices described in this thesis, it will be helpful to draw upon this rich historiographical legacy. In other words, there are some solid reasons to continue employing this term.

Yet controversy still remains. Usage of this word even caused a stir during the 2016 primary. Bernie Sanders, for example, was resolutely condemned for using the term during the Democratic Debates. "When you're white, you don't know what it's like to be living in a ghetto."

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[205] The U.S. was rated as the most unequal country in the world by a 2015 Allianz report. The OECD's 2014 Gini Coefficient, on the other hand, places the U.S. as the third most unequal country in the world—right behind Mexico and Chile.
https://www.allianz.com/v_1443445123000/media/economic_research/publications/specials/en/agwr2015EN.pdf
http://www.oecd.org/social/income-distribution-database.htm

Sanders stated, "You don't know what it's like to be poor. You don't know what it's like to be hassled when you walk down the street or you get dragged out of a car."[206] Sanders was immediately excoriated and many imputed that the Senator believed all blacks live in ghettos. The gaffe was subsequently used to suggest that the candidate was out of touch on issues of race.

Despite Sanders ungainly usage of the word, he nonetheless acknowledged what many Americans and politicians cannot: The continuing persistence of black poverty and residential segregation. In general, the topic receives superficial treatment and proposals to address these problems through even mildly redistributive policies are frequently condemned. The irony surrounding the intense criticisms directed towards Sanders' ghetto comment is that his platform bears a striking resemblance to some of the core demands raised during the formative stages of the Civil Rights Movement. There are strong reasons to suggest that the actualization of the Senator's platform would do much to ameliorate the discords examined in this paper.

One of the most notable features of the 2016 Presidential Election, however, was the concerted effort made by a large number of liberal commentators to discredit Sander's relatively prosaic social democratic reforms. Instead of embracing anti-poverty programs as a potential tool to redress the widespread effects of systemic racism (arguably a former hallmark of the Democratic Party), these policies were paradoxically attacked and speciously derided as racist.

Sander's laser-like focus on the issue of wealth inequality, his repeated condemnation of the predatory actions of Wall Street, his continued insistence on a $15 an hour minimum wage and a single payer system were frequently criticized as not only unrealistic, but also myopic. Such a focus, it was claimed, pandered to working class white male voters at the expense of other voices.

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[206]http://www.cnn.com/videos/politics/2016/03/07/democratic-debate-flint-bernie-sanders-ghetto-racism-07.cnn/video/playlists/2016-democratic-presidential-debates/

A recent Salon article encapsulated this line of thinking by stating that Sanders, "can't stop chasing the great white male," and that "The Democratic Party is selling out women and all marginalized groups in favor of Bernie Sanders' dangerous myths."[207] Many commentators asserted that the Senator's platform eschewed a more expansive critique which addressed issues of race and gender in an "intersectional" fashion. By heavily focusing on issues of poverty and inequality, it was suggested that Sanders created a homogenizing (and implicitly Eurocentric) program that failed to sufficiently address the plight of women and people of color.[208] That fully 54% of African Americans, nearly 60% of Latinos, and almost half of all women would receive an immediate pay raise from the actualization of Sander's platform seems to make little difference to these critics.[209] Nor does the fact that there are currently 28 million people in the country without healthcare—the majority of whom the CDC indicates are low-income people of color.[210]

Nonetheless, there are reasons to at least consider the merit of arguments leveled at Sanders—and by proxy the connection between economic inequality and racism. As Weise's discussion of Prince George's County should make clear, wealth alone does not provide deliverance from racial dissonance. By citing the treatment accorded to Harvard's Louis Henry Gates who was arrested for entering his own home, many liberal pundits have (correctly) noted that racism cuts across class lines and effects those at both the bottom and the top of the economic chain. Even the most affluent African Americans can still be subjected to violence, hostility, and a host of innumerable daily indignities. As a result, some commentators suggest that programs

[207] http://www.salon.com/2017/04/24/bye-bye-bernie-the-self-appointed-captain-of-the-democratic-ship-needs-to-stop-chasing-the-great-white-male/
[208] My personal, favorite treasure trove of such commentary is Peter Daou's Twitter account.
[209] http://www.nelp.org/publication/growing-movement-15/
[210] Nonetheless, low to middle income whites still constitute the plurality of those without healthcare. https://www.cdc.gov/nchs/data/nhis/earlyrelease/earlyrelease201605.pdf

which attempt to redress the effects of racism by tackling issues of poverty are misguided. Single payer healthcare, the argument goes, will not end racism.

Fair enough. Yet eliminating the toxic effects of systemic bigotry will also require more than quiet introspection and a robust discussion of white privilege. Any effort to combat the deep-seeded injustices which cordon the most vulnerable segments of our population into destitute and almost uniformly segregated areas will necessitate widespread public support and a mass movement capable of compelling those in power to take immediate action. It will also require a policy approach which provides the economic means to transcend the crippling poverty that mars most of our major cities. Thus, some degree of redistributive policies will necessarily be part and parcel of any serious attempt to end the continued persistence of urban ghettoization.

Additionally, one should be cautious of arguments that suggest discriminatory actions taken against wealthy African Americans necessarily invalidates the cogency of a class-based analysis. As Marable and others have suggested, the racist language employed against even the wealthiest of blacks, is coded with symbolic motifs derived from pejorative assessments of class status. Similarly, the tropes which inform racial stereotypes stem from derogatory assumptions about working class culture and behavior. Presumptions of black criminality are one of the more odious and obvious manifestations of this phenomenon.

To put it another way, the language, invectives, and cultural motifs utilized to attack African Americans of all socio-economic backgrounds draw upon a cultural trove of disdainful stereotypes rooted in hostility towards the working class. When a wealthy person of color is subjected to racist diatribes, insults, or treatment, Marable and others have suggested they are

symbolically reduced to working class status (or perhaps a lumpen-esque position) and derided as such.[211]

A substantial portion of Smith's *Racial Democracy and the Black Metropolis* is devoted to an argument which suggests that any attempt to redress processes of ghettoization, must simultaneously address issues of race and class. While racism and its associated effects seems to endure during times of plenty, it undeniably proliferates during times of scarcity. This fact seems especially lost on commentators who struggle to comprehend the virulent spike in nationalism and overt acts of racism which have accompanied the election of Trump.

Faced with declining wages, a milieu of economic uncertainty, and the absence of either an effective analysis of the causes of this precariousness or a redistributive political program which aims to end it, many have taken solace in blaming those on the margins of society. People who have eaten their fill may still have room for hate, but those with empty stomachs seem more inclined to gorge on bigotry. While the establishment of policies or even a state which actually succeeds in eliminating economic inequality would by no means guarantee an end to racism—one thing seems equally certain: racism cannot be eradicated within a social or economic framework which produces scarcity and inequality.

An unequal distribution of resources inevitably creates struggle over those resources. Poverty is the mother of scapegoating and a society which seeks to end (or at the very least desires to mitigate) the effects of racism must work to eliminate the material conditions which give rise to its creation. While it may be tempting to assert that these tasks are best handled by politicians and political scientists, historians and educators committed to principles of social justice should also play a role in directing the country toward a more equitable future. For those interested in such an

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[211] Manning Marable, *How Capitalism Underdeveloped Black America* (Cambridge: South End Press, 1983). Marable's discussion unfolds in chapter 6, "Black Brahmins: The Underdevelopment of Black Political Leadership."

undertaking, our objective should be to provide accessible scholarship which clearly documents the causes and consequences of these problems.

Doing so may require a return to earlier paradigms of scholarship or the creation of something entirely new. It may also require a robust debate over extant terminology and a rethinking of the "ghetto synthesis." Keeping this in mind, this project attempted to catalog the combination of explicit and structural factors which created and still continue to create adversarial conditions African Americans and widespread residential segregation. An analysis of systemic oppression may require the use of an ugly word to describe similarly ugly circumstances.

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