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## The Impacts of Exclusionary Zoning Practices and Gentrification on Low-Income and Minority Populations in America's Inner Cities

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THE IMPACTS OF EXCLUSIONARY ZONING PRACTICES AND  
GENTRIFICATION ON LOW-INCOME AND MINORITY POPULATIONS IN  
AMERICA'S INNER CITIES

A Thesis

Submitted to the Graduate Faculty of the  
University of New Orleans  
in partial fulfillment of the  
requirements for the degree of

Master of Science  
in  
Urban Studies

by

Tanjanesia Alder Jackson

B.G.S., Southeastern Louisiana University, 2000

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## Abstract

This thesis will examine the effects of residential segregation, exclusionary zoning, and gentrification on low-income minorities in inner cities. The research will show the relationship between housing inequalities and institutional classism and racism. In addition, the research will examine the use of public policies and regulations that maintain the existing isolation and concentration of minorities and low-income families through disinvestment.



## Preface

What led me to write about residential segregation, exclusionary zoning, and gentrification as topics for this research were my life experiences. Through my experiences growing up in the City of New Orleans, I knew my black community was overwhelmed with social, political, economical, and educational problems, and many of the white communities in New Orleans did not experience these problems as heavily. My parents divorced when I was young, and I lived mainly with my grandmother in the Magnolia or C.J. Peete housing development while my mother worked 50 plus hours a week to support my sister and me. My mother wanted me to have the things that the other children that grew up in that environment did not. Though I grew up in an impoverished neighborhood, I had a life of privilege. I went a private school during the weekdays and went home on the weekends to my New Orleans East home. Though it was not easy, my mother worked hard, with no support from my dad, to pay monthly mortgage, utilities, and other bills, while paying private school tuitions for both my sister and me. My father lived off and on with my grandmother, but I never felt a parental bond to him because of the physical and emotional pain he put my mother through. As for my friends, they did not have the same opinions. My grandmother and my mother wanted to keep me sheltered from the young people in the housing development, in fear

that their deviance would rub off on me. But I wanted to be around children my age. So, I was allowed to play with some little girls that lived in my building and the building next to us. I did not have a sense of class when I was young, it did not occur to me until the latter adolescent years. I felt a connection to my friends in the housing development, we were like a family. In high school, I became awakened of all the social problems that existed for poor blacks and other minorities around the nation. I began to enlighten myself through self-study and thought-stimulating conferences that released me of my blindness. Through this, I was able to vividly see, how much I had been brainwashed into overlooking an important part of me, my history, the history of my people. I fell victim to materialism as a result of trying to fit into mainstream values. The magnet high school I went to was systematically incarcerating my mind. I felt imprisoned and held hostage by the indoctrination of internalization racism, sexism and classism that existed in myself, educational preparation and community. This became important to me, but I begin to slowly abandon my history and culture to assimilate into the mainstream to become accepted. After I graduated with my undergraduate degree, I began to see how I was prejudged by my sex, class status, and race. As I entered the graduate program, all these things became more apparent to me, and this forced me to have a greater understanding about issues that affected minorities globally. I began to recognize the internal oppression in my friends and family. We, as black people, are constantly trying to escape from ourselves or our blackness. Being black in America means being disadvantaged, and being white means having an advantage over the others. When I became conscious of these things, I became angry. I began to internalize the social ills that existed due to racism and classism against people of color, this realization brought

me into a great depression. I was able to feel the pain from the tribulations of others, as well as myself. External and internal ignorance kept me away from what was going on globally and why it was happening. These issues weighed heavily on my mind as well as my spirit. In order to release myself of such pain and suffering, I was lead to create my healing through telling my story through this thesis.

## Chapter 1

### *Introduction*

A common dynamic experienced by poor blacks living in America is a continuous cycle of marginalization and displacement as privileged groups use residential segregation, exclusionary zoning and gentrification to isolate blacks to a specific urban or suburban area. Color and class barriers remain major obstacles for blacks in housing and employment. Race and class privilege operate through public policies and strategies to protect the interests of affluent whites and prevent members of the “underclass” from attaining and retaining decent employment and housing.

Who are members of the “underclass”? Many affluent stakeholders point to the many social problems that exist in the underclass. However, when they speak of social problems that exist in the underclass, they often have poor blacks and Latinos in mind. The theory of the “underclass” evolved through legislative actions that support penalizing the poor for not contributing to the local, state, and federal tax bases, and for not upholding mainstream values. Mainstream media accounts of the underclass characterize it by high rates of poverty, crime, drug dealing, hustling, school dropouts, joblessness, as well as high rates of female-headed households, teenage pregnancy, out-of-wedlock births, and welfare use, a rootless population functioning outside mainstream values and institutions (Abramovitz and Withorn 1999, 160). The affluent most commonly

associate dysfunctional behaviors and practices that transpire in inner cities with low-income, usually minority neighborhoods. Some politicians, social service workers, governmental agencies, and the media deliberately prejudge all minorities—mainly blacks—based on stereotypes. Many academics attempt to correlate the analysis of the atypical actions observed in the underclass communities that are often common factors found in low-income, black communities. What causes are responsible for the self-destructive and lackadaisical behaviors that often exist in low-income minority communities?

The following research will discuss the underlying forces that bring about housing inequalities and uncover patterns of injustice affecting black people and low-income families. Secondly, the research will show how the affluent use zoning ordinances to exclude low-income black families from the suburbs. Finally, the research will reveal the exodus of white families from urban cities in earlier decades, as well as the exodus of poor black families who are pushed out of their neighborhoods due to gentrification. My research will examine measures that are used to prevent the impoverished from affecting prosperous families' quality of life while discussing various oppressive practices major stakeholders use to keep low-income minorities low-income. Furthermore, my research will discuss how institutional classism and racism maintain inequalities in housing and employment. Race and income are highly correlated and quite often minorities and the poor are the same people and therefore are the targets of racism and classism (Meyers 2002, 355).

I will address three particular inequalities within the housing sector. Chapter 1 will address the roots of residential segregation and how institutional classism and racism

lead to injustices sustained and enforced through governmental policies and regulations.

Chapter 2 will discuss in detail the effects of exclusionary zoning—tools used to keep minorities and low-income families out using legislative regulations and policies.

Chapter 3 will discuss inequalities that result from gentrification—the process by which a low-income neighborhood undergoes socio-economic change that forces low-income families out due to the constant rise in rental costs.

### *The Effect of Classism and Racism on Black People*

Class, or status, has and will always be a major segmenting force in America's society. Author Phillip Clay states in his writings that race is important, but class takes a greater precedence over race and racial issues (Clay 1979, 37). Clay asserts that segregation is not rooted in racial behaviors or attitudinal differences, but is related to characteristics and behaviors commonly connected with class (Clay 1979, 37). Class is of greater relevance than race, because class crosses all racial lines. Class issues affect every race and ethnic group and are a common factor shared by all who reside in America, where everyone is assigned a position on the social spectrum. Classism is defined as a systematic perpetration of practices that constitute a form of oppression through persistent inequalities of income, wealth, status, and social power and, like sexism or racism, is illustrated at the individual, institutional, and cultural levels (Adams 2000, 380).

Racism is defined as an intentional or unintentional misuse of power to isolate, separate, and exploit people based on ethnicity or race (Environmental Justice 2003).

Like Clay, William Julius Wilson (1987, 12) believes that the dynamic of class, more

than race, is linked to the creation of the underclass. Racism, however, is deeply rooted in the creation of the underclass and class is often used as a means to redirect the focus from racism. Wilson's analysis provides justification for many other social scientists to lessen the effects of how racism helped to deepen poverty. By rejecting the importance of race, social scientists made the theory of the underclass more creditable (Abramovitz and Withorn 1999, 162). Racism is what creates the majority of the inequalities for black people in America, not so much classism. Although class is certainly relevant, racism against black people is deeply implicated in all forms of oppression, including classism and sexism.

### *Black Residential Segregation Persists*

Black families have suffered a long history of forceful takings and removals. Africans were stolen from their African villages and communities, brought to America as slaves, and forced to labor for some European settlers who prospered through the horrific acts of slavery. Racism in American society served to maintain the division of the lower classes. Governing European settlers instituted this 'divide and conquer' theory to prevent the union of African slaves with European indentured servants in a mission to revolt against the ruling class or elite. The legacy of slavery continues to affect black people living in poverty. Institutional racism sustains the dominance of a particular group or class. According to Stokely Carmichael, racism is both individual and institutional:

Racism is both overt and covert. It takes two, closely related forms: individual whites acting against individual blacks, and acts by the total white community against the black community. We call these individual racism and institutional racism. The first consists of overt acts by individuals, which cause death, injury

or the violent destruction of property. This type can be reached by television cameras; it can frequently be observed in the process of commission. The second type is less overt, far more subtle, and less identifiable in destructive of human life. The second type originates in the operation of established and respected forces in the society, and thus receives far less public condemnation than the first type (Knowles and Prewitt 1969, 1).

Racism can be attributed only to those who have the power to cause suffering (Hacker 1992, 29). Historically in the U.S., those who held such power have been members of the Anglo-Saxon race, who are the primary leaders of the institutions that govern this country. Racism is not only prejudice, or beliefs and actions of individuals, but also a system that is comprised of cultural messages and institutional policies and practices. In the U.S., it is very apparent that the system works favorably to whites and disfavorably to most conquered minorities (Latinos, Native Americans, and blacks) (Tatum 2000, 80). Tatum defines cultural racism as cultural images and messages that affirm the assumed superiority of whites and the assumed inferiority of people of color (Tatum 2000, 79). Cultural racism is institutionalized through concealed barriers, such as hiring an underqualified white man for a job, and overlooking the qualified lesbian woman of color based on physical and sexual attributes. Unspoken actions, such as the example above, are one of the many measures privilege whites in many different institutions (employment, housing, consuming products and services, as well as other social, economical, political, and cultural resources), while reinforcing racism, classism, sexism, and homophobia. Social, financial, and political obstacles hinder the progress of black people and impede their ability to overcome racial discrimination. In addition, many of the personal attitudes of policymakers have been institutionalized. Institutional racial practices created the black ghetto and are partially responsible for the 'black



pathology' that exists in poor communities (Knowles and Prewitt 1969, 1). The theory of institutional racism justifies why blacks are overrepresented in the underclass (Massey 1993, 144). Massey and Denton assert the separation of blacks was achieved by a combination of racist attitudes, private behaviors, and institutional practices that disenfranchised blacks from urban housing markets and led to the creation of the ghetto (Massey and Denton 1993, 83). Institutional racism is deeply implicated in the residential concentration and isolation of blacks.

Historically, systemic institutions have deprived blacks of the educational preparation necessary for obtaining the high-paying jobs to advance themselves economically as many of their white counterparts have done. Author Andrew Hacker expounded on barriers encountered by blacks that hinder high-level achievements and success in America. Being "black" in America often denotes bearing the mark of slavery (Hacker 1992, 14). Moreover, William J. Wilson (1987, 61) points out that the concept of "culture of poverty" implies that fundamental values and attitudes of the black ghetto subculture have been internalized and thereby influence behavior. Some blacks continue to perceive themselves as subordinate to whites, by internalizing racial oppression and embracing a sense of unworthiness; at the same time, they are not given an opportunity to demonstrate their value to society (Hacker 1992, 14). No matter how much blacks attempt to assimilate into the European-derived culture, they will never be fully accepted by white people in America (Hacker 1992, 11).

According to Clay (1979), race remains possibly the single most conflict-ridden issue in American cities. Ubiquitous injustice has created segmenting features in the housing market, forcing prospective white homebuyers to base their views of

predominantly black neighborhoods on societal stereotypes and prejudgments. Many blacks are often too poor to afford new housing and even if somebody would sell to them. They are often consigned to the oldest and mostly densely built housing (Clay 1979, 37). In earlier years, financial institutions used discriminatory practices to systematically deny mortgages, loans, and other financial services to blacks in urban areas. Public and private housing and financial agencies made it close to impossible for blacks to buy a home, renovate their existing homes, or even start their own businesses in their neighborhood (Ladner 2001, 73). Residential segregation has concentrated blacks into underprivileged neighborhoods that are socially, educationally, politically, and economically depleted of the tools essential to sustain equal quality of life standards (Novek 2001). If important human rights are stripped away from poor black communities, the community members will lack optimistic views and lifestyles. Politicians, institutions, and other major stakeholders in America do not expect mainstream values to emerge from the people who populate the desolated black ghetto. The black ghetto contains an almost exclusive assortment of disadvantaged individuals and families who remain outside of the mainstream (Wilson 1987, 8). Although socioeconomic conditions for disenfranchised minorities may have improved overall, the institutionalized system of housing discrimination that perpetuated the ghetto as the enabling condition of black oppression is still intact (Massey and Denton 1993, 212). Consequently, the geographic and political isolation of the ghetto makes it easier for racists to act out their prejudices. In a divided, unjust society, blacks become easy targets for racist actions and policies (Massey and Denton 1993, 162).

Some may argue that other minorities experience residential discrimination as well, but none quite to the extent as the conquered minorities. While many ethnic groups have encountered housing discrimination, no group has experienced the sustained high level of residential segregation that has been imposed on blacks and Native Americans for hundreds of years (Massey and Denton 1993, 2). Judd argues that blacks can easily make a case for affirmative action in housing, not primarily because blacks historically suffered discrimination at the hands of realtors, developers, and banks, but because the federal government itself abetted in the creation of the present patterns of residential segregation and is therefore obliged to enact policies of equal force to reverse the effects of its earlier actions (Judd 1999, 149). Several experimental studies conducted by local fair housing agencies across the country showed realtors routinely discriminated against black couples who had identical economic profiles (education, income, and work experience) as white couples. The results of the study showed that realtors steer black couples towards areas of black concentration. According to Ransford (1977), discriminatory action stems from a consensus among realtors as to which areas are to remain all white, thus going beyond individual instances of discrimination and resulting in institutionalized housing discrimination (Ransford 1977, 37). Over several decades the implementation of local, state, and federal policies with the support of developers, realtors, and financial institutions has sustained racial and class oppression restricting residential and economic mobility among minorities and poor and low-income families and individuals.

## *Political Views on Black Poverty*

What can be done to reduce the over representation of blacks in the underclass? Perhaps, the underclass black neighborhoods could look to political leaders for assistance or a possible solution. The two major political partisan groups have different views on who is to blame for blacks being over represented in the underclass populations.

Conservatives blamed the existence of an underclass on unproductive values and behavioral traits, an absence of “normal” male-headed families, and an expanded welfare state. Liberals explained the behaviors as pragmatic, if irresponsible and destructive, adaptations to isolation, discrimination, and blocked opportunities, as well as to problems inherent in single-parent families. But many of the 1990s liberals and conservatives agreed that the underclass was not merely poor, disorganized, and marginal, but also deficient and deviant (Abramovitz and Withorn 1999, 160).

Accountability is very important. People must recognize that the policymakers and major stakeholders must take responsibility for playing a major role in the implementation of classist and racist legislation, just as some blacks need to take responsibility for their lackadaisical, reckless, risky behaviors that lead to self-inflicted immobility, incarceration or even death. Talk show host Tony Brown explains how the Democratic Party has deceived blacks into embracing an imaginary role for government, that of serving its citizens and a foolish perception that a political party of white majority leadership will solve black people’s problems (Smith 1999, 270). Though the fight for black equality and power was a grueling and long struggle to acquire some access to social, educational, political, and economical gateways, the black race cannot make a claim to be truly free and equal to whites in America. No one can be truly be free so long as they look to others for their freedom (Smith 1999, 269).

In an article in the *American Legacy Magazine*, Lynn Morrissey suggests that some blacks too often suffer from a malady she identifies as the Immediate Gratification

Syndrome (IGS) (Morrissey 2004, 56). The origin of IGS may lie in the fact that blacks are the descendants of Africans who were enslaved. African slaves, after all, had no control over their present, let alone their destiny, because of the belief that nothing is guaranteed tomorrow. Some black people remain bound by psychological chains that usually lead to financial ruin. Psychological bondage deters blacks in many ways; for example, unyielding behaviors are indoctrinated into the youth and passed on from one generation to the next. Andrew Hacker suggests that from the slavery period to the present day, the nation has never sufficiently accepted black Americans as full citizens. White America often suggests that blacks should put aside their own culture so they can be absorbed into the dominant stream (Hacker 1992, 23). However, one must first understand the social construct that leads to the extreme problems that exist in the black ghetto, before seeking an immediate resolution through public policies which have over centuries, justified the imposition of inequalities.

From the conservative perspective, black members of the underclass lack a work ethic, ambition, and a sense of self-reliance, and as a result, created its own desolation. From the liberal perspective, words that may be stigmatizing to ghetto residents, either because of the fear of providing fuel for racist arguments or the concern of being charged with racism or blaming the victim, are avoided in describing any behavior of the black underclass (Wilson 1987, 6). Wilson refers to the constant blaming and stigmatizing of ghetto residents as contemporary racism, which he defines as attitudes and behaviors typical of many whites who make a conscious, willful effort to systemically refuse to give blacks equal opportunities or accept them as equal human beings (Wilson 1987, 10).

Both political parties have constantly blamed minorities and low-income groups for complacency with substandard living conditions and low-wage jobs that prevent them from attaining decent housing. Many politicians consider the cause of black poverty is a lack of motivation, education and employment. However, political leaders fail to take accountability for the social and economic isolation caused by racial and ethnic oppression, effectively denying minorities access to valuable resources they need to overcome poverty.

For example, in order to acquire living-wage jobs, an applicant must have sufficient educational preparation and job training. But school board members and politicians undermine these essential elements when they cut back or steal funds earmarked for public education, funds intended to prepare minority students for college and better jobs.

In actuality, there are not enough living-wage jobs for the poor in the U.S. With major businesses and corporations going out of business or relocating to the suburbs or abroad, more poor people face unemployment or underemployment. The jobs remaining in impoverished communities are often menial jobs with low wages. Low-wage jobs make it close to impossible for poor parents to provide quality housing for their families, in addition to paying utilities and other bills, buying food, and clothes. According to Meyers:

In 1999, the average cost of renting a house was \$580 per month. Over fourteen million U.S. households spend more than half their income on housing. Three out of ten households have trouble affording their housing. Over nine million households are in living situations classified as overcrowded or physically inadequate. Households with one person employed full-time at minimum wage cannot afford to rent a one-bedroom apartment anywhere in the U.S. There is a severe housing shortage among the lowest wage earners, where the demand exceeds the supply by two million (Meyers 2002, 355).

Even after slavery, Jim Crow laws, and Separate but Equal laws in the south, blacks in America still face many of the same obstacles as before. Although many blacks have seen their life chances improve, the black population remains largely within underclass communities. [Table 1.1] The present policies continue to maintain a permanent division of America into two societies: one mostly underprivileged, located in the urban cities and the other, prosperous, located in the suburbs and in outer-lying areas (Babcock and Bosselman 1973, 49). Disproportionately, whites live in the suburbs and minorities are consigned to the inner-city. Thirty years ago, the Kerner Commission reported on big-city riots of the 1960s, and focused as well on the patterns of urban disinvestment and white flight to the suburbs that were creating “separate and unequal” societies. Race, space, and class defined the social divisions, and perceptions of the old urban crisis were colored by the woes of a handful of places that came to symbolize the decay of cities (HUD 1999). *The Kerner Report* suggests that the nation has yet to embrace metropolitan explanations for inequality and regional solutions to it (HUD 1999). [Table 1.2] The War on the Poor continues.

### *The Quest for Class Segregation By the Middle Class*

Throughout U.S. history, the wealthy have sought to separate themselves from the poor. Jews, Italians, Poles, and some Mexicans, Asians, blacks and Native Americans have all sought to obtain better housing in neighborhoods not dominated by their own ethnic groups as their levels of education, income, and occupational statuses have risen (Massey and Denton 1993, 45). Middle-class American culture generally idealizes the values of self-reliance, hard work, sobriety, and sacrifice. Adherence to these principles

is widely believed to bring financial advancement in society (Massey and Denton 1993, 166). Most people would rather not live among the impoverished. The affluent tend to surround themselves with others of similar backgrounds and economic status, leaving impoverished minorities alienated and out of the mainstream. The social isolation imposed on blacks by systematic residential segregation ensures their economic isolation as well (Massey and Denton 1993, 166). Race and class are highly correlated. Minorities and the poor are often the same people, making them victims of both racism and classism (Meyers 2002, 356). Obvious patterns of disinvestment and racial segregation, hallmarks of the urban crisis the Kerner Commission highlighted 30 years ago, continues to define America's cities and metropolitan regions (HUD 1999).

Economic and social isolation influences the next generation of nonproductive residents who turn to a life of crime to fulfill their appetite for wealth. The generational crisis stems from the minority poor not recognizing the difference in the life chances of fortunate and less fortunate individuals (Babcock and Bosselman 1973, 49). Impoverished youth will presumably develop into impoverished adults. Through deficient educational training and facilities, insufficient living-wage employment and lack of self-knowledge and awareness of systematic factors that sustain poverty, the cycle of poverty is preserved from one generation to the next. Not recognizing or acknowledging the obstacles constructed by the elite to impede the upward progression of minorities and low-income groups, minority youth and young adults often feel useless, powerless and devalue the life of themselves as well as others.



### *Emotional and mental endurance, the human side of segregation*

The experience of the poor black family is one like no other. The black race has been prejudged by society in regards to job opportunities, housing, education, and lifestyle before it is given a chance to demonstrate otherwise. Racial oppression and discrimination are and have always been detrimental to people of color. Psychological scars convince them that this horrific condition is a test of God's will or the "this-is-how-we-are-supposed-to-live mentality." Many black families get into a comfort zone and choose to live with it, instead of challenging oppressive conditions that maintains their depression and anger.

Why have some settled for this, when many others fought against institutionalized racism, by putting pressure on local, state, and federal governments? Maybe some blacks that know of the injustices that are experienced by black people are afraid to stand up against these oppressive forces, because some have observed that the heroes and heroines who stood up for the human rights of their people were assassinated. Black people have endured many physical, social, mental, and emotional trials and tribulations and still manage to survive. Perhaps this may be credited to the pride the black elders took in their heritage and history that helped them survive slavery and the subsequent discrimination that has plagued and continues to plague this race for hundreds of years (Hacker 1992, 23).

### *Federal Discrimination*

The federal government clearly aided in the decline of major urban cities across the country. Major cities suffered a loss in revenues in the 1960s as a result of federal

loan restrictions discouraging whites from moving to inner cities, isolating poor minorities in inner cities, and reestablishing the economic tax base in the suburbs (Knowles and Prewitt 1969, 140). In addition, the Federal Housing Administration (FHA) favored racially homogenous neighborhoods and refused to provide mortgage insurance for racially integrated housing (Knowles and Prewitt 1969, 27). The discriminatory policies of the FHA, which extend over the postwar, race-based suburbanization movement is the main culprit behind racial segregation (Taylor and Hill 2000, 51). The beginning of white flight was abetted by the federal government's Homeowners' Loan Act, passed during the Roosevelt's Administration in the 1930s. In later decades, the federal government enacted policies that lead to intense segregation than ever before. Federally insured (FHA) loans in the 1930s, provided opportunities for the white middle class to achieve the Everyman version of the American Dream that considered home ownership a symbol of social status and success (Judd 1999, 144).

The Federal Fair Housing Act of 1968 outlawed overtly discriminatory market practices like exclusionary zoning [discussed later in chapter 2], racial steering (a method used by realtors to keep racial groups to certain neighborhoods that contain a large qualities of their race) and redlining (when realtors draw red lines on cities maps to restrict racial groups to certain parts of urban cities and financial institutions used this discriminatory process to deny racial groups loans to reside in predominately white neighborhoods), but it had relatively little effect on establishing unjust traditions among real estate agents and lenders. Over the next two decades, despite increases in income, education, and job status for minorities, housing patterns remained segregated (Novek 2001). Some federal programs established for low-income communities are usually not

intended to benefit those that live within low-income communities but to attract middle to upper-class families so they can replace low-income families and reestablish economic tax bases for a particular city (KaPonda 2001).

Massey and Denton suggest that in order for public policies to effectively end racial segregation, the policies must not only attack racial discrimination in the public housing market but also the private housing markets where 98% of all dwellings are located (Massey and Denton 1993, 229). In particular, the institutionalized process of neighborhood racial turnover must be interrupted, which is the ultimate mechanism by which the ghetto is reproduced and maintained. According to Massey and Denton, racial turnover is built into the composition of urban housing markets through racial discrimination that prohibits black access to predominantly white neighborhoods and systematically channels black housing demand to a few black or racially-mixed areas (Massey and Denton 1993, 229). Racial turnover is often referred to as racial tipping, which occurs when a few black families move into a predominately white neighborhood, causing most whites to leave. Racial turnover usually occurs because white families have the perception that black people lower property values. Therefore, when black families move into a predominately white neighborhood, realtors encourage white families to sell quickly before the property becomes worthless. Hence, realtors are able to capitalize off the insecurities of the whites by buying their homes at lower values and selling these houses to blacks at higher prices, a process also known as blockbusting (Knowles and Prewitt 1969, 27). Realtors and developers, who scare white families into selling their homes, mostly benefit from misleading whites into believing that blacks depreciate

property values, so that the realtors can capitalize from black families seeking refuge from disenfranchised neighborhoods.

In order to eliminate racial barriers in urban housing markets, direct institutional involvement of the federal government is required (Massey and Denton 1993, 229). For federal policy to drastically minimize residential segregation and the concentration of poor blacks in poverty in the central cities, the federal government would have to be prepared to challenge local zoning and land-use practices (Judd 1999, 149). Urban policies have worked unfavorably for blacks, rather than helped them (Judd 1999, 147). Residential segregation will continue to persist until its curtailment, but public as well as private institutions must be willing to change their policies and practices towards people of color (Knowles and Prewitt 1969, 29).

### *Public housing as a federal housing policy*

Discrimination in employment exacerbates black poverty and restricts economic potential for integration, and black residential mobility is systematically inhibited by pervasive discrimination and white avoidance of neighborhoods with black residents. [Table 1.3] After 1950, government programs further reinforced the walls of the ghetto by encouraging slum clearance and displacing ghetto residents into multi-story, high-density housing developments (Massey and Denton 1993, 83).

Federal public housing policy forced many poor black families from their neighborhoods, their communities, their sense of community, and their social networks. Many low-income communities were demolished by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) and replaced with multi-story, high-density housing

developments that served the purpose of housing the poor in masses (intensifying the concentration of poverty), but have been marked as a haven for crime and poverty.

According to the Greater New Orleans Community Data Center's website:

Public housing was one of the New Deal components under the Franklin D. Roosevelt presidential administration proposed to assist families that were significantly impacted by the affects of the Great Depression. After the passage of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, desegregation of all public housing developments across the U.S. initiated, creating a racially diverse, low-income and working-class families living within public housing developments. It was not until the late 1960s to early 1970s, when the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) began setting income restrictions on residents; forcing out middle-class residents and creating a concentration of minorities and poverty and encouraging white flight out of urban cities to a greater capacity. In the course of white flight from the city, came a decrease in social, educational, and economical development. The constant stripping of low-income families of employment opportunities, educational, social and standard housing conditions, leave these communities depressed and despaired (Greater New Orleans Community Data Center 2003).

Public housing, once a symbol of government intervention to provide citizens with affordable housing during times of economic disparity and difficulties, is now a series of isolated and often forgotten communities that contain high rates of poverty and crime, and often viewed by the media as socially and educationally deficient asylums or reservations for poor people. "Public housing, in the words of the historian Arnold Hirsch, represents a new, federally sponsored 'second ghetto', one "solidly institutionalized and frozen in concrete," where government took an active hand not merely in reinforcing prevailing patterns of segregation, but in lending them a permanence never seen before" (Massey and Denton 1993, 57).

### *Urban Renewal Practices*

Urban renewal is a term used to illustrate a process in which communities are enhanced by eradicating slums and other substandard areas, checking blight, revitalizing poorly planned or antiquated physical patterns, releasing prime property for new development, and wherever feasible, conserving and upgrading salvable properties and vicinities (Gorland 1971, 15). In the 1960s and 1970s, urban renewal replaced many historically valuable properties with ugly, tall, modernized, skyscrapers. Restoration was not desirable because policymakers and planners regarded housing in low-income neighborhoods as poorly designed or physically outmoded. Afterward, many people began to notice the importance of the uniqueness, originality and historic qualities of housing in low-income neighborhoods.

Massey and Denton infer that urban renewal programs have and continue to destroy more housing than they replace and therefore permanently displace many poor blacks into other overcrowded ghetto neighborhoods, which leads to their instability and further decline (Massey and Denton 1993, 56). HUD released a report declaring that the urban crisis was motivated by the experience of a handful of big cities and their enormous rates of disinvestment and “white flight” to the suburbs (HUD 1999). According to HUD, In the 1950s and 1960s when whites first rushed to the suburbs, and during the 1970s, 1980s, and early 1990s there was a dramatic “de-industrialization” of the U.S. economy. Many jobs that had been located in the central cities moved to the suburbs, sometimes following the consumers and workers already living there. Business capital also migrated overseas in search of lower labor and other costs, leading to steadily increasing unemployment rates, as well as poverty, in urban cities and towns (HUD

1999). [Table 1.4 and Table 1.5] As a result of corporate ventures to increase profits and minimize expenses (seeking cheaper labor), one will find an abundance of continually besieged poor blacks in decaying urban cities, searching for decent employment and suitable housing, when the opportunities for their advancement have been diminished, leaving them dependent upon public assistance and living in despair.

In recent times, HUD reported that the most disadvantaged renters are waiting longer for fewer affordable housing units and that lengthy waiting times for assistance increased substantially between 1996 and 1998 as the economic recovery surged forward (HUD 1999). HUD uncovers the underlying factors in the maintenance of the disadvantaged minorities: rents are rising faster than income for those 20 percent of America's households with the lowest incomes; an increasing loss of affordable housing with an astonishing decline of 1.3 million units (19 percent) from 1996 to 1998; and the decline of federal support over the last two decades (HUD 1999). As HUD's report notes, "With nowhere to turn, millions of the most vulnerable American families seem to be waiting in vain" (HUD 1999). The federal government is implicated in this drastic reduction of affordable housing units for low-income families, one result of urban-renewal-type programs and the HOPE VI (Homeownership Opportunities for People Everywhere) program; HUD has not and is not encouraging the replacement of every unit built for every unit demolished.

As with most of the low-income redevelopment housing programs, housing officials are charged with encouraging low-income families to participate in the planning process for new residential developments. Too often, local and federal housing development officials organize town hall meetings in order to solicit opinions and

suggestions of the low-income population in regards to redevelopment in their neighborhoods, while simultaneously carrying out anti-poor agendas, and disregarding the amendments or disapprovals made by the low-income population. Low-income families rarely reap the true benefits of the new development. The Community Action Program (1964), Model Cities (1966), and the Neighborhood Development Program (1968) were noteworthy programs, projected to enhance participation by working-class citizens and neighborhood groups in local governmental affairs. In response to various sources of criticism, federal officials also tried to make the renewal program more flexible administratively and devoted more attention to the needs of the urban poor (Stone 1976, 92). Nevertheless, the outcome of low-income black representation and participation in housing redevelopment programs is very minimal. Cuff suggests that without acknowledgment of and support for housing as a basic human right, homelessness and substandard housing will continue to result from local, state and federal public policy (Cuff 2002). Why does this happen? What causes the lack of participation in the governmental programs and intervention that affect poor blacks? Why do we see a lot of this happening nationwide? Maybe because government authorities think they know more than the people that they are supposed to help what is best for their clients.

Many government programs that were implemented in the mid-twentieth century impaired several growing black communities that were in the midst of becoming self-sufficient. Many government interventions of the past had an underlying intent to eliminate the potential threat that upcoming black businesses posed to white businesses and residential areas. In the 1950s and 1960s, local elites manipulated housing and urban



legislation to carry out prevalent slum clearance in growing black neighborhoods that endangered white business districts and elite institutions (Massey and Denton 1993, 56). Urban renewal programs adversely affected many minority neighborhoods by demolishing historic houses and buildings or replacing them with the ugly, multi-story, isolated housing developments we know today.

In conclusion, blacks and other conquered minorities continue to experience residential segregation through the machinations of the private housing market and through public policy. As a consequence, the correlation between minorities and poverty persists. Several local fair housing agencies across the country performed fair housing studies that showed “civilized people” (higher income whites) would least prefer to live among poor blacks. Too often, poor blacks are targets for housing inequalities; perhaps, much of the discrimination can be contributed to stereotypes, prejudgments, and personal attitudes towards the black race.

## Chapter 2

### *The Zoning Concept*

The era from 1916-1926 initiated the inception of zoning into U.S. cities as a policing power tool to control incompatible land uses. In 1916, New York City adopted the first comprehensive zoning law, which led to controversy regarding the legitimacy and constitutionality of the newly introduced zoning ordinance (Callies, Freilich, and Roberts 1986, 23). The newly formed legislation erupted dispute among city leaders and citizens over the separation of land uses by housing costs and types (multi-family, mobile homes, single-family, industrial and commercial). Multi-family housing, mobile homes, hazardous industrial and commercial uses posed a nuisance to affluent neighborhoods, and were usually zoned to low-income areas. The idea of separating land uses in developing townships was an ideal concept for local lawmakers to exploit and abuse. The idea of a city with all the urban amenities (businesses, employment, and goods and services) without encountering the social and economic problems of cities became very appealing to potential white occupants. As millions of whites flocked to new suburban areas, the housing shortage in central cities began to ease significantly during the 1950s. Vacancy rates in central cities climbed, levels of overcrowding among blacks as well as whites were drastically reduced, and the black ghettos expanded (Tauber 1965, 7). However, according to Taylor and Hill, the use of zoning as a tool encouraged the

isolation of minorities and low-income families (Taylor and Hill 2000, 58). If there is accuracy to this speculation, then the U.S. reneges on its claims to class and racial diversity and inclusiveness by supporting the injustices of many local zoning ordinances.

It was not until the U.S. Supreme Court case (272 U.S. 365, 47 S. Ct. 114, 71 L.Ed. 303) *Village of Euclid, Ohio v Amber Realty Company*, which led to the U.S. implementing standards for zoning in all states. The arguments in the *Euclid v Amber* case evoked regional and national attention. State and federal governments were adopting the principles of this Supreme Court case, formulating and implementing the concept of the Standard State Enabling Act of 1926 and later the Standard City Planning Enabling Act of 1928. The *Township of Euclid v Amber Realty* Supreme Court case was the groundbreaking case for zoning practice. The Supreme Court ruling in this case paved the way for the regulatory practices of zoning in regards to setting minimum lot sizes, maximum building heights and the prohibition of the use of land for the building of apartments. The developer wanted to maximize his profit and did not appreciate local zoning ordinances influencing what can and cannot be developed on the property. To the surrounding neighbors the idea of a possible invasion of low-income delinquents, lowering their property values and bringing deviant behaviors and poverty into their quiet carefree suburban town was totally unacceptable. Because Amber Realty challenged the entire idea of zoning, the chances of the court ruling in its favor decreased. Alfred Bettman, a Harvard-educated corporate lawyer (said to be the father of zoning) who represented the Township of Euclid, argued that the proposed development would endanger the health, safety, and general welfare of the surrounding community. Thomas and Ritzdorf argued that the unfair legislative outcomes from the *Euclid v Amber* case

stem from the union of native white men with strong exclusionary views of African Americans and European immigrants. Thomas and Ritzdorf consider zoning as a tool for implementing segregation through racially restrictive covenants that enable city realtors to limit home sales and rentals to blacks and Jews (Thomas and Ritzdorf 1996, 23).

Due to sprawl into surrounding suburbs and a decreasing central city population that began in the 1920s, there was a shift from city planning to regional planning to guide the growth and development of cities and their surrounding suburbs (Taylor and Hill 2000, 56). Some decision-makers believed that cities were experiencing a great deal of serious social and economic problems due to the unplanned, unregulated, and chaotic patterns of growth and development (Taylor and Hill 2000, 57). Consequently, physical, social, economic, educational, and environmental problems escalated in cities as a result of the exodus of affluent whites. The affluent chose to flee instead of confronting the problems that were linked to economic deprivation and substandard housing created, in part, by them. Policies and practices devised by local planners, housing reformers, and civic leaders, and not solely federal bureaucrats, inaugurated the era of city planning. Some sociologists and historians view the policies and practices as a technique planners use to impose their ideas and values of what “community” stands for onto the malleable working-class population (Taylor and Hill 2000, 56). In the book *Historical Roots of The Urban Crisis: Blacks In the Industrial City 1900-1950*, authors Henry Louis Taylor, Jr. and Walter Hill argue that city planning hindered the working-class blacks and whites from moving to the suburbs, creating a safe residential haven for higher-income groups (Taylor and Hill 2000, 56). Moreover, as Knowles and Prewitt points out, urban planning and redevelopment became the chief tactics for keeping black areas subordinated and

consolidated during World War II (Knowles and Prewitt 1969, 151). This seems to be the pattern within all central cities containing large numbers of working class and minority residents.

Zoning, as a tool used to segregate land uses, was the result of the complaints of middle class neighborhood residents who felt that they should be excluded from the “others.” Lawmakers also used zoning as a tool to isolate urban inhabitants from the majority of the new jobs that were located in the suburban ring (Knowles and Prewitt 1969, 152). According to Seitles:

Segregationist zoning ordinances, which divided city streets by race, coupled with racially restrictive covenants between private individuals became the common method of legally enforcing racial segregation. Racial segregation soon became the *de facto* policy of local governments and standard operating procedure for individual landowners. The emergence of the black ghetto did not happen by chance, but was the result of the deliberate housing policies of the federal, state, and local governments and the intentional actions of individual American citizens (Seitles 1996).

A major concern for the planning community was to build a modern residential society by configuring residential areas on the basis of housing cost and type and segregating income groups from one another, all in the belief that this separation would isolate social ills to the urban areas and control unplanned developments (Taylor and Hill 2000, 57). Furthermore, planners and civic leaders felt that by means of zoning legislation, they would be able to build a modern society through regulating lot and floor size, housing size, and setback requirements to raise the standards required of residential construction in a suburban communities (Taylor and Hill 2000, 57). The acceptance of the large lot, floor, and house size requirements by planners and political leaders implies that homeownership was exclusive, and not for everyone. According to Taylor and Hill:

However, previously there were many heterogeneous neighborhoods within cities and suburbs. Low-income and working class purchased and built houses in the cities as well as in the suburbs. The planning community challenged this notion of home-ownership as a symbol of middle-class status, a position afforded only by the higher income groups (Taylor and Hill 2000, 57).

Planners designated homeownership as beyond the economic reach of low-income workers (Taylor and Hill 2000, 57). Homeownership and the escalation of property values, in other words, became connected to the social class structure. Blacks were locked out of the system long enough to ensure that the configuration of residential segregation became written in stone (Judd 1999, 144). The planning community presumed that houses owned and occupied by those of low- to moderate-income were poorly constructed and maintained, causing blight among middle-class residents who were concerned with protecting their property values (Taylor and Hill 2000, 57). White apprehensions about racial integration are connected with the assumption that black neighbors undermine property values, thereby associating black people with declining property values. Many suburban municipalities have gone through extreme measures to keep low-income families and/or minorities from invading the “wholesome” suburbs.

### *What is Exclusionary Zoning?*

Zoning was utilized by council members and planners to segregate incompatible uses with the purpose of protecting the health, safety and general welfare of the residents of a township. However, city planners and city officials considered apartments and other kinds of multifamily housing as noxious as industrial uses and a potential danger to property values and the general welfare of the public (Liberty 2003, 582). Exclusionary zoning is used to promote housing segregation within towns and cities (Meyers 2002,

353). According to Nelson, by the 1970s “exclusionary zoning” fell into disrepute and was held responsible for segregating the poor into dysfunctional inner cities (Nelson 2002, 2). Exclusionary zoning forces poor minorities to cluster in certain neighborhoods, creating an increased need for social services and weakening the social foundation in those communities. As WallJasper notes:

Even as the tax base shrinks, taxes often rise to meet low-income people's increased need for local government services, and problems more prevalent in poor communities intensify: crime, underachieving public schools and a culture of hopelessness. All of this, along with America's ongoing anxiety about race, fuels middle-class and business flight from these communities, usually in the direction of the newer suburbs that practice exclusionary zoning (WallJasper 1999).

Exclusionary zoning reflects the selfishness, wealth, and ethnicity of dominant classes rather than a unique preference for particular local public goods or an idiosyncratic, but benign, lifestyle (Meyers 2002, 350). Racial and economic prejudices are major reasons many communities enact exclusionary zoning ordinances, rather than the simple snobbery or a desire to preserve the character of the community (Lauber 1973, 2). Planners and lawmakers used exclusionary zoning as a validation to keep unwanted commercial and industrial uses from affluent individuals and neighborhoods.

Exclusionary zoning is a way of eliminating unwanted uses, such as public dumps, industrial mills, chemical refineries, and pig farms from the middle class's surroundings and/or placing them into minority and low-income neighborhoods endangering their health, safety, and general welfare. Exclusionary racism is the term used by environmentalist and low-income advocates to describe this exclusionary phenomenon. According to Bullard (1999), environmental racism refers to public policies, practices or directives that directly or indirectly impose on individuals, groups, or communities of color (Bullard 1999, 5). Bullard asserts that economic and political

influence, as well as race, plays a major role in sorting desirable and undesirable residential amenities and land uses (Bullard 1999, 6). The opinions and suggestions of wealthier members of society (those who have “pulled-themselves-up-by-their-bootstraps”) take precedence in local zoning decisions, rather than those of lesser privilege. As a consequence of the lack of achievement and productivity of low-income populations, usually minority, poor people must contend with most of the unwanted land uses that the middle and upper classes do not want in their neighborhoods. The snobbish and self-seeking motivations of many suburban elites, also known as the Not-In-My-Back Yard (NIMBY-ism) syndrome, are acknowledged when major land use decisions are made. Suburban zoning determinations are vested in governments whose interests are the requirements and desires of their residents—most often the relatively wealthy and affluent—and not the needs and desires of the moderate-income or the poor who live in the central city or less prestigious suburbs (Tauber 1965, 1). As KaPonda points out, “the government does not follow its own rules. It changes to accommodate the rich” (KaPonda 2001).

Alfred Bettman, along with architects, civic, social, public, and business leaders launched the city planning movement (Taylor and Hill 2000, 56). Critics made several judgments about the use of zoning as a land-use tool. Many credit this attention to the separation of races and classes. Jane Jacobs contends that uncertainties of mixed uses and diversity mistakenly led city planners to rebel against diversity (Meyer 2002, 353). The ideas of diversity help configure city-zoning regulations (Meyers 2002, 353). Mistakenly, diversity represents a major obstacle for planning, in fear that it could



deliberately promote spontaneous assortments of ethnicities and cultures in inner cities by providing the conditions essential to its growth (Meyers 2002, 353).

### *Types of Exclusionary Zoning Practices*

Setback requirements, unusually large minimum lot and floor requirements, high housing costs, density controls, required home and infrastructure improvements, administrative delays, and building code regulations are just a few exclusions that clearly target a specific group of potential inhabitants, those with money.

A number of zoning requirements and regulations habitually tend to exclude the poor from suburban areas. Members of local zoning boards and city councils often use floating or 'non-Euclidean' zoning—a zone is allotted for a particular type of land use but no area has been specifically designated for that land use—as a method of excluding or delaying high density developments (such as apartment complexes) and certain industrial and commercial developments. Local zoning boards are required to rule individually on every application for development of controversial land uses, allowing for opportunities to delay and obstruct disfavored types of development (Harvard Law Review 1971, 1646). The authority of zoning boards and city councils to make individual rulings on a case-by-case basis often leads to discrimination against affordable housing and apartment complexes that may contain minorities.

The density requirement refers to the number of dwellings per given unit of land area. Setback requirements establish a minimum distance between the front, back, and side yards. Minimum floor area requirements allegedly used to ensure the health and safety of residents, raises the lower limit of construction costs. Large minimum floor

area, setback, and lot size requirements are often utilized by planners and council members to achieve a low-density for a given community or township. Often, all three measures are employed together by some municipalities to achieve the same low-density effect (Babcock and Bosselman 1973, 4).

Required improvements transfer infrastructure costs such as streets, sidewalks, sewers, schools, and parks to prospective homebuyers, costs that would normally be financed by developers or municipalities. Unnecessary expenses are transferred to the homebuyer, increasing the debt service ratio of the potential borrower/homeowner. Other types of required improvements are garages, off-street parking, accessory storage buildings, and landscape amenities. Given the extra costs, affordable housing becomes close to impossible for low-income, especially minority, families to find (Babcock and Bosselman 1973, 11).

Building and housing codes are toughened and usually exceed the Federal Housing Administration (FHA) standards. Exclusionary measures make it even harder for low-income families to afford to live and work in suburban areas. Potential developments of smaller lot sizes or even multi-family units are often delayed or denied variances, once again preventing low-income families from moving into suburban communities. The approval of the development must filter through several officiating boards, commissions, and councils, causing a delay in construction by placing six-month to one-year moratorium on the proposed land.

The most common exclusionary zoning practice is the prohibition of the construction of multi-family dwellings within a suburban community. According to the Harvard Law Review:

Some suburbs have attempted to ban apartment construction altogether, while others permit it only in very small areas. Since there are good reasons for both low-income and developers to prefer low-income apartments to single-family dwelling, the effects of restrictions on apartments may be to ensure that no low-income housing gets built at all (Harvard Law Review 1971, 1646).

Many municipalities rely heavily on revenues generated from property taxes in the belief that single-family units produce more proceeds than low- and moderate-cost apartments. Some planning departments believe that low to moderate apartments will cost more in services than they produce in revenue. However, a number of studies have shown that garden-style apartments would generate more revenue than educational costs, disproving this hypothesis (Tauber 1965, 2). Bogart (1993) identifies four additional motivations for municipalities to exclude certain groups:

1. Fiscal Zoning, in which people are excluded if they pay less in local taxes than they receive in public services. Local municipalities generate much of the funding to finance public works and administrative operations of the township or city. To these governments, low-income groups do not provide the secured tax-base (generated through property-taxes) to suffice for the general operations of the municipality.
2. Public goods zoning, in which people are prevented from entering a community because they will have a deleterious effect on the cost of producing local public services. Due to presumption of low-income groups using local public services in excess in comparison to those who supply the most capital towards the function of public services.
3. Consumption zoning has not been a primary focus of most economists is the possibility that there can be negative externalities in the consumption of private goods resulting from community heterogeneity. Furthermore, communities faced with defending exclusionary practices often rest their defense on these popular environmental concerns.
4. Political economic zoning the residents of a town excludes potential entrants whose preferences for public goods differ. The common example of this type of exclusion is when the suburban area is opened to low-income groups likes and dislikes of the entrants differs from the higher income groups (Bogart 1993).

Zoning provides elite residents with an opportunity to remove themselves to a specific area in town. Suburbanites have created and maintain their isolation through

exclusionary zoning ordinances; municipalities can raise construction costs significantly, thus preventing the construction of affordable housing for lower-income families (Harvard Law Review 1995, 1127). Exclusion of affordable housing not only permits the suburbs to sustain a certain aesthetic, but also serves suburban residents' economic interests. Exclusion reduces access costs in the use of public services for suburbanites because low-income households are more likely to increase the demand for public services without contributing significantly to local tax revenues (Harvard Law Review 1995, 1127).

### *Neighborhood Preferences*

Most people prefer living where the neighbors are congenial and have social and political outlooks similar to their own (Meyers 2002, 351). Neighborhood preferences also contribute to the unintentional and intentional concentrated pockets of poverty in urban cities in suburban towns and cities. People prefer to live in areas that are crime-free zones, with excellent school, access to goods and services, and a variety of employment opportunities. According to Meyers:

Decisions about where, who, and what to live near are often based on stereotypes. These choices, which can lead to communities segregated by race or class or both, reverberate through nearly every facet of American life. In this way, racial isolation practically ensures...inequalities in education, employment, culture, personal networks, freedom from crime, and the many other opportunities, amenities and freedoms that are related to location. The interaction of classism and racism make racial isolation in neighborhoods...both socially destructive and difficult to remedy (Meyers 2002, 350).

Not all individuals can live where they want. Decentralization for the select few encourages them to seek refuge from the fiscal and physical burdens of cities instead of working for the improvement of the entire metropolitan community (Meyers 2002, 351).

The ability to obtain future opportunities—better schools, more employment possibilities, and a higher quality of life—has a lot to do with community preferences (Meyers 2002, 359). Homogenous neighborhoods that contain all of these valuable social, physical, and economic resources are good things, but why is it that a middle-class or upper-class neighborhood is rarely referred to as a ‘concentration’ of wealth? These neighborhoods are where the affluent dominate all the important resources that are deficient in low-income neighborhoods. Why is it that the affluent do not want to share the wealth? These neighborhood preferences can reinforce the classist and racist motives behind practices and policies created to contain low-income and poor people.

### *Blacks and the Notion of Decreasing Property Values*

Residential zoning codified the creation of a homogenous neighborhood by the segregation of population based on income and race (Taylor and Hill 2000, 58). From the perspective of the planning community, the organization of land uses was a good way to control many social problems, as well as to control unplanned development that would cause future infrastructure problems by escalating future operational expenses (Taylor and Hill 2000, 56-57). Overcrowding is directly linked in an underlying relationship with the physical deterioration of real property and the disintegration of neighborhood standards (Weaver 1948, 280). Public and community facilities will have shorter life spans when subjected to continual use by too many people. In the early and mid-twentieth century, blacks were constrained by insufficient amounts of space for entertainment, recreation, housing, and education, with many living in deplorable

conditions. Today, black people continue to be synonymous with low property values (Weaver 1948, 280).

According to Thomas and Ritzdorf, several social reformers believed that zoning not only offered a way to exclude incompatible uses from residential areas, but was also a way to slow the spread of slums into better neighborhoods, thus protecting property values by excluding undesirable people from penetrating “good” white neighborhoods (Thomas and Ritzdorf 1996, 24). The undesirable people were two racially-based groups: immigrants and blacks. Many scholars believe that zoning is a mechanism used to enforce the system of racial segregation (Thomas and Ritzdorf 1996, 24).

A large share of blacks live in geographically-isolated and racially homogenous neighborhoods where poverty is endemic, joblessness is rife, schools are poor, and even high school graduates are unlikely to speak standard English with any facility (Massey and Denton 1993, 166). According to Seiltes (1996), “blacks and Hispanics of the same socioeconomic class as whites typically live in communities with less tax wealth, lower ownership rates, and higher poverty crime rates. Thus, increased housing costs generated by the practices of exclusionary zoning disproportionately affect blacks and other minorities, virtually ensuring the continued patterns of racial segregation in American cities and suburbs.” Communication barriers would make it even harder for some urban blacks to live amongst whites. White apprehensions about racial mixing are associated with the belief that having black neighbors weakens property values and reduces neighborhood safety (Massey and Denton 1993, 98). White and affluent Americans continue to believe that blacks do not maintain their homes and are more prone to violence; these negative images target urban blacks as wild savages with no morality and

lead directly to fears that black neighbors lower property values and increase crime rates. Negative images of blacks promote white resistance to black entry and avoidance of residential areas that contain black residents (Massey and Denton 1993, 94). If suburbs have a visible black presence, a potential to attract more blacks than whites emerges and leads to rapid racial turnover and the emergence of a suburban black enclave (Massey and Denton 1993, 70). Robert Weaver asserts in his 1948 book, *The Negro Ghetto*, that there is no facet of housing more important than the connection between racial occupancy and property values. The most highly regarded and repeatedly quoted rationalization for residential segregation is the assertion that black people lower real estate values (Weaver 1948, 280).

By examining the very nature of the black family's work, status, and income before and immediately after the Civil War, it was inevitable that they would be relegated to the least desirable housing (Weaver 1948, 8). Low-income neighborhoods are not the result of the inability of low-income residents to live in desirable areas (Babcock and Bosselman 1973, 49). According to Massey and Denton:

After decades of steady improvement, black economic progress stalled in 1973, bringing about a rise in black poverty and increase in income inequality. The economic progress of the 1950s and 1960s had been sustained into the 1970s; segregation levels might have fallen more significantly. William Clark estimates that 30%-70% of racial segregation is attributable to economic factors together with urban structure and neighborhood preferences..." (Massey and Denton 1993, 89).

Some public policies have provided a number of opportunities for the advancement of minorities in society; however, blacks, Native Americans, and Latinos living in the heart of the ghetto, reservations, and barrios are still among the most isolated people on earth (Massey and Denton 1993, 77).

### *The Battle for Mount Laurel*

In the New Jersey Supreme Court case, *Southern Burlington County of the NAACP v the Township of Mt. Laurel* (456 A.2d 390) the term “exclusionary zoning” surfaced, though exclusionary practices existed years prior to the court decision. As cities in the area began to decline and social problems worsened, Mt. Laurel, New Jersey gained the attention of people seeking an ideal suburban family lifestyle. Moving to Mt. Laurel was a way middle and upper class families could enjoy a carefree lifestyle. In the 1960s and 1970s, the construction of interstate highways also made it easier for suburbanites to commute to their urban jobs. In this small, rural town, developers began to build single-family dwellings with large lot size requirements, along with other luxurious amenities, and thereby preventing low-income families from moving to the suburbs. However, there was an existing low-income, minority population in Mount Laurel. Ironically, politicians and planners began to implement explicit zoning ordinances to drive poor blacks out of the suburbs. The planners and politicians were diligently preparing for the relocation of the new white middle and upper class residents who were looking to flee mounting urban blight, poverty, crime, and racial conflicts (Meyer 2002, 361). The issue was not solely the exclusion of minorities and the poor because Mount Laurel already had a significant, long-standing population of lower class and minority residents. The existing low-income minority population suffered because of the decisions of their newer, wealthier neighbors (Meyers 2002, 361). According to Meyers:

When lawyers entered the scene, they found that many African-American families had resorted to living in renovated chicken coops and shacks. Community reaction, however, was that “these families need housing, not lawsuits. The mayor of Mount Laurel had told members of a mainly African-American congregation,



“If you people can’t afford to live in our town, then you’ll just have to leave.” Increasingly, the town leaders created a vision that did not end this. Residents found themselves being forced out, regardless of how long they had lived in Mount Laurel or their level of investment in the community. Because of the deeply rooted values of property ownership and, in particular, the power of alienation, it was difficult to see how the situation in Mount Laurel could change (Meyers 2002, 361).

From the Mount Laurel case, many Fair Share Housing Laws evolved in the United States to enforce a required amount of affordable housing for towns and cities or payments in lieu of taxes. According to Bogart:

In New Jersey, the Supreme Court ruled in a number of cases collectively known as the ‘Mount Laurel’ decisions that municipalities must accept their ‘fair share’ of low-income housing. By allowing high-income municipalities to make payments to low-income municipalities in return for a reduced ‘fair share’ the state has also created a ‘market for exclusion’ that in principle allows researchers to infer the benefits of exclusion to high-income municipalities (Bogart 1993).

The Mount Laurel case denoted that it was not constitutionally acceptable for cities to deny access to an entire class of people and, furthermore, that local governments had a responsibility to ensure that similar discriminatory practices did not transpire again (Meyers 2002, 362).

### *Misuse and Abuse of Zoning*

When political representatives began using zoning as a tool to restrict certain groups from the suburbs, the U.S. was forced to face a serious problem. The regulation of large minimum lot and floor space requirements, minimum housing size, extraordinary set-back requirements, subdivision exactions, rising housing costs, strict residential classification, maximum density limitations, the prohibition of the construction of multi-family dwellings and the misuse of other land use controls indicated that exclusionary

practices were utilized by political officials to keep low-income families and minorities out of suburban townships, which was a major ramification of the *Euclid v Amber* Supreme Court case.

The reality is that the middle and upper classes can typically opt to surround themselves with neighbors who reflect their own race, social class, status, and background (Meyers 2002, 350). It is not meant to imply that zoning is the only governmental device used for exclusion but prohibiting exclusionary zoning would enable more minorities and low-income people to live in suburban areas. Exclusionary zoning is only one facet, although an important one, of a very complex occurrence in which much research as well as judicial and legislative action is needed (Brooks 1970, 3). Proponents (some suburban political representatives and residents) may argue that this is not exclusionary zoning, but a tool used in planning to sustain social, economical, and cultural authenticity within a given community. Suburban residents are willing to take extreme measures, including spending large sums of their own money, to keep the disadvantaged at bay, or to make them forbidden neighbors (Meyers 2002, 350).

Arguably, studies have shown that political leaders in suburban areas have abused zoning tools to serve political and personal agendas. According to the *Harvard Law Review*, city public officials have expressed increasing concern over growing suburban abuse of the zoning power, and the practice has come under administrative and legislative attack. However, courts have been hesitant to deal with the problem (*Harvard Law Review* 1971, 1647). Meyers refers to zoning as a constitutionally acceptable form of segregation and overt discrimination against the poor, as well as racial and ethnic

minorities. Zoning laws allow people to select and judge others based on characteristics that have been deemed invidious in other realms of law (Meyers 2002, 360).

### *Contributing Factors*

It is recognized that most minorities are poor due to lack of educational and employment opportunities that, in turn, create major obstacles for poor and minority groups and make it extremely difficult for them to relocate to suburban areas. Therefore, municipalities justify strict requirements and higher housing costs for low-density housing. Municipal officials assume that they would not be able to recoup funds for infrastructure, civil services, and educational institutions through property taxes, because higher-density developments house many low-income families who do not own property and would consume more in services than they would contribute in taxes. Altering the language of state enabling legislation to ban discrimination through land-use planning and controls is one of the most direct ways of trying to prevent communities from employing exclusionary zoning (Brooks 1970, 6). Lack of state intervention will continue to perpetuate an on-going cycle of oppression for minorities and low-income families.

### *Suggestions for Controlling Exclusionary Zoning*

A relatively recent tool used to counter exclusionary practices is state-sponsored growth management statutes. Growth management is an administrative implementation of statewide land-use policies, and requires each locality to use its zoning power in the interests of the state as a whole, rather than for local interests only. Most advanced

versions of state-sponsored growth management plans emphasize the provision of affordable housing as well as the fair placement of housing, the containment of urban sprawl, and the encouragement of state economic growth (Harvard Law Review 1995, 1127). Growth management is believed to reduce the NIMBY-ism attitudes that tend to favor the middle-class. Thus, cities will work with regional bodies to compromise strategies and practices to reduce the occurrences of exclusion. Many issues are linked to the essential question of whether it is constitutional to exclude certain individuals from dwelling in a particular community based on characteristics such as race and class (Meyers 2002, 351).

### *Has State Growth Management Worked?*

New Jersey, Massachusetts, Oregon, Rhode Island, and Florida are some of the few states that devise regional plan to help their cities grow “smart.” Smart growth is moderating the consumption of land for roads, houses and commercial buildings by guiding development to areas with existing infrastructure; it facilitates the centering of development around urban and order suburban areas while preserving wetlands, farmlands, and green space (Callies, Freilich, and Roberts 1999, 599). Opponents of growth management argue that any regulation imposed to meet environmental and infrastructure needs will increase the cost of residential construction. Other opponents are suspicious because growth management attempts to limit development or create “growth control” or “slow growth” (thorough planning takes time) through state-regulated growth management practices (Harvard Law Review 1995, 1137).

The most effective regional fair-share anti-exclusionary legislation is the New Jersey Fair Housing Act. This act evolved from the Mt. Laurel (456 A.2d 390) case. The New Jersey Fair Housing Act assigns power to an administrative agency to examine and evaluate housing needs in order to remain in accordance with the fair share requirement (Harvard Law Review 1995, 1135). The fair share requirement mandates that communities that will experience an increase in population growth designate zones for multifamily housing to suit to the needs of all people (Callies, Freilich, and Roberts 1999, 467). Growth Management can be rather helpful because it encourages a state-approved fair-share plan that leads to rational planning, rather than a random distribution of court-ordered builder's remedies of state-granted permits. One of the provisions of this act states that one municipality can pay another to cover up to fifty percent of its share of affordable housing (Harvard Law Review 1995, 1135).

Oregon provides another example of a state with progressive anti-exclusionary zoning measures. Oregon's plan was able to control suburban sprawl by incorporating "urban growth boundaries" to promote higher-density growth within existing cities, instead of concentrating them within one area of a city's limits (Harvard Law Review 1995, 1138). In Massachusetts, a regional statute mandates that local zoning boards uphold decisions requiring ten percent of the local housing stock allocated to low and moderate income families, or 1.5% of the municipal land contains affordable housing (Harvard Law Review 1995, 1134). Oregon, Florida and Rhode Island require counties to adopt a local comprehensive plan that is consistent with state planning goals (Harvard Law Review 1995, 1139).

The successes of growth management depend upon two factors: political feasibility and implementation. The political climate in the state is a major determinant of the future of progression towards inclusiveness. Officials must actively work to enforce and maintain confidence in growth management legislation. In addition, growth management attracts the support of environmentalists, urban activists and housing advocates because it addresses the short-term and long-term urban needs while planning for the general welfare of the metropolitan area (Harvard Law Review 1995, 1141). Success or failure also relies on the implementation of growth management practices, usually by a statewide agency or a regional council to investigate housing needs and identify the share of housing responsibility that each locality should assume. In effect, this constitutes a regional comprehensive plan. Harvard Law Review suggests that legislation should require localities to create a consistent plan with state housing goals (Harvard Law Review 1142, 1995). State agencies must be willing to apply specific sanctions, such as withdrawal of state funding or reducing the power of local governments to grant development permits, if localities continue to exclude affordable housing (Harvard Law Review 1995, 1142).

## Chapter 3

### *What is Gentrification?*

Gentrification is a term used to describe the migration of middle-class people into run-down urban neighborhoods, along with increasing rents and property values, changes in a district's character and culture, and displacement of long-term poor residents (Lang 1982, 1). Gentrification, originally used to describe a phenomenon occurring in London neighborhoods beginning in the 1950s, was referred to by housing advocates as the process by which the areas being upgraded were transformed into middle-class neighborhoods. The middle class, therefore, became the modern "gentry" or gentrifiers. The term gentrification obtained widespread recognition in academic studies and policy administration (Muniz 1998, 21). Opponents, housing advocates, and displacees often refer to gentrification as a socio-economic cleansing of particular neighborhoods often correlated with affluent people who drive up property values and cause escalation in surrounding rents, making it close to impossible for current low-income residents to remain. The outcomes of gentrification benefit the landowners, but what about the displacees, where do they go? As KaPonda (2001) says in an article in *Poor Magazine*, attractive, revitalized community with townhouses, new asphalt paved streets, swimming pools, and all of the luxurious amenities that come with redevelopment would astonish many residents whose needs and desires fall within the sphere of "ordinary people."

However, for many activists whose commitments exceed the basic temptations and corruption, nothing short of a one-for-one return (for every low-income unit renovated and sold at market rate price, an affordable unit is built for low-income families) will be acceptable. Through this comment, KaPonda may be suggesting that for every dilapidated unit renovated and rented to a higher income family, an affordable renovated unit must be available to a low-income family. Many proponents of gentrification believe that the gradual elimination of low-income families will, in turn, reduce the crime and social problems that the residents of many gentrified areas previously faced. However, the results of gentrification are complex and contradictory, and its real impact varies (POV Flag Wars 2003).

“Urban Pioneers” are often affluent people who buy substandard properties and renovate them, doubling, and sometimes tripling the property’s original sale values. Urban Scouts or Pioneers move into newly renovated blighted houses in low-income neighborhoods. Improving property values for surrounding homes make it impossible for many low-income blacks to live in these areas any longer due to increased rental costs, with the exception of the succession of houses to family members (Major 2002).

The dense low-income areas of inner cities are a product of the post World War II era. After World War II, affluent whites fled urban areas for the suburbs with the assistance of the federal government, a process also known as “white flight.” The outflow of capital stripped the inner cities of good housing, businesses, and resources, which left cities across the nation impoverished with unsustainable economies, substandard housing, increased criminal activity, poor education, inadequate infrastructure and destroyed souls. Urban renewal legislation is often associated with



some form of gentrification, causing a major exodus of black, low-income and other impoverished groups.

Poor black families are once again victims of forceful residential removals and government takings. Some politicians who create the various policies or zoning laws view blacks as violent, antagonistic nuisances—often credited to societal stereotypes and prejudgments—so they take measures to reduce the influx of poor blacks into middle and upper class neighborhoods. Many privileged whites avoid living in communities with large numbers of blacks. On the other hand, some affluent whites tend to perceive rundown, low-income, usually black, neighborhoods as potential investment opportunities, thus encouraging lawmakers to promote the ideal of neighborhood restoration through advocating urban renewal-type projects. These projects usually stimulate urban takeovers that push poor black families out of their communities into other impoverished and overcrowded communities.

The physical improvements beautify cities, lessen urban decay and bring about improvement in the city's economic tax-base. However, city officials must work diligently to drastically improve the deficiencies that continually afflict the educational, social, economical institutions in impoverished neighborhoods. Many public and private institutions must be held accountable for depriving poor people of basic resources they need to avoid impoverishment.

Physically dilapidated structures in inner cities are aesthetically displeasing to the eyes. However, legislation dealing solely with the physical aspects will not solve the problems that are grounded in urban decay. Housing and homelessness advocates, community members and political officials must work together to get to the root of the

social and economic problems that exist in low-income communities. To lessen or reduce crime and poverty, all three players (advocates, community members, and politicians) must be willing to find preventive measures that will put an end to the negative outcomes that exist in low-income communities. However, leaders must sincerely want to make these possible solutions work to alleviate these problems. Social reform is desperately needed within cities. In order for that to occur, however, city governments must reform as well. Communities need to address the issues that contribute to the concentration of large numbers of low-income families from one overcrowded neighborhood to another within cities. Factors such as lack of employment (due mostly to white-flight), and inability to find decent housing and education prevent many low-income individuals from advancing socially and economically. Many luxurious amenities, community services and businesses evolve from neighborhood revamping as a result of gentrification implemented through numerous federal, state and local policies to counteract dilapidated housing, yet the impoverished least experience the benefits of housing and neighborhood improvements. Many of the minority residents of underclass communities are affected by housing policies that displace people in mass and reduce the number of housing units due to demolition of blighted housing. Isabel Estrada (2002) refers to gentrification more as socio-economic cleansing to relieve rich white folks of the plight of encountering human waste on the streets than compelling themselves to sympathize over people with no food or shelter. She credits the nation's housing crisis on the failed policies and misapplied capital expenditures that were budgeted for the redevelopment process (Estrada 2002).

### *Factors or Criteria for Gentrification*

The physical attributes may have changed but the broad social approach to gentrification remains. Opponents of gentrification insinuate that it is race and class oppression of one race or class by another. Displacement and extreme cases of abandonment indicate that there is a racial and class conflict (Butler 1997, 38-39). According to Butler (1997, 43), gentrification involves five types of displacement, which create new patterns of social segregation:

1. Resettlement and social concentration
2. Transformation of the building structures-aesthetic features.
3. Persons with an alleged shared culture and lifestyle.
4. Reordering of property values and economic development and job location.
5. Process may occur independent of each other, but is best reserved where all coincide.

In addition to Butler's criteria, the League of Women Voters of New Orleans (1979, 5) in their report on housing displacement in New Orleans, add that urban revitalization or gentrification is often a product of private enterprise and is composed of several factors:

1. Concerns over energy and transportation.
2. The rising cost of new housing in the suburbs.
3. The emergence of a new group of urban pioneers.
4. Greater awareness of architectural attractions of older urban housing as a consequence of efforts of preservation groups.
5. Job opportunities in the cities.
6. Foreign and domestic capital investment in our cities.

Gentrification is a class-based process often rooted in racism. Municipalities frequently target minority neighborhoods for revitalization, because targeted areas generate less property tax revenue for localities.

### *Purpose of Gentrification*

Gentrification is a class-rooted process and contains an underlying racist ideology that is also money-driven. To some, gentrification is another word for class war, an attack against low-income minority residents who live in particular areas of inner cities. Affluent individuals and families renovate and rehabilitate some of the housing units and move into poor neighborhoods. The PBS special *POV Flag Wars* (2003) questioned the type of people that were attracted to low-income, mainly minority, neighborhoods in their TV special. In the 1970s, urban life slowly began to regain prestige among artists and the highly educated (*POV Flag Wars* 2003). Some believe that middle-class individuals recognized the value in these neighborhoods, since they were often characterized by accessibility to markets, local businesses, major transportation corridors, architectural designs, and historical value. Real estate agents market to the affluent by encouraging them to invest in blighted or substandard housing at a little cost to renovate or rehabilitate dilapidated housing units. Major housing improvements will increase their investment value five times more than the original value.

As rehabilitation work on blighted properties continues, several neighborhood convenient stores are being replaced by coffee shops, pet grooming businesses and changing the name of the community to suit the taste of the new inhabitants of the area.

Gentrifiers perceive revitalization as their contribution to the improvement of the city by beautifying dilapidated properties, diversifying the community, and acting as a major proponent in the reduction in criminal activity, poor healthcare, and educational institutions with the potential to increase community development and economic growth. The renovations that are made to impoverished neighborhoods may be an improvement, but property values make it extremely difficult for low-income families to remain in the newly renovated neighborhoods. Owners of low-income rental properties may see that potential renovations within a neighborhood as a way of increasing their income on properties through renting to middle-class residents. The physical attractions of the property may entice renters who offer higher rental prices to stay within the neighborhood, in turn pushing the low-income families out.

### *Is This An Integration of Class?*

Competitive housing markets usually exclude low-income families from competing with affluent or middle-class people. Gentrifiers seek areas where they can purchase large houses from the original owners who do not realize the actual or potential value of the area. Subsequently, migration of the middle-class occurs, and if the demand has decreased for the single-family housing units in this area, the larger structures are converted into condominiums or apartments. The increase in property values and inflation costs due to the influx of middle-class families into impoverished neighborhoods make it close to impossible to keep affordable housing for low-income families (Lang 1982, 21). The process of gentrification creates availability for middle-

class and upper-class families while creating a shortage of affordable housing units for low-income and poor families.

Lang argues that gentrification is not the cause of re-segregation, but rather a concomitant of the standard functioning of free housing markets. Nevertheless, it is true that unregulated gentrification operating in a free market may cause the spatial segregation of various ethnic and minority groups (Lang 1982, 14).

### *Political Culture of Gentrification*

Gentrifiers often dominate neighborhood organizations because organizations are a political resource that can be mobilized to negotiate with public officials, to apply for historic designation, to enforce guidelines of housing repairs, and, in general, to use collective strength to shape the community in the interests of the gentrifiers.

In many U.S. urban cities, such as San Francisco, Harlem, Atlanta, Chicago, and even New Orleans, there is a current pattern of gentrification that is continually evolving and transforming decaying neighborhoods and displacing poor residents. One of the advantages of gentrification proclaims that it promotes neighborhood diversity (racially and socially), contributing to the alleviation of crime and reduction in poverty within vicinities. According to Palen and London (1984, 28) “The ethnic diversity that many of the new urbanites value, as mentioned earlier, is ‘safe’ diversity around, rather than within.” Mixed incomes are very important, but are the middle class residents helping their low-income neighbors to overcome poverty through means of assisting poor residents to obtain living-wage employment? Gentrification would not be such a controversial issue if the objectives of the middle-class were to help low-income

minorities to overcome the oppressive state of secluded and substandard living, but that is usually not the motive of middle-class individuals. It can be assumed that the intentions of higher income households are to reinforce the power and privileges they readily retain over the oppressed. The absolute security of middle to upper class status may be one reason urban pioneers are willing to settle in such close proximity to poor neighborhoods (Palen and London 1984, 26).

Everyone wants to be free from crime and poverty, experience and be a part of a growing prosperity, enjoy new infrastructure and beautiful, newly renovated housing and commercial buildings. Who would not want to see crime reduced, reinvestment in new buildings and infrastructure and increased economic growth in their neighborhoods (POV Flag Wars 2003)? This is a common response to the effects of gentrification, which all seem positive, right? However, this will only benefit a certain group of people, usually white, middle to upper class singles or childless couples who are becoming prominent in the urban society. As POV Wars notes, “Unfortunately, the benefits of these changes are often enjoyed disproportionately by the new arrivals, while the established residents find themselves economically and socially marginalized (minimized and casted to the side)” (POV Flag Wars 2003). Gentrification does not improve the overall quality of life for low-income families. It does not alleviate the social problems that plague low-income and poor people, it shifts the concentration of poverty from one area of an urban city to another. Some low-income individuals may have violent responses to the effects of gentrification and may take those behaviors out on the newcomers. Newcomers may experience frequent robberies, vandalism, and assaults that are results of rebellious, low-income families and individuals who were affected by displacement.

### *Privileged vs. Under-Privileged*

What could middle-class people do for low-income and poor people? If we are created equal as humans, why are we ranked according to class? In this society as a family travels up the socioeconomic strata, the family gains more and more access, recognition and governmental incentives as justified by governmental agencies. The more a family is able to become less dependent on governmental assistance or intervention, the more valued they are to the American standard or model.

To city officials, the middle-class is more important to the city than those of an inferior status. The mixing of the two classes may cause middle-class people to feel a sense of superiority over individuals and families who do not have equal access to goods, services, education, and good health care. Michael Lang refers to this behavior as middle-class ethnocentrism, where the middle class views the replacement of low-status groups as beneficial to the community by definition (Lang 1982, 23). Political leaders believe that the middle class will start a social movement that is oriented towards change or improvement, serving as a role model for low-income families to follow, often in terms of leader-follower relationships.

Palen and London believe that the “Back to the City Movement” evolved from white-collar workers who grew tired of the extremely long commuting distances to the suburbs from their jobs and careers located in the inner city. Many suburban commuters are looking for decent housing near their places of employment and urban entertainment, recreation and historical monuments and districts. In addition, with rising suburban housing costs and taxes, cities began to seem once again appealing. In some old-city neighborhoods, structurally sound, turn-of-the-century houses can be purchased and



renovated for substantially less than the cost of a new house in the suburbs (Palen and London 1984, 38).

### *Displacement*

The displacement of low-income or no-income families are more problematic than the renovation and rehabilitation of dilapidated houses. This causes displacees to move further out of their district to find housing that would not exceed more than 50 percent of their income. These same displacees will find themselves forced to move again as values rise in their new locations (Lang 1982, 21).

During the 1950s and 1960s the implementation of urban renewal by the Department of Housing and Urban Development and the Federal Highway Program under the administration of the U.S. Department of Transportation, resulted in a massive displacement and relocation of the nation's elderly, minorities and low-income families. Some scholars and academia often refer to urban revitalization or renewal as gentrification. Previous studies concluded that displacees often shift to substandard housing and cluster in households leading to overcrowding. Minority groups, especially blacks and Latinos, find it harder to find affordable housing than whites, in addition to increased housing cost, and the severe social and personal mayhem often affiliated with displacement, these factors often greatly impact the elderly (League of Women Voters of New Orleans 1979, 6). Displacement of families, the aged and economic classes can be influenced by independent revitalization efforts as a result of disinvestment, (decreasing tax-base, due to white flight and urban sprawl) natural disasters, and tragedies.

## *Conclusion*

Residential segregation, exclusionary zoning, and gentrification have two things in common: all three measures and methods are used to displace a race or class of people, usually poor blacks and public policies and practices create and maintain low-income and minority subordination. Residential segregation is usually race-based, class-based, or both. Prior to 1900, blacks were dispersed amongst white neighborhoods, although many of these whites remained racist, oppressive and hostile towards blacks in these areas. Since exclusionary zoning and residential segregation are unconstitutional, the affluent class and political officials are seeking other means such as gentrification to slowly push the “deviant,” low-income families and minorities out of their neighborhoods. The language may not be as blatant as before, but the concealed discriminatory jargon nevertheless remains in public legislature and laws.

There are similarities as well as differences between gentrification and exclusionary zoning. The major differences are that zoning is a legislative tool used to control growth and development, which is often abused. Exclusionary zoning is the use of those tools to prohibit certain groups (cultural, racial, religious, aged, gender, and low-income) from a certain area. Gentrification is a process that occurs based on potential historic value, locality and investment opportunities. Low-income families, minorities, and women are powerless and inconvenienced. “Justice for all” becomes a metaphor for “justice for all except those who are low-income, minorities and women.” Excluded groups are not major stakeholders in the American pie or the American dream.

According to Babcock and Bosselman:

Segregation and poverty have been created in the racial ghetto a destructive environment totally unknown to most white Americans. What white Americans

have never fully understood, but what the Negro [blacks] can never forget, is that white society is deeply implicated in the ghetto. White institutions maintain it, and white society condones it (Babcock and Bosselman 1973, 49).

There is no humor in misfortune. Many conservatives view low-income people as “hopeless, lazy, and worthless.” Why waste our tax dollars on the poor when they are not trying hard enough to find employment? Many urban communities are suffering for this common element of sufficient employment for their impoverished members. The jobs are just not there. The few jobs that urban communities do have are being offered to suburbanites. However, no one is giving poor blacks a chance. Where can they turn? Many are saying that there is no future for black people; especially children living in impoverished conditions and for those trying to escape it, they are rejected by society. When someone from the underclass is trying to improve his or her situation, color and class barriers are major hindrances from excelling and achieving goals within the American society. Major hindrances seem to be the story of the low-class or underclass, and minorities. What is my purpose? How can I leave a footprint in society? It is hard to gain acceptance into a society that rejects you.

--- “Why am I fighting to live if I am living to fight? Why am I trying to see when there is nothing in sight? Why am I trying give when no one gives me a try? Why am I dying to live when I am living to die?” (Lyrics from Edgar Winter, Woodstock era in 1971).

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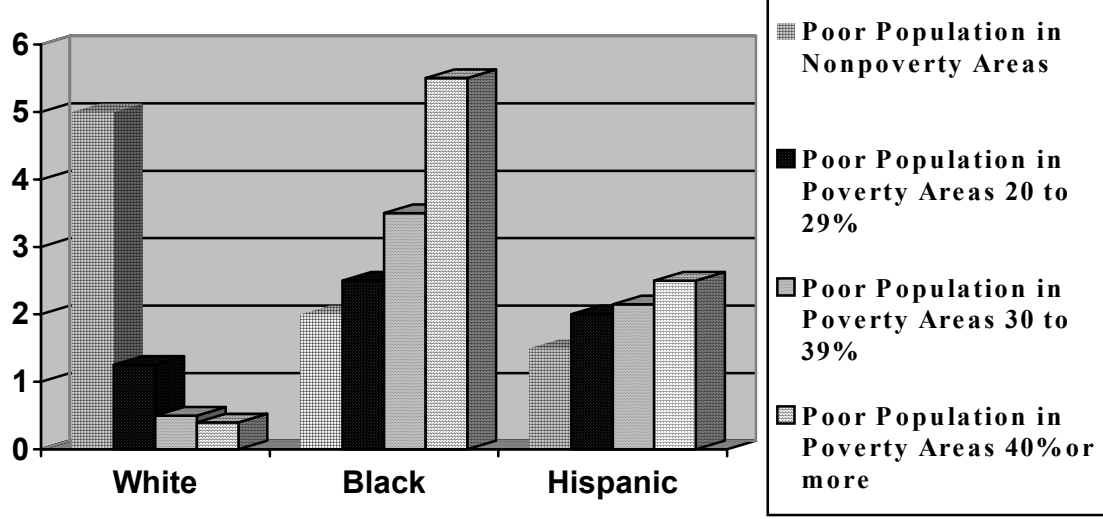
Winter, Edgar. "Dying to Live" Galaxy records, Woodstock era in 1971.

## Appendix



**Table 1.1**  
**Concentration of Poor Population in Non-Poverty and Poverty**  
**Areas in Five Largest Cities (Based on 1970 Census)**

(One Hundred Thousands)



Source: Wilson, William J. *The Truly Disadvantaged: The Inner City, the Underclass, and Public Policy*. The University of Chicago Press: Chicago, 1987. Pg. 59

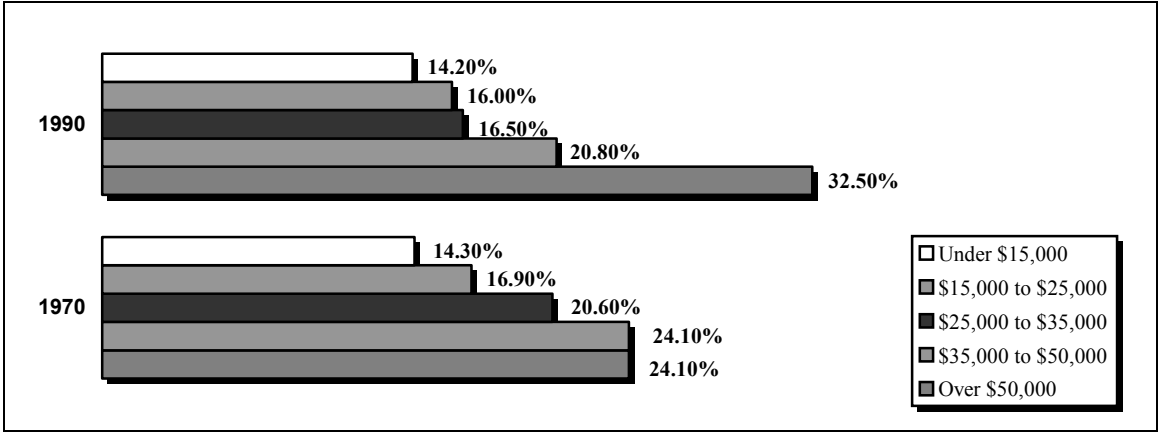
Table 1.2  
Poverty Percentage in America

<b>Poverty Percentages</b>			
	<u>White</u>	<u>Black</u>	<u>Multiple</u>
All Persons	8.8%	31.9%	3.63
All Children	15.9%	44.8%	2.82
All Families	8.1%	29.3%	3.62
Female Headed Households	37.9%	56.1%	1.48
<b><i>WHERE POOR AMERICANS LIVE</i></b>			
	<u>White</u>	<u>Black</u>	
Central Cities	32.7%	60.3%	
Suburbs	35.2%	17.5%	
Non metropolitan	<u>32.1%</u>	<u>22.2%</u>	
	100.0%	100.0%	

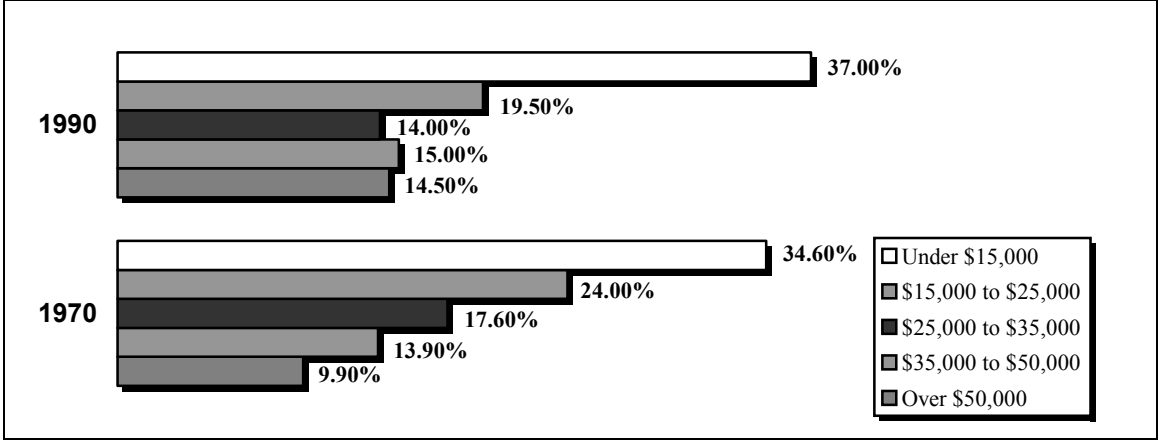
Source: Hacker, Andrew. Two Nations: Black and White, Separate, Hostile, Unequal. Charles Scribner's Sons: New York, 1992. Pg. 100

Table 1.3  
Income Distributions (1990 Dollars)

White Families Income Distribution



Black Families Income Distribution



Source: Hacker, Andrew. Two Nations: Black and White, Separate, Hostile, Unequal. Charles Scribner's Sons: New York, 1992. Pg. 98

**Table 1.4**  
**Many Central Cities (and Most are Small or Mid-Sized) Show**  
**Unacceptably High Unemployment Rates Relative to the Nation as**  
**a Whole Central City**  
 (Unemployment Rate by Population Size)

Unemployment Rate, Avg. 1998	All Cities		Small Cities * Less than 50,000		Mid-Sized Cities 50,000-100,000		Larger Cities 100,000-500,000		Largest Cities 500,000 or more	
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
6.8% or Higher (50% or more Above U.S. Rate)	95	17.5%	33	17.2%	35	19.4%	21	14.7%	6	25.0%
4.5% to 8.6%	163	30.2%	56	29.2%	56	31.1%	46	32.2%	5	20.8%
Less than 4.5% U.S. Rate	281	52.1%	103	53.6%	89	49.4%	76	53.1%	13	54.2%
	539		192		180		143		24	

Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics

\*NOTE: Unemployment Rate Data is not available for Central Cities of less than 25,000 population. These cities are classified as having employment rates less than the U.S. Rate.

**Table 1.5**  
**Shrinking Cities Tend to Struggle with Higher Unemployment and Poverty**  
**Central City Poverty Rate and Unemployment by Population**

Change Category

	1990 to 1996 Population Growth Class				Estimated Poverty Rate 1995 20% or More		Avg. 1998 Unempl. Rate* 50% U.S. Rate	
	#	% of All Central Cities	Est. Pov. Rate 1995	Unempl. Rate Avg 1998	#	% of Class	#	% of Class
<b>Decline 5% or more</b>	116	21.5%	24.2%	6.1%	64	55.2%	36	31.0%
<b>Decline Less than 5%</b>	67	12.4%	20.1%	4.6%	30	44.8%	8	11.9%
<b>Population Increase</b>	356	66.0%	18.4%	4.9%	76	21.3%	51	14.3%
<b>TOTAL</b>	539		19.8%	5.1%	170		95	
Source: HUD								
* NOTE: Unemployment Rate Data is not available for Central Cities of less than 25,000 population.								

## **Vita**

Tanjanesia A. Jackson, a native of New Orleans, LA, received her Bachelor of General Studies degree from Southeastern Louisiana University in Hammond, LA. Currently she is a candidate for her Masters of Science in Urban Studies at the University of New Orleans. After graduation, she plans to move to Philadelphia, PA to pursue employment with a housing agency or organization.