

Land Values and the Enduring Significance of Racial Residential Segregation

Henry Louis Taylor, Jr.

I. Introduction

The life chances of many African Americans are tied to their experiences in underdeveloped central city neighborhoods. The implication of living in these Black spaces was suggested in a provocative question posed by the historian Carol Anderson in her book, *Eyes on the Prize*, which I paraphrase, “How could the Civil Rights Movement leave in its wake a nation where schools are more segregated than ever, where Black workers are stuck in low-income jobs, where racial residential integration is a dream deferred, where most Black children live in poverty, where significant health disparities exist between the races, and where Blacks comprise 32% of American prisoners but only 13% of the population?”

I theorize that African Americans have made minimal socioeconomic advancements since the Civil Rights Era because of racial residential segregation. Residential segregation is more than the separation of Blacks and Whites in geographical space. It is a market-driven system of denying African Americans equal and equitable access to education, jobs, in-

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comes, wealth, and other critical services and experiences that bolster their life’s opportunities and outcomes. For this reason, researchers that study neighborhood effects have convincingly argued that neighborhood-based social determinants produce undesirable health and socioeconomic outcomes among Blacks. Consequently, African Americans cannot make significant socioeconomic progress until this racist system of segregation is dismantled and their neighborhoods turned into great places to live, work, play, and raise a family. The ending of racial segregation will require dismantling the land value system that undergirds it.

II. The Systemic Structural Racism Framework

Persistent racial residential segregation is an American paradox. The nation

has celebrated the ideal of inclusivity, residential integration, and social mobility since the dismantling Jim Crow racism in the 1960s. Yet, despite the passage of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, the Fair Housing Act of 1968, and the outlawing of redlining, restrictive covenants, and discrimination in the rental and sale of housing, residential segregation endures and continues to define Whiteness and frame storylines about Blackness. Why does residential segregation endure despite efforts to end it?

Discussion of residential segregation typically defaults into narratives about government housing policies, individual preferences, and discriminatory practices. I want to take a different approach by situating residential segregation within market dynamics and systemic structural racism and social class inequality. The

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intent is to shift the conversation away from “state blaming” and the actions of individual Whites and to refocus it on the markets and systems that produced these segregated outcomes. The systemic structural framework is critical to understanding how market dynamics interact with state systems to produce residential segregation. Structural racism refers to institutions merged into systems that operate to bring about undesirable socioeconomic and health outcomes for Blacks. Although institutions and systems’ operations are unique, they nevertheless work interactively to generate policies, programs, and activities that produce unwanted social, economic, cultural, and political outcomes for Blacks and people of color.

Operating within this market-driven structural racism framework, the education, labor, housing, and land valorization systems interactively function to push Blacks into low-value, marginalized, and underdeveloped neighborhoods. For example, the failure of resource-depleted schools that often service the Black community reduces Black success in the labor market, while Whites have the competitive edge because of their access to resource-rich schools with an abundance of extra-curricular activities. Blacks are the perpetual losers in this rigged labor market competition and the resulting low incomes force them to search for housing in the most undesirable residential settlements in a metropolis.

Many Blacks are trapped in these low-value, marginalized, and underdeveloped neighborhoods. The sociologist Patrick Sharkey argues that they are stuck in place. Based on a longitudinal study of African Americans in Chicago over four decades, beginning in 1968, Sharkey concludes that residential mobility does not exist for most Blacks. Roughly three-quarters of all Black children who grew up in the 1970s and 1980s in underdeveloped Chicago neighborhoods were still poor and living in the same type of localities in 2008. These Blacks did move, but their new neighborhoods were no different from the ones they left behind. As Sharkey puts it, they were stuck in place.

The racist land valorization system is the producer of these racially segregated neighborhoods. The real estate appraiser

Frederick M. Babcock invented this land value system based on the intertwining of race, place, economics, and culture. A belief that the mere presence of Blacks in a community reduces residential property values anchors the system. However, land value is not an autonomous ontological feature of the city-building process, but a system that is reflective of, and constituted by, prevailing social values and biases. Babcock played to the racist sentiments of Whites in developing a land value system that supported racism and the commodification of the owner-occupied house and its transformation into a wealth-producing vehicle. Therefore, he structured a mortgage-risk system in which the presence or absence of Blacks determined the value of housing and neighborhoods.

Babcock argued that neighborhoods had life-cycles and that the presence of Blacks in a community signaled the onset of a period of rapid decline in that area. In this system, as the percent of Whites and social class exclusivity-- measured in terms of median household income and percent of the population with a college degree— increases in a locality, so does the house-value and the wealth-producing

The ending of racial segregation will require dismantling the land value that undergirds it.

capacity of that residential district. On the flip side, as the percent of Blacks and social class inclusivity increases, the house-value and wealth-producing power of that residential district decreases. These residential districts are scattered across a land value continuum, and where a community falls along this continuum will determine its housing values, amenities, hedonic features, and access to quality goods and services.

This land value system structured an urban residential environment characterized by neighborhood inequality and settlements in which Blacks and Whites lived in separate and unequal neighborhoods. A public-private partnership created the strategic framework for de facto residentially segregated communities during the Depression era. These racially segregated neighborhoods structured relations among

government, the White masses, and Black people. Thus, on the eve of the Second Great Migration of African Americans to urban centers, the government and their private sector allies had already created a new method of residentially segregating Blacks. In this system, White racism and economic advantage are inextricably bound together. This interconnectivity drives the residential segregation process and produces a culture infused with racial stereotypes and biases to support it.

III. Black Neighborhood and Predatory Development

Our story does not end here. Blacks pay a heavy price for being segregated in residential spaces. Scholars typically conceptualize Black communities as disadvantaged, poor, or sites of disinvestment and concentrated poverty. I conceptualize these Black neighborhoods as underdeveloped places characterized by “segrenomics” and predatory entrepreneurship. A high wall of land values trapped Blacks in these underdeveloped sites, where they do not own the land on which they are building their community.

These sociospatial units become the site of oppression, exploitation, and contestation because Blacks have limited housing and shopping options; segrenomics dominate. Segrenomics refers to the predatory profit-making activities that occur in communities where residential segregation limits residents’ consumption options. Thus, in these residential districts, predatory landlords generate hyper-profits in Black neighborhoods by delaying or postponing maintenance and charging high rents. Neighborhood merchants overcharge them for goods and services. Local governments fail to maintain streets and sidewalks, poorly maintain publicly owned vacant lots, and refuse to aggressively enforce existing housing and building codes. Concurrently, these residents are often the target of excessive fines and ticketing for municipal revenue-generating purposes. Meanwhile, greedy bankers and realtors turn the Black community into a golden goose of profitability through the use of subprime loans, mass foreclosures, and other unscrupulous home finance meth-

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The Making of Boston's AFFH Ordinance - A Brief Oral History

In late 2020, the City of Boston announced new legislation amending the city's zoning code to include affirmatively furthering fair housing requirements. The legislation, effective in March 2021, evolved out of extensive local advocacy efforts and community concern around housing issues, spurred in part by the recent Assessment of Fair Housing (AFH) process and related public engagement efforts by the advocacy community. It requires that proposed developments be assessed for both their impact on historical exclusion and displacement risk and that developers identify measures to further fair housing.

Below, members of the Boston advocacy community and City Councilor Lydia Edwards recount some key lessons from the effort to pass this landmark piece of local legislation. This conversation was facilitated by Megan Haberle, Deputy Director, Poverty & Race Research Action Council.

Nadine Cohen: I am an attorney at Greater Boston Legal Services, and I used to be on the Board of the Fair Housing Center of Greater Boston. I've been a long-term fair housing attorney and advocate. I got involved early on in the Assessment of Fair Housing (AFH) process that the city of Boston was doing to meet their obligation to Affirmatively Further Fair Housing. I was also part of this community advisory board and have been working with this group and with Councilor Lydia Edwards to get both the AFH and AFFH amendment included in the zoning code.

Kathy Brown: I'm from the Boston Tenant Coalition (BTC), which co-anchored the whole AFH organizing process with the Fair Housing Center of Greater Boston. We worked together to help the city create a good AFH, as intended by the Obama administration's framework. [Our community] engagement was really extensive. I'm really proud of all our effort around organizing and engagement. And we've just been supportive since day one of Councilor Edwards' amazing AFFH amendment.

James Jennings: I'm a professor

emeritus at Tufts University, and I became involved initially as a consultant to the Boston Housing Authority. The late Bill McGonagle, who I did some work for at the Boston Housing Authority, asked me to come on board and help with the data piece primarily, and then I also became involved in the writing some of the drafts. By the second or third drafts, the city then requested that they borrow me from the BHA. And so, I worked on writing the June 2019 draft report (as we like calling it, the June-teenth report) and presented it to the city.

Lydia Edwards: I'm a City Councilor in Boston. I represent District One, which is East Boston, Charlestown, and the North End. Many people are at ground zero for school busing in Charlestown.

[Unless] you are intentional in your planning, unless you are actually integrating civil rights in how you design a new neighborhood, you actually injure the underserved...[t]hat is the direct connection between zoning and civil rights...

And now East Boston is the home of the single largest private development in the city [the Suffolk Downs redevelopment project]. I am a former - but forever in my heart - practicing attorney at Greater Boston Legal Services. So that's where I met a lot of these folks. I did community organizing for immigrants and domestic workers before I was in politics. I also ran a legal clinic for domestic workers. Currently, I'm doing a lot in housing and zoning. I helped draft and introduced the first version of this zoning amendment.

David Harris: I'm with the Charles Hamilton Houston Institute for Race and Justice at Harvard Law School. I've been in this space through the development of the Seaport and everything else. I was the founding director at the Fair Housing Center of Greater Boston. Even though I don't do fair housing directly anymore,

due to my background and racial justice perch, I've continued to work with this committee and the city and to just generally be a thorn in the city's side. It's really such an honor to be able to have a relationship with our elected officials and activists doing this work.

Megan Haberle (PRRAC): My first question is: what do you see as the connection between zoning and fair housing, and how did your thinking about that connection inform the creation of this new requirement in Boston?

Lydia Edwards: I think what I have learned and what I've seen through the research, especially in Boston is that zoning has been one of the greatest undoers of civil rights and fair housing goals. It has been how the city and local municipalities avoid actually having to integrate and build inclusive communities.

Zoning for too many has been the injury. [Some in power] pretend that it's raceless, classless, and just about density, height, or traffic. One example of this perspective at work in Boston was the creation of the Seaport district. That demonstrated that unless you are intentional in your planning, unless you are actually integrating civil rights in how you design a new neighborhood, you actually injure the underserved. Now you have one of the whitest, richest neighborhoods in Boston, and that was just done recently in a city that is becoming browner. That is the direct connection between zoning and civil rights, and unless we intentionally bring civil rights to zoning, it will injure the moral compass of the city.

Oftentimes the problem is the capitalist understanding that if you build more, you'll get more - there'll be a trickle down to the underserved - or that marketing affordable units, in diverse communities is somehow meeting the obligation to Affirmatively Further Fair Housing.

That's traditionally been how the Boston Planning and Development Agency (formerly Boston Redevelopment Authority) has met its obligation. We'll just tell everybody of all colors that they can't afford to live here. [The AFFH] amendment is there to undo those injuries and

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ods that bilk homebuyers of millions.

When Blacks do become homeowners, they discover that their homes are situated in places where house values appreciate at a much lower rate than in White communities. In all too many instances, the Black owner-occupied house is more of a cultural artifact than a vehicle of wealth production. These underdeveloped and marginalized Black residential districts are stigmatized, their oppressive and exploitative conditions normalized, and mass arrests and lethal police force are used to control the masses. According to the Washington Post, Blacks are killed by the police at more than twice the rate of Whites.

The underlying assumption undergirding the residential segregation paradigm is the seeming impossibility of radically transforming these underdeveloped Black sociospatial units. This theory, based on the work of Robert E. Park, Ernest K. Burgess, and the Chicago School of Sociology, caused “integration” and residential mobility to become the default goal of urban planners and policymakers. Blacks have always favored “integration,” not because of an affinity for Whites, but because of the high levels of residential development found in White spaces. Yet, Whites will resist racial residential integration because the apartheid system rewards them economically and provides them with accumulated privileges/advantages and benefits and a competitive edge in the educational and labor markets. That’s why more than sixty years after the 1954 Supreme Court decision outlawing school segregation and more than fifty years after the Fair Housing Act outlawed housing discrimination, America is still a highly segregated society. According to the St. Louis Federal Reserve Bank’s dataset on White-Non-White dissimilarity index for each of the nation’s counties, most American cities remain highly segregated, especially those with large African American populations. The index of dissimilarity ranges from 0 to 100. It measures the percentage of the non-Whites in a county that would have to change census tracts to equalize the racial distribution between Blacks and Whites across all tracts in the country.

IV. Disrupting Predatory Development and the Land Valorization System

Practitioners, activists, and policymakers must base strategies for solving

the Black underdeveloped neighborhood problem on five interacting realities. First, Black neighborhoods’ stigmatization is to normalize the oppressive and exploitative conditions found there, to justify poverty deconcentration programs aimed mostly at public housing units, and to rationalize neglect of these communities by the local government. Second, Blacks are stuck in place because of constrained residential mobility. Third, Blacks are a renter-dominated community that does not own or control the land on which their communities are built. Fourth, Whites resist race and social class integration because they economically and socially benefit from residential segregation. Lastly, racialized spatial inequities result from a

The first strategy features a people-centered neighborhood regeneration plan designed to allow for community ownership and control over the land on which Blacks are building their community.

racist land valorization system that generates high land values in white neighborhoods by reducing land value in Black neighborhoods. This land value system drives residential segregation, so it has to be dismantled to build just cities based on racial and social class inclusivity.

The underdevelopment of Black neighborhoods is part of the larger problem of neighborhood inequality and it must be attacked on a metropolitan level. The plan should consist of two interactive strategies aimed at disrupting market-driven metropolitan residential development. The first strategy features a people-centered neighborhood regeneration plan designed to allow for community ownership and control over the land on which Blacks are building their community. The design must pursue collective ownership, build community wealth, and emphasize developing political power. These political actions should not only include radical electoral politics, but also building alliances with other community groups across the urban metropolis.

Concurrently, it is necessary to imbue

Black space with a culture that supports and reinforces the collective approach to everyday life and culture. The intent is to pursue participatory democracy, communal ownership, and shared equity to inform the transformation of the Black community into a great place to live. The community land trust is the most vital tool in this quest for communal ownership, and it must be pursued with other forms of collective ownership, including cooperatives, limited equity cooperatives, deed-restricted houses, and condominiums, along with a cultural framework that supports a collective way of life. Finally, I want to stress that the regeneration strategy involves a remaking of the institutions and programs servicing the Black community, including schools and policing.

The second strategy uses a radical residential mobility scheme to enable Blacks, desirous of leaving the community, to move to other parts of the metropolis. Existing residential mobility stratagems, built on HUD’s tenant-based subsidy programs, focus on moving people into “opportunity neighborhoods” without necessarily restructuring those communities or altering their racist culture. Radical residential mobility, in contrast, is not about “race mingling” or merely living next door to Whites, but it is about a process of changing these White-dominated neighborhoods so that these communities can accommodate and meet the needs of the Black newcomers, as well as other people of color. Radical racial mobility is an anti-racist residential inclusive strategy that operates at a greater scale than existing mobility programs. It requires the deep cultural and structural transformation of White space to disrupt the land value system and recreate residential space so that it meets the cultural, social, and physical needs and desires of the Black and colored newcomers. Such changes require altering the land value system, erasing the culture of White supremacy, and mitigating market dynamics in these White residential spaces.

The abundant neighborhood effects literature indicates that Blacks will never get free if they live in stigmatized, marginalized, and undeveloped neighborhoods, plagued by the activities of predatory entrepreneurs and complicit anti-Black government officials. The Black community

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The American Right to Education: The Northwest Ordinance, Reconstruction, and the Current Challenge

Derek W. Black

The original theory of America was quite radical. In a world ruled by kings and queens, our founders sought to turn political power over to average people. This new experiment in self-government depended on educated citizens. Without education, the founders feared democracy would devolve into mob rule and open doors to unscrupulous politicians and hucksters. Our democratic experiment might very well just fail. As Benjamin Franklin bluntly acknowledged at the close of our Constitutional Convention, the founders had established “a republic, if you can keep it.”

Recognizing the challenge, the nation’s commitment to public education actually predates the Constitution itself. Two years before the Constitutional Convention met, the Continental Congress needed to resolve the colonies’ competing land claims in the western territories and establish the rules for creating new states, not just extensions of existing ones. The solution came in the form of the Northwest Ordinances, which still today are reprinted at the front of every copy of the United States Code alongside the Constitution and Declaration of Independence. In 1785, the Northwest Ordinance divided new lands into territories and towns that would ultimately become the states of Ohio, Illinois, Indiana, Michigan, Wisconsin, and Minnesota. Those same rules later governed land west of the Mississippi too. In total, the Northwest Ordinance helped shape thirty-one states.

Education was embedded into the

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structure of these future states. The Northwest Ordinance divided every town into thirty-six lots and reserved a center lot for public schools, requiring outer lots to generate resources for those schools. Then, while delegates were literally drafting the Constitution, the Continental Congress added a guiding principle to the Ordinance: “religion, morality, and knowledge, being necessary to good government and the happiness of mankind, schools and the means of education shall forever be encouraged.”

Our founding era presidents also explored the nation to expand public education as rapidly as possible. President George Washington urged Congress that no “duty [is] more pressing on [the na-

The Northwest Ordinance divided every town into thirty-six lots and reserved a center lot for public schools...

tional] legislature” than “the common education of a portion of our youth from every quarter.” The very “prospect of [a] permanent union” depends on their education. Thomas Jefferson was similarly convinced that public education is “necessary to prepare citizens to participate effectively and intelligently in our open political system [and] to preserve freedom and independence.” He boldly proposed committing the nation’s financial treasure and future surpluses to education—and amending the Constitution if necessary. John Adams was even more specific, arguing that government has a responsibility to provide education to “every rank and class of people, down to the lowest and the poorest” and pay for it at “public expense.”

Yet universal access to public education—much like universal participation in self-government—was a concept honored more in American ideas than real-

ity during the nation’s first century. The most glaring breach was slavery. In addition to physical slavery, states tried to bind African Americans’ minds, making it a crime for slaves to read and write.

That breach, however, evoked responses that involved some of the nation’s most inspiring and redeeming moments—moments that the modern mind struggles to fully appreciate. Slaves fled for Union lines shortly after the Civil War began and, once safe, made the acquisition of learning—a right long denied them—a top priority. Makeshift schools immediately sprang up and quickly swelled beyond capacity across the South—from Fort Monroe along the Virginia coast (the location where slaves had ironically first arrived in America) to the banks of the Mississippi. Some schools had over one thousand students.

Underneath these efforts was a deep human longing. For instance, when a white missionary teacher first arrived at a freedmen’s camp along the Mississippi River, an elderly former slave greeted her at the water’s edge, immediately indicating that he knew her purpose: “I’se been ’spectin you...for de last twenty years. I knowed you would come, and now I rejoice.” Similarly, when asked if she wasn’t “too old to learn,” an eighty-five-year-old woman explained that “she must learn now or not at all, as she had but little time left, and she must make the most of it.”

Swelling numbers and passion soon transitioned into a burgeoning movement. Freedmen asked for, and sometimes demanded, education through letters, face-to-face encounters, and the organizations they created to advocate for education. Their expectation and articulation of what freedom meant—and education’s central role in it—literally redefined the nation’s constitutional norms regarding citizenship. With education and voting at the top of the freedmen’s list, those things were soon at the

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top of Congress's too. For instance, as a condition for rejoining the Union after the war, Congress forced Southern states to rewrite their state constitutions and embed the right to education in them.

Senator Charles Sumner wanted to go even further. He offered an amendment to the Reconstruction Act to require that the system of education that southern states were about to create would be "open to all, without distinction of race or color." The Amendment surprisingly failed by a single vote, but the idea even more unfathomably made its way into southern state constitutions anyway. No less than South Carolina led the way. Delegates to its constitutional convention argued that "[i]t is republicanism to reward virtue. It is republicanism to educate the people, without discrimination." Another explained that "the question is not white or black united or divided, but whether children shall be sent to school or kept at home. If they are compelled to be educated, there will be no danger of the Union, or a second secession of South Carolina from the Union." Those arguments carried the day and a constitutional guarantee of education soon became the national norm. No state ever again entered the Union without guaranteeing education in its constitution and other existing states following suit.

Today, all fifty state constitutions protect the right to education. This right and its protections were so successful over the past half-century that one might have concluded that the constitutional rights to education and voting, proceeding together, secured an irreversible triumph. Notwithstanding imperfections in our voting and educational systems, the rights to vote and education were no longer in serious dispute. The overwhelming majority of Americans seemingly believed that everyone ought to be able to vote and that the federal and state governments must ensure a quality education all.

But democracy's triumphs are rarely irreversible or settled. Some states—aided and sometimes prodded by federal officials—have been trying to take

the gift of public education back. They are turning their backs on ideas as old as the constitutions under which they operate. While threats to the ballot are immediately understood as threats to democracy, attacks on public education are not always fully appreciated as such. But rest assured, just as the gift of public education has helped build up our democracy, taking it back threatens to tear down our democracy.

Fortunately, regular citizens are standing in opposition. In 2018 and 2019, tens of thousands of citizens—including in the reddest of red states—marched together, demanding that their legislatures fully fund public schools,

[A]s a condition for rejoining the Union after the war, Congress forced Southern states to rewrite their state constitutions and embed the right to education in them.

fairly compensate teachers, and place real limits on the privatization of education in the form of charter schools and vouchers. After securing key legislative victories in the states and catching the attention of the full democratic slate of presidential candidates, public education appeared poised for a comeback.

A worldwide pandemic, however, reset the political, cultural, and economic landscape again. States immediately cut public education budgets and gave no consideration to the fact that the cost

of education would soon rise, not drop. As education went online and stayed there, the technology gap became more important than ever before and expanded already unacceptable achievement gaps. Sensing a freefall, parents with means began retreating to their corners, worried less with the overall health of the education system and far more with maintaining their kids' competitive advantages. The result was a wave of new private school enrollments, pandemic pods, and individualized demands. National leaders, including President Trump and Secretary DeVos, eventually charged that public education itself was the problem and holding the nation back, throwing more fuel on the fire of one of the most divisive presidential elections of the modern era.

History suggests both danger and possibility ahead. Public education has always served to bring disparate groups together and expand opportunity to those without it. It also reveals that private institutions have never been successful in systematically doing either of those things. America's ability to reach the other side of crisis as a stronger nation rests not upon radical new ideas that denigrate or undermine public education but upon its willingness to cling to those ideas that were once radical, two hundred years ago, and managed to get us this far. And the events of January 6, 2021, painfully remind us that we remain on a precipice, that we have never fully committed to those ideas, and still have a long road ahead. ■

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Gentrification, Demographic Change, and the Challenges of Integration

Kfir Mordechay

Since the Supreme Court ordered the desegregation of American schools in 1954, the legacy of *Brown v. Board of Education* has yielded both progress and disappointment. The unanimous ruling not only started the process of eliminating de jure racial segregation in education, but also set the precedent for removing the same barriers to housing access, employment, civic participation, and other facets of American society (Noguera, 2019). Yet, even as we acknowledge the historic significance of *Brown*, there have been many changes since. Intense levels of segregation—which had decreased markedly in the decades after 1954—are now on the rise. This is happening as American society is in the midst of profound demographic changes, with the country’s suburbs and gentrifying areas at the forefront (Mordechay, Gándara, & Orfield, 2019). This article seeks to describe the phenomenon of gentrification and its complex interplay with public schools. It then considers how policy might be deployed to minimize gentrification’s harms while harnessing some of the benefits it may present for a return toward the vision of *Brown*.

The question of equity in education remains as relevant now as it was at the dawn of the Civil Rights Movement, but the context of today could hardly be more different. Simply put, Americans are vastly more diverse. Whereas Whites accounted for approximately 90% of the population in the decade of the *Brown* ruling, their share has steadily dropped. Since 1980, the share of Whites has declined from close to 80% to 60% of the total population, with some projections suggesting the nation will become “minority white” around 2045 (Frey, 2018). K-12 schools have already hit that point (figure 1). And yet racial segregation in U.S. public schools is increasing in many parts of the country (Frankenberg, et al., 2019).

Racially isolated schools are associated with a plethora of unequal education-

al outcomes, including less experienced and less qualified teachers as well as high levels of teacher turnover (Clotfelter et al., 2010). Students attending segregated schools also have fewer and less advanced curricular options as well as inferior facilities and resources (Yun & Moreno, 2006). As a result of these compounded disadvantages, the outcomes for students who attend segregated schools include lower academic achievement (Mickelson & Nkomo, 2012), higher dropout rates, and lower graduation rates (Balfanz & Legters, 2004).

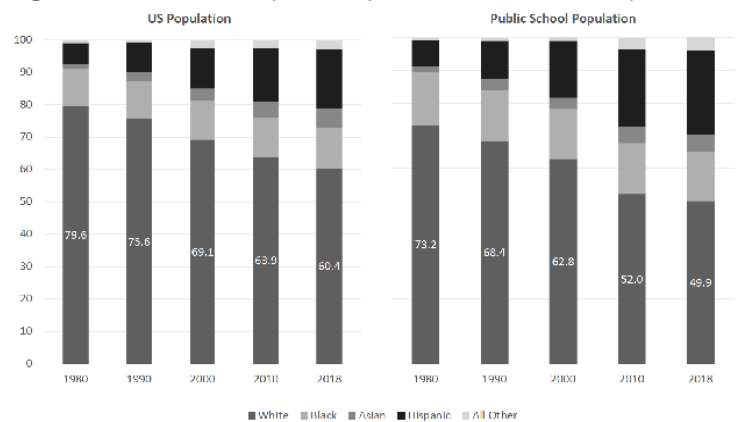
The segregated features of American neighborhoods, especially housing patterns are a major driver of racial school segregation. Although this link has loosened in recent years, the vast majority of children still attend their local neighborhood public school (Snyder et al., 2019). Because of the tightly linked relationship between housing and school attendance, scholars have begun to pay attention to the phenomenon of gentrification, through which affluent and educated, and mostly White households have swept back into the urban cores from which their parents once fled. As a result, a notable number of communities have become newly heterogeneous via this process of gentrification, particularly since 2000 (Ellen & Torratts-Espinosa, 2018). This carries potentially significant implications for many urban school districts across the country.

I. Gentrification: From Minor to Major Force

The term gentrification dates back to the early 1960s to describe the migration and subsequent transformation of working-class areas of East London (Glass, 1964). Since then, the definition of gentrification, as well as its causes and consequences, has been widely debated among scholars, activists, and the gen-

eral public. Gentrification in its classic form entails an influx of higher socioeconomic status individuals and outside, often predatory, investment into relatively poor neighborhoods that have experienced disinvestment. Most scholarship has emphasized neighborhood changes in educational attainment, housing stock, and income as the defining features of gentrification. In recent decades, however, race has also become a central feature.

Figure 1: Race and Ethnicity of US Population and Public Schools, 1980-2018



Historically, gentrification has been a minor force of urban change in most cities, but there is general agreement that it has become much more substantial in a number of urban centers in the last two decades (Ellen & Torratts-Espinosa, 2018; Florida, 2003). The scope of this demographic shift has been large, with some estimates suggesting that 20% of neighborhoods in America’s fifty largest cities have experienced gentrification over the last two decades. In several cities with more extensive levels of gentrification, more than half of all neighborhoods have been gentrified (Maciag, 2015). Perhaps most surprising is that this trend is a reversal of decades of disinvestment and white flight in the mid-20th century.

Many theories have been offered to explain what is fueling gentrification. These accounts range from drastic decreases in violent crime (Ellen, et al. 2019), increased racial tolerance by Whites (Sander, 2018), deliberate urban revitalization efforts by municipal governments (Smith, 1996), millennials’ distaste for commuting (Okulicz-Kozaryn & Valente,

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2019), and two decades of development plans tailored to the “creative class” of college-educated professionals. These forces along with increasing affordability pressures drive higher-income households to lower-income neighborhoods in search of less costly housing (Ellen, et al. 2013), further fueling gentrification.

II. Gentrification and Neighborhood Schools

In spite of these trends, gentrifying neighborhoods that achieve racial and economically diverse communities may not result in diverse schools. High SES and White families who move into transitioning neighborhoods often do not send their children to the neighborhood school, instead choosing private schools, charters outside the neighborhood, or other choice programs. However, recent data seems to suggest this may be changing, and some schools serving gentrifying neighborhoods may be experiencing a decrease in segregation (Mordechay & Ayscue, 2020; Deim et al., 2019). Several recent analyses of traditional public schools in New York City and the District of Columbia found that in the cities’ most rapidly gentrifying areas, White enrollment increased and school segregation declined, albeit modestly (Mordechay & Ayscue, 2020, 2019).

In addition, the rise of charter schools has presented an added layer of complexity for understanding schooling within gentrification contexts. Some research shows that charter school emergence may actually facilitate gentrification in many circumstances (Pearman & Swain 2017). Charter school growth may lead to a rise in school segregation and a decline in residential segregation as neighborhood and school choices decouple (Rich et al. 2021). Also, several recent studies have documented that in urban districts where charter school options proliferate alongside gentrification, neighborhood diversity does not necessarily trickle down to the nearby charter schools (Mann et al., 2020; Bischoff & Tach, 2020; Mordechay & Ayscue, 2017). As charter schools expand across urban centers, it remains unclear whether or not they are an obstacle to the desegregation of local schools.

Scholars have begun investigating the social and racial tensions that often accompany these demographic shifts. Gentrifier parents can bring needed resources and improvements to local schools that have been historically segregated.

However, these same parents may also lead to the marginalization of the populations that preceded them at the school (Posey-Maddox, 2014; Siegel-Hawley et al., 2016; New York Times, 2020). Studies exploring modern parenting practices have suggested that this is in part driven by a set of common fears and anxieties that motivate privileged parents to engage in exclusionary behaviors that often “hoard opportunities” (Goyette & Lareau, 2014). This in turn creates a dynamic where school leaders find themselves rarely willing to challenge this behavior and frequently cater to higher-SES, White families, undermining the equity aims of the school (Mordechay, 2021; Calarco, 2020). These power and privilege dynamics can create highly racialized environments in which race and class shape student experiences in ways that might accentuate inequality. All of this points towards a complicated interplay between school diversity and urban gentrification.

III. Implications

While gentrification can be an inexorable destructive force in neighborhoods without significant protections in place, these communities also have an opportunity to harness the upsides of neighborhood change and alleviate the stark racial and economic isolation that has been so pervasive throughout urban America. In order for the outcome of gentrification to be a shared opportunity, efforts at meaningful integration across the lines of class and race are important. To achieve longer-term integration, however, policymakers will need to work in coordination with housing and education entities as well as community-based organizations, leveraging existing community assets and resources. The goal must be to seek a revitalization model that will work for both long-time residents and newcomers.

Keeping Neighborhoods Affordable

Limited housing supply and increased demand in central cities have combined to cause housing prices to skyrocket, which puts vulnerable households at risk of displacement. Housing market pressures are especially pronounced in gentrifying neighborhoods (Freeman & Schuetz, 2017). Cognizant of the potential pitfalls of gentrification, a number of cities and nonprofits are utilizing community preference policies allowing residents priority access to subsidized housing built in

their neighborhoods. Such programs can target low-income residents who are at the highest risk of displacement (such as renters), or those that have long ties to the community. For example, the city of Portland recently adopted a program that gives affordable housing to residents who were displaced as a result of past redevelopment efforts. Similarly, other cities including San Francisco, Seattle, New York City, and Austin have adopted similar policies (Goetz, 2018). For these policies to be effective, they must be carefully tailored to the particular community and regularly reviewed for compliance with the Fair Housing Act (for example, New York City’s policy was challenged in a Fair Housing Act lawsuit filed in 2015 that is still pending in 2021). Properly crafted community preference policies can be an effective strategy for minimizing displacement and ensuring that long-term residents of color benefit from neighborhood improvements occurring around them. In addition, preserving subsidized housing that already exists in gentrifying communities can help to lock in diversity over the long term. In strong market neighborhoods, local governments should also enact policies that protect existing tenants from harassment and evictions.

The social environments of newly gentrifying communities are often characterized by limited social interaction across races and class, and often with dynamics of exclusion. For the communities to be truly integrated, intentional efforts to break through the challenging social barriers are critical, including developing more inclusive forms of governance and welcoming public spaces for shared use (Chaskin & Joseph, 2015). Long-standing community organizations are likely best equipped to help break down the social barriers that are common within demographically shifting neighborhoods. This can help ensure that all residents feel part of the community and can take full advantage of any emerging opportunities.

Schools as Anchors of Integration

A key neighborhood feature in both attracting and retaining families with children are the local public schools. Efforts to integrate gentrifying families into local schools must include policies, practices, and effective leadership that are responsive to both new and long-time

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residents (Mordechay & Ayscue, 2018). Once schools in gentrifying areas attract a more diverse student body, additional policies and practices are needed to ensure schools are not just desegregated on the surface and segregated within. Simply assigning students to schools in a manner that creates diversity will not produce desired outcomes. Making sure that the teachers of diverse classrooms are prepared to handle the challenges that often accompany rapid demographic shifts is imperative. Providing these educators with professional development opportunities that focus on strategies for adapting to racial changes can help ensure equitable inclusion of students from all backgrounds. As has been well documented, tension in gentrifying urban schools is common. Therefore, preparing school leadership to work effectively with all parents is essential, especially ensuring that the schools do not become sites for opportunity hoarding by the more privileged parents.

In addition to leadership preparation that combines high-quality research and hands-on experience, it is important to consider the racial and ethnic diversity of school leadership. Administrators of color can have a number of distinct advantages, including more trust when communicating with community members that share their racial and ethnic background. Therefore, in diversifying schools located in racially transitioning neighborhoods, districts should prioritize hiring a diverse corps of principals.

Embracing Diversity

American society is in the midst of profound demographic changes; and as the nation becomes more diverse, a return toward the undoing of segregation and the vision of *Brown* becomes more imperative. Currently, gentrification is a growing social and economic force in many cities, offering an opportunity to integrate what were once segregated neighborhoods and schools. While unchecked gentrification is unlikely to produce any lasting integration, it is possible that with explicit diversity efforts from schools and communities, gentrification could lead to shared opportunities for all stakeholders. ■

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to create healing. It requires us to hold a mirror up to the developers and say: ‘This is what you purchased in 2021, here is what it looked like in past decades; here’s the displacement crisis that you are now responsible for undoing; these are the injuries; and now, here’s a whole list of mitigation measures. You will be part of helping to undo those harms through planning and zoning.’

James Jennings: It’s interesting that the zoning codes for the city of Boston were established in 1956. We have the Fair Housing Act of 1968. This basically represented two divergent narratives for the city of Boston up until a few weeks ago. When you look at the zoning codes in Boston, there isn’t one word on fair housing, decades after the Fair Housing Act of 1968. In a sense, the amendment at last conjoins fair housing and zoning, as should have been clear all along.

Kathy Brown: In terms of backdrop, I would add that the Boston Tenant Coalition, in addition to helping to anchor the AFH community advisory committee, also anchors a coalition around inclusionary development policy, Coalition for a Truly Affordable Boston. We’re trying to reform that in Boston and are working with Councilor Edwards on the state level and city level. The reality is as the Councilor said, the mayor’s housing strategy has been build, build, build. It’s approximately 57,000 units, that’s what they say the need in the city of Boston is to address housing needs. Right now, it is maybe 15,000 units of those that are affordable? Part of the way of getting there is inclusionary development, but the reality is that the development that is happening is mostly market rate, and a lot of luxury units. While the payout has been improved, the actual percentage of units that are affordable is so paltry. And the income targeting by “Area Median Income” just doesn’t work.

David Harris: I’m not as versed on zoning as others here, and I want to make sure that we get a different point in the record. It has to do with the Seaport and the work that Nadine and I did long ago, back when the Seaport was known as the South Boston Seaport. The reason it was known as the South Boston Seaport was

so that the community benefits could go to the South Boston Betterment Trust, set up for the benefit of “long time residents” of South Boston. We fought the racist idea that only one group could benefit from the creation of one of the first new neighborhoods in any city in the country. We had an opportunity to create a brand-new neighborhood, and there was a struggle over that and we were able to successfully stop it, but then we didn’t have all the tools to stop it. It’s really important to understand the role of community organizing and agitation, but you also have to have the statutes.

Megan Haberle: With regard to the AFFH amendment, could folks speak a bit to the role of the community in pushing

We wholly adopted the Obama administration definition of AFFH on purpose because it has tried, true, tested case law to support it.

the effort forward, and also to the interaction between advocacy groups and the council? How did that effort come into being and to fruition?

Nadine Cohen: I think the community part started with the Affirmatively Furthering Fair Housing mandate from the Obama administration. The mandate calls for looking broadly at all the things that go on in a municipality that keep people from having the opportunity to get housing, live in any community, and get the services they need - everything from healthcare to transportation, to education. It’s so much broader than just housing. Through the efforts of the Boston Tenants Coalition, and this group of us that came together from legal services, and we had people from ACE, an environmental justice group in the community. We initially had the Lawyers’ Committee for Civil Rights and a number of other community groups as well come together. We went out and had many community meetings. The city was involved as well and talked about what the major housing issues were. And I think it all came back to displacement, unaffordable housing, and lack of services. I think that informed a lot of our

decision-making.

The community became energized by Councilor Edwards’s efforts to amend the zoning code and include fair housing. It was a great connection between political activists, community activists, lawyers, academics, environmental justice groups, and health advocacy groups. I think that was a very important part of this.

Megan Haberle: Could you highlight some of the specific fair housing requirements that the new zoning code requires developers to undertake?

Lydia Edwards: What I learned from, from the Seaport, and what I’ve learned from Suffolk Downs [an East Boston development project] is that the process is where the community needs to be involved in literally in telling you the questions that you need to ask. For example, when developers come in, they have to fill out a worksheet. They have to get a long worksheet and those questions were completely informed by the community. They initially gave us a draft that asked how many tenants are living in the building when you purchased it, but the community came back and said: not all of us are considered tenants, some of us are just occupants. We changed the vocabulary. Tell us who will live there? And did you require it to be delivered to you vacant? Did you get this building vacant on purpose?

The community came with the questions, to ask the developers: When you approached this project, what were your real intentions? And then we went into commercial displacement: did you just get rid of the only bodega in the entire neighborhood? Did you just get rid of Johnny Food’s Mart (which they did in Charlestown, and replace it with a Whole Foods)?

Developers had never been trained in this kind of thinking or analysis. They never thought they were going to have to do this. And so now we’re going to do their job for them, we’re going to have to be the consultants and the judges of what they do. The community informed the questions in the process. Then it goes to a committee, and they take their list of their proposed mitigations, their proposed report from the historical and displacement mapping that they’re going to get from the city.

And then they have a whole analysis
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of whether they meet the mark, whether they're going to Affirmatively Further Fair Housing or not. That the committee is internal within city government was a fight and for many advocates it wasn't their preference. Still, the report comes out to the public. We know when the committee meets, we get to look at their reports and self-assessments, and we give our own opinion.

Part of our job going forward now is: how does this work? How do you demand more? What are you looking for? How do you use the analysis, what questions can push for the community to get more? From day one, it must involve trained community members. We have to go take these papers, take this process to community advocates, groups, and do what a lot of groups have learned to do with the Boston jobs policy. We have a job policy that says this many people of color, this many women, and this many Boston residents. They show up at the site. They do a census at the site and they show up at the committee meetings for the jobs policy and say, this isn't right, to those who are not in compliance.

That's what we need to do: train people to be part of this conversation. It's exciting in that sense and that's how it's expected to work. On its face not only does it include fair housing, but for the first time it uses affirmatively integrated communities as a goal in zoning.

We wholly adopted the Obama administration definition of AFFH on purpose because it has tried, true, tested case law to support it. And that's taking meaningful actions to remove all obstacles to opportunity. And making sure that we use that specific language, and that was a big push too, to negotiate that with the city.

Megan Haberle: As someone who also lives in a city that's a high-cost market, with a lot of displacement, but also a very deeply segregated city, I'm curious: as you talk about the building of political will to push this initiative forward, was the conversation around displacement and the conversation around other fair housing issues, including, segregation and housing choice, were those things intertwined from the beginning or was there daylight between them? How are those concepts working together for people, including for some of the advocacy groups

throughout this process?

James Jennings: That question reflects how to approach fair housing as it should rightfully be approached, which is as intersectional. We had groups who were involved with different areas of activism by presenting fair housing as not just looking at just affordable housing or building more housing, but really how is health connected to fair housing? There might be people who were concerned about health equity at the table. We have a big homelessness problem among children and families in the Boston public schools. I remember some early meetings where some people were asking me, what does health have to do with fair housing? But by approaching fair housing as it should be, intersectionally, it allowed for a space for groups working on all kinds of social justice issues to come together. So

[A] lot of young people, young people of color, all sorts of people are working with us to fight the kind of development that is really impacting them.

fair housing emerged as a powerful glue in the city.

David Harris: One answer is that in our surveys that stuff came up. We actually talked to people, got feedback. People mentioned violence. Violence becomes a fair housing issue if you understand it correctly. And you think about how you allocate resources and how the city takes care of itself.

It wasn't clear that the city understood or knew what fair housing was either, in its statutory nature or applied nature. The beauty of having this zoning legislation, was that as we worked with the city, as we tried to argue for the Juneteenth report, it was important for us to be able to point to some action that people could take that and this bill was it - it was perfect. The other piece of the struggle with the city and doing this was precisely around this question of community input.

The city, as all municipalities do, thinks about outreach. They think, we'll have a meeting at five o'clock, maybe we'll even go to the neighborhood and have a meet-

ing. That's their idea of outreach and engagement.

For us, there was this question of accountability, of getting the city to write into their AFH that they are going to be held accountable. That there are going to be mechanisms by which people will both have input and be involved in assessments.

I think that's where the real breakthroughs are coming. Not only here, they're coming all across the country where people are starting to say, we want to control our fate, and a little dinner for us or something at a meeting isn't going to do it.

Lydia Edwards: I wanted to add to the lessons learned from the Seaport, which is that it's not the first final product that gets approved where the injury is done. The Seaport on its first draft on paper is a green lush, beautiful place to live. By the time they got through amending it quietly, going through their process without community engagement, it's a concrete jungle with a postage stamp of greenspace.

We knew that we had to make sure that there were enough hooks. Now when they try to amend a development plan, they will have to do a robo-call to the community in English and Spanish. They will have to say we're going to amend it - we're going to do these things. We also required the developer to come back every two years and give the community updates on the mitigation process, buildings, and environmental impacts - all of these things are required.

We linked the AFFH amendment, not just in the zoning code, but to Article 80, which is our large and smart project review. When they go to amend their project, they have to do this assessment again. The impact of the amendment has to go through all of this as well. You changed your project. Now you have to make sure that the environmental standards that you agreed to are still going to be met as well, and the affirmatively integrated community that you promised us.

Kathy Brown: I feel like I've also learned more about the legal hooks and tools, as I'm more of the organizer. Housing discrimination is a huge problem in Boston. Suffolk University just did a study about housing discrimination, es-

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pecially people with subsidies. Blacks are discriminated against way more than everybody no matter their income. I just want to make sure that in addition to talking about displacement, we mention housing discrimination including against families and people with subsidies. So much of all the new housing has been like one-bedrooms and studios - not for families. I want to mention that is in the zoning amendment, in addition to displacement - the historical exclusion, and looking at areas that have historically been white.

I just want to talk a little bit about the amazing timing of all this. Two different components of it. One is racial justice: awakening, awareness, organizing, and accountability. The flashing of the lights on the city and public figures to act. The other thing which is exciting is all the grassroots organizing that has happened in many neighborhoods where a lot of young people, young people of color, all sorts of people are working with us to fight the kind of development that is impacting them. It is happening all around the city, Roxbury, Dorchester, Jamaica Plain, and Brighton - where an insane amount of development is happening. In terms of the timing of this amendment and using this amendment, we have all this amazing organizing and leaders of color on the ground fighting the BPDA around these developments. It's just really good because we didn't have that several years ago - it feels like the timing is perfect.

Megan Haberle: What is your sense of hopefulness going forward about how much impact you see this fair housing measure having on the city of Boston?

James Jennings: Well, I think there's going to be some resistance. I think the call to continue community organizing is going to be critical. About two weeks ago, the *Boston Business Journal* highlighted a piece entitled "As Walsh Heads to DC Boston's Real Estate Is Fearing Upheaval. We're going to get resistance from the powers that be, from the status quo. But we now have a framework to

push the envelope in terms of community organizing, asking the questions, and how to become more involved.

Nadine Cohen: As Councilor Edwards said this is just the beginning of the process, and we have to stay vigilant - you can't let up. We all know power never concedes anything. You push, you demand, and you organize for it. I think we have to be vigilant, keep that up, and have the community organizing part and also the legal as well. The city of Boston did not understand any of this when we first got together in 2017 to talk about AFFH, and I think we have educated them.

We have pushed them and Councilor Edwards has pushed them from the other side. So will things change? I hope so. I do want to say that I think the AFFH

[I] really hope...that other cities see the example of Councilor Edwards and really push for fair housing to become part of their zoning laws.

efforts from the Obama administration and the 2015 rule helped energize us to push forward. And I hope the Biden administration goes back to the 2015 rule and that other cities see the example of Councilor Edwards and really push for fair housing to become part of their zoning laws - because that's a big part of it.

David Harris: I'm an optimist, and you know where my optimism is right now - we're going to have a new mayor. One of the things that we learned in this process that was painful and difficult for us was that we never dealt directly with this mayor. This mayor never engaged this process fully or cooperatively. In other cities that's not the case. It would

be my hope that the next mayor is a little bit more engaged directly in these issues and a little more committed and knowledgeable about fair housing in its full dimensions.

Lydia Edwards: I'm hopeful in what I see for my colleagues now. One of the saddest things I learned in this is that unless you were an expert in housing and able to ask the right questions as a city council, [you didn't have the tools to assess developers]. I happen to have worked for the administration in housing, happened to have access to experts on the phone, and not everyone does, even the best person may not have this expertise on hand. Developers eventually come to my table and asked for my support, they always do. Now, I literally hold up the amendment and say, get as close to this as possible, and then go further. I don't care what size your project is, you're going to follow this amendment and that's it. So it has provided a guidebook for negotiating tactics for politicians.

Also, I'm hopeful that Cambridge and some other cities will start to pick it up, but it's not just going to be in Massachusetts. We set a national conversation, a mold, and every single city has its own special sauce of injury, pain, and discrimination. This amendment is flexible enough so that the healing can be city-specific.

We were going to change the zoning code for the city of Boston, no matter who won the national election. And so I hope that was also inspiring to a lot of other cities. It will come from the grassroots efforts of saying there's harm done, and there needs to be healing now. And this is how we're going to do it. ■

New on PRRAC's Website

Mixed income neighborhoods and integrated schools: Linking HUD's Choice Neighborhoods Initiative with the Department of Education's Magnet Schools Assistance Program, by Philip Tegeler & Laura Gevarter (March 2021)

Reviving and Improving HUD's Affirmatively Furthering Fair Housing Regulation: A Practice-Based Roadmap, by Megan Haberle, Peter Kye, and Brian Knudsen (December 2020)

(LAND VALUES: Cont. from page 4)

is now the epicenter of systemic structural racism and the site of contestation over neighborhood development. Therefore, to get free, Blacks must transform the communities in which they live and eliminate racial residential segregation by launching a radical residential mobility strategy aimed at dismantling the land value system and disrupting the market forces that drive it. The progressive urban strategy must therefore center neighborhood inequality and inequity in the battle to build just cities based on racial and social class inclusion and socioeconomic justice. ■

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Resources

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