Half Empty or Half Full: Segregation and Segregated Neighborhoods 30 Years After the Fair Housing Act

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The year 1998 marks the 30th anniversary of the passage of the Fair Housing Act, the last major civil rights law passed during the 1960s. It is also the 30th anniversary of the publication of the Kerner Report (Kerner Commission, 1998) on the violence that erupted in our cities in the same decade. In my mind the two are closely linked because residential segregation so dramatically embodies the Report's most famous words: "This is our basic conclusion: Our Nation is moving toward two societies, one Black, one White—separate and unequal."

More than anything else, I would like to be able to argue that the past 30 years have proved these words false. Some have claimed them to be false saying that the Kerner Commission "traumatized by the riots ... had deluded themselves into thinking that the conditions of African-Americans in the United States had been deteriorating rather than improving since World War II." (Thernstrom and Thernstrom, 1997). Recognizing the progress that has been made is important, and this progress cannot be denied. But emphasizing progress while minimizing the importance of the slow speed of the progress and the remaining resistance to it (Thernstrom and Thernstrom, 1997) serves only to make people feel better. Refusing to think about the remaining problems does nothing to solve them.

The first part of this article presents evidence of how segregation has changed since the Kerner Report was published and the Fair Housing Act was passed while the second reflects on the effectiveness of the law itself. In the third section I discuss post-1968 changes in society, as well as changes in the nature of housing discrimination that alter the context in which future gains in neighborhood integration will have to take place. In this section, I also report some of my current research on all-White neighborhoods, which challenges the reliance solely on segregation indices as the measure of progress toward an integrated society. Though the accuracy of the segregation indices is not in doubt, they represent only one aspect of a complex picture. The article concludes with some reflections on what present trends and the past 30 years of history mean for the future of housing policy and neighborhood integration in the United States.[1]

Post-1968 Changes in Residential Segregation

The Kerner Commission clearly saw housing as a problem related to the violence that had erupted in many of the Nation's cities in the summers of the mid-1960s. Members of the commission gave the Nation three choices: to continue with its present policies, to enrich ghetto areas, or to integrate. Clearly and strongly, they recommended integration, not only because they accurately predicted future job growth in the suburbs, recognized the importance of racial and social class integration as the most effective way of improving education, or were concerned that the development of an adequate housing supply would require substantial out-migration (Kerner Commission, 1988). More important, they recommended integration because:

> Integration is the only course which explicitly seeks to achieve a single Nation rather than accepting the present movement toward a dual society. This choice would enable us at least to begin reversing the profoundly divisive trend already so evident in our metropolitan areas—before it becomes irreversible.

One of the many items offered in support of that conclusion was data on residential segregation from the 1960 census of population and housing. Segregation is measured with the Index of Dissimilarity, which varies from 0 (no segregation) to 100 (complete segregation). The index showed that the average segregation of Blacks from Whites in the Nation's largest cities was 86.2 in 1960 and had been relatively stable over time, averaging 85.2 in 1940 and 87.3 in 1960 (Kerner Commission, 1988). These numbers can be interpreted as the percent of either group that would have to change neighborhoods to be evenly distributed across the neighborhoods of a city; in other words, for every neighborhood to have the same percent Black or White as the city as a whole. In reading the report, the implication of the writers in citing these numbers is clear: "If we are going to move toward a more integrated society, then the value of the segregation index should go down."

What happens if we update these numbers to the present? Studies of segregation were done using data from each of the decennial censuses following the passage of the Fair Housing Act: 1970, 1980, and 1990. Exhibit 1 extends the series of segregation indices in the Commission's report to the 1990 census, the most recent one taken. The newer numbers are taken from a recent book (Massey and Denton, 1993) and refer to the 30 metropolitan areas with the largest Black populations. Roughly two-thirds of the metropolitan African-American population live in these areas.[2]

It is clear from exhibit 1 that Black-White segregation remains at a very high level and is changing only modestly. The numbers for the last three censuses are divided into Northern and Southern components, for until 1960 segregation varied little by region and was actually higher in the South, but after 1960 it fell more quickly in the South, producing a North-South disparity of about 10 points. In the Northern metropolitan areas, Black-White segregation averaged 85.5 in 1970, 80.1 in 1980, and 77.8 in 1990. The comparable figures for Southern metropolitan areas were 75.3, 68.3, and 66.5 (Massey and Denton, 1993). During the past 20 years, segregation in these large metropolitan areas has declined only 8 points in the North and 9 in the South. The largest declines have been in newer metropolitan areas in the South and West, which tend to have small Black populations. African-American segregation remains extremely high in those U.S. metropolitan areas with the largest Black populations.

The pattern shown here is the same as that reported by other researchers who have looked at more metropolitan areas. The segregation of Blacks from Whites in all metropolitan areas averages 68.6 in 1990 (Bureau of the Census, 1998). Farley and Frey (1994) point

Exhibit 1

Trends in Black-White Segregation in the United States, 1940–1990

Year	Segregation Index[a]			
1940	85.2			
1950	87.3			
1960	86.2			
1970	85.5	(North)	75.3	(South)
1980	80.1	(North)	68.3	(South)
1990	77.8	(North)	66.5	(South)

Sources: 1940, 1950, 1960: Kerner Commission, 1988, p. 247; 1970, 1980, 1990: Massey and Denton, 1993, p. 222. At the time the Kerner Commission wrote, segregation was highest in the South, but one average was more or less typical. They note, however, that in the mid-1960s special censuses in certain cities in the North revealed a large increase in segregation, and thus the North-South disparity shown here

[a]The index of segregation is defined as the index of Dissimilarity. It varies from 0 (no segregation) to 100 (complete segregation). It can be interpreted as the percent of either group that would have to move in order for both groups to be evenly distributed across all neighborhoods in a city—for each neighborhood to have the same percent Black or White as the city as a whole.

out the importance of newly built (post-1970) housing in decreasing segregation, as well as the larger declines in military locations, a finding that supports the analysis of how well the military has desegregated (Moskos and Butler, 1996). Frey and Farley (1996) show that in multiethnic metropolitan areas, those with large influxes of Hispanic and Asian immigrants, distinctive racial segregation dynamics suggest the potential for greater mixed-race neighborhood living.

What all these researchers agree on is that the segregation of African-Americans is higher than that for any other group. On average, the segregation of African-Americans is about 65 percent greater than that of Asians and about 35 percent greater than that of Hispanics (Bureau of the Census, 1998). In some of the most highly segregated metropolitan areas, for example Chicago, the segregation of Asians and Hispanics is similar to each other, but at roughly one-half the level of that of African-Americans (Bureau of the Census, 1998). If we look at segregation of their particular group from all nongroup members, Hispanics and Asians are about equally segregated, while Black segregation is about 50 percent higher (Farley and Frey, 1994). Both the Hispanic and Asian populations saw their segregation increase between 1980 and 1990, especially in the gateway areas where new immigrants first locate, but in other areas they saw declines in their segregation (Farley and Frey, 1994). As a result, it is unlikely that they will ever reach the uniformly high levels of segregation of African-Americans, a pattern that was described as *hypersegregation* in 1980 (Massey and Denton, 1989) and persisted in 1990 as well (Denton, 1994).

Focusing on segregation by race ignores another little known fact: Segregation by race for African-Americans is higher than segregation by any other characteristic in United States cities and metropolitan areas. This statement is true in the present, but also in the past: Lieberson (1980) has shown that in the early decades of this century, the segregation

levels of European immigrants, at their highest, seldom reached that of African-Americans today. To put the current segregation of people by race and ethnicity into context, we can look at segregation by other demographic characteristics. Using the same index as above, segregation of the poor from the nonpoor averages around 36 in 1990 (Abramson et al., 1995), while that of employed from the unemployed, single parents from married couple families, high school versus nonhigh school graduates, or welfare versus nonwelfare recipients is even lower. (White, 1987). Indices of poverty concentration, defined as the percentage of all the poor who live in census tracts with more than 40 percent of their residents poor, are frequently under 10 (Coulton et al., 1996). Put in this light, the emphasis placed on residential segregation by race, and that of African-Americans in particular, is more understandable.

Thus far, it is clear that much of the racial residential segregation used by the Kerner Commission to justify its famous two societies quote is still with us today. Despite the desire of some researchers (Thernstrom and Thernstrom, 1997; Patterson, 1997) to focus more on Black progress and attribute the remaining segregation to voluntary causes—a point to which I will return below—segregation remains high. Though there is clear evidence of declines, they are small and their pace slow. Much of the progress in lowering segregation has been made in places where African-Americans do not live in large numbers. Segregation remains at very high levels for African-Americans, particularly so in places where the riots of the 1960s took place and where there are large absolute and proportionate African-American populations.

Segregation imposes costs in terms of poorer school and neighborhood quality, fewer neighborhood amenities, restricted access to jobs, and neighborhood crime and violence (Massey and Denton, 1993; Massey, 1995; Jargowsky, 1997). The effects of economic restructuring fall harder on segregated neighborhoods (Galster et al., 1997), and there is evidence that Latinos in segregated neighborhoods fare worse than their nonsegregated counterparts (Enchautegui, 1997). In short, segregation is far from a neutral outcome.

In one sense, then, it is safe to conclude that the 1968 Fair Housing Act did not eradicate residential segregation. In terms of where we live, we have not reached a point of being one Nation, despite the passage of 30 years since enactment of the Fair Housing Act. In the next section, the issue of what the Fair Housing Act did and did not accomplish and why is taken up in more detail.

What Did the 1968 Fair Housing Act Accomplish?

It is tempting to conclude from the segregation scores presented above that the Fair Housing Act did not work. But the better conclusion may be that the Fair Housing Act was nowhere near enough to combat the institutionalized social structure of segregation in the Nation's largest cities (Massey and Denton, 1993). Three lines of reasoning help support and explain this conclusion.

First, it is not known, nor is there any way of knowing, what the segregation numbers would be today if the Fair Housing Act had not been passed. My personal opinion is that they would look worse than they do had it not been for the law. Since the law applied Nationally, a scientific evaluation of its effectiveness is inherently difficult, if not impossible (Lieberson, 1985). However, to say the law did not work is to say the modest but widespread declines that did occur would have happened without it, an unlikely prospect given the limited support for open housing at the time the law passed. The resistance Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., experienced in places such as Cicero, Illinois, as he tried to take the

civil rights campaign—particularly that for open housing—to the North, is but one example of evidence that little change was to be expected without the law (Williams, 1988).

A second reason for arguing that the Fair Housing Act was simply not enough is that the original act was gutted of most of its enforcement provisions by the compromise amendment offered by Senator Dirksen of Illinois that enabled the bill to gain the votes of moderate Republicans (Massey and Denton, 1993a). Only by eliminating HUD's authority both to investigate allegations of discrimination and to issue complaints as well as cease and desist orders against discriminators and also by lowering the penalties for violating the law was it possible to gain enough votes to move the bill forward. Even so, it remains unclear that it would have passed the Senate without the release of the Kerner Report the day after the Dirksen compromise was adopted. The death of King was crucial as well: The 1968 Fair Housing Act was passed in the House 6 days after King's death while the National Guard still stood guard at the Nation's Capitol (Massey and Denton, 1993).

Despite known weaknesses in the original law, it took until 1988 to pass a revised law with more stringent enforcement provisions. The amended law added the handicapped and familial status as protected classes under the Fair Housing Act, extended the time for filing housing discrimination complaints, raised the penalties for violation, and enhanced HUD's powers, as well as those of the Department of Justice (Massey and Denton, 1993). In a sense then, 1998 is really only the 10th anniversary of an effective Fair Housing Act and the 30th anniversary of a symbolic one.

It cannot be emphasized enough that the 20 years between 1968 and 1988 were a lost opportunity in terms of race relations in the United States. Progress that could have built on the momentum of the civil rights movement was not made. As a result, we now find African-American scholars questioning residential integration as a primary goal, though supporting it in theory (Patterson, 1997; Calmore, 1995), and a slight worsening in Black desires for integration, though by and large they strongly prefer it (Farley et al., 1993). It is interesting that though nearly all such arguments are framed positively, in terms of Black identity and community, all include some elements of escaping from discrimination and victimization. Thus the voluntary aspect of the segregation is directly linked to treatment by White society, making it impossible to logically separate the voluntary from the discrimination argument (Denton, 1996; Rosenbaum, 1996).

A third reason why it is inappropriate to judge the effectiveness of the Fair Housing Act solely on the residential segregation figures is that residential segregation, particularly of Blacks, is the result of a long history made up of many more forces than individual acts of housing discrimination—of prejudiced individuals refusing to sell their homes to Blacks—the prime thing that the Fair Housing Act was intended to fight. My work is not alone in emphasizing the roles of the Government, lenders, the Realtors code, the Federal Housing Administration mortgage program and, among many others, bank and insurance discrimination in creating the pattern of segregation in U.S. cities (see Hirsch, 1983; Jackson, 1985; Massey and Denton, 1993; Squires, 1994; and Yinger, 1995). Under the leadership of its former Secretary Henry Cisneros, HUD finally started admitting its role in segregation, a positive step that has continued under the leadership of Secretary Andrew Cuomo. But admission of past wrongdoing is different from changing all the institutionalized program structures that help keep segregation in place—a much harder and larger task that HUD is now attempting. Making sure that every HUD program is administered in such a way that it fosters deconcentration and fair housing is a vital goal but one that will require changing bureaucratic structures that have long been in place.

So judging of the Fair Housing Act as a failure at this point is wrong and premature. At a minimum, it has brought great benefits to all the individual claimants who have successfully sued and were awarded damages under it.[3] Though nearly impossible to measure, the law and the publicity surrounding successful lawsuits have probably also served to deter those nearby who were also considering discriminating. And to the extent that fair housing was talked about and promoted, it has consistently reaffirmed a basic principle of United States citizenship: the freedom of Blacks (and everyone) to live wherever they want and can afford—the denial of which *Jones v. Mayer* (1968) referred to as "slavery that will not die."

The challenge now is to move forward from where we are. This will require that we understand how United States society has changed in the past 30 years, how discrimination operates in the current housing market, and how the declines in segregation have played out at the neighborhood level—the topics of the next section.

The Changing Context of Fair Housing Efforts: Post-1968 Changes in Society, Housing Discrimination, and Neighborhoods

Further progress toward fair housing will take place in a world quite different from that in which the law was originally passed. The most obvious change is the increasing diversity of the U.S. population. As of 1998, the United States is home to just over 270 million people. In proportional terms, non-Hispanic Whites make up 72.3 percent and non-Hispanic Blacks 12.1 percent, with Hispanics and Asians at 11.3 and 3.6 percent respectively (Bureau of the Census, 1998). Since the passage of the Fair Housing Act, the White population has declined more than 11.2 percentage points, while all other groups have increased their shares. If we calculate a diversity index to measure the percentage of time two randomly selected people would be of different racial or ethnic groups, the index went from 29 to 40 between 1970 and 1990 (Harrison and Bennett, 1995). Though the diversity is greater in coastal areas than in the heartland (Frey, 1995), we are rapidly moving toward the day when the chances are 50-50 that two randomly chosen people will be of a different race in the United States as a whole, and have already reached that day in the most diverse metropolitan areas.

The increased diversity comes from immigrants and their children. The 1965 changes in immigration law have meant that millions of new immigrants are now coming to the United States, mainly from Central and South America and Asia. It is no longer correct to think of housing integration between just two groups—Blacks and Whites. While the waves of European immigration in the early part of the century increased the relative share of the White population to 87.6 in 1920, if current immigration trends continue, by 2050 non-Hispanic Whites will make up just over one-half of the United States population (Edmonston and Passel, 1995). Indeed, Whites are not the largest group in many cities even now, though they still predominate in metropolitan areas as a whole. Inclusion of all people under the rubric of fair housing is vital. Thinking about it only as a Black-White issue, no matter what the historical validity of the claims of African-Americans over newer immigrants, will not be fruitful if we want to move from the current situation.

A second aspect of the changing context of fair housing efforts has to do with the current nature of discrimination in the housing market. There is no doubt that housing discrimination has declined substantially since 1968. To a certain extent, in that year, it was a virtual certainty: Newspapers advertised housing by race, and there were few who objected to statements about not wanting Blacks to live near them or real estate agents saying they did

not rent or sell to Blacks. It is equally certain that there is still an enormous amount of discrimination in today's housing market (Yinger, 1995). When HUD did its first nationally representative housing audit study in 1978, it found that discrimination against Blacks was widespread, a finding reconfirmed by the latest National study, almost 10 years ago, which found Blacks and Hispanics likely to be discriminated against roughly 50 percent of the time on a single visit to a real estate agent (Yinger, 1995). Since the acquisition of housing normally requires several visits to an agent, the probability of experiencing differential treatment quickly approaches 90 percent once one factors in these multiple visits. In 1998 Housing Secretary Cuomo announced plans for a new national study (Janofsky, 1998) that will update our information on this important topic.

But what is most different about today's discrimination compared with that of the past is not its level but its subtlety. Even victims of discrimination find it hard to know if they have been mistreated without the results of audits, when matched pairs of homeseekers report the treatment they receive and the results are compared across races. Because discrimination is so subtle and pernicious, it is seldom seen by Whites. It has been incorporated into the structure of how business is done and is treated as normal (Denton, 1996). But it is by no means costless. In a recent article, John Yinger estimates that discrimination costs Black and Hispanic households a "tax" of $4,000, on average, every time they search for a house to buy (Yinger, 1997).

Housing discrimination today promotes and reinforces the effects of historical segregation in housing in U.S. cities. The effects of segregation—and by analogy the effects of vigorous pursuit of fair housing—operate at two different levels: individual and structural. These are conceptually distinct but very intertwined in reality. George Galster calls this the vicious circle of inequality: Housing discrimination operates at an individual level to deny persons of color the opportunity to live wherever they want and can afford and to maintain and reinforce prejudice—the stereotypes that Whites hold of people of color. Through these individual processes, housing discrimination's effects then move to the structural level to maintain the socioeconomic inequalities between Blacks and Whites, between Whites and persons of color, and to deny persons of color the wealth accumulation that comes from rising property values (Galster, 1992). This last is a particularly salient point because rising housing value has been the primary route for middle-class families to acquire some wealth. But it is unearned income related to the location of the house. Melvin L. Oliver and Thomas M. Shapiro (1995) estimate that the current generation of Blacks have missed out on $82 billion this way—$58 billion through the lack of housing appreciation with another $10.5 billion due to paying higher mortgage rates, and $13.5 billion from the denial of mortgages.

The operation of housing discrimination as a vicious circle implies that housing discrimination affects all people, not just those who are excluded from housing by discriminatory actions. It is all too easy to think of the Fair Housing Act as having meaning only for persons of color, Blacks, or poor people, but the effects of segregation extend beyond those who are its victims. The long-term costs of having citizens who are not able to contribute to their fullest because of poverty, poor education, and lack of jobs is borne by the society as a whole, even though in the short term, Whites benefit from segregation (Massey, 1995). Maintaining segregated neighborhoods feeds prejudice by limiting contact among different groups of people and also maintains fear of crime, despite the fact that crime rates are falling (Massey, 1995). Research has shown positive effects on White attitudes toward Blacks as a result of contact with African-Americans (Ellison and Powers, 1994; Sigelman and Welch, 1993; Sigelman et al., 1996). Research has also shown that poor women and their children do better if they move from high-poverty neighborhoods (Rosenbaum, 1995; Rosenbaum and Popkin, 1991; Briggs, 1998). Yet, despite this

research, public policy too often fails to recognize the link to residential segregation as an important cause of the lack of contact. One exception is HUD's new initiative to give poor people the opportunity to move to better neighborhoods, Moving To Opportunity. (Briggs, 1998; Turner, 1998).

The final change in the context in which future fair housing efforts will take place occurs at the neighborhood level. My work with my Albany colleagues, Richard Alba (Denton and Alba, 1998) and Bridget Anderson (Denton and Anderson, 1995) shows that the number of all-White (more than 98 percent or 95 percent) neighborhoods is declining rather quickly—declining both in cities and suburbs. Though 95 percent White neighborhoods still represented around one-half of all suburban neighborhoods in the Midwest and one-third in the Northeast in 1990, they were less than 20 percent in the South and about 10 percent in the West (Denton and Alba, 1998).[4] It is safe to conclude that Americans are currently living in neighborhoods that have some degree of racial or ethnic integration. While this may seem surprising in light of the segregation figures discussed above, the mathematical fact is that high segregation can persist with many, if not nearly all, individual neighborhoods being minimally integrated. One statistic is from the neighborhood's point of view, while the other is from the population's point of view.

Exhibit 2 highlights these changes for 25 metropolitan areas. To get the overall message that the exhibit is intending to convey, scan each of the five columns from left to right, without focusing on specific cities. The first column shows the percentage of non-Hispanic Whites from the 1990 census. Though there is considerable variation, ranging from a low of 30 percent in Miami to a high of 93 percent in Albany, most areas contain a majority of non-Hispanic Whites in their population. Compared with the first column, the second and third columns are striking in their lack of variation, with isolation indices[5] ranging from 0.825 to 0.967 for White isolation from Blacks only, and from 0.746 to 0.948 for isolation from all groups. These indices can be interpreted as the average proportion of Whites in the average White person's neighborhood. Regardless of their proportion in the population, non-Hispanic Whites are extremely isolated from non-Hispanic Blacks, and very isolated from all those different from them. These isolation indices reflect the high segregation scores discussed in the first section of this article and are from the population's point of view. Though different from the index of dissimilarity reported in exhibit 1, the isolation index mirrors those results.

The last two columns of the exhibit are statistics calculated from the neighborhood's point of view. These refer to suburban neighborhoods in the metropolitan areas and show the percentage of all neighborhoods that were all-White in 1970 and 1990 (defining *all-White* as 95 percent White).[6] With the exception of metropolitan areas where there was a large Hispanic population, many of the suburban neighborhoods in these areas were at least 95 percent White in 1970. The other exception is Memphis, which had no 95 percent White neighborhoods, even in 1970—no doubt reflecting the rural Black population that became suburban through metropolitan area redefinitions.[7] By 1990, however, only 7 of the 25 areas, all in the Northeast or Midwest, had more than one-half of their suburban neighborhoods remain 95 percent White. Just over one-half (13) of the areas listed had fewer than 10 percent of their neighborhoods in this category, up from 3 percent in 1970. Thus in the span of 20 years, many suburban neighborhoods became home to at least a small percentage of non-Whites. From the neighborhood's point of view, these are all integrated neighborhoods. By 1990 homogeneously White neighborhoods had virtually disappeared in the suburbs of most metropolitan areas as well as in their center cities.

Exhibit 2

Patterns of Segregation in Selected Metropolitan Areas, 1990

Metropolitan Area[a]	Percentage Non-Hispanic White	White Isolation From: Non-Hispanic All Blacks	White Isolation From: Non-Hispanic All Non-Whites	Percentage of Suburban Neighborhoods 95 percent White 1970	Percentage of Suburban Neighborhoods 95 percent White 1990
Albany-Schenectady-Troy, NY	92.9	0.965	0.948	96.5	82.6
Atlanta, GA	70.2	0.878	0.854	64.8	5.7
Boston, MA (P)	85.2	0.962	0.921	95.3	47.1
Buffalo, NY (P)	85.0	0.958	0.937	94.7	86.8
Chicago, IL (P)	62.6	0.944	0.857	88.4	26.0
Cincinnati, OH-KY-IN (P)	85.5	0.941	0.931	86.8	74.6
Cleveland, OH (P)	77.6	0.952	0.931	88.2	63.7
Dallas, TX (P)	66.9	0.901	0.817	40.0	7.0
Denver, CO (P)	78.6	0.959	0.889	42.7	10.0
Detroit, MI (P)	75.0	0.950	0.927	90.0	65.9
Houston, TX (P)	56.6	0.887	0.771	30.5	5.9
Jersey City, NJ (P)	47.7	0.912	0.772	36.4	0.0
Los Angeles-Long Beach, CA (P)	41.0	0.921	0.687	5.2	0.0
Memphis, TN-AR-MS	57.7	0.825	0.812	0.0	0.0
Miami-Hialeah, FL (P)	30.4	0.898	0.836	12.9	0.0
Minneapolis-St. Paul, MN-WI	91.5	0.972	0.941	97.7	63.8
New York, NY (P)	48.1	0.881	0.773	50.9	5.1
Oklahoma City, OK	79.8	0.929	0.854	64.1	3.1
Philadelphia, PA-NJ (P)	75.4	0.929	0.901	72.0	45.8
Phoenix, AZ	77.3	0.966	0.878	15.2	12.1
Providence, RI (P)	88.3	0.967	0.936	94.3	80.5
San Francisco, CA (P)	65.6	0.935	0.746	14.3	3.7
San Diego, CA	57.9	0.941	0.808	5.0	0.8
Seattle, WA (P)	85.5	0.967	0.894	83.6	14.4
Washington, DC-MD-VA	62.7	0.862	0.794	38.9	0.6

[a]Areas listed with a P following them are primary metropolitan statistical areas (PMSAs), parts of consolidated metropolitan statistical areas (CMSAs), whereas those with no designation are simply metropolitan statistical areas (MSAs).
Source: Calculated from 1990 Census of Population and Housing STF4A data by the author

No matter which definition of all-White is used, all the metropolitan areas, including those that in 1990 still contained a relatively high proportion of all-White neighborhoods, experienced declines in the proportion of their suburban neighborhoods that were all-White. In fact, those that retained a relatively high percentage of all-White neighborhoods were those with the largest White populations in 1990, indicating a basic lack of people with which to diversify neighborhoods. But even areas such as Boston, still more than 85 percent non-Hispanic White in 1990, saw their 95 percent all-White neighborhoods drop from 95 percent to 47 percent in these 20 years. While the data suggest certain factors that help maintain a high percentage of all-White neighborhoods, such as high residential segregation and a small Black population, there is nothing to indicate that the process of decline in the proportion of all-White neighborhoods is not a widespread phenomenon touching all metropolitan areas. These conclusions mirror those of other researchers who examined integrated neighborhoods, using varying definitions of *integration* (Ellen, 1998; Smith, 1998). While the number of neighborhoods so integrated was dependent on the definition, both of these studies also report a large decline in completely homogeneous White neighborhoods.

Since the research from which the data in exhibit 2 are taken is ongoing, a full explanation of what factors best explain cross-metropolitan-area variation in the declining proportion of all-White neighborhoods is not yet available, though the areas that continue to have a larger proportion of their neighborhoods all-White tend to include a number of those identified as *hypersegregated* (Massey and Denton, 1993). At the same time, cross-metropolitan variation is not of that much interest because it is apparent that for most areas all-White neighborhoods are no longer a large part of the suburban landscape. Furthermore, the socioeconomic status of the residents and the housing in the neighborhoods that remained all-White from 1970 to 1990 compared with those that started all-White in 1970 but did not remain so by 1990, is not that high. Many of the more complex neighborhoods, those with at least 2 or 5 percent of multiple other groups (Asians, Hispanics, Blacks) as well as Whites, scored much higher on standard socioeconomic measures (Denton and Alba, 1998).

These neighborhood-level changes have two important implications for continued work toward the promotion of fair housing. First, individual people will be able to say that their neighborhood is integrated and segregation statistics will not be backed up by their personal experience. Second, as a result, it will become easier for them to think that segregation is no longer a problem. The decrease in the number of all-White neighborhoods is certainly progress, especially because it decreases the number of all-White neighborhoods to which Whites can flee. The decrease is also a point of concern if it leads us into complacency before the job is really done, while discrimination is still high and the vicious circle of inequality persists. One certain outcome is that the work of fair housing advocates is made harder because they must argue—against personal neighborhood-level experience—that segregation still exists, as well as why it is harmful.

Conclusions

The main issues raised in this essay can be summarized quite succinctly:

- Though the Fair Housing Act was passed 30 years ago, only 10 years have passed since the 1988 amendments, which greatly strengthened HUD's ability to enforce the act and extended the protected classes. The two decades from 1968 to 1988 were a wasted opportunity in U.S. race relations, during which segregation declined somewhat but attitudes against integration also hardened.

- Though both have declined since 1968, considerable segregation remains today in the Nation's largest metropolitan areas, especially those with large Black populations, and housing discrimination also remains prevalent. The problem of segregation that the Fair Housing Act was passed to address has not been solved.
- Future progress toward fair housing and neighborhood integration must now take place in a world no longer only Black and White. New immigrant groups, primarily Hispanics and Asians, must be incorporated into fair housing.
- From the neighborhood's point of view, most city neighborhoods, and many suburban neighborhoods, now have at least a small percentage of minority neighbors. This is particularly true of neighborhoods in the South and West, but also true of at least one-half the suburban neighborhoods in the Northeast and Midwest. While this is progress toward integration, it also poses a new challenge by removing, for Whites, some of the personal experience of isolation and segregation.

What does all this mean for future policy initiatives in support of furthering fair housing? Movement from the almost complete segregation documented by the Kerner Commission to a more integrated society is a fundamental process of social change about which we have not done enough theorizing. We have no good road map of what the intermediate steps will or should look like, and as a result we risk missing out on promoting the positive and countering the negative. For example, theories of the role of mobility in shaping neighborhoods have tended to focus almost exclusively on those who left. Some argue that White flight flooded the market with properties, causing prices to fall. Others focus on the fact that in the days of complete segregation there were more positive role models in Black neighborhoods, but it is these people who were able to move out after 1968 (Wilson, 1987, 1996). Yet spatial mobility, moving to a better neighborhood, moving from an apartment to a house, moving from a starter home to a bigger home, has always been part and parcel of the American Dream. We cannot deny it to anyone, White, Black, Hispanic, Asian, or Native American, and we especially cannot deny it to those who are poor and who have been most harmed by our system of segregated housing. Fair housing, is after all, about choice.

The issue of what happens to a neighborhood is largely determined by who moves in, not who moves out (DeMarco and Galster, 1993). All neighborhoods have some degree of residential turnover: People die, their job transfers, their incomes increase or decrease, or their family size changes. But housing economists have long told us that the demand for housing, how many people want to move into a neighborhood, is what sets the price or value of that housing. By focusing only on who moves out, rather than on who moves in, we risk denying to all the opportunity that Whites have in terms of neighborhood choice. We also risk misidentifying appropriate policies that will encourage neighborhood revitalization and redevelopment.

In developing new fair housing initiatives, continued leadership and involvement from HUD is vital. In a recent press release, HUD announced increases in support of its fair housing programs, which are to be applauded (U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, 1998). At the same time, opposition remains: At their recent national meeting, the board of directors of the National Association of Realtors (NAR) voted to seek changes in HUD's Fair Housing Initiatives Program (FHIP) to limit the use of money granted under it to situations in which there is an actual complaint. NAR wants FHIP funding targeted to enforcement assistance to individual victims, despite the fact that testing has been legal for years (Massey and Denton, 1993) and discrimination is difficult for individuals to detect. The NAR directors also voted to seek a change in the effective date of the 1988 amendments dealing with accessibility from March 1991 to April 1998

(National Association of Realtors, 1998). Another example of opposition is in HR 3206,[8] a bill currently being considered by the United States House of Representatives, which would limit the siting of group homes, among other things. In short, battles that the fair housing community would have seemed to have won in the courts long ago may have to be fought again.

As a result, one can only conclude that no matter how far we have come, we still have a long way to go. Arguing about progress is similar to arguing about whether the glass is half empty or half full. Though emphasizing progress may keep us from despair, the more important task is to focus on how far we still need to go. Elimination of residential separateness and the restricted access to the neighborhood-linked social goods that it entails will not be solved without the cooperation of all groups in society. It cannot be solved by any one group working alone. To the extent that Whites remain the numerically largest group, there must be White demand across the entire housing market, including in areas where Blacks and other persons of color live. As newer groups grow in size, particularly Hispanics and Asians, they too must embrace and be embraced by the fair housing movement. Blacks cannot be the only targets of fair housing initiatives, no matter how vital their participation remains and how important they were to the movement's beginnings. All people, especially Whites, must regularly see and be shown houses in all types of neighborhoods, including racially integrated ones. Troubled neighborhoods, no matter what the color of their residents, need to be helped so that they, too, can have their homes in demand. Dealing with these issues will require creative public policies that will include members of all racial groups in working toward the underlying goal of the Fair Housing Act: one Nation.

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Notes

1. This article reflects a distillation of three speeches that I gave in 1998. On February 6, I spoke at a conference, "Fair Housing 1968–1998: Promises Kept, Promises Broken," University of Miami School of Law, Coral Gables, FL; on April 21, I spoke at HUD Secretary Cuomo's Community 2020 Seminar Series "In Celebration of Fair Housing Month," in Washington, D.C.; and on August 27, I participated in a panel on the 30th Anniversary of the Fair Housing Act at the American Sociological Association annual meetings in San Francisco. Conversations with participants at all of these events have benefitted this article and my thinking enormously. Any errors remain my own. Some of the research reported here was partially supported by a grant to the author from NICHD (1R01–1HD2901602), and by grants to the Center for Social and Demographic Analysis, State University of New York at Albany from NICHD (P30 HD 32041) and NSF (SBR-9512290), all of whose support is gratefully acknowledged.

2. Residential segregation is only measured with data from the decennial censuses of population and housing, so the 1990 indices are the most recent available. These numbers are the Index of Dissimilarity, a commonly used measure that compares, for two groups, each neighborhood's proportion of a group to that group's proportion of the city or metropolitan area. It varies from 1 (total segregation) to 0 (each neighborhood has the same proportion of each group as the city or metropolitan area as a whole).

The resulting index shows how far away from a pattern of evenness the groups are and can be interpreted as the proportion of either group that would have to change neighborhoods to be evenly distributed. Neighborhoods are approximated by census tracts, small nonoverlapping geographic areas that average about 5,000–7,000 people.

3. *The National Fair Housing Advocate*, published at 835 West Jefferson Street, Room 100, Louisville, KY 40202, is a good source of reports on settlements in fair housing cases. It is also on the Internet at: http://www.fairhousing.com.

4. I report the results for suburban neighborhoods only because by 1990 there were only a handful of center-city census tracts in any of the 50 largest metropolitan areas that were more than 95 or 98 percent White.

5. This is the P-star index, which is a weighted average of the neighborhood racial composition experienced by members of a particular group. It is measured here from the point of view of non-Hispanic Whites and calculates the percentage of Whites in the average White's neighborhood or White isolation. Isolation can be measured assuming there are only two groups in the population (Whites and Blacks in this case–column 2) or from all non-Whites (column 3). See Massey and Denton (1993) for more details on this index.

6. The results for the 98 percent White definition are not shown. The patterns using the 98-percent criterion are similar, though with the more stringent cutoff, fewer neighborhoods qualify as all-White. Only Buffalo (56 percent), Cincinnati (50 percent), and Albany 40 percent) had substantial proportions of neighborhoods that were 98 percent White as late as 1990.

7. Metropolitan areas, except in New England, are defined in terms of whole counties. Thus when a county is added to a metropolitan area because a substantial portion of the population is economically linked to the metropolitan area, it may also include a substantial rural population.

8. The text of HR 3206 can be found on the Internet at http://www.house.gov.

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