THE PERSISTENCE OF RACIAL SEGREGATION

Soc 2202 : Cities and Society
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PREVIOUSLY

➤ Racial and Socioeconomic Segregation

  ➤ from W.E.B. DuBois to The Great Migration

➤ Forces of Racial Segregation

  ➤ White Aggression (Urban Riots)

  ➤ Zoning Regulations and Racially Restrictive Covenants

  ➤ Federal Policies and the Creation of Iconic Ghettos

    ➤ HOLC and Federal Housing Administration

    ➤ Housing Acts of 1949 and 1954

TODAY

➤ The Persistence of Racial Segregation in Communities

➤ Movements Toward Racially Diverse Communities

  ➤ Types of Diverse Communities

    ➤ Diversity by Direction

    ➤ Diversity by Circumstance

➤ Institutional Barriers to Housing Choice

➤ Arguments Related to Persistent Poverty Within African American Communities (Wilson v. Sharkey v. Venkatesh)

INTEGRATION NOW?

➤ **1960s:** Political support for segregation will decrease for government bodies.

  ➤ **Kennedy:** desegregate public housing

  ➤ **1964 Civil Rights Act:** prohibit federal government from discriminating in any of its programs on the basis of race.

  ➤ **Civil Rights Act of 1968:** ban racial discrimination in the sale or rental of private or public housing.

SUPPORTING INTEGRATION

➤ INTEGRATION has been difficult to achieve through government policies.

  • Maintaining racial compositions.

  • Differing attitudes among blacks and whites in relation to racially integrated neighborhoods.

    • Most whites still prefer to live in all-white neighborhoods and suburbs.

      • Racial thresholds (around 40%).

    • Most blacks prefer living in neighborhoods with equal numbers of black and white residents.

  • Affirmative marketing techniques and financial incentives.

  • Courts have been central in promoting integration.

SUPPORTING INTEGRATION

➤ *Gautreaux vs. Chicago Housing Authority* (1966)

  • public housing as *de facto* segregation

  • led to a housing voucher program

➤ Moving to Opportunity:

  • designed to see if moving to less impoverished communities might affect quality of life.

    • results mixed

    • MTO study seemed to show that living in quieter, less stressful environments did have very positive effects on children.

SUPPORTING INTEGRATION

➤ Section 8 Housing Choice Voucher

- families can rent units above fair market rate (FMR) as long as they pay the difference between the government-established FMR limit and the actual rent.

➤ Income Mixing in Public Housing

- greater socioeconomic mixing in public housing

➤ Scattered-Site Subsidized Housing

- families are given vouchers to live in low poverty neighborhoods

➤ Redevelopment

- Hope VI Program (1992)

INSTITUTIONAL BARRIERS TO HOUSING CHOICE

➤ Lower incomes

➤ Racial discrimination in housing markets

- realtors as neighborhood "gatekeepers"
- Dual housing markets
- blockbusting

➤ Today, it remains more difficult for blacks to find more affordable housing relative to whites.

- mortgage disinvestment
- subprime loans

NEIGHBORHOOD DIVERSITY

➤ Racial and economic diversity in neighborhoods is often treated as an omen.

➤ Some neighborhoods/communities have succeeded in maintaining long-term diversity (since the Civil Rights Movement)

- Diversity by direction
- Diversity by circumstance

DIVERSITY BY DIRECTION

➤ Creation of Community Based Organizations (CBOs) and other community organizations.

➤ Religious institutions are encouraged to play a prominent role in promoting pro-diversity values.

➤ The places where different groups in the community come together on a regular basis are more prevalent and development.

➤ Greater financial and political resources to promote diversity.

➤ Working relationships with banks and real estate agents to market the community.

➤ Bi-racial or bi-ethnic character instead of a multiracial or multiethnic character.

DIVERSITY BY CIRCUMSTANCE

➤ Multiethnic as opposed to bi-racial/bi-ethnic

➤ Multiple groups representing multiple ethnic/racial differences.

➤ Religious institutions are central for building bridges between groups.

➤ Fewer social seams to bring different groups together.

➤ Difficult to organize collectively due to multicultural character.

➤ Limited financial resources (often due to high number of immigrants)

➤ Substantial number of affordable housing units.

EXAMPLES

· Examples of Diversity by Direction

  · Sherman Park (Milwaukee); Park Hill (Denver); West Mount Airy (Philadelphia); Forest Park (Chicago)

· Examples of Diversity by Circumstance

  · Jackson Heights and Fort Greene (New York City); Rogers Park, Edgewater, and Uptown (Chicago); San Antonio and Fruitvale (Oakland); Houston Heights; Southeast Seattle

THE PERSISTENCE OF INEQUALITY

➤ **underclass thesis:** the argument that poverty is the result of factors beyond their control.

➤ **culture of poverty:** the argument that poor people adopt certain practices that differ from those of the middle class (mainstream) in order to adapt and survive in different economic circumstances.

  ➤ **perverse incentives:** reward structures that lead to suboptimal outcomes by stimulating counterproductive behavior.

    ➤ e.g. welfare (discouraging work efforts)

THE TRULY DISADVANTAGED (1987)

William Julius Wilson (1935 -)

➤ welfare a minor consideration with respect to labor and marriage markets in the inner cities.

➤ shifts focus from welfare to factors such as deindustrialization, globalization, suburbanization, and discrimination as causes of urban poverty.

  ➤ the disappearance of manufacturing jobs in the inner cities have left dependent minority populations without an employment base.

  ➤ the rise of single parent and welfare-dependent families result from increased joblessness, which left few "marriageable" black men who could support the family and play the role of "breadwinner."

  ➤ the removal of the "black middle-class" buffer: the departure of the black middle class out of black neighborhoods resulted in deterioration of black institutions.

THE TRULY DISADVANTAGED

➤ **social isolation,** resulting from the socio-geographic distance between urban, low-income residents and the institutions and resources that more socio-economically secure individuals have access to and utilize in their daily lives.

  ➤ produced by the absence of sustained contact or interaction with individuals and institutions that represent mainstream society.

  ➤ access and utilization allows them to access and employ valued resources for enhancing their status in social life.

➤ **concentration effects:** the social outcome resulting from large numbers of impoverished people living in extreme proximity to one another.

  ➤ state of being saturated in social networks and patterns of social exposure with little other than chronically poor people.

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Wilson argues that the social isolation of impoverished black communities is far more damaging and relevant to urban poverty than the idea of a "culture of poverty." He specifically mentions that "the exodus of middle- and working-class families from many ghetto neighborhoods removes an important 'social buffer'" (Wilson 56). **According to Wilson's argument, does class matter more than race in examining the continued existence of the urban ghetto? How does Wilson's opinion compare with the opinions of the authors we read for last class (Massey and Denton, Sharkey)?**

-Christina M., Expert Question

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Wilson describes the increasing social isolation in the most disadvantaged black urban communities as a *concentration effect*. What factors over time have lead to this phenomenon, and why is the *concentration effect* related to social isolation rather than a "culture of poverty"?

-Lucas H., Expert Question

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Wilson observed the rapid increase of poor black households run by single mothers in urban areas over time. How is this lack of traditional family structure compensated for in Venkatesh's descriptions of Maquis Park? How is the underground economy and the idea of "hustling" crucial to making ends meet for neighborhood residents?

-Lucas H., Expert Question

Should the underground economy be considered not only a system of employment, but a community? What do we see in Venkatesh's description of an impoverished black community, Maquis Park, that hasn't been articulated by previous authors?

-Christina M., Expert Question