

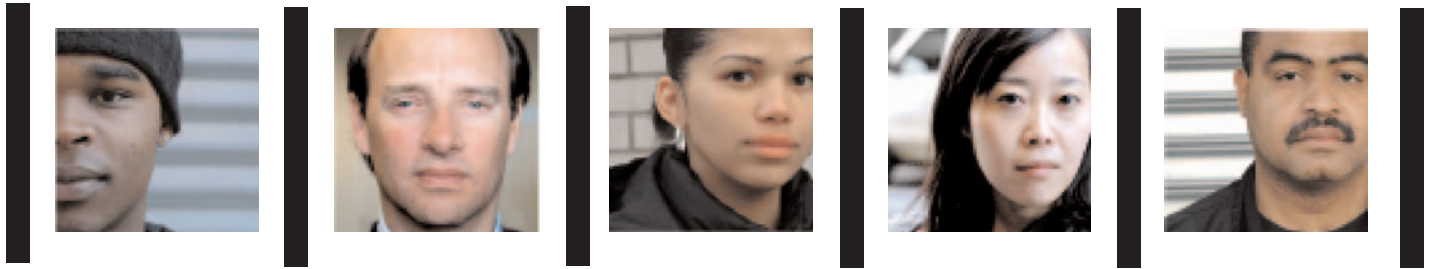


TEXAS LOW INCOME HOUSING INFORMATION SERVICE

HOUSING MATTERS

A newsletter dedicated to the goal that every Texan should have decent, safe, affordable housing

SEGREGATION



An enduring Texas challenge

Thirty seven years ago Americans struggling to end housing discrimination achieved a historic victory. President Lyndon B. Johnson signed the Fair Housing Act into law, prohibiting racial discrimination in the housing market. Nearly four decades later Texas cities remain starkly segregated by race.

Housing segregation in Texas cities has historically been among the highest in the nation. While racial segregation levels fell significantly from 1980 to 1990, the decrease in segregation slowed and in some Texas cities increased from 1990 to 2000.

In this newsletter, we explore the background of housing segregation in Texas and ask what should be done about the problem. To arrive at some answers, TxLIHIS interviewed Elizabeth “Betsy” Julian, the state’s leading expert on fair housing and a civil rights attorney who filed the landmark *Young v. Kemp and Walker, et al v. HUD, et al* housing desegregation lawsuits.

TxLIHIS: Where did you grow up?

Julian: I grew up in the small East Texas town of Crockett—a town of 7,500 in the heart of the Piney Woods. It is a town whose makeup then was about half Black and half White. It was a typical small East Texas town.

TxLIHIS: You went to law school at the University of Texas?

Julian: Yes, undergraduate and law school at UT between 1966 and 1973. This was an important time in terms of understanding my interest in a lot of these issues as well as understanding my experiences growing up. My father was a small town lawyer in East Texas. He and my mother were considered liberals in a town that did not have a lot of those. So I grew up interested in politics and social issues. My environment certainly shaped my thinking and my ultimate professional choices.

TxLIHIS: Crockett was a segregated community?

Julian: Crockett was a very segregated community. The schools integrated very timidly just as I was leaving high school in 1965-66. It was not that different from anything you’ve seen and heard about segregation in the South.

TxLIHIS: How did you first get involved in fair housing work?

Julian: Housing as a civil rights issue came on my screen in the late ‘70’s, early ‘80’s. I had worked Legal Services since 1973 so I had been working on poverty and civil rights issues. When attorney Mike Daniel and I went to East Texas to work for East Texas Legal Services in 1980 we brought a large public housing desegregation case—the Young case. That case set the track for me in the area of housing for the next twenty years.

TxLIHIS: When was the Young case filed and what was it about?

Julian: The Young case was filed in 1980 and it challenged a racially dual system of public housing in 36 counties in East Texas covering about 70 public housing authorities. We decided instead of filing a bunch of separate cases we would file one case against HUD alleging that HUD over its entire history had created and perpetuated a racially separate and unequal system of housing for families dependent upon public housing authorities for housing assistance.

TxLIHIS: What brought the case about? Was the problem with local housing authorities, or was it national policy?

Julian: The ultimate cause of it was building and operating housing on a racially segregated basis. There were Black projects and there were White projects all throughout East Texas. If you were White you could only be on the list for the White projects, and if you were Black you could only be on the list for the Black projects.

Lucille Young, one of the named plaintiffs in the Young case, was



living in an extremely substandard private rental house that had gotten so bad that the roof had fallen in...She was on the waiting list for the Black project and couldn't get in because it was so long. So we went in to compel the housing authority to let her into the White project...The record in the case demonstrated that [HUD] was very complicit and aware of the segregation that was going on.

This was 1980. This was way past 1954 when separate but unequal in these kind of public environments had been declared unconstitutional. It was an outrage that HUD and the federal government had allowed this to go on as long as it had and had not done anything about it.

When I went home and was visiting with my dad about the lawsuit he said, "You know when we built public housing, it was a handful of progressive folks that took it on." And he said, "We knew when we built it that it would be segregated. It was the only way we could get it built. So we built it segregated and we figured that when we got it built that the federal government would come in and tell us that we couldn't operate it segregated. Then we would integrate it and then go on our way. But the federal government never came."

I think that was true all over this country, but certainly throughout the South. You had the [federal] government ignoring decades of law regarding racial segregation and discrimination, allowing local jurisdictions that had a history of racial discrimination and prejudice to continue to do business as usual with federal funds.

TxLIHIS: After the Young case, was the Walker case the next major housing segregation case you worked on?

Julian: The Walker case was, if you will, the Dallas version of the Young case. The legal principles were exactly the same and they weren't that dissimilar from the legal principles involved in school desegregation. It essentially said that a racially segregated separate and unequal system was illegal under the Constitution and the laws of the United States.

By the time the lawsuit was brought in 1985, the low-income Whites were not in the public housing system by and large. So the focus of the Walker case was not so much integrating the public housing units, but creating opportunities for choice for all the African American members...so they could access housing outside those segregated public housing units if they wanted to. Or, if they stayed, they could have the opportunity to live in conditions equal to the conditions that the low-income White elderly residents lived in. We kind of used that as our standard. Whatever HUD and the housing authority were providing for low-income White seniors, they should provide equally good conditions, including air

conditioning, for African-Americans.

TxLIHIS: Why were Whites not in the Dallas Housing Authority by the time you filed Walker?

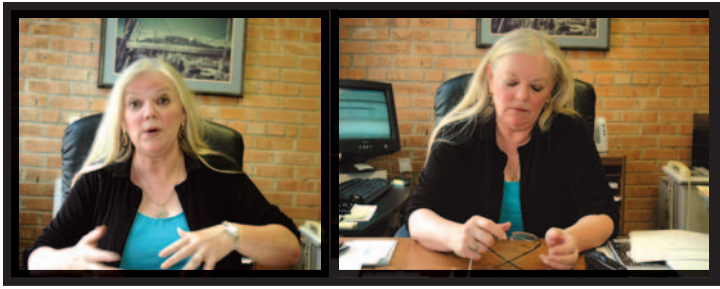
Julian: Well, a couple of reasons I think. Most of the family public housing had been built in Black neighborhoods and consistent with the pattern in urban areas nationally, it had been allowed to grossly deteriorate. Low-income African Americans really had no place else to go. Low-income Whites did. In the late 1960's as public housing had to integrate, and as everybody from the Justice Department to HUD said we really could not continue to enforce segregated public housing, other housing programs came on that perpetuated segregation. The Section 236 Program and 221(d)(3) BMIR Program...used private developers who got benefits through low interest loans and other kinds of subsidies to operate individual housing developments. They weren't public housing. It was the private market in the public market so to speak. And they were located all over Dallas, a lot in White areas.

When we filed Walker one of the things we did was do a phone survey and...what we found was that there were approximately 10,000 of these private HUD assisted units located all around Dallas. A lot of those projects didn't advertise and didn't take Section 8 even though they should have. We spent a lot of time in Walker simply trying to open up the HUD White assisted housing in the Dallas area because it was on the ground and in good neighborhoods. We got lots of resistance from HUD, which was pretty outrageous given their duty to end segregation in their programs and affirmatively further fair housing, but we came to expect that from them.

In the Young case, Judge Justice, in one of his opinions responded to HUD's argument that the public housing program had to be treated separately from Section 8, and Section 8 from Section 8 New Construction, and Section 8 New Construction from anything else. Essentially they were trying to Balkanize these programs and say if we segregated and discriminated over here, we couldn't be made to use our other programs to help remedy the discrimination and the segregation we imposed. Judge Justice noted, quite rightly I think, that in fashioning a remedy for unconstitutional behavior he was not limited to the government's choice of weapons.

TxLIHIS: Did housing segregation ever become a political issue or was it always simply a legal issue?

Julian: Racial segregation has always been as much a political issue as a legal issue. I think that the history of the passage of the Fair Housing Act in 1968 reflects that.



You will remember that the Fair Housing Act did not get passed until 1968, well past the passage of the Voting Rights Act in 1965, and the Title VII public accommodations law in 1964. It was not until the assassination of Dr. King in April 1968 that the Johnson Administration was able to push through the passage of the Fair Housing Act. The resistance to making fair housing the law of the land really underscores how very fundamental the issue of segregation was to the way this country operated.

TxLIHIS: *The politics you describe are the politics that resist fair housing. Where are the politics at the community level in Texas that advocate for fair housing? Why did it take until 1985 to get something going? And why did it take two civil rights lawyers to file a lawsuit? Where is the community concern?*

Julian: Well, I think first of all you are talking about a segment of the community that is very low income and had very little political power based on their economic and their racial status. Our clients were very concerned about it...The driving force behind the Dallas case was Mary Dews—an African American tenant organizer and counselor who had been on Section 8 herself. Mary was passionate about the conditions that minority women and their children were being placed in as a result of the way the housing authority was operating its programs. That rage was there before we filed that case.

I do think that there was nationally a failure on the part of the low-income housing community to take up the banner of housing segregation for a number of reasons. Probably the most important [reason] was...a feeling that if you pressed for fair housing, if you challenged segregation in housing...that you would drive away the political support for any money for low-income housing. That is certainly the history of the public housing program.

We continue to struggle to this day with that conflict between do you “get the housing now and fix the segregation later” or do you “insist that housing and civil rights go together...or justice is not done?”

TxLIHIS: *Did these segregation practices exist in other cities?*

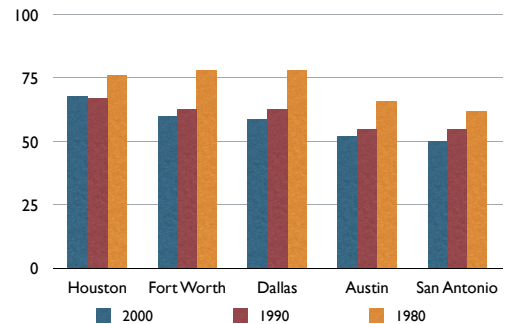
Julian: Yes. If it operated before 1960 it was absolutely de jure segregated. Even well after that, many housing authorities gave only lip service to real desegregation. Once you’ve built it segregated, it’s not that hard to keep it that way. So I’d be surprised to find any public housing authorities that don’t have a legacy of “separate and unequal”...and often that continued into the other housing programs like the Section 8 Housing Voucher Program. The Walker case was not just about public housing, it was also about the way the Section 8 program was operated to basically keep Section 8 participants in about one ZIP code here in Dallas.

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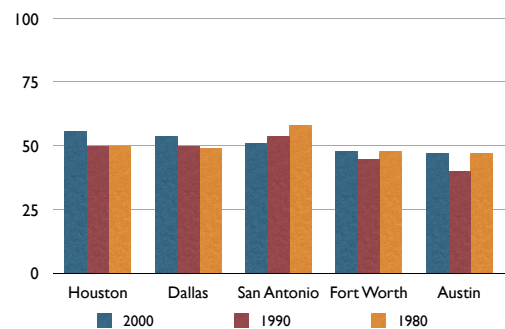
Housing segregation measured by the Dissimilarity Index

(0=complete integration, 100=complete segregation)

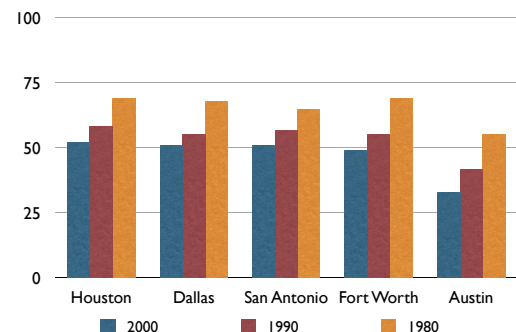
Black-White segregation



Hispanic-White segregation



Hispanic-Black segregation



About the Index of Dissimilarity

The standard measure of segregation is the Index of Dissimilarity (D), which captures the degree to which two groups are evenly spread among census tracts in a given city. Evenness is defined with respect to the racial composition of the city as a whole. The index ranges from 0 to 100, giving the percentage of one group who would have to move to achieve an even residential pattern—one where every tract replicates the group composition of the city. A value of 60 or above is considered very high. For example, a D score of 60 for Black-White segregation means that 60% of either group must move to a different tract for the two groups to become equally distributed. Values of 40 to 50 are usually considered moderate levels of segregation, while values of 30 or less are considered low.

Demographers typically interpret change either up or down in the following way:

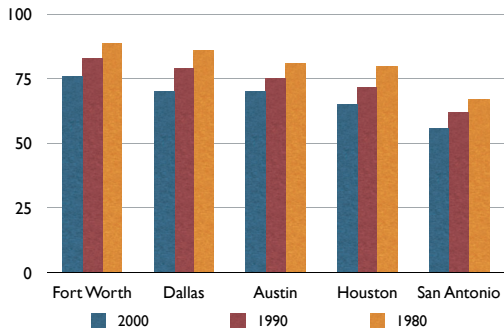
- Change of 10 points or more in one decade - Significant change
- Change of 5-10 points in one decade - Moderate change
- Below 5 points in one decade - Small change or no real change.

Source: Lewis Mumford Center for Comparative Urban and Regional Research, the University at Albany, SUNY

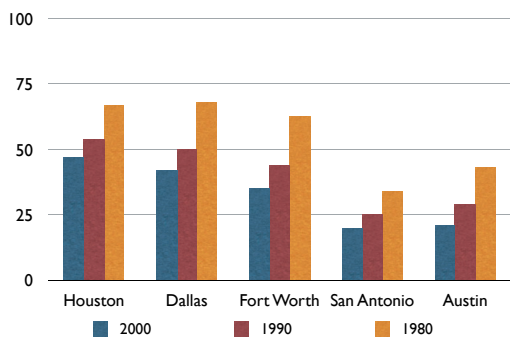
Housing segregation measured by the Isolation Index

(75 means average White resident lives in a neighborhood that is 75% White)

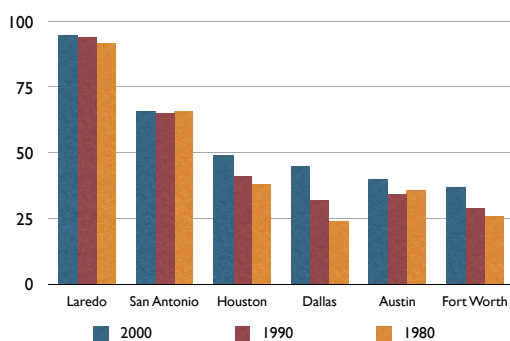
White isolation



Black isolation



Hispanic isolation



About the Isolation Index

Another widely used measure of segregation is a class of Exposure Indices that refer to the racial/ethnic composition of a tract where the average member of a given group lives. Exposure of a group to itself is called the Index of Isolation. The range is from 0 to 100. For example, an Isolation score of 80.2 for Whites means that the average White lives in a neighborhood that is 80.2% White.

Even if segregation (measured by the Index of Dissimilarity) remains the same over time, growth in a minority population will tend to leave it more isolated—that is, leaving group members in neighborhoods where they are a larger share of the population.

Source: Lewis Mumford Center for Comparative Urban and Regional Research, the University at Albany, SUNY

TxLIHIS: You went on to become Assistant Secretary for Fair Housing at HUD. How did that come about?

Julian: After President Clinton was elected in 1992, I was contacted by national civil rights people who were putting together a list that they wanted to propose to the Administration. I would say that the main reason I was considered was due to our work in Walker and Young. ...I originally went as Deputy General Counsel. My job was to deal with a lot of these housing desegregation cases nationally [and] to settle them in a way that furthered fair housing. I became Assistant Secretary for Fair Housing after the first year I was there.

TxLIHIS: What did you learn at HUD?

Julian: I learned that I would never go back to HUD [laughing].

Seriously, I did learn a lot but it was not the most professionally productive period of my life looking back on it in terms of really making a difference and contributing the way I would like to contribute. That being said, that was due to being a part of a political environment that is very difficult to operate in. I cannot ever overstate how much the political environment changed after the '94 elections – how that limited the ability to do anything very progressive at HUD and through the [Clinton] Administration.

I learned how hard it is to get the right thing done even when you have really good people at the table. And there were some very good people at the table. But we didn't do anywhere near all we should have done on this issue. When I went to HUD I thought of HUD as only being about fair housing and civil rights. When I got there I came to understand institutionally what a very small and—relatively speaking—unappreciated part of the HUD mission that fair housing is. I think that's a real problem. HUD has so many masters. I refer to it as the "four headed monster." It has very separate constituencies—and oftentimes constituencies that are at odds with each other.

I had always thought of fair housing as a civil rights issue, and that meant, for me, race. My experience at HUD reinforced my belief that housing discrimination is really about the last great gatekeeper in the world of equal opportunity. We have laws that say you can't discriminate in employment and you can't discriminate in...education.

But as long as you can perpetuate housing segregation you pretty much can accomplish the same harm by excluding people from the places where they get access to the opportunities. You don't have to say they can't go to a good school, you just don't let them live in a community where a good school is. You don't have to deny them the opportunity to get access to a good paying job. You just make sure they live so far away from that well-paying job that they are not going to be able to get it...or keep it.

So, I think the notion of "housing discrimination" as a gatekeeper is an important one as it relates to limiting access to a wide range of opportunities, not just housing. It does so very effectively. If you limit people's access to places where those good things are by how affordable you make the housing in those areas, then you are really able to control who gets a wide range of opportunities way past what kind of roof they have over their head. In that way housing is much more than shelter and the issue of housing segregation is about much more than housing. It is about access to opportunity.

TxLIHIS: Are there any practices that the state or local governments in Texas are engaged in that concern you as far as their impacts on fair housing?

Julian: Sure. All the actions that encourage and reward the NIMBY attitude toward the development of affordable housing. Any policy that restricts the development of affordable housing, excludes it from places of high opportunity, or steers it into other places that correspond with racial or poverty concentrations would concern me. I think that you can look at the state's Qualified Allocation Plan which distributes tax credits and see a number of areas that steer affordable housing into low-income areas and away from higher income areas where market forces are creating opportunity.

The lack of policies incentivizing a "fair share" distribution of affordable housing so that affordable housing really is everywhere is a failure on the state's part. A "fair share plan" would say if we have 10,000 units of affordable housing to distribute... we distribute them so that every jurisdiction is going to have some affordable housing. One of the problems with allocating it where it already is is that it supports existing segregation. So if we assume that people are where they are because of their race and class...then we perpetuate that, if that's the only place we build the housing. If we spread it out, we expand housing opportunity...and if somebody considers affordable housing a burden, if everybody has some then it is an equally-shared burden.

TxLIHIS: It seems to me that would be very difficult politically.

Julian: There is nothing about fair housing or housing as a civil rights issue that is not beyond difficult.

The lack of political will to address segregation in this society through effective housing policy [is] a complete and total failure of...responsible political action. I don't disagree with you. That's why we as a society made the deal with the devil on segregation in the first place.

We've had affordable housing and public housing programs for over fifty years and they were designed to be constructed on a foundation of segregation, not because there were not a lot of good people who would have preferred it otherwise, but because they thought segregation was such a difficult political issue. So when you get down to the licklog, it's always punted on.

So if you ask me a question that suggests that it would be politically difficult to do, that would be true... Getting people to even agree to look at the problem is difficult.

If you look at a city and you find out all of the small lots are in one part of town for single-family homes and all of the large lots are in another part of town, then you begin to see why the part of town that happens to be the minority part of town has all the small lots. This part of town is never going to create the kind of diversity—even in the homeownership environment—to have a tax base like another section of the city. That's just a small example. It's a lot harder to find a policy that promotes integration than it is to find one that discourages it.

TxLIHIS: Diversity is not what the typical homeowner wants. Most think it best to live in an area that is composed of their economic strata or the one above theirs. Aren't you bucking human



Betsy Julian and the staff of ICP.

Dallas project supports families integrating neighborhoods

Betsy Julian has assumed numerous roles in the fight for integrated communities—attorney, national policy-maker, and now advocate, with the establishment of the nonprofit Inclusive Communities Project (ICP) last year.

According to Julian, ICP "works for the creation and maintenance of thriving racially and economically inclusive communities, expansion of fair and affordable housing opportunities for low-income families, and redress for policies and practices that perpetuate the harmful effects of discrimination and segregation."

ICP originally began as the Walker Project, Inc.—created in 1990 in response to the *Walker v. HUD* case that challenged public housing segregation in Dallas. Julian and attorney Mike Daniel were the plaintiff attorneys in this case.

ICP was appointed by the Court to administer the Walker Housing Fund, established as part of the remedy in the case to expand housing opportunities for low-income Dallas families.

Julian says ICP is not only about housing integration—it is about the broader ideals of equal opportunity. "As an organizing principle we believe we should not continue to separate ourselves by race and class," says Julian. "Doing so is harmful to individuals in terms of denying them access to opportunities and ultimately harmful to our society."

ICP provides counseling, education, and financial services to families who have decided to relocate from low-income neighborhoods to neighborhoods that offer them more opportunities. Julian knows that this transition is not always easy.

"We know that for many families who have moved out of racially-isolated, high-poverty environments, the move is effectively as difficult as moving to a new country," Julian says. ICP responds to those difficult transition periods where help is needed—whether it is in tutoring a child struggling to catch up in a new school, or in helping families cover the cost of moving.

ICP' also seeks to engage low-income people to effect positive social change in their communities. "We have hopes to expand our programmatic efforts to encourage communities to figure out if they are inclusive or not and why," Julian says. 🏠

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nature here? Is there a reason to believe that you can be successful?

Julian: Well, we are not as segregated as we were fifty years ago. And I would challenge the view that everyone wants it that way. But we have to talk about it.

You may argue that its been really harmful to the Whites but it has not been helpful to communities of color to stay segregated because people in power don't usually segregate other people to give them more. They segregate them to give them less. Oh, they get the land fills and the toxic waste site, but they get less city services and overall less access to opportunity, particularly market driven opportunity. Minority communities continue to bear the scars of that today.

There is a series in the newspaper here about the Black middle class with a quote: "we are playing a lot of catch-up." That is absolutely true. And it makes it much more difficult to catch up if you are limited in where you can play to catch up.

I can make a moral argument against segregation, a religious argument against segregation. I can argue it from the economic standpoint, but ultimately it is illegal.

[Former US Senator] Ed Brooke talked about "amiable apartheid" as being the way our country worked. I think we continue in many parts of the state...to exist in state of amiable apartheid. There are a lot of people who will keep trying to fight it. But if enough people do think segregation is a good system, then perhaps we should have that debate openly, rather than just back-door it.

TxLIHIS: Why do people seem to have such a hard time talking about this issue?

Julian: Race is just a very uncomfortable issue for people to talk about. People feel guilty about their feelings about it or they feel impotent about their ability to do anything about it.

If you are African-American I would think at some point you would just want to give up on White people cause we are not ever going to get it. I've had friends of mine say just that. So they are not going to worry about it. Not because they think it is a great way to be but they are simply going to go on about their lives. They just don't have time to try to convince us White folks to act like human beings.

So there is on the one hand the fact that we want to believe we're past it. But there is way too much indicating that we're not. The point at which there are no racial disparities related to income or health or environment where you live, then we may be able to talk about race not being the factor that it is. Right now there is not an indicator of social and community health that does not have a racial disparity involved in it. As long as that is true, race is the issue and housing is one of the most visible ways that race is kept an issue.

TxLIHIS: The Legislature outlawed inclusionary zoning for owner occupied housing this year. Is that a big deal?

Julian: I think it is...incredibly significant because it is an aggressive effort to prevent communities from dealing with the harms of segregation, even if they actually wanted to. It is a big step backward.

No question the State of Texas puts a higher priority on the interests of people with lots of money over people with less, and that has racial implications given the historical effects of discrimination.

What the experts say about the effects of extreme housing segregation...

- Political isolation: a residentially isolated minority cannot make political alliances with other groups—their local political needs do not overlap with anyone else's.

Douglass Massey and Nancy Denton, *American Apartheid*

- In the aftermath of the Voting Rights Act (1965), the decennial process of districting has, under court orders, undertaken a kind of reverse-gerrymandering, which draws districts to maximize the number of 'minority- majority' districts, that is the number of districts that are majority Black. This means that there are more Black elected officials, but even more political isolation between Blacks and Whites.

Lani Guinier

- White flight to the suburbs leaves urban schools with an insufficient tax base, and therefore insufficient resources.

William Julius Wilson, *When Work Disappears*

- Racial segregation concentrates poverty and therefore crime. Inner city residents face much higher rates of violent crime than anyone else.

Alex Kotlowitz, *There Are No Children Here*

- The concentration of poverty means that ghetto residents have too few role models. Without knowing anyone who has succeeded in school and gone on to college and a professional career, children in the ghetto can't imagine how they might succeed.

Alex Kotlowitz, *There Are No Children Here*

- The concentration of poverty ensures that Black inner city neighborhoods don't have the economic strength to support a sufficient retail sector, so all goods available in the inner city are over priced.

Douglass Massey and Nancy Denton, *American Apartheid*

- Segregation in the housing market limits the supply of housing available to Blacks, and therefore drives up the price of housing available to Blacks.

Arnold Hirsch, *Making the Second Ghetto*

- Segregation was reinforced by a conscious policy of neighborhood 'redlining', by the Federal government, so the lack of loans and investment and credit in the inner city has robbed generations of Blacks of the benefits of home ownership.

Douglass Massey and Nancy Denton, *American Apartheid*

- Hopelessness is a key part of the psychology of the ghetto.

Kenneth B. Clark's studies of Harlem youth

- Ghetto residents are alienated from the large, impersonal bureaucracies that rule their lives (the housing authority, the court system, the welfare office), and these bureaucracies make no effort to teach ghetto residents about their rights. So without financial resources or sufficient education, ghetto residents are treated capriciously and frequently unfairly by these important bureaucracies.

Piven and Cloward, *Regulating the Poor*

Source: Some Notes on the Effects of Residential Segregation, and Spatial Isolation (<http://www.stanford.edu/~mrosenfe/>).



Homebuilders make a lot of money and benefit from a lot of support from the government.... inclusionary zoning is a perfectly legitimate exercise of government power. We place a wide range of...burdens on industry and business and individuals that limits their ability to do their business the way they want to. For the State to say the interests of the private development community (who will still make buckets of money) outweigh the public's interest in effectively addressing the harmful effects of continued racial segregation, and a community's decision to be more inclusive, is a...profoundly regressive position.

TxLIHIS: A lot of the work by people who care about housing has been done through community development corporations (CDCs) working on the revitalization of low-income communities. Does their work reinforce segregated housing patterns?

Julian: CDCs don't have to have that effect.

I described the harms of segregation as being two-fold: separate and the unequal. With that understanding of the harm this social engineering policy of segregation has imposed, CDCs have chosen to work on the unequal part as opposed to the separate part.

An idealistic defense of the CDCs is that they have just taken one piece of the problem. If they are successful in solving it, then they will have created communities that are attractive enough so that no longer is it an irrational act to move into a historically minority community because [it] is no longer equated with the condition of being a community that is lacking in quality of life, resources, and desirable environment. If CDCs are successful in building up those neighborhoods and communities, and insuring the current residents are involved in what happens, they can be a major part of the solution.

I think that gentrification properly done is not a bad thing from the standpoint of breaking down the barriers of segregation. I think that moment of opportunity [is when] the market forces and desires come together so that people might choose to live together. When that opportunity presents itself, if the only response of the CDC is to put up a barrier wall that says "you can't come in" to those White yuppies who want to move back to the city—at that point I think you really have to ask what is being protected, and what is being improved. But that doesn't have to be the only response.

I would really like to see CDCs embrace the notion of inclusive communities in the work they do the same way I would like to see the growing White suburban communities embrace the notion of inclusive communities... It is not about preserving and protecting and excluding.

TxLIHIS: Once an inner city minority neighborhood begins to integrate how do you maintain a racial balance?

Julian: First you have to be willing to say that is a goal. Then we should talk about what kind of policies a city can adopt if they decide they want to strike this balance, not just in terms of race, but also in maintaining a degree of economic diversity in the community.

I will say that balance is the hardest thing that we do in life. So there is not a silver bullet answer to how you strike balance. Because balance is so difficult—most of us tend to want to go all the way to one end of the seesaw or the other and sit there. Either up in the sky or down on the ground, but we really do not like trying to balance partly because it requires constant vigilance and...compromise and... judgment and...the decision as to when it has been struck.

For example, communities do things to strike that balance in terms of their zoning laws, and giving people access to money to fix their house up or to pay their taxes...If you say that you want to improve a neighborhood and you want to improve it in a way that allows the boarded up houses to be rebuilt...[You] will let people come in and recognize that this may upset the economic dynamic a little bit, and it may change the tax base, so [you'll] protect the folks who are there, for example, by insuring their taxes won't jump until they sell, things like that.

It's like playing chess. What move do we make to counter the move that has just been made? But we have to agree on the goal and that requires talking honestly about race and class in ways that we don't like to do.

To use the President Bush's phrase, challenging segregation is "hard work," and that is why we are where we are. It will always be a lot easier to agree to be separate but to promise to fix the "unequal" piece of it. That is the trap the CDCs need to resist falling into.

Segregation has not made things better for people of color. I don't think it makes things better for White people either. Segregated minority communities have never gotten their fair share of things and even if they started getting their fair share right now, the catch up factor is huge. Segregated White communities have usually gotten more than their fair share.

Bottom line: there is an economic winner and a loser in racial segregation. And that's reason enough to address it. But we shouldn't just be about changing the group that is the loser, we should be about undoing the social construct of racial segregation altogether. That's really what the Fair Housing Act promised, and we should keep that promise. 🏠

The problem Texans are uncomfortable discussing

Thirty seven years after the Kerner Commission report concluded that America was “moving toward two societies, one Black, one White—separate and unequal,” Texas cities remain divided by race and some recent trends in housing re-segregation are alarming.

Research shows that the progress made in integrating Texas’ major cities is slowing, or even reversing (see page 3). In Houston, for instance, segregation between Blacks and Whites increased between 1990 and 2000. In Dallas, segregation between Hispanics and Whites has been on the rise since 1980.

The ramifications of housing segregation stretch far beyond the borders of any neighborhood. Racial and economic isolation in housing continues into the classroom, where disparities in school funding lower the quality of education for low-income, minority children. Segregation continues into the workforce, where it restricts opportunities for low-income minorities to obtain high-paying jobs.

Segregated neighborhoods are limiting opportunities for minorities in every facet of life yet nobody is talking about it. The silence on this issue must be broken. We are calling for a renewed commitment to ending segregation from policy makers, the Legal Services community, community organizations, churches and individuals.


The recent session of the Texas Legislature signifies a turn in the wrong direction. Anti-integration legislation (HB 2266) now prohibits

cities from requiring the inclusion of housing opportunities for low- and moderate-income people in new developments. Elected officials at the Texas Legislature who claim allegiance to anti-racist ideals should not only stand firm against this type of legislation, but work to pass initiatives that promote integration.

The Legal Services community must also become more aggressive in addressing the problem of housing discrimination and segregation. Because of Betsy Julian’s and Mike Daniel’s pioneering work first as Legal Services attorneys then as members of the private bar, segregation in public housing in East Texas and Dallas has been confronted. We need other attorneys in public and private practice to follow in their footsteps.

Finally, neighborhood organizations, community development corporations, socially conscious individuals and people of faith should join together to work towards more integrated communities.

There was a time when housing segregation was discussed openly as a major civil rights issue—that was 1968, when Dr. Martin Luther King spoke of the “dark and desolate valley of segregation.” It was only the assassination of Dr. King that prodded Congress to pass the long-delayed Fair Housing Act.

We must recognize that the stain of segregation is still on us today and take steps to eliminate it. 

Find data about housing segregation in your city at : <http://mumford.albany.edu/census/>

www.texashousing.org



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