

The Changing Landscape: The Continuing Quest for Fair Housing in the 21st Century

By

Henry Louis Taylor, Jr., Ph.D.
Professor, Department of Urban and Regional Planning
Director, Center for Urban Studies
School of Architecture and Planning
University at Buffalo

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The purpose of this essay is to examine the new challenges facing the fair housing movement and to outline the road that must be traveled to achieve the goal of fostering and building secure and diverse neighborhoods, where people from across the color and class spectrum live together.¹ Although progress has been made, we still have a long way to go before this dream becomes a reality. The United States remains a highly segregated society, where neighborhoods and suburban municipalities are organized on the basis of the interplay between race, class, housing cost, and housing type.² Public opinion notwithstanding, the separation of neighborhoods along race and income lines is deeply embedded in the dominant American vision of how metropolitan regions ought to grow and develop.³ Within this context, the fair housing goal cannot be achieved without a new vision for metropolitan America, without strong congressional leadership, and without a new and more aggressive set of public policies specifically designed to disestablish the segregated metropolis.⁴

¹ Department of Housing and Urban Development, *Fair Housing Month*, www.gov.hud. March, 2005.

² Todd Swanstrom, Colleen Casey, Robert Flack, and Peter Dreier, Pulling Apart: Economic Segregation among Suburbs and Central Cities, **The Brookings Institute**, October 2004.

³ Anthony Downs, **New Visions for Metropolitan America** (Washington, The Brookings Institution, 1994): 3-31.

⁴ The Institute on Race and Poverty, *Analyzing the Relationship between Housing, Education, and Persistent Segregation*, A Report to the McKnight Foundation, June 1997; john a. powell, *Fair Housing and the Affordable Housing Crisis, Recommendations to the Millennium Housing Commission*, www.mhc.gov/focus/powell.

The essay is divided into three parts. The first part will outline the events that led to the passage of the Fair Housing Act of 1968 and the frontal assault on housing discrimination, while the second part explores the interplay among structural racism, the growing diversity of the United States, and persistent residential segregation. The final section discusses the need for a new vision of the urban metropolis and what has to be done to realize the fair housing goal.

The Fair Housing Act: Making a Frontal Assault on Racial Residential Segregation

The Fair Housing movement emerged as a public policy response to the violent sociopolitical outcomes connected to the emergence of a segregated urban metropolis. The process of commodifying and segregating neighborhoods on the basis of race and income did not start until the late 1920s. Prior to this, blacks and whites shared residential space, albeit in an environment characterized by social distance and overt, hostile racism. During this period, work, not race, shaped the social geography of urban regions.⁵ This type of multi-racial residential environment started breaking down with the rise of mass homeownership between 1930 and 1945, and by 1968, it had been supplanted by the residentially segregated metropolis.⁶

The emergence of this new model of metropolitan residential development took place during a complex and volatile period in American history. Between 1940 and 1970, millions of African Americans left the rural areas of the south for urban centers in all regions of the United States, and by the early 1960s the black freedom struggle had shifted from civil rights to neighborhood development.⁷ In 1965, when the black scholar, Kenneth B. Clark, referred to Harlem as a *dark ghetto*, he was talking about the emergence of inner city distress as the new

⁵ David M. Katzman, **Before the Ghetto: Black Detroit in the Nineteenth Century** (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1973):53-80; Douglas W. Rae, **City: Urbanism and Its End** (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2003):113-140).

⁶ Henry Louis Taylor, Jr., *Creating the Metropolis in Black and White: Black Suburbanization and the Planning Movement in Cincinnati, 1900-1950* in **Historical Roots of the Urban Crisis: African Americans in the Industrial City, 1900 -1950**, Henry Louis Taylor, Jr. and Walter Hill, eds. (New York and London: Garland Publishers, 2000): 51-71.

⁷ Henry Louis Taylor, Jr., *The Theories of William Julius Wilson and the Black Experience in Buffalo*, in **African Americans and the Rise of Buffalo's Post Industrial City, 1940 to Present**, Henry Louis Taylor, Jr., ed. (Buffalo: Buffalo Urban League, 1990):66-88; Thomas J. Sugrue, **The Origins of the Urban Crisis: Race and Inequality in Postwar Detroit** (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1996):179-181; Appendix A and B; Bobby M. Wilson, **Race and Place in Birmingham: The Civil Rights and Neighborhood Movements** (New York: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2000):1-13; 189-204.

epicenter of American racism. Clark argued that institutionalized socioeconomic problems in the ghetto were not only self-perpetuating, but they also spawned other socioeconomic problems and reproduced distress from one generation to another.ⁱ

The anger, frustration, and hopelessness described by Clark merged with police brutality to trigger more than three years of sustained urban rebellions in the United States. The summer of 1967 was a particularly violent one. Revolts took place in Newark, New York City, Cleveland, Washington, Chicago, and Atlanta. Then, on July 23, Detroit exploded. Before the National Guard ended the rebellion on July 25th, 43 African Americans were killed, 1,189 were injured, and 7,231 were arrested.⁸ The nation seemed to be moving toward a racial Armageddon. In response, that August, President Lyndon Johnson formed an eleven member National Advisory Commission on Civil Disorders to explain the racial violence that was plaguing America. Eight months later, in March 1968, the Commission, headed by then Illinois Governor Otto Kerner released its landmark report on Civil Disorders.⁹

The Commission concluded that the nation was "moving towards two societies, one black, one white, separate and unequal... a white society principally located in suburbs, in smaller central cities and in the peripheral parts of large central cities; and a Negro society largely concentrated within large central cities."¹⁰ To breakdown this pattern of segregated living, the Commission called for the enactment of a national fair housing law. Less than a month later, on April 11, 1968, Congress passed the Fair Housing Act, just seven days after the assassination of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.¹¹ That same year, the Supreme Court ruling in *Jones v. Alfred H. Mayer Co.*, which held that the Civil Rights Act of 1866 banned racial discrimination by private, as

⁸ Alonford James Robinson, *Detroit Riot of 1967*, **Black Voices**, www.blackvoices.com.

⁹ By one count, between 1965 and 1968, 329 "important" racial disturbances took place in 257 cities, resulting in nearly 300 deaths, 8,000 injuries, 60,000 arrests, and property losses in the hundreds of millions of dollars. Stephen Thernstrom, Fred Siegel, and Robert Woodson, Sr., *The Kerner Commission Report and the Failed Legacy of Liberal Social Policy*, Policy Research and Analysis, The Heritage Foundation. www.Hertitage.org

¹⁰ *Civil Rights 101:Housing*.www.civilrights.org

¹¹ *Civil Rights 101: Housing*.www.civilrights.org.

well as governmental housing providers, reinforced the Fair Housing Act.¹² The war against housing discrimination and residential segregation had begun.

Homeownership and the Rise of Residential Segregation

The Fair Housing Act sought to tear down the walls of racial residential segregation. Yet, thirty-seven years after its passage, the American residential environment is still fractured along the lines of race and income. A brief history of the rise of a commodity-based system of home ownership and residential development will explain why residential segregation is so resistive to change.

During the opening decades of the 20th century, U.S. urban leaders believed that the owner-occupied, single-family dwelling unit should be the bedrock of a modern industrial society. Consequently, they made constructing a new model of residential development based on the principles of economic rationalization and home ownership their top priority. Toward this end, they pursued a series of policies to bring homeownership within the economic reach of higher paid workers and the middle class and to protect the home investment from land uses that threatened property values.¹³ Between 1930 and 1945, the money mortgage system was revised to allow buyers to purchase homes with a small down payment and to re-pay the mortgage within a period of 20 to 30 years. Then, the Home Owners Loan Corporation and the Federal Housing Administration (FHA) were established to assist prospective homeowners in their pursuit of the necessary capital. In this model of residential development, suburban development was favored over central city development, single-family construction over multi-family construction, and new homes over renovated homes.¹⁴

The rise of homeownership led to the commodification of the residential environment and the transformation of neighborhoods into *defended territories*, where residents sought to keep out

¹² Title VIII of the Civil Rights Act of 1968. Enforcement of the Fair Housing Act was dependent on litigation and legal struggle.

¹³ Henry Louis Taylor, Jr., *Creating the Metropolis in Black and White: Black Suburbanization and the Planning Movement in Cincinnati, 1900-1950*, in **Historical Roots of the Urban Crisis: African Americans in the Industrial City, 1900-1950**, Henry Louis Taylor, Jr. and Walter Hill, eds. (New York and London: Garland Press, 2000):51-71.

¹⁴ Taylor, *Creating the Metropolis in Black and White*, **Historical Roots**,51-71.

undesirables and to prevent land uses that might devalue property. In this new setting, residential development was driven by housing markets dominated by the buying and selling of dwelling units for profit. Now, the home was not only a living place, but also it was an economic investment.¹⁵ To operationalize this approach to residential development, policy makers needed to develop a neighborhood classification system to guide the investment decisions of underwriters.

This task fell to the economist Frederick Babcock, who outlined the neighborhood life-cycle theory in his 1932 book, **The Valuation of Real Estate**.¹⁶ He urged realtors to evaluate the “future histories” of neighborhoods when appraising them. Neighborhoods, said Babcock, moved through a life-cycle characterized by a gradual process of decline that eventually resulted in the neighborhood becoming “poor, blighted, or decadent.” Over time, as the neighborhood becomes obsolete, there is an increase in populations with incomes lower than the original inhabitants and this intensifies the community’s downward trajectory. Babcock stressed that racial change in a neighborhood could trigger its rapid decline and a precipitous fall in property values.

In 1933, the Home Owners Loan Corporation (HOLC) developed a residential classification system to guide the investment decisions of underwriters. In devising this scheme, the HOLC established a link between race and place. The appraisal system was based on a color-coded classification scheme that determined the desirability of neighborhoods. Four classifications were used in the system: Green, Blue, Yellow and Red. The most desirable neighborhoods were classified as green, while the least desirable communities were coded red.

The main goal of the appraisal system was to identify the neighborhood’s current stage in the life cycle and to project its emerging trajectory. Because of the income differential between African Americans and whites, black neighborhoods were marked red regardless of the conditions found in them. Consequently, the mere presence of African Americans in a neighborhood meant that residents, both black and white, were *less likely* to receive a mortgage than residents in all-white neighborhoods. Even all-white neighborhoods located adjacent to or near black communities were often red lined.

¹⁵ Taylor, *Creating the Metropolis in Black and White*, **Historical Roots**, 51-71.

¹⁶ Frederick Babcock, **The Valuation of Real Estate** (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company).

As a result of the HOLC classification system, the idea that blacks triggered the downward trajectory of neighborhoods became the driving force behind the residential development process. The commodification of homeownership and neighborhood development combined with neighborhood life-cycle theory to transform white neighborhoods into “defended territories,” where residents sought to keep out of their neighborhoods undesirables or land uses that might devalue housing values. This way of thinking took on a life of its own and continued to influence the decisions and behavior of those buying and selling homes long after the origins of the neighborhood life cycle theory and the HOLC classification scheme had been forgotten.

Then, in the consumer orientated, post 1950 era, homeownership spawned an urban culture in which individual wealth production was directly connected to homeownership and neighborhood development. This caused most home buyers to prefer to live in neighborhoods where the rate of housing appreciation was the highest. In this profit making setting, homeowners tend to view policies that maximize profits on the home investment favorably, while frowning on policies that reduce and/or threaten profits on the home investment. This racialization of residential space, caused by the neighborhood life-cycle theory and the HOLC neighborhood classification system, made whites believe that black neighbors represented a retrogressive force that could undermine the home investment, especially if their numbers increased over time.

This perspective helps to explain the differences in neighborhood preference between blacks and Latinos and whites. Blacks and Latinos generally believe that a neighborhood is ideally integrated when their proportion is equal to that of whites, or when at least 30% of the neighborhood population is composed of whites. On the other hand, whites grow increasingly uncomfortable when the proportion of blacks and/or Latinos living in their community goes beyond 10%.¹⁷ This different in neighborhood preference, I believe, is directly related to white concerns about the impact that people of color will have on property values.

Because individual wealth production is connected to homeownership and residential development, the great majority of whites, even though they acknowledge the legitimacy of

¹⁷ Douglas S. Massey and Nancy A. Denton, **American Apartheid: Segregation and the Making of an Underclass** (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1993):88-96.

integration as a social goal and support open housing as a core American value, will not support it in practice.¹⁸ As long as economic investment and profit-making drives the residential development process, the social goal of fostering secure and diverse neighborhoods will continually be undermined by the economic goal of maximizing profits on the home investment.

The commodification of housing and neighborhood development caused federal and local policy makers to formulate a series of policies that led to the creation of an economic hierarchy of neighborhoods and jurisdictions scattered across the metropolitan region. This process of city and regional building was not benign. To erect this model of residential development, it was necessary to construct a legal framework consisting of zoning laws, subdivision regulations, building codes, transportation regulations, and other strategies required to continually produce and reproduce homogenous neighborhoods. These policies tended to sift and sort the population in neighborhoods and municipalities based on race and income, and operated to concentrate people of color primarily in the central city and whites primarily in the suburban region, thus creating an urban metropolis characterized by uneven development and extreme socioeconomic disparities and a new pattern of residential segregation.

Many progressive urban leaders are concerned about persistent residential segregation because of its contribution to central city decline and inner city distress and because of the disparities between whites and people of color that it produces. The problem is that the U.S. constitution does not guarantee equal access to high quality goods and services, such as good schools, safe and healthy housing, safe and secure streets, inviting parks and access to jobs and favorable opportunities. In this country, the cost and quality of goods, services, and positive life chances depends primarily on where a person lives. Housing, then, is more than shelter. The neighborhoods in which dwelling units are situated create a framework and venue that provides individuals with access to wealth accumulation and to educational, social, political, and economical resources and opportunities. In the United States, then, a bundle of socioeconomic *advantages* are connected to neighborhoods and the communities and/or municipalities in which they are located. Therefore, because neighborhoods are organized along racial and class lines,

¹⁸ Massey and Denton, **American Apartheid**, p. 92.

they have become the new mechanism for spawning and perpetuating social, economic, and political disparities between whites and people of color.

This is a very complicated issue. The laws promoting white supremacy no longer exist, the age of Jim Crow racial segregation has passed, and racial attitudes are more liberal than ever. Yet, by almost every indicator, people of color do not enjoy the same quality of life experiences, positive opportunities, and socioeconomic and political advantages as whites. The reason is that a new, racially-inspired neighborhood-based structure of inequality has supplanted the old colorline. Now, public policy and social custom have made use of metropolitan space to order opportunities for people by race and class. In this context, the metropolitan region is racialized along neighborhood lines, jurisdictional lines, and along municipal borders that separate the central city from the suburbs.

This creates a serious problem for central cities and people of color, and eventually for the urban region itself. Because of a stagnate and depreciating housing market and the continued loss of business, industry, and its higher income population, central cities do not have the tax base needed to provide a high quality of life for *all* its residents and thus grapple successfully with their great social needs, including the regeneration of their distressed neighborhoods and the development of high performing public schools. Meanwhile, suburban areas with their high tax base and low social needs are able to attract higher income residents, along with new jobs and businesses to their communities, making them even more desirable places to live.

This process of central city and regional development intensifies the gap between central city and suburbs, creates a pattern of uneven regional development, and generates a neighborhood socioeconomic hierarchy where poor communities are primarily concentrated in the central city and inner suburbs and affluent and middle-class neighborhoods, in suburban jurisdictions. However, David Rusk, the renowned regionalist and former mayor of Albuquerque, New Mexico, warns us that unless this pattern is arrested, declining central cities and inner suburbs ultimately will negatively impact the economic viability and competitive edge of the entire

metropolitan region. So, in the end, the process of metropolitan residential segregation will eventually hurt the urban region.

Increased Racial Diversity and Persistent Segregation

Not everyone believes that the integration trend has peaked and that an age of resegregation is emerging. Harvard History Professor Stephen Thernstrom and his wife, Abigail, a senior fellow at the Manhattan Institute, wrote a 1997 book, titled **America in Black and White: One Nation Indivisible**. They argue that the country is more integrated and more racially united than ever before. They stress that the number of blacks and whites living in integrated communities grew markedly between 1970 and 1990 and that there has been a dramatic movement of minorities out of cities during the 1990s. More than 70% of both blacks and whites now claim to have a “good friend” of the other race. Only a small fraction of blacks say they have no white neighbors.¹⁹ HUD, in marking the 37th anniversary of the passage of the Fair Housing Acts says “This year’s theme [of fostering secure diverse communities] is particularly relevant, given the changing face of America’s communities. Once separated by race and religion, today’s neighborhoods are multicultural, where people of every color and background share a common goal of building a better future for their families.”

Without question, since the passage of the Fair Housing Act 37 years ago, progress has been made in opening up white neighborhoods to people of color. Between 1965 and 2000, the influx of millions of Latinos and Asians into the United States, combined with the growing prosperity of blacks, led to rise of multi-racial neighborhoods. However, this trend toward increased integration did not lead to the disestablishment of the racially-inspired, commodity-based model of residential development. Not only this, but I believe the integration trend has peaked and in coming years, the segregation trend will resurface, albeit not to the same degree as in earlier years.

Over the past three years, scholars have studied the years 1980 to 2000 to determine if increased racial diversity has intensified residential integration. According to John Logan, director

¹⁹ Donald Lambro, *Remarkable Progress on Race has been made*, **Austin American Statesman**, September 8, 1997, Manhattan Institute for Policy Research, www.manhattan-institute.org.

of the Lewis Mumford Center for Comparative Urban and Regional Research at the University at Albany, the United States did not become more integrated between 1980 and 2000.²⁰ In 2000, he says that the average white person in metropolitan America lived in a neighborhood that is 80% white and only 7% black, while a typical black lives in a neighborhood that is only 33% white and about 51% black.²¹ Between 1980 and 2000, the levels of segregation among blacks fell more than Latinos and Asians. Yet, these small changes did not keep blacks from remaining the most separate of minorities. At the same time, although Latinos and Asians are considerably less segregated than blacks, their levels of segregation did not change over the past 20 years. Indeed, as their numbers grew, the likelihood of their becoming more segregated intensified. The bottom line is that Latinos and Asians are now more segregated than they were in 1980. On the flip side, residential segregation among blacks declined slightly, but this small increase in residential integration did not change the hypersegregated status of African Americans.

During this 20 year period, there was a significant movement of minority groups into the suburban region, but the data indicates that this movement did not increase the levels of residential integration. It appears that blacks, Latinos, and Asians were moving into suburban racial enclaves, rather than into predominantly white communities. In fact, the magnitude of segregation increased among all minority groups settling in the suburban region. The bottom line is that minorities moving into the suburbs are choosing to live among their own, rather than with other racial groups. Blacks, Latinos, and Asians prefer living in neighborhoods where large numbers of their race reside, and this leads to increasing the segregation rate as the percentage of minorities living in these communities rise.

The various measures of racial segregation tell us about the degree to which people live in integrated or segregated communities, but they do not provide insight into the *quality* of the neighborhood in which the various racial groups live. To address this issue, the Mumford Center studied the neighborhood gap between whites and people of color. The center reports that

²⁰ Laurent Belsie, *Ethnic Diversity grows, but not integrated*, **Christian Science Monitor**, March 14, 2001, www.csmonitor.com.

²¹ John Logan, *Ethnic Diversity Grows, Neighborhood Integration Lags Behind*, December 18, 2001, www.Mumford.albany.edu.

significant neighborhood disparities exist between whites and people of color in metropolitan America. Their study showed that in terms of per capita income, poverty rates, percent of residents with a college education or professional occupation, home ownership, housing vacancy and median household income, whites and people of color, especially blacks and Latinos, live in very different types of communities.

This is a neighborhood gap in the quality of people's lives, and considerable evidence from other studies suggest that this gap is associated with inequalities in public schools, safety, environmental quality, public health, and access to a range of socioeconomic opportunities. The center concludes that blacks, Latinos, and Asians live in neighborhoods that are separate and unequal to the ones where whites reside. This also means that housing is going to be more expensive and appreciate at a more rapid rate in white neighborhoods than in communities of color.

The Thernstroms indicate a significant number of blacks and Latinos moved to the suburban region during the 1990s and that this provided evidence that the country is moving toward a nation characterized by multicultural neighborhoods, where people live in racial harmony. A study by Todd Swanstrom and others for the Brookings Institute found that a significant number of blacks, Latinos, and Asians did move to the suburbs during the nineties. However, these minority groups were primarily moving into inner suburban communities with other members of their own race. In most regions in the country, the rate of segregation increased for minority suburbanites during the nineties.

The movement of people of color from the central city to the suburbs did not necessarily mean that they were moving from a poor to middle-class or affluent community. On the contrary, the data suggests that people of color often moved from *poor* central city neighborhoods to *poor* suburban communities. Swanstrom says that between 1980 and 2000, the number of poor suburban communities increased dramatically, while affluent suburbs grew less dramatically, and middle-class suburbs declined. He defines poor suburbs as those whose per capita incomes fell below 75% of the regional per capita income, and affluent suburbs as those whose per capita incomes exceeded 125% of the regional figure. Middle-income suburbs include those with per

capita incomes in between these two extremes. According to David Rusk, when a community's per capita income falls below 70 % of regional per capita income, the locality is no longer a place to invest or create jobs. While the 70% or 75% thresholds are arbitrary, the point is that if places fall far enough behind, people and businesses will hesitate to move or invest there, thus accelerating their decline.²²

In the 20 year period between 1980 and 2000, the proportion of poor suburban communities more than doubled as they jumped from 8.4% to 18.1%. Concurrently, the proportion of affluent suburbs grew from 16.7% to 21.3%, an increase of about 13%, which the proportion of middle-class suburbs significantly dropped from 74.9% to 60.8%, a decline of 23%. The portrait of suburban residential development is clear. As people of color move into the suburban region, the number of poor suburbs is growing. Moreover, as blacks, Latinos, and Asians pour into the inner suburbs, whites are moving into the outer suburbs and ex-urban communities, which are situated in semi-rural settings.

The data is clear; diversity is growing in the United States, but not residential integration. Social ideals notwithstanding, the average white person continues to live in a neighborhood that contains only a handful blacks, Latinos, and Asians. The ideal of residential integration remains a dream deferred. Instead, at one pole, an invisible color line has drawn jurisdictional boundaries around urban places, which keep resources and opportunities solely within prospering communities, while zoning laws, development impact fees, transportation policy and other tools work to ensure that lower-income people of color do not benefit from suburban prosperity and opportunities. Concurrently, at the other pole, people of color, especially blacks and Latinos, are concentrated in distressed central city and suburban neighborhoods, where limited resources and an elitist approach to city and regional building divert scarce funds away from the regeneration of these neighborhoods.

Where Do We Go From Here?

²² Todd Swanstrom, Colleen Casey, Robert Flack, and Peter Dreier, *Pulling Apart: Economic Segregation among Suburbs and Central Cities in Major Metropolitan Areas*, The Brookings Institute, October 2004:3.

Where do we go from here? Disestablishing residential segregation and dismantling the racially and economically discriminatory structures that undergird it will require a new vision for metropolitan America and the utilization of a more aggressive strategy than the current legal actions. The scholar and attorney, John A. Powell, for instance, argues that the Fair Housing Act (FHA), and the body of law that has evolved with its passage, is inadequate to confront the current affordable housing crisis and its impact on people of color. Powell says that many federal circuits now interpret the FHA to require proof of intentional discrimination before they'll deliver a finding of illegal government action. Because proving intent is nearly impossible, this requirement has significantly reduced the FHA's power to remedy discriminatory practices. Further, even where private plaintiffs can meet the intent standard; these lawsuits often result in cumbersome and ineffective remedies. This does not mean that the legal struggle against housing discrimination should be abandoned. It should not. However, to realize the elusive goal of residential integration and the fostering of secure diverse neighborhoods, the plan of action must be broadened and simultaneously operationalized on several fronts.

On one front, there is a need to construct a vision for the urban metropolis. The continued decentralization of people, work, business and industry means that realizing the goal of fostering inclusive, cross-class, multi-racial neighborhoods can only occur within a metropolitan context. The experiences of the last thirty-seven years demonstrate that the development of these types of communities will not occur without aggressive action taking place within the context of a new vision of how metropolitan areas. This will be a difficult, but not impossible task. Conflicting interests notwithstanding, people will support a new vision if they believe doing so will benefit both themselves and society.

A crucial step in persuading people to embrace a new growth and development strategy is to demonstrate to them the potential gains. This means having frank and explicit conversations about race, social problems, and residential development with all racial and socioeconomic groups in the region. Here, it should be stressed that formulating a vision for the region also involves constructing a two-way street that builds residential linkages between the central city and the suburbs. This effort should involve a strategy to regenerate distressed inner city

neighborhoods by transforming them into secure, vibrant, cross-class, multi-racial communities. At any rate, the politics of choosing among visions of metropolitan development should involve institutionalizing a regional vision process that regularly brings residents together to talk about the region's future.

Concurrently, on another front, an alliance should be built between the central city and inner suburban communities and civic and professional organizations and groups with a desire to reinvent the region. University at Buffalo Professor of Urban and Regional Planning, Kate Foster, says that identifying the *impulse to cooperate* is the key to building a progressive regional alliance for change. By finding a common ground, disparate groups can be brought together to form a united front for collective action. Central cities and poor inner suburban communities face similar problems, and since inner suburbs are the primary destination of people of color migrating to the suburbs, it is in the interest of leaders and residents in these jurisdictions to adopt strategies for building secure, cross-class, multi-racial communities. Otherwise, they will continue to decline, falling farther and farther behind the more affluent suburban communities.

Concurrently, there are a growing number of civil and professional groups with a metropolitan vision supportive of the goal of integrated neighborhoods and the redirection of urban growth back toward the urban core. For example, the Active Living, Smart Growth, and New Urbanism movements have all stressed the need to refashion the traditional vision for metropolitan America, and they have all acknowledged the importance of expanding the supply of affordable housing units and the building of inclusive communities. These groups must be made part of a broader collaborative to fight for the enactment of new legislation supporting open housing and they must help in the formulation and implementation of policies that will facilitate the construction of affordable housing and the creation of inclusive communities in the suburban region.

Within this context, there are a number of policy issues that should be pursued at the national level, which must ultimately involve congressional leadership. The limits of time will not permit a full elaboration of these, but nonetheless, I want to mention three. While much can be done by local areas to disestablish residential segregation, the goal of fair housing cannot be

achieved without federal commitment. The fragmentation of the urban metropolis into multiple municipalities makes it literally impossible to achieve regional collaboration for residential integration without federal support.

If congress intends to break down the wall of residential segregation that it erected, then it must provide the leadership, both in words and deeds. There are three areas in which congressional leadership could be central. First, congress should enact legislation and develop polices that ensure fair land-use policies. This means banning all forms of exclusionary land-use and property development policies, which are designed to discriminate against people solely on the basis of their race and/or income. Class exclusivity, it should be stressed, is the flipside of racial exclusivity, and congress prohibits it. Only by eliminating exclusionary land use and property development policies will affordable housing be distributed throughout the metropolitan region. In this regard, congress should encourage the development of metropolitan planning organizations with the power to set land use and transportation policies for the entire region, and they should require each locale to produce plans area wide plans that dismantle barriers to the development of inclusive communities before federal funds are distributed to any government in the region.²³

Secondly, transportation polices should be refocused to support public transportation and to create a transit system that connects the central city to the suburban region and that creates routes designed to provide services to work, shop, and recreate and that link suburban communities to public institutions that support low-income residents. This means shifting federal funds away from highway construction and road maintenance to the support of public transit. Residential areas in the suburbs have been designed and built as automobile dependent communities, which places extreme hardships on low-income families living in them. Most low-income residents are dependent on public transportation and public institutions located in the central city. Unless transportation is redesigned to replace automobile dependency in the suburbs, moving into that area will not be feasible for many low-income residents.

²³ Anthony Downs, *Housing Policy in the New Millennium*, Speech, HUD Conference on Housing Policies for the Millennium, October 3, 2000.

Lastly, congress must provide much greater support for housing advocates and their quest to end housing discrimination. Not only must congress develop a clear action plan for dismantling housing discrimination, but it must also increase funding to housing organizations that are fighting bias. To fight a real war against housing discrimination and residential segregation, adequate funding is needed. Within this context, congress should fund scholarly research that seeks to identify impediments to fair housing and that formulate strategies for achieving residential integration. Concurrently, they should fund activities designed to construct a cultural framework supportive of linking the ideal of fair housing to the practice of residential development.

The quest to foster secure, diverse communities should not only focus on opening up and reconstructing neighborhoods in the suburban region, but also the strategy should include the regenerating and transforming of troubled inner city neighborhoods into vibrant, cross-class, multi-racial communities. Only by solving urgent social problems and building highly desirable and affordable inner city neighborhoods can whites be enticed to live in the central city, both inside and outside of inner city communities. This means that the current strategies of building central cities must be revised to include a main focus on inner city development. The idea is to build a series of model communities in inner city and inner suburban neighborhoods that will attract large numbers of whites. Only by demonstrating that it is possible to develop this vibrant, cross-class, multi-racial communities with a balance of blacks, whites, Latinos, and Asians, can residential segregation be defeated.

In closing, I want to stress that the interactive forces that drive residential segregation have become increasingly complex and difficult to dismantle with the passage of time. The laws that promote white supremacy have been replaced with invisible structures, which appear race-neutral and with cultural values that support race and class exclusivity. The end result is a process of city and regional building informed by (1) the connection of individual wealth production to homeownership and neighborhood development, (2) the promotion of exclusionary suburban zoning and property development (3) the building of housing units that low and moderate income groups cannot afford without subsidies, (4) the celebration of cultural values that encourage households to move to higher-status neighborhoods when their incomes rise, (5) the

encouragement of race and class segregation in all housing markets (6) the erection of major barriers to regeneration and recreation of distressed inner city neighborhoods (7) the creation of obstacles that hamper the participation of people of color in regional labor and opportunity markets.²⁴

This is an important conclusion because it implies that we cannot achieve the social goal of fair housing and the fostering of secure and diverse communities unless we alter these seven basic characteristics of the city and regional building process. This is significant because the urbanist, Anthony Downs, says that the population of the United States will rise by 48 million from 2000 to 2020, with over a third of these new residents coming from third world communities. Therefore, unless the patterns of segregated living are broken down, the racial and class disparities characteristic of the urban metropolis, will grow exponentially. So, the task of disestablishing racial residential segregation and building inclusive communities, where people from across the race and class spectrum live together, is not only a moral imperative, but also it is a socioeconomic necessity.

ⁱ Kenneth B. Clark, **Dark Ghetto: Dilemmas of Social Power** 2nd ed. (Middletown: Wesleyan University Press, 1965): 11-20.

²⁴ Downs, *Housing Policy*, October 3, 2000.