**“Locked in Buffalo’s Socioeconomic Basement”: An examination of Political and Institutional Racial Discrimination and its Effects on the local African American Community**

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Between 1970 and 1990, America’s inner-city neighborhoods experienced record levels of concentrated poverty, unemployment, housing vacancies and a relatively new phenomenon, hypersegregation.[[1]](#footnote-1) Despite decades of federal and state Civil Rights legislation, the nation’s African American population was collectively becoming more segregated and poor. As a result of this growing socioeconomic disparity, many scholars and researchers have conducted qualitative and quantitative analyses of major cities in search of a policy panacea. Often overlooked from this conversation, but of equal importance is the historical development of African American communities in mid-sized, rust-belt cities. This paper addresses the African American community in Buffalo, New York, and critically examines how local politics, interest groups and financial institutions negatively impacted the socioeconomic development of the city’s East Side.

Through a review of the Supreme Court Case *U.S. vs Bethlehem Steel* 1970, a federal employment discrimination case, local race relations are shown to have manifested into hiring decisions and job placement. Similarly, documents and correspondences from the local HUD office, the Buffalo Municipal Housing Authority and the Citizens Council on Human Relations provide a glimpse into the White-dominated interest groups and urban renewal boards that frequently misrepresented local constituents and often misused urban renewal funds. Court briefs and documents from the federal desegregation mandate of 1970 and the court case *Arthur vs. Nyquist* similarly demonstrate how segregation within the Buffalo School District was in some instances, supported by local politicians and community leaders who blocked integration efforts and succeeded in re-segregating schools through the guise of Charter schools. Local racial tension and race relations are also critically examined within Niagara Savings and other prominent financial institutions. By examining local banks and financial institutions, it is argued that Buffalo’s most powerful individuals contributed to urban disinvestment by directing funds into the suburbs through the construction of shopping centers, the Kensington and LaSalle expressways and the University at Buffalo North Campus.

These various forms of private and public institutional racism challenge the theory that the exodus of middle-class Blacks caused the increase in concentrated poverty that was experienced during the past several decades.[[2]](#footnote-2) Moreover, this research stages the benefits of studying mid-sized cities, and offers several points for revising macroeconomic urban renewal policies based on the success and failure of efforts in Buffalo. For instance, input from a study conducted by the Buffalo Urban League offered that, in order to strengthen the Black community, youth must be integrated into leadership positions in organizations, and that existing organizations need to be revived and adaptive to modern community issues.[[3]](#footnote-3)

The chaos and civic disorder of the Buffalo riot of 1967 forced the city’s White majority to confront acute racial tension within the region, and to acknowledge the inequity that African Americans faced in Buffalo’s inner-city. Staff and volunteers from the city’s “Storefront Education Information Centers” conducted ethnographic research that was funded by Title I of the Higher Education Act of 1965, which sought to understand the Black community’s actions and motivations for rioting.[[4]](#footnote-4) Although Buffalo’s local interest in quelling racial tension was surely progressive for the time, research on urban riots had been undertaken by entities of the federal government for almost a year. In a study that reviewed riots from major urban regions throughout the country, the *Report of the National Advisory Committee on Civil Disorders* of 1968 cited police practices, unemployment, underemployment and inadequate housing as the core factors to most national riots.

Although African Americans in Buffalo voiced frustrations that resembled those of other inner-city residents, research conducted by the SEIC yielded a much more comprehensive list of social complaints.[[5]](#footnote-5) Riot participants explained that they had engaged in the riot due to the following outstanding issues: a negative attitude toward police and the belief that the police unnecessarily harassed them, the belief that society was impeding their aptitude for social and economic mobility, frustration over empty promises in local, state and federal poverty and welfare programs and lack of access to jobs and education.[[6]](#footnote-6) A subsequent investigation conducted by professors at the University at Buffalo confirmed the research from the Storefront researchers’ report, and further noted that the increasing practice of police brutality was at the core of urban unrest. The identification of these nuances is pertinent for two reasons: the local focus generated detailed results that more appropriately addressed Black social dislocation, and the attention called to this dislocation forced politicians to publicly address these issues. For instance, following the SEIC reports, Mayor Frank Sedita and Special Assistant for Urban Affairs Jackie Robinson initiated communication with the local African American community in an attempt to understand these issues at a grassroots level.[[7]](#footnote-7) This communication between Buffalo’s White elite and Black, inner-city poor was notably brief, and was proceeded by ensuing decades of social neglect and disinvestment.

White society’s interest in urban research and development at both the national and local levels during the 1960s-1970s was quickly overshadowed by the growing popularity of conservative and law-and-order politics. This had a direct and acute effect on policy implementations in the Buffalo-Niagara region, whose population has historically voted Democratic. Richard Nixon’s implementation of the Comprehensive Drug Abuse Prevention and Control Act of 1970[[8]](#footnote-8) and creation of the Drug Enforcement Administration in 1973, targeted young, minority inner-city youth as the main instigators of American crime. Moreover, Nixon explicitly attacked urban renewal programs through his release of *Toward Freedom From Fear,[[9]](#footnote-9)* literature that reinforced and supported his law-and-order agenda.Within this report, Nixon criticized Lyndon Johnson’s 1967 authorization of the National Advisory Commission on Civil Disorders, and retorted that, “Doubling the conviction rate in this country would do more to cure crime in America than quadrupling the funds for [Hubert] Humphrey’s war on poverty…”[[10]](#footnote-10) Statements from H.R. Haldeman, Nixon’s Chief of Staff, confirms this transgression that the national increase in crime became an issue that was inextricably connected to race. He identified that, “[President Nixon] emphasized that you have to face the fact that the whole problem is really the blacks. The key is to devise a system that recognizes this while not appearing to…”[[11]](#footnote-11)

While the negative effects of national War on Drugs policies on American cities has recently received deserved attention, the role of local economics, politics and interest groups in the development of African American communities is often overlooked. Examining the local effect of institutional and political racism in Buffalo in the African American community contributes to existing scholarship because it provides an alternative to macroeconomic policies and can offer tailored recommendations for socioeconomic improvement. Studies from urban historian William Julius Wilson and sociologists Elijah Anderson, George Galster, Douglas Massey and Nancy Denton focus on the nation’s largest cities to draft conclusions about the future of African American communities in the United States. While Denton and Massey’s research is certainly important for broad policies, this focus limits research on mid-sized, urban areas. I argue that by critically analyzing the modern history of Buffalo’s African American community, the role that local agency and politics plays is proven to directly affect local, Black socioeconomic development more so than federal policies.

This paper furthermore contends that race surely and definitively played a role in the modern geographic, social and economic development of African Americans in Buffalo. Politicians, lawyers, businessman and bankers controlled the city’s post-War land development, resource distribution and infrastructure by almost unanimously comprising board membership within the Buffalo Municipal Housing Authority, Buffalo Common Council, Buffalo Urban Renewal Bureau and the Buffalo Housing and Urban Development Department.[[12]](#footnote-12) These majority White committees had little interest in developing Buffalo’s African American East Side, and rather, desired to divert federal funds and state grants to suburban development.[[13]](#footnote-13) While this pattern of power can largely be identified within other major U.S. cities, the issue of race within Buffalo is more exaggerated and potent than comparable regions. For example, from the nearly $400 million dollars that local non-profits, Black community organizations, federal funds and banks raised for Urban Renewal projects during the 1990s, less than 3.2% was actually invested into at-risk communities.[[14]](#footnote-14) This discrimination is not limited to politics, however. Blacks in Buffalo have consistently been excluded from the city’s educational, residential, financial and legal policies and institutions. It is evident that local politics and interest groups have had a direct and exclusionary effect on inner-city community development.

**Revising the existing framework: Expanding on accepted historical narratives through a local approach**

When discussing modern race relations and African American History, literature from acclaimed urban historian William Julius Wilson is necessary to examine. Wilson argues in *The Declining Significance of Race* that it is the exodus of middle-class Blacks from inner-cities, rather than “white flight,” that has most negatively impacted modern African American communities. Specifically, Wilson contends that classism has played a larger role in perpetuating socioeconomic disparity in these areas than institutional racism and spatial isolation. According to Wilson, “…the life chances of individual blacks have more to do with their economic class position than with their day-to-day encounters with whites…”[[15]](#footnote-15) This position can be further explored and ultimately challenged through the case study of Buffalo, New York. Research from Neil Kraus, Elijah Anderson, and Thomas Sugrue, as well as testimony from Buffalo resident Harold Brown demonstrates that the life chances of inner-city, African American residents in Buffalo were often limited by patterned practices of institutional racism. This occurred most often through the manipulation of government funding from HUD, the FHA and the BMHA. More specifically, investigations of the Buffalo School District, the Buffalo Municipal Housing Authority, the Buffalo HUD office, and local banks conclude that race was a central consideration within organizational policies and funding towards the African American community.

In addition to Wilson’s contention that classism most logically explains socioeconomic decline in modern American cities, the author argues that the economic plight of inner-city residents in the 1980s-1990s can be attributed to an overall increase in the Black middle-class, which created a wider intra-racial class divide. Wilson criticized federal policies of the 1970s, most notably, Affirmative Action, and linked the overall increase in educated African Americans to a rise in socioeconomic mobility.[[16]](#footnote-16) While statistical data surely demonstrates that the Black middle-class expanded from the 1970s-1980s, this alone cannot account for the sharp increase in segregation within inner-cities. Through analyzing census data, public policy expert Paul Jargowsky concludes that although there existed a pattern of middle-class exodus from the inner-city during the 1980s, the overall geography of ghettos suggested that Black middle-class migration had limited effects on the prospects of underclass social and economic development.[[17]](#footnote-17) Jargowsky notes that during the 1980s, 22% of inner-city Blacks within the Middle-Atlantic region were living in poverty.[[18]](#footnote-18)

During the same decade, Buffalo’s African American population recorded a poverty rate of 36.3% and simultaneously claimed their lowest rate of inner-city outmigration since the 1950s. Additionally, the national population of “ghetto” residents increased by 35.9% while the Black middle-class population decreased. Between 1980 and 1990, Buffalo also experienced an increase in both the proportion of ghetto residents within these communities and poverty rates in the inner city.[[19]](#footnote-19) This suggests that the increase in poverty cannot be explained simply through Wilson’s middle-class outmigration theory, as poverty in Buffalo increased most significantly during decades when middle-class residents remained in the Fruitbelt.

Research conducted by the Buffalo Urban League during the late 1980s and early 1990s supports the claim that the local African American community did not experience a significant middle-class outmigration. A report commissioned by the Buffalo Urban League concluded that Buffalo’s historical development did not coincide with Wilson’s thesis in *The Declining Significance of Race.* In their research compilation, the BUL argued that “The type of social transformation described by Wilson has not taken place in…medium-sized and small cities [where] there has been no mass exodus of black middle-class…workers…”[[20]](#footnote-20) Buffalo’s low level of middle-class outmigration, geographic expansion and above-average poverty rate demonstrate the heightened effects of local politics and institutions on the modern development of the African American community. This was only exacerbated by employment discrimination within local manufacturing plants that hired Black men in low-skill jobs that were dangerous and often the first to be laid off.

Wilson’s thesis that “underclass” decline was not related to structural racism, and instead was the result of an undercaste that could not adapt to middle-class American social expectations has been further challenged by academics. Ethnographer Philippe Bourgois contends Wilson’s these claims in his book *In Search of Respect: Selling Crack in El Barrio.* Through his analysis of crack dealers in Spanish Harlem, Bourgeois contends the concept that inner-city minorities hold fundamentally different values and aspirations than the White majority, and that inner-city minorities are socially and culturally “pathological.” Bourgeois argues that although there exist different variations in education, employment and legal interactions in the inner-city, the fundamental life goals of “ghetto” individuals are nearly identical to those held in mainstream society. Sociologist and CUNY Professor Terry Williams similarly concluded that although poor Blacks in New York City are generally stigmatized by mainstream society, they overwhelmingly hold career, familial and educational aspirations that are identical to middle-class Whites.[[21]](#footnote-21) Sociologist and Colombia University Professor Sudhir Venkatesh, who conducted ethnographic research on the underground economy in Chicago’s South Side, similarly determined that individuals within these communities share identical life goals with mainstream society. His research concludes that socioeconomically disadvantaged individuals value stable finances, a stable home life and desire to live in a safe neighborhood. Venkatesh challenges the subculture thesis by arguing that the underground economy is a survival mechanism to the socioeconomic isolation that inner-city residents endure.[[22]](#footnote-22) Bourgeois, moreover, challenges the claim that a distinct underclass “subculture” exists, and argues instead that, “The logistics of selling crack are not dramatically different from those of any other risky private sector retail enterprise.”[[23]](#footnote-23)

Elijah Anderson’s urban ethnography *The Code of the Streets: Decency, Violence and the Moral Life of the Inner-City* examines social bifurcations, noted as “decent” and “street” within an analysis of inner-city life in Philadelphia. Anderson’s research on middle-class and lower-class African American life in the inner-city and peripherals of the city is best used to critically examine Wilson’s focus on the middle-class exodus and its connection to inner-city poverty. Anderson’s qualitative research deciphers between “decent” and “street” individuals within the ghetto; he uses this distinction to explore alternatives to Wilson and other scholars’ “underclass subculture” proposition. Research by scholar Michael Fortner furthermore supports Anderson’s arguments, through a criminological perspective. In his article, “The Silent Majority in Black and White,” the author portrays the impact of local politics on inner-city minorities and argues that, “…narratives indicate that the timing and content of white reaction varied across space, time, and white ethnic groups and that white ‘backlash’ frequently erupted from specific forms of group threat fostered by policy conflicts or black residential mobility…”[[24]](#footnote-24) The participants within Anderson’s research concurred with this concept that the White majority dominates social and economic institutions; this stranglehold on resources ensures that Blacks have limited opportunity to escape the confines of the inner-city. Residents of Buffalo’s inner-city have similarly understood their plight, and are undeniably aware of this injustice. A resident of Buffalo’s East Side, for example, voiced that, “The judicial system-they do not represent us. They’re going all kind of different ways now because of the diversity of the economic situation in this country, the prejudice in this country, the political atmosphere in this country...”[[25]](#footnote-25) Evidence from Anderson’s research corresponds with sentiments of African Americans in Buffalo, who through various media outlets expressed their distress over injustices with the Common Council, BMHA, HUD and other institutions.

In addition to ethnographic surveys, broader socioeconomic analyses prove important to place Buffalo within a larger analysis. Thomas Sugrue’s landmark monograph, *The Origins of the Urban Crisis: Race and Inequality in Postwar Detroit,* offers a comparative rust belt urban history. Sugrue’s analysis of discriminatory housing and economic practices in Detroit is important to use to analyze Buffalo, and allows one to draw principal conclusions of inner-city Rust Belt trends. Sugrue dates deindustrialization to the 1950s rather than the 1960s or 70s, when the effects were most visible; this leads to a more close examination of neighborhood practices (both Black and White), in particular White neighborhood block groups and real estate agencies. Of course, this research led to a more granular understanding of de facto discrimination practices in White suburbia, which adds a dimension to the historiographical understanding of suburban outmigration, deindustrialization and the geographic solidification of concentrated poverty. Sugrue’s macro-assumptions, however, often overlook the importance of local factors. While Sugrue contends that, “…the experiences of Detroit and other Rust-Belt cities are largely a matter of degree, not a matter of kind,”[[26]](#footnote-26) Buffalo actually proves to be distinct in its increasing segregation, child poverty rates and levels of school segregation.

Thomas Sugrue’s historiographical account of Detroit’s economy, however, provides a useful framework to compare with Buffalo. Sugrue includes data that validates differences between Detroit and Buffalo within the text. For instance, he noted that Detroit’s post-war economy was 60% automotive, while the remaining 40% was a combination of chemical companies, aircraft manufacturers, food processing plants, pharmaceutical companies and machine and typewriter manufacturers.[[27]](#footnote-27) In comparison, Buffalo’s economy was predominately focused on the steel industry, with automobiles and other manufacturing industries closely following.[[28]](#footnote-28) Interestingly, Sugrue articulates that Detroit’s UAW and local unions forged alliances with Black churches, organizations and the local NAACP in an effort to curb racial employment discrepancies. During this time, Buffalo’s UAW and local unions intentionally discriminated against Black employees, perhaps to a larger degree. Sugrue’s inclusion of the “River Rogue Plant” within his analysis is useful in comparison to the Bethlehem Steel Plant in Buffalo. For instance, the author noted that the River Rogue Plant was essential to local employment prospects, especially in providing low-skill jobs for African Americans in Detroit, which was of similar truth to Bethlehem Steel.

**A post-war steel mecca disintegrated: The Buffalo economy from 1945-1980** The Buffalo-Niagara region is often viewed in terms of its depreciating, post-deindustrialized economy.[[29]](#footnote-29) Recent studies have corroborated this perception; according to *Open Buffalo,* the Buffalo-Niagara metro area has a current unemployment rate that is 5% higher than the national average.[[30]](#footnote-30) Equally as alarming, the average individual’s wage in Buffalo is nearly $10,000 less than the national average, and has actually decreased by $2,000 since 1970.[[31]](#footnote-31) Urban activist Mark Goldman, an expert on Buffalo’s economic history, has argued that Buffalo’s economic divergence can be attributed to a large and looming local issue; the reluctance to adapt local, manufacturing markets into international, technology industries. Goldman contends that, “…while some…places saw that the days of industrial domination were numbered…little effort was made in Buffalo to reorient the economy of this city to the changing realities of an increasingly post-industrialized world…”[[32]](#footnote-32) This reluctance to adapt is partially explained by local Anglo-dominated politics and institutions, who control nearly all board member positions within the city and who have overwhelmingly favored investment in manufacturing.[[33]](#footnote-33) Manufacturing in Buffalo is a highly politicized and prioritized system of employment; it has traditionally been one of the largest employment sources for Whites. Organizations that have implications for the Black community like the NFTA, Erie County Democratic Executive Committee and the Buffalo Economic Renaissance Corporation have respective Black membership rates of 9%, 21% and 28%. Similarly, the Buffalo-Niagara Enterprise, Niagara Regional Transit Council have membership rates of 2.3% and 0%.[[34]](#footnote-34) To most adequately address the complexity of this urgent economic issue, it is essential to comprehensively examine the history of the local manufacturing industry and Lackawanna/Bethlehem Steel.

The decline of Buffalo’s manufacturing industry in the 1960s was impacted by outward migration trends. Between 1950 and 1970, the City of Buffalo lost more than 100,000 members of its population,[[35]](#footnote-35) a higher percentage than Detroit, Chicago, Cleveland and New York City.[[36]](#footnote-36) Buffalo’s record population loss demonstrates that its urban history cannot be categorized under the national master narrative; the city continued to experience rapid outmigration and unemployment rates that surpassed even the largest U.S. cities; this was inclusive the region as a whole. Moreover, between 1960 and 1990, Buffalo experienced poverty rates that increased from around 16% to 26%.[[37]](#footnote-37) The national trend was quite the opposite; in 1960, the national poverty rate peaked at 22% and stabilized at around 12% from 1970-1990.[[38]](#footnote-38) By 1990, 21.7% of families in Buffalo were living below the poverty level, the 8th highest percentage of the 100 largest U.S. cities.[[39]](#footnote-39) In addition to the high rates of net population loss, local outmigration of inner-city residents to suburbs, commonly referred to as “White Flight,” created a spatial divide that was inherently racialized. Disinterest was not the sole result of White outmigration, however. To protect their new suburban homes and neighborhoods, Whites in the Buffalo area ensured that they maintained control of political, social and economic institutions. While Buffalo’s economy and population suffered substantially from the 1950s-1990s, the African American population, often overlooked from this local historiography, suffered the most acute social and economic effects.

**Economic Disparity and Acute Discrimination: Buffalo’s Black, Post-War Economy**

Within this post-war economic context, Buffalo’s relatively small African American population was asphyxiated by economic, social and political exclusion. Between 1940 and 1980, African Americans in Buffalo had the highest unemployment rate, the lowest rate of labor force participation, the lowest wages, [and] held the least desirable jobs within the Northeast.[[40]](#footnote-40) This was in comparison to an overall economic improvement within the Northeast region; ghetto poverty rates had begun to steadily decline beginning in the 1970s.[[41]](#footnote-41) While accounts that point to deindustrialization and the overall decline in the manufacturing industry certainly are merited, employment discrimination and local unions and interest groups explain why racial workforce discrepancies in Buffalo were exacerbated.[[42]](#footnote-42) Research conducted by *OpenBuffalo* outlined that the city’s drastic overall economic decline and subsequent population loss can be most directly attributed to “an economy once focused to an unusual degree on heavy industry.”[[43]](#footnote-43) Between 1960 and 1970, jobs in the City of Buffalo decreased by 17%, while jobs in the surrounding suburbs increased by 31%.[[44]](#footnote-44) From 1975-1995, the Buffalo area’s job growth fluctuated from 0% in 1975, to -3% in 1983 to its peak at 5% in 1990.[[45]](#footnote-45) Buffalo’s poor level of modern job growth is one of the lowest in the nation; during this same time period, the nation recorded a job growth increase of almost 70%.[[46]](#footnote-46) The local African American labor force suffered acutely from this overall economic decline. Between 1970 and 1980, Whites in Buffalo were more than twice as likely to be self-employed as Blacks.[[47]](#footnote-47)

The economic decline that the Buffalo region experienced beginning in the late 1970s was most detrimental to the local African American population. Between 1979 and 2000, the region’s employment rate for young, less educated Black males actually decreased by 17.1%, which was the worst rate in the nation.[[48]](#footnote-48) Local politics and job discrimination further tightened African American labor participation. Black employment in the Buffalo Municipal Housing Authority, City Council, the Buffalo Public School District and Bethlehem Steel was nearly non-existent, despite the overall increase of African Americans in the city. The Lackawanna Steel plant, a facility of Bethlehem Steel Corporation, was the fourth largest steel plant in the nation and one of the largest regional employers.[[49]](#footnote-49) Beginning with the company’s absorption of Lackawanna Steel in 1922, Bethlehem Steel consistently practiced discrimination within hiring decisions, employee placements and wage structures. The extent of this employment giant’s use of racial discrimination effected individual African American employees as well as the entire local African American community.

Testimony from Harold Brown,[[50]](#footnote-50) the first African American to move into Tonawanda, a suburb of Buffalo, demonstrates the effects that local employment discrimination had on residential and economic mobility. Mr. Brown, a stable, working-class Black citizen and veteran of World War II, recalled that during the interview process at Bethlehem Steel, all Whites were interviewed, processed and given work preferences before any Blacks were even spoken to.[[51]](#footnote-51) Moreover, he witnessed that Whites were given a comprehensive evaluation and were asked about their educational background and employment background, while Blacks were not afforded the opportunity to voice their merits. Mr. Brown was personally told that only yard work was available, which consequently was accompanied by the lowest pay, and subject to the first round of job cuts.[[52]](#footnote-52) Interview compiler James Bilotta gathered from his conversations with Brown that this experience evidence of structural inequality and discrimination. He argued that Brown’s “experience at Bethlehem convinced him that the union, the company and the government worked hand-in-hand to keep the black man down economically.”[[53]](#footnote-53)

Harold Brown’s account of local discrimination in employment patterns suggests that during this time, labor market racism in Buffalo was considerably worse than comparable mid-sized cities. To be sure, Thomas Sugrue’s analysis of Black Detroit finds that institutional racism, segregation and alternative forms of discrimination played a large role in perpetuating racial inequalities. However, Sugrue argued that in some instances, local labor unions actually increased Black employment beginning in the late 1950s. In one case, the author recounted that:

Unions…played a central role in changing the terms on which blacks were hired…the leadership of the UAW…made a tremendous push for the inclusion of blacks in the workplace…despite opposition from rank-and-file workers and corporate managers…the success of interracial unionism in the automobile industry hindered employers’ strategies of fragmenting the workforce by race to curb union militancy…[[54]](#footnote-54)

Detroit’s labor unions, which were commonly influenced by local interest groups, did even more than assist in providing economic opportunities for Blacks. Sugrue stated that the UAW forged alliances with black churches, reform agencies, and even the local NAACP branch.[[55]](#footnote-55) The coalition of Detroit’s labor unions and African American political and interest groups contributed to an increase in the city’s Black middle class and political development. This local political and economic collaboration helps to explain Detroit’s relatively low levels of Black unemployment from 1950-1970. Unemployment rates for 1950, 1960 and 1970 were recorded as: 11.8%, 18.2% and 9.8% respectively.[[56]](#footnote-56) The weak alliance and White stranglehold on Buffalo unions with Black churches and institutions led to the union decision to support the Buffalo Municipal Housing Authority’s decision to demolish Ellicott district churches and residences in the name of “slum clearance,” and through the use of federal funds.[[57]](#footnote-57)

In a letter from members of Buffalo’s Citizens Council on Human Relations to the Buffalo Common Council, CCHR Co-chairman Norman Goldfarb argued that, “…the city describe[d] how its action in tearing down the Ellicott District ha[s] caused massive overcrowding in the remainder of the Negro ghetto and caused blight and decay…”[[58]](#footnote-58) Writers of the Model City Application in 1967 also positively identified the residential exclusion that the urban renewal in the Elliot District created. The authors argued that the initial renewal project destroyed homes owned by Blacks, restricted them to the Masten and Ellicott districts and resulted in the placement of multiple families into high rise project apartments that were cheaply made, understaffed, and that provided virtually no services to residents.[[59]](#footnote-59) This ensured that the quietly emerging middle-class Black community remained economically and politically restricted, as the homes that they owned were destroyed and entire families were forced to relocate to housing projects.[[60]](#footnote-60)

Buffalo’s distinct pattern of employment discrimination reached its legal zenith in 1970 when the United States Supreme Court found the company guilty for violating Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964. Historian Neil Kraus noted that, in accordance with Harold Brown’s individual experience, the fourth largest steel plant in the United States “…admitted that it had engaged in several different discriminatory employment practices at the Lackawanna plant…[that] revolved around hiring, job assignment, and promotion…”[[61]](#footnote-61) The Supreme Court official case summary condemned the company’s actions, and disclosed that:

The plant’s employment office falsely raised the general aptitude test scores of white applicants, hired some white applicants without testing…and provided employment opportunities to white applicants which were not…provided to Negro applicants… in these instances where Negroes were initially assigned by the personnel department to traditionally white departments, they were discriminatorily rejected by supervisory personnel.[[62]](#footnote-62)

In addition to the unearthing of discriminatory employment practices, the court discovered that the local steel plant compiled a racist “Au” or “Gold” list that was used to rank seasonal employees and judge their aptitude for full-time promotion and job placement.[[63]](#footnote-63) According to court documents, no African American was ever on the “Gold List,” and only 11 out of nearly 350 seasonal employees were Black.[[64]](#footnote-64) Local African Americans faced even more limited economic mobility within the plant through supervisory, management and promotional exclusions. The plant admitted to “excluding qualified negroes” from the mechanical and electric divisions by establishing subjective promotional standards. This was organized by the personnel office, who inhibited Black employees’ ability to earn supervisory roles by transferring Whites with no supervisory experience into supervisor positions in Black majority departments.[[65]](#footnote-65) For the marginal amount of Blacks who did achieve a supervisor role, many White employees defied their authority. One African American gentleman, who was a former supervisor at the Lackawanna plant, recalled that his subordinates repeatedly told him that “Blacks weren’t supposed to be leaders.”[[66]](#footnote-66) He further noted that his employees often refused to “take orders from n\*\*\*\*rs.”[[67]](#footnote-67) In contrast to the UAW-Black community cooperation in Detroit that is outlined by Thomas Sugrue, the Bethlehem Steel Corporation and affiliated union directly and admittedly discriminated against African American employees.

While *U.S. vs Bethlehem Steel* drew attention to Buffalo, the case was not a terminal or isolated incident of employment discrimination within Buffalo. Following the government’s condemnation of the corporation’s hiring practices, many local employers continued to exercise racial bias in hiring decisions and job placement. Testimony from White residents of Buffalo featured in the *Buffalo News* confirm that employment discrimination continued into the 1990s. In 1992, the *Buffalo News* conducted the area’s first race relations survey; members of the news team collaborated with prominent African Americans, and interviewed thousands of local Whites and Blacks to gauge the level of racial tension within the area. One of the subsequent articles concluded that in regards to local employment patterns, 88% of Blacks that were surveyed believed that they had been denied jobs due to racial bias.[[68]](#footnote-68) In a subsequent follow-up article, 25% of surveyed Blacks reported that they were sure they had been denied a job because of their race.[[69]](#footnote-69)

Their beliefs were also confirmed through local employment research. In 1992, only 6.5% of employed African Americans secured white collar jobs, compared to the national rate of 9.2%.[[70]](#footnote-70) Contrary to William Julius Wilson’s submission that Black economic opportunity had increased following the Civil Rights movement, middle-class and inner-city Black residents in the 1990s continued to face employment discrimination. In response to a *Buffalo News* race relations survey, one local African American male confided to the news team that he was consistently successful at telephone interviews, but in-person interviews commonly resulted in company disinterest. He explained that during one specific interview, “…there [was] that undeniable expression on the interviewers face…they [couldn’t] tell over the phone [that I was Black]…they seem[ed] interested over the phone… [but] the attitude changed once I walked through the door…”[[71]](#footnote-71)

Interestingly, just two decades following the *U.S. vs Bethlehem Steel* decision, White residents of Buffalo translated the mild increase in Black economic opportunity as “reverse discrimination.” Many residents attributed this increase in Black employment to Affirmative Action policies, and contended that this was a form of reverse discrimination, despite Blacks compromising 40% of the city’s population by 1990.[[72]](#footnote-72) Dr. Henry Louis Taylor Jr. analyzed the angered local response to the adoption of Affirmative Action policies. He concluded that, “…the idea that Whites think they are more intelligent, trustworthy, hardworking, etc., could very easily get translated into hiring and promotion decisions…”[[73]](#footnote-73) He continued to explain that local White attitudes applied this superiority complex to the increase in Black employment, which he argued, has in turn created a White consensus that Affirmative Action programs are unjust. Despite the perceived “reverse discrimination” of Affirmative Action, Buffalo’s deep politics ensured that Whites and ethnic Whites secured the best jobs. Diana Dillaway confirms that that in Buffalo, “Political leaders…continued to use the power of electoral politics…to [bring] patronage and jobs to…[their] respective ethnic community…”[[74]](#footnote-74) In conjunction, the majority of Buffalonians refused to acknowledge the rapidly increasing levels of local ghetto poverty, and continued to ignore the social issues of the Fruitbelt.

The consequences of racist hiring practices are demonstrated through local unemployment and poverty rates, as well as average wage data organized by race. In 1990, the mean income for Black families was $16,000 less than for White families.[[75]](#footnote-75) Of 5,870 Blacks holding white collar jobs in Buffalo during this same time, only 1400 were men. African American resident Marie Robinson provided insight into this discriminatory emphasis on males, as she argued that, “If you give a Black man a job, that’s empowerment, and that’s something that they don’t want Black men to have…”[[76]](#footnote-76) By constricting Black men to low-paying manufacturing and service-sector jobs, society has stripped them of their ability to provide for their families and to improve their socioeconomic position. In 1990, Buffalo’s African American poverty rate was 37.4%,[[77]](#footnote-77) and the city recorded the third largest increase in ghetto poverty in the nation behind only Milwaukee and Detroit.[[78]](#footnote-78) During this decade, the number of Blacks living in ghetto neighborhoods nearly doubled; this growth was twice as high as Cleveland and Chicago.[[79]](#footnote-79) This perpetual cycle of minimal jobs and wages, fueled by political control and institutional racism directly influenced the housing development in Buffalo, and led to hypersegregation.

**Residential Segregation in Buffalo: The political roots of local Hypersegregation**

By 1990, 11 million people in the United States lived in urban ghettos; of this demographic, seven out of eight ghetto residents were minorities.[[80]](#footnote-80) This drastic increase was influenced by a 36% national increase in African American ghetto residents, and a simultaneous increase in ghetto poverty from 37.2% in 1980 to 45.4% in 1990.[[81]](#footnote-81) During this time, Buffalo’s African American communities experienced heightened rates of poverty and social disinvestment as well. Sociologists Nancy Denton and Douglas Massey classified Buffalo as the eighth most hypersegregated urban area in 1990 out of a study of 30 U.S. metropolises.[[82]](#footnote-82) Even more daunting, the authors concluded that Buffalo was one of five cities that experienced both an increase in hypersegregation and a sharp increase in Black poverty.[[83]](#footnote-83) Paul Jargowsky described that the local reaction to this national trend was influenced by a transition of residential inequity from larger cities to mid-sized cities. He argued that, “Unlike the 1970s, the increases in the number of Blacks living in ghettos in the 1980s were not dominated by large cities like New York and Chicago,” but rather, mid-sized, rust-belt cities.[[84]](#footnote-84) More important to this specific thesis, and in contrast to Wilson’s major argument in *The Declining Significance of Race,* researchers determined that “…both the poor and the non-poor were leaving the ghetto and near-ghetto neighborhoods” during this time.[[85]](#footnote-85) These extreme levels of hypersegregation, Black poverty and overall social disinvestment that Buffalo’s African American community experienced in the 1990s was a result of local politics, discrimination within local municipalities and a unique and more severe history of racial tension.

Buffalo’s high rates of residential segregation and overall hypersegregation were a result of institutional racism. This came in the form of discriminatory local politics and officeholders’ stranglehold on land development policies and urban renewal funds. Beginning as early as 1952, powerful decision makers within the City of Buffalo made conscious efforts to channel urban renewal funds into projects that benefited suburban development. This understandably compromised redevelopment efforts of Buffalo’s local African American community by depriving them funding and investing in commercial, residential and educational endeavors in the suburbs. The Buffalo Redevelopment Project of 1952 was a nominal effort to invest into commercial and residential zones in Buffalo’s East Side. In their attempt to “redevelop” the East Side, the City of Buffalo decided to demolish the 29-block Ellicott district and replace it with new residential and recreational facilities.[[86]](#footnote-86) This “redevelopment” destroyed homes that were owned by Black middle and working class families, and disintegrated the social and economic prosperity of the Ellicott District. The destruction of the community was not only limited to residences, however. St. Lucy’s church, which had a strong influence in the neighborhood, was torn down and transformed into an empty lot.[[87]](#footnote-87) According to an informational pamphlet created by the CCHR and supported by BUILD, leaders of the redevelopment project promised new and improved housing to Black residents, and assured the locals that their residence in housing projects was temporary in order to more efficiently remove them from the Ellicott District.[[88]](#footnote-88)

While extremely damaging, the Buffalo Redevelopment Project was not an isolated instance of proactive discrimination. Redevelopment projects and White-controlled local urban renewal boards often worked in conjunction with real estate agencies, the Buffalo Municipal Housing Committee and the Buffalo Housing and Urban Development agency. This resulted in highly developed discriminatory housing policies and segregatory practices. During the 1950s and 1960s, Blacks in Buffalo had no access to real estate agents, and even when they were privileged enough to work with a Black agent, they were not shown properties in White neighborhoods.[[89]](#footnote-89) African American home buyers were restricted to the Old East Side, which was comprised of dilapidated turn-of-the century homes that were formerly owned by German, Irish and Polish immigrants. While comparable rust-belt cities like Detroit, Chicago, Cleveland and Pittsburgh experienced similar patterns of residential discrimination; the African American community in the Buffalo-Niagara region has faced different forms of adversity. Historian Mark Goldman argued that unlike other major U.S. cities, private discrimination in Buffalo heavily permeated housing development. He stated that, “…private prejudice was not dealt with but rather translated into public policy in such critical areas of urban life as housing and education…”[[90]](#footnote-90) As a response to the social and economic assimilation that the African American community experienced in Buffalo in the 1950s and early 1960s, local White political interest groups restricted the community’s access to housing and residential convenience. This pattern subsequently worsened; by 1983, there was still no local law in effect that forbade rental discrimination in the Buffalo-Niagara region.[[91]](#footnote-91)

While data and historiographical accounts of Buffalo’s urban development prove crucial to a comprehensive assessment, understanding local race relations on urban housing and land development provides historiographical detail and helps to explain the city’s high rates of residential segregation. The White majority’s perception that Blacks hold innately different and distinct value sets is important to explore within this discussion. Research on African American communities in Buffalo consistently demonstrates that building a strong community is the highest priority.[[92]](#footnote-92) While many authors analyze federal policies and national trends to understand discrimination, it is essential to understand social manifestations of racism that often influence political decisions. Researcher Charles Reitz argued that, “…residential segregation [in Buffalo] did not just happen…it was largely directed by conscious decisions and deliberate policies of the most powerful political and economic groups in the city…”[[93]](#footnote-93)

The rapid increase in residential segregation in Buffalo during the 1980s-1990s prompted the *Buffalo News* to conduct an investigation of local racial relations from 1992-1993. The study consisted of lengthy interviews and research on Buffalo’s educational system, economy and politics, and focused heavily on racial tension to explain the city’s modern social and economic crises. Throughout the interviews, journalists reported that, despite the “colorblind” façade of racial progress espoused by neoconservatives and neoliberals, and despite nearly three decades of post-Civil Rights society and legislation, race relations actually worsened in the Buffalo area. The separation of Black and White culture had transformed into a socially disinvested local atmosphere. For example, one study from the Buffalo News featured testimony from Whites who referred to local Blacks as “welfare recipients” and “those people.”[[94]](#footnote-94) In one of the ensuing articles, journalists and researchers encountered White children whose parents warned them not to play with Blacks, and expressed that they deeply mistrusted “all blacks”.[[95]](#footnote-95) These same local Whites also agreed that their neighborhood would not tolerate an influx of Black residents. Residents argued that they would move if a neighborhood became too integrated because “blacks couldn’t keep [their] houses up.”[[96]](#footnote-96) From this information, the survey’s researchers and journalists concluded that “Neighborhoods remain heavily segregated…A stubborn residue of ignorant and diverse attitudes on the part of whites is one of the biggest reasons. Because of the way power is distributed in our society, white prejudice can still shut down black opportunity…”[[97]](#footnote-97) While the research was much needed, the results were nearly identical to the conclusions of the Kerner Commission report thirty years earlier.

Despite decades of residential, commercial and social segregation, it is undeniable that African Americans in Buffalo hold identical values and morals as local Whites. As part of the *Buffalo News* survey, researchers interviewed White and Black residents of the Buffalo area and inquired about personal and familial values. The results clearly demonstrated that, like the participants in Bourgeois and Anderson’s research, both groups viewed their families as the most important part of their lives and valued religion, education and freedom above money.[[98]](#footnote-98) Dr. Henry Louis Taylor Jr. provided local context to this concept. He argued that, “You simply cannot find a distinction among blacks and whites on family values…at a time when critics are chastising the black family as being dysfunctional and focusing on blacks dropping out of schools, the [*Buffalo*] *News* survey showed that blacks said they care as much…about education and family as whites…”[[99]](#footnote-99) Despite the clear racial tension that directly affected housing decisions and political support for segregated neighborhoods in the 1990s, the African American population desired greater unity between racial groups. The racial tension that Buffalo experienced in the 1990s as reported in articles of the *Buffalo News* and arguably still experiences, is a poignant example that critically challenges William Julius Wilson’s suggestion that there exists an underclass subculture within inner-city populations.

Negative testimony from White residents in the *Buffalo News* demonstrate the extent to which negative race relations in Buffalo affected the city’s housing development. By 1980, the Buffalo metropolitan area was recorded as the twelfth most racially segregated region in the nation, and in 1990, this ranking increased to the eighth most segregated metropolitan region.[[100]](#footnote-100) Researcher Li Yin remarked that the city recorded remarkably high levels of residential segregation. She deducted that “data for Buffalo reveal the persistent and striking high level of Black–White residential segregation in both the city and the metropolitan area.”[[101]](#footnote-101) These extreme levels of segregation warrant further inquiry into local political forces. One glaring issue that remained during this time was the Common Council’s failure to pass a local ordinance to forbid rental discrimination.[[102]](#footnote-102) An article in the *Buffalo News* featured statements from a landlord who addressed his tenants with racial slurs and referred to them as “animals.”[[103]](#footnote-103) White Buffalonians were well aware of the discrimination; a local resident confided that, “After all this time, whites still tend to think of themselves as smarter and more hard-working and trustworthy than blacks…the implications of such attitudes cannot be overstated, given that whites typically control job and housing decisions…”[[104]](#footnote-104)

**The Role of White-controlled political interest groups in inner-city development**

In addition to the White community’s discriminatory attitudes, municipal housing organizations and private real estate brokers had a major impact on the Black community’s development. Buffalo’s HUD office, the Buffalo Municipal Housing Authority and the Buffalo Urban Renewal Board, in most instances, were staffed by White political elite. Data from correspondences between the Buffalo Municipal Housing Authority and the Buffalo Common Council in 1975 support this claim. The BMHA warned that Buffalo stood to lose $11.7 million in special revenue sharing funds because the Common Council refused to follow a congressional mandate included in the Housing and Community Development Act of 1974. This mandate specified that “…a city must build new housing in non-ghetto areas, thus giving minorities an opportunity to live outside the ghetto…”[[105]](#footnote-105) The Common Council’s refusal to integrate Buffalo’s neighborhoods suggests that maintaining segregation was a higher priority than receiving federal funds for “renewal” purposes. A letter from Norman Goldfarb to the Common Council’s president and majority and minority leaders confirmed that, “…the original plan was emasculated by the Common Council…this was motivated by racial consideration…”[[106]](#footnote-106)

In an attempt to end discriminatory housing policies on the local level, the Citizens Council on Human Relations drafted and marketed a proposed ordinance that would close the legal loophole that was responsible for continuing rental discrimination in Buffalo.[[107]](#footnote-107) Racism within the Common Council was prevalent in various correspondences and letters regarding urban renewal funds and board memberships. For example, a letter issued to Mayor Stanley Makowski from the CCHR alleged that, “Racial discrimination in housing, practiced by…the federal government, BMHA and the private sector resulted in the overwhelming number of Buffalo’s Black Citizens being placed…in the Masten and Ellicott district…”[[108]](#footnote-108) The letter also affirmed that, “…the reason the Common Council (1968-1973) refused to pass this legislation was racial…”[[109]](#footnote-109) An interview with Fruitbelt native Terrance Evans provides more insight into how local politics and local racism restricted Buffalo’s Black political voice. According to Terrance, “Voices are subdued here because of subdivisions within communities that are a result of politics.” Evans also added that, “These politics are very neighborhood specific” and racialized.[[110]](#footnote-110)

In addition to racism within the Common Council, discriminatory policies from Buffalo’s Housing and Urban Development Department also had an impact on African American home ownership within the Buffalo community. Testimony from Harold Brown, the first African American to move into suburban Tonawanda, provides insight into the individual impact of institutional discrimination. On several occasions, Mr. Brown was denied home ownership in Tonawanda after builders had agreed to show him the home over the phone. Like many other African Americans in Buffalo and other cities, Brown recalled that realtors would contact his employers to inquire about his race, and on several occasions, would inform him that they could not sell to Blacks because White home owners associations had decreed against this.[[111]](#footnote-111) The consequential discrimination that Blacks faced in Buffalo was due to both organizational incompetence and policies that were discriminatory. To cover their discriminatory practices, a local HUD memorandum from 1975 articulated that “…we have little experience with either complaints or processing of applications…”[[112]](#footnote-112) This “disorganization” was not reciprocated in other cities; in 1970, the Chicago and Illinois Commission on Human Relations held a public conference to reinforce anti-discrimination laws on the federal, state and local levels in an effort to alleviate racial tension.[[113]](#footnote-113)

While the FHA and HUD embedded discrimination into their policies and procedures, the Buffalo Municipal Housing Authority and Buffalo Urban Renewal Board had more direct control over public housing programs and renewal funds. The BMHA and BURB had the power to initiate, construct and administer public housing programs in Buffalo.[[114]](#footnote-114) Despite efforts from the National Urban League and other local branches to assist Blacks in obtaining homeownership, White board members of the BMHA and HUD absorbed millions of dollars in federal and state grant funds.[[115]](#footnote-115) During a local civil rights lawsuit against segregated schooling, Federal Judge John T. Curtin observed that “…evidence proves that the residential segregation in Buffalo was caused… by the policies and practices of the Federal Government, the BHMA, the private real estate industry, and the Common Council in the City of Buffalo.” Low board membership rates in the BMHA and HUD added to the underrepresentation and misrepresentation of Black citizens; this also allowed White board members to more readily redirect federal funds into suburban interests. Similar to other political organizations and interest groups within the region, the BMHA board was consistently staffed with local, White political elite. Despite the overwhelming amount of blacks residing in Buffalo’s housing projects, the BMHA’s board has never been majority black.[[116]](#footnote-116) Shockingly, until 1973, no more than one black had ever served as a member on the Buffalo Urban Renewal Board.[[117]](#footnote-117) By this time, Detroit, Cincinnati and Gary had already elected their first Black mayors.[[118]](#footnote-118)

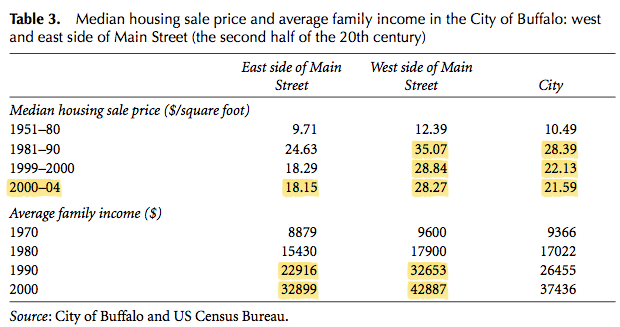
**Hypersegregation in Buffalo: Deteriorating Homes and Racial Confinement**

The economic and residential discrimination that African Americans have faced and continue to face in Buffalo have distinctly negative consequences for the overall welfare of the community. The city of Buffalo, specifically the Fruitbelt, has the oldest housing stock in the nation; over two-thirds of area homes were built before 1940.[[119]](#footnote-119) According to research conducted by *Open Buffalo,* this is extremely detrimental to residents because it can result in high levels of disrepair, lead paint poisoning, asthma, and high utility costs.”[[120]](#footnote-120) These dilapidated homes are dangerous to residents and depreciate their value. Although it is legally the landlord’s responsibility to upkeep these properties, the neglect is often misunderstood as a reflection of African American tenants’ reputation; this increases negative stereotypes about Black residents and reinforces socioeconomic divisions. Buffalo’s housing stock moreover opposes the national trend of new home construction. Contrary to national trends, by the 2000s, 60% of Buffalo homes were built before 1939.[[121]](#footnote-121) Research has confirmed that the Fruitbelt’s dilapidated housing stock was both caused and perpetuated by racially restrictive housing practices. In her research on housing segregation in Buffalo, Li Yin argues that “rundown neighborhoods with a deteriorating housing stock or with imminent negative changes is less attractive to home buyers. Housing values therefore are determined not only by the condition of the dwelling itself, but also by the neighborhood.”[[122]](#footnote-122)

As Buffalo’s housing stock aged, and racially restrictive practices were maintained, local economic disinvestment consequently increased commercial and residential vacancy rates in the Fruitbelt. Scholar Edward Larkin identifies that practices of redlining have a direct correlation with modern rates of inner city housing vacancy. In the *Fordham Law Journal,* Larkin argued that urban disinvestment “…involves a refusal to provide home mortgage loans or home improvement loans to certain geographical areas… [Which] decreases the availability of funds [and]… the neighborhood deteriorates…”[[123]](#footnote-123) In the case study of Buffalo, practices of redlining have not only constrained the African American population, but have resulted in increased vacancy rates and urban disinvestment. The severity of these vacancy levels were published in a study conducted by the *Partnership for the Public Good,* a non-profit organization in Buffalo. Lead spokesperson Irene Pijuan concluded that, “Buffalo faces severe issues of vacant and abandoned houses, ranking only second to St. Louis on the list of American cities with the most vacant properties per capita”[[124]](#footnote-124) Moreover, between 1970-2010, the home vacancy rate has increased from 4.4%- 18.9%.[[125]](#footnote-125) By 1980, 92% of occupants in the Fruitbelt’s housing projects were minorities; deteriorating living conditions and discriminatory practices employed by the BMHA further increased the vacancy rate to 65%.[[126]](#footnote-126)

The increase in housing vacancies in the East Side substantially reinforced White residents’ perceptions that Blacks were inept at maintaining their homes and taking care of their communities. This residential chasm allowed politicians and private real estate brokers to continue segregating neighborhoods. One White, middle-aged woman from Cheektowaga (a suburb of Buffalo) reported that if a significant number of blacks moved into her neighborhood, she would become concerned about property values dropping and probably would move.[[127]](#footnote-127) Similarly, a White woman from East Aurora, a suburb south of Buffalo, expressed that she would be concerned about Blacks being unable to keep up their property because she believed that the neighborhood rent was too high and that, “…a lot of them…don’t make a lot of money and can’t afford to live here…if they didn’t keep up their homes…[[128]](#footnote-128) These racial attitudes were mirrored in Detroit, Chicago and Pittsburgh during the 1990s. An article from the *New Pittsburgh Courier* argued that residential integration in the early-mid 1990s failed due to “Fierce denunciations of crime and welfare…[which] in the white man’s eyes is the most prominent feature of the Black underclass...”[[129]](#footnote-129)

White Buffalonians’ racialized understanding of housing values was indubitably premised on stereotypes that Black residents, pooled together as a homogenous “underclass” group, could not maintain their homes. These misconceptions increased disinvestment, which resulted in a decrease in Fruitbelt housing values around 1980. As you can see on Table 3 below, from the 1950s through the 1970s, housing values for the West Side and East Side of Buffalo were distinguished by less than $3.00 per square foot, and the average family income was less than $1,000.00 annual difference.[[130]](#footnote-130) From 1980 to 2000 however, the price per square foot of East Side residences decreased to $10.00 lower than the West side, and the average family income fluctuated from around $2,000.00 to $10,000.00 less than the West Side.[[131]](#footnote-131) These decreasing housing values were directly related to areas with heavy concentration of African Americans; during the 1990s, 88% of the Fruitbelt’s population was Black.[[132]](#footnote-132)



The discrepancy in housing values by geographic and racial composition also effected crime rates and residential health. In addition to urban disinvestment, the decrease in housing values has resulted in higher mortality rates, higher crime rates and an overall increase in levels of disease in minority communities. A study conducted by Kevin Hart, JD and Stephen Kunitz, MD explored the connection between segregation and high mortality rates and concluded that Buffalo’s low elasticity made it highly conducive to violent crime.[[133]](#footnote-133) After researching 114 metropolitan areas, the authors determined that Buffalo had the sixth highest level of residential segregation in the nation, and an extremely low level of residential elasticity. They concluded that, “Our finding [is] that segregation is positively associated with mortality among adult African Americans…”[[134]](#footnote-134) This is also confirmed by intrastate data; Erie County has recorded higher rates of premature death than Albany, Onondaga and Monroe Counties.[[135]](#footnote-135) A proposed ordinance from the Citizens Council on Human Relations to the Buffalo Common Council also confirms this connection. Within the ordinance, members of the CCHR argued that, “Discrimination in housing results in overcrowded, segregated areas with substandard, unsafe and unsanitary living conditions, which cause increased mortality, disease, crime, vice and juvenile delinquency…”[[136]](#footnote-136) It is this connection that explicates the self-fulfilling prophecy of labeling African Americans pathological and typifying the “underclass”.

**Financial Investment in the City of Buffalo 1970s-1990s**

As East Side housing values and civic participation continued to decease following the 1960s, commercial investments and urban planning avoided the inner-city. The impact of hypersegregation in Buffalo certainly had wide-ranging effects on the African American community, which extended into the financial and investment categories. In the midst of post-deindustrialization, the financial decisions of local banks and investors in the construction of the University at Buffalo North Campus, Kensington and Scajacuada Expressways, and other investments shifted markets to the suburbs and drained the city of lucrative social centers. The decisions of these local financial institutions to shift their investments to the suburbs was dictated by elite bankers, politicians, businessmen and lawyers, and supported by local municipalities who were often staffed by these individuals.[[137]](#footnote-137) Similar to residential segregation in Buffalo, commercial segregation isolated Black businesses and favored investment to suburban projects and infrastructure. Scholar Mark Goldman noted that “The decline of downtown Buffalo…was not reversed or even slowed by government policies. With the same generous cost write-down benefits that city officials had provided…for the renewal of downtown, suburban municipalities provided for …….by the end of the 1970s, the city was well surrounded by enormous, enclosed…shopping malls…”[[138]](#footnote-138) African American community activist and NAACP President Frank Mesiah expanded on this and argued that:

Many whites think the whole thing was resolved with the civil rights movement…they thought that brought equality…there is a long way to go…if you look at the end result, the effects are the same…even for those who have credentials, why is it there are no African-Americans on corporate boards, in major policy decision areas of banks, or of major corporations?[[139]](#footnote-139)

The compounded effect of urban disinvestment and suburban prioritization within Buffalo’s major financial institutions had a large impact on the local African American community. By 1980, thirteen of Buffalo’s largest financial institutions had extended a combined total of $405,467,097 in mortgages in Erie County, yet 81.8% of these loans were provided to suburban residents. In addition to being denied mortgages, Fruitbelt residents were consistently denied investment within the community. For example, the Ellicott and Masten districts of Buffalo received only .09 and .3% of total investments from local banks during the 1980s.[[140]](#footnote-140) The Marine Midland Bank invested $27 million into the suburbs during this time, while Buffalo Savings and WNY Savings invested tens of millions solely into suburban areas.[[141]](#footnote-141)

The construction of the LaSalle, Kensington and Scajaquada Expressways during the late 1960s furthermore disrupted the fiscal development of the East Side by cutting through neighborhoods and restricting access to community resources. The Expressways were funded by the federal and New York State governments, however, much like federal funds received by the BMHA, HUD and BURB, local politicians and interest groups dictated the zoning and geographical planning of the highways.[[142]](#footnote-142) The placement and decisions voiced by local figureheads cut off the East Side’s access to the area’s customer base, and promoted further suburban investment by isolating Black commerce and residences. Fruitbelt native Terrance Evans,[[143]](#footnote-143) an African American gentleman who was born and raised in Buffalo’s Fruitbelt, provided further insight into the effects of the placement of the Kensington Expressway. Evans noted that “…the 33 (Kensington) diverted business opportunities from the East side,” and attributed the placement to what he referred to as “systematic oppression and the desire to retain segregation.” Journalist Geoff Kelly captured the effects of this construction in *ArtVoice,* and argued that:

The $45 million Kensington Expressway tore up…Humboldt Parkway, claimed hundreds of homes in previously stable neighborhoods, ripped a trench in the ground that emphasized the city’s racial division, and diverted automobile traffic from the East Side’s once-thriving business strips to a limited-access expressway that shuttles commuters from downtown Buffalo to the northern suburbs… depressing property values. Starving small businesses on Jefferson and Fillmore of customers and abetting the evisceration of those business districts. Subjecting two generations of residents surrounding the expressway to air and noise pollution.[[144]](#footnote-144)

Keeping with the precedent of urban disinvestment of urban disinvestment, local politicians’ decided to place the University at Buffalo North Campus in the suburbs rather than downtown had negative consequences for the city’s Black population. Despite support from Governor Nelson Rockefeller and Buffalo’s African American community to place the second University at Buffalo campus in the downtown/waterfront area, local politics ultimately surpassed the state’s choice and pushed for the campus to be constructed in Amherst.[[145]](#footnote-145) With the help of the Albright-Knox Gallery chairman, the University Board of Trustees successfully inhibited a visual display of the downtown location and moved it to a local library.[[146]](#footnote-146) The placement of the University at Buffalo North Campus is important for two reasons; it demonstrates the strong influence of local politicians and businessmen over state and federal figures and it ultimately isolated the Black community from academic and employment opportunities. Mark Goldman argued that “…the construction of UB North Campus in Amherst rather than downtown had a large negative economic impact on the city..,[[147]](#footnote-147) while another scholar noted that, “The location of the new UB campus made it extremely difficult for many low-income urban residents to take advantage of the university…either in the form of attending classes or accessing the numerous employment opportunities that the new campus provided…”[[148]](#footnote-148)

**Discrimination in the Buffalo Public School System: From a leader of integration to modern segregation**

By 1970, many urban school districts across the United States remained racially segregated despite federal and state desegregation mandates. Buffalo’s Public Schools followed suit, and in many instances, faced higher rates of segregation than other major cities. This predominately came in the form of racial segregation and unequal schooling. A report from the United States Commission on Civil Rights determined that by 1972, More than twenty schools in Buffalo had a Black enrollment rate of 90% or higher, while twenty-nine had a White enrollment rate of 90% or higher.[[149]](#footnote-149) The same commission also concluded that Buffalo had the worst problem of segregation in New York State, as it had more children in segregated schools than anywhere else in the state.[[150]](#footnote-150) Overall in Erie County during this time, only 6 schools within the Erie County School District had a non-white population over 1%.[[151]](#footnote-151) These statistics were much in line with levels of segregation in Detroit, Chicago, Gary, Pittsburgh and other mid-sized, rust-belt cities.[[152]](#footnote-152) While these statistics prove similar to the national trend during the 1970s, it is essential to understand that Buffalo’s education system was at one point, lauded for its advances in integration.[[153]](#footnote-153) Gary Orfield, the co-director of UCLA’s civil rights project, commented that Buffalo was a city of “pioneers” who led the nation in integrated school systems. Despite promising federal and state attempts to desegregate the school system following the decision in *Arthur vs. Nyquist,* Buffalo Public Schools have become increasingly segregated.

Local court case *Arthur vs. Nyquist 415 F. Supp. 904*, 1976, exposed the effects of segregation in the Buffalo School District, and eventually mandated the school system to integrate the district. The case was brought about by parents of students who were consistently faced with unequal and segregated schools. The Plaintiffs, members of the Buffalo community, the Community Advisory Board for Bilingual Education of Buffalo and parents were guided by the CCHR, BUILD and the Buffalo branch of the NAACP. These groups collaborated to integrate the Buffalo Public school system. The defendants, Ewald P. Nyquist, Commissioner of Education of the State of New York, James D. Griffin, then Mayor of the City of Buffalo, and the Buffalo Board of Education refuted that their zoning policies and standards for honor schools were not racially selective.[[154]](#footnote-154) The court found the Buffalo Public School System guilty of both de facto and de jure segregation and discriminatory practices. After deciding in favor of the Plaintiffs, Judge John Curtin ordered the Buffalo School District to maintain a minimum minority population of Blacks in each school of at least twenty percent.[[155]](#footnote-155) Court manuscripts documented that Judge Curtin identified that, “It is evident that the Buffalo Board of Education has taken actions which have…substantially segregated [the] school system…”[[156]](#footnote-156)

In addition to exposing the effects of segregation in the school system, *Arthur vs. Nyquist* and the city’s failure to implement the “Buffalo Plan”[[157]](#footnote-157) revealed the influence that local politics had over federal and state mandates and the African American population. Under the primary proposal for the Buffalo Plan, the state ordered that the earliest grades in the Buffalo Public Schools would remain segregated. The suggested plan to integrate the school system was even less effective; Blacks in elementary levels were assigned to majority-White schools while White students were not mandated to attend schools in the Fruitbelt or other predominately Black areas.[[158]](#footnote-158) Moreover, the plan “…specified that [official board action] must not involve the transportation of white children into non-white areas…”[[159]](#footnote-159) Despite the mild integration propositions, members of the Buffalo Common Council and the Buffalo Board of Education denied its implementation and the court’s mandate. The CCHR pushed for a reform of the Buffalo Plan, and pressured lead politicians to comply with the legal mandate. In a letter to Mayor Stanley Makowski, a member of the CCHR directly identified the Mayor and Common Council members as instigators in segregation. He stated that, “As a councilman and a Mayor, you have watched the Board of Education and the Common Council each contribute and play a major role in the development…of segregation in Buffalo’s schools…”[[160]](#footnote-160)

Members of the Buffalo Board of Education and Common Council also demonstrated their control over the city school district by implementing discriminatory practices and policies in vocational and technical charter schools. Although various attempts at the Buffalo Plan failed to substantiate into a comprehensive solution, the Common Council created a Magnet Schools program that addressed segregation. The Magnet School program was created to diversify the demographics, programs and curriculum of the Buffalo schools. A mandated district-wide Cultural Curriculum Content Reform was included in this program in 1986. It focused specifically on teaching African and African American history to students.[[161]](#footnote-161) Thirty-Seven of Fifty-Eight local elementary schools abided by the court-ordered guidelines and implemented minority populations between 30% and 65%.[[162]](#footnote-162) The Curriculum program’s potential to integrate the community through education and begin the process of desegregating the schools was ultimately compromised by popular and political support for Charter schools. The program substantiated the racial tension within Buffalo, as many teachers expressed misunderstanding and even anger at the mandated cultural lessons to Black students.[[163]](#footnote-163)

Although the Buffalo Common Council implemented the Cultural Curriculum program, their propositions to integrate the Buffalo Public School Systems ultimately resulted in charter schools and de-facto segregation. Although Magnet Schools were a promising solution to all racial groups in Buffalo, racialized screening processes were included in their design, which often times resulted in a racial imbalance in schools.[[164]](#footnote-164) Arnold Gardner, a former president of the Buffalo Board of Education, testified that there was a “special” screening process for applicants of the city’s vocational and technical schools that resulted in discriminatory treatment of Black applicants.[[165]](#footnote-165) Racist attitudes were also reinforced by teaching staff and by the racist attitudes of parents and students. A race relations survey conducted by the Buffalo News in 1992 included testimony from local teachers, students and parents in regards to school integration. One Black teacher at an elementary school stated that she overheard two white students talking about a Black child, when one of the students told the other “Not to play with her because she’s a n\*\*\*\*r.”[[166]](#footnote-166) Another account shared that “In Depew, [a suburb of Buffalo] one woman’s son refused to touch Black figurines in a manger set-up at home, because he recounted that “his teacher taught him that blacks have germs…”[[167]](#footnote-167) The lack of progress in the Buffalo Public School System following the *Arthur vs. Nyquist* suggests that local politics had a direct effect on Black development, and more dauntingly, that we have much progress to make to desegregate our society and our systems.

While evidence from the *Buffalo News, Arthur vs. Nyquist* case briefs and local testimony surely demonstrates the individual effect of local racial tension in Buffalo, a report to the Governor’s task force on education in 1987 shows the effects of comprehensive local racism on schools. Educational Director Herbert Foster concluded through his observation of the Buffalo School district that, “Most teachers begin their careers with very little, if any…work with any other than middle-class white students...”[[168]](#footnote-168) He continued that, “Because of this misunderstanding, their exists an overrepresentation of black and minority youth…suspended from school and assigned to special education classes…”[[169]](#footnote-169) The disinvestment in integration efforts from both the Buffalo Common Council and local residents resulted in an end to the Magnet School program and the formation of Charter Schools. Pressure from suburban parents to retain segregation in Erie County resulted in backlash of efforts from individuals attempting to comply with the court mandated integration that followed *Arthur vs. Nyquist.* An attempt in the Amherst School District in 1992 to reconfigure school zones and enforce integration, led by the District Superintendent, was met with anger from suburban residents. Even journalists from the *Buffalo News* disagreed with the effort and argued that the proposition was, “…an unfounded and inaccurate picture of segregation in our two elementary schools…”[[170]](#footnote-170)

Segregation has only worsened as a result of powerful political and civil influences on reversing integration efforts. Rather than distributing students equitably throughout the school district with disregard to race, the Buffalo Public School district eliminated neighborhood schools and started assigning students to schools based on parental requests.[[171]](#footnote-171) This resulted in a rapid increase in charter school openings in the East Side, which re-segregated the school district and reintroduced inequality within educational facilities.[[172]](#footnote-172) Because political leaders and suburban residents were unwilling to compromise and integrate their schools, the Buffalo School District has become re-segregated at a higher rate than the 1970s. Journalists Susan Schulman and Harold McNeil reported that, “The situation in Buffalo underscores a distributing trend seen across New York State, which the Civil Rights Project identified as the most integrated state in the nation…”[[173]](#footnote-173) One media commentator argued that this increase was in many ways, unique to Buffalo.[[174]](#footnote-174) He stated that, “The issue of segregation…has dogged Buffalo…for generations…for years, schools serving Black children were considered inferior to those that educated their white classmates…”[[175]](#footnote-175) By 2012, racial attitudes and political influences in the Greater-Buffalo area had overcome decades of federal, state and local efforts in integrate the school system; five schools in Buffalo had reached Black enrollment rates of 99% or higher minority students.[[176]](#footnote-176) Desegregation had failed.

Through their stranglehold on the economic, residential, financial and educational sectors, local political groups in Buffalo have successfully limited the African American community’s access to mobilizing resources. Bethlehem Steel maintained its employment discrimination following *U.S. vs. Bethlehem Steel,* while the Buffalo Common Council and the Board of Education avoided the integration mandate included in the *Arthur vs. Nyquist* decision. This was a pattern typical of Buffalo from 1970 through the late 1990s; promising federal and state anti-discrimination legislation was not enforced by local entities. Even when funded by state and federal governments, the Buffalo HUD branch and BMHA channeled funds for inner-city development for private projects unrelated to the Black community. A comprehensive examination of Buffalo’s African American community is relevant to current historical, sociological, criminological and economic research. Buffalo’s categorization as a mid-sized city, scholars, government officials and policy makers have much to learn about the nuances that accompany the historical development of each individual city.

Through a careful consideration of primary source evidence and expert opinions, as well as a comparison of data with other cities, it is evident that an improvement of socioeconomic opportunities for Buffalo’s Black community can benefit from improvement in the local economy. Buffalo’s economic emphasis on heavy industry and manufacturing narrows its capability to adapt to new national markets. Economists Thomas Stanback and Theirry Moyelle observed that Buffalo, “…has shown little capacity to move away from a longstanding dependency on manufacturing and seems unable to find new directions for rejuvenation of its economic base…”[[177]](#footnote-177) Another researcher deducted that Buffalo’s overall stunted economy and mild growth of service employment compared to other Midwestern-northeastern cities suggests that it is still deindustrializing rather than beginning to restructure itself.[[178]](#footnote-178) *StartUp New York*, the most recent attempt to revitalize Buffalo’s economy, continues to focus on investments in manufacturing industries.[[179]](#footnote-179) Even with promising investments into the region’s academic and medical institutions, African Americans are repeatedly squeezed into low-paying, unstable positions. An examination of the modern national economy also has beneficial implications for local policy reform. Economist Timothy Bates noted that while Chicago, Atlanta, Boston and New York have rapidly grown and produced a large amount of white collar jobs, rust-belt cities are “sick,” and characterized by industrial decline and stagnant economies.[[180]](#footnote-180) A call for comprehensive research on Buffalo’s economy and prospects is much needed.

The absence of white collar jobs in rust-belt cities and increased levels of urban poverty are aptly explained through three categories of labor. Oriented and International Markets (such as the Detroit auto industry or Los Angeles entertainment), Input/Product development industries (services), and local supply industries: food, shelter, education (services populations in economy).[[181]](#footnote-181) Although deindustrialization had obvious effects on the African American community’s economic opportunity, this more detailed look shows the institutional power of Buffalo’s labor decline. In order to directly address jobs for the local Black community, two things must happen; the political stranglehold on jobs must be denounced and there must be a diversified and open local job market. This has, of course, been a rallying cry for centuries; further research into policies that can ensure equitable economic integration within Buffalo are needed. An increase in the number of jobs will have little effect on economic prosperity for Blacks, as jobs alone cannot undo poverty; working poverty mostly perpetuates ghetto economic disadvantage as the same (blue collar) jobs are receiving lower wages in the underprivileged areas.[[182]](#footnote-182)

In addition to a diversified economy and an expansion of industry, investing human resources and developing an area-wide school integration effort is crucial to advancing the local African American population. Although the Buffalo Plan failed to be effective in undoing the vestiges of de facto and de jure segregation, private notes from CCHR Co-Chairman Norman Goldfarb offer promising alternatives to school integration through busing. To avoid the controversy that accompanies mandatory busing, flexible attendance zones and transportation safety courses within the Buffalo Public Schools should be implemented. To ensure that teaching staff, parents or political adversaries do not undermine initiatives like the Cultural Curriculum Reform Program, policies should be created with local universities to ensure that incoming teachers understand the importance of a diverse curriculum.

To residentially integrate the racial groups in the Greater-Buffalo area, a local anti-discrimination ordinance that addresses multi-family apartments and owner-occupied residences is necessary. Despite efforts from the CCHR, the NAACP and BUILD in the 1970s-1980s to pass such an ordinance, members of the Common Council denied its implementation through a majority vote. Local Black leaders as well as progressive politicians and lawyers need to work together to draft and pass local legislation to prevent the daily acts of housing discrimination that exclude Blacks from affluent communities and deny them of their basic right to reside in the area of their choice. Major Banks that derive the majority of their funds from the region should re-invest in their respective areas, either by mandate or by voluntarily providing incentives to fund small businesses in the Fruitbelt and African American communities.

After speaking to several residents from the Fruitbelt, it is apparent that there remain several issues within the Black community. Dr. Henry Taylor argues that in order for Buffalo’s African American block clubs, political organizations and recreational programs to improve, inner-city youth need to become leaders with a vested interest in the community.[[183]](#footnote-183) While it may seem like a miniscule issue, youth leadership and community investment would strengthen political interest and would prompt social action. Developing the Fruitbelt’s political voice and unifying the population needs to be a major focus for revitalization efforts moving forward. As Ella Baker articulated, “…what is needed is the development of people who are interested not in being leaders as much as in developing leadership in others.” To best dismantle the stranglehold on the local White political machine and to most aptly address systemic racism, Buffalo’s African American populations, local non-profit organizations and funders should focus on empowering Fruitbelt residents through education, and through creating sustainable systems that fuel pride for community and a vision for the future of their community.

1. Nancy Denton and Douglas Massey, *American Apartheid: Segregation and the Making of the Underclass* (Harvard University Press, Cambridge: 2003) Third Printing. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. William Julius Wilson *The Declining Significance of Race,* directly supports this claim. Several alternative authors sociologists and historians who merit this claim are:Michael Reich, “The Economics of Racism,” Robert Adelman, “Neighborhood Opportunities, Race, and Class: The Black Middle Class and Residential Segregation,” and Stephen Gregory, “The Changing Significance of Race and Class in an African-American Community.” [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. Henry Louis Taylor, Jr. *African Americans and The Rise of Buffalo’s Post-Industrial City, 1940 to Present* (Buffalo Urban League, Inc., Buffalo: 1990) [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. Storefront Education Information Centers were agencies that were created to facilitate two-way communication between social institutions and African American, inner-city populations. The agencies were constructed under the “Buffalo Storefront Experiment,” and offered high school equivalency instruction, remedial reading, tutoring and computer education to individuals within these communities. The information centers eventually developed into more sophisticated academic and employment support for Buffalo’s urban, African American population, and offered more advanced courses on small business management, college mathematics, black history and the legal problems of ghetto life. Members of the S.E.I.C.’s were the foot soldiers who conducted the interviews and observations of the 1967 riot, yet their work was augmented by several Professors from the University at Buffalo. The program’s dedication to accurately understanding and portraying the motivations behind the rioting was truly unique within the national context. For further reference, please see the *Preliminary Report on the Disturbances in Buffalo,* accessible at <http://www.buffalonian.com/history/articles/1951-now/1967riots/1967riot-reportSUNYAB-CUEC2.jpg>, and *Interinstitutional Cooperative Arrangements in Higher Education in New York State,* accessible at <http://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED054718.pdf>. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. National Advisory Commission on Civil Disorders. *Report of the National Advisory Commission on Civil Disorders Otto* Kerner et.al. 1968. Accessible at <http://www.eisenhowerfoundation.org/docs/kerner.pdf>. [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. Frank Besag *The Anatomy of a Riot: Buffalo, 1967* (University Press, Buffalo: 1970) 15-16. [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. http://buffalonian.com/history/articles/1951-now/1967riots/1967riot-reportSUNYAB-CUEC3.jpg [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
8. The Comprehensive Drug Abuse Prevention and Control Act of 1970 categorized drugs by potential for addiction and established levels of acceptance for medical use by drug. According to the standards of this act, Marijuana, Cocaine and Heroin were the targeted priority, as they had a high potential for addiction and no accepted medical uses. The establishment of the Drug Enforcement Administration in 1973 replaced the former Bureau of Narcotics and Dangerous Drugs. [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
9. Vesla M. Weaver, “Frontlash: Race and the Development of Punitive Crime Policy,” *Studies in American Political Development* Volume 21, (Fall 2007). 259. [↑](#footnote-ref-9)
10. Quoted in, Anonymous, “Conservative Agendas and Campaigns: The Rise of the Modern ‘Tough on Crime’ Movement,” *Defending Justice.* Accessible at <http://www.publiceye.org/defendingjustice/pdfs/chapters/toughcrime.pdf>. 43. The statement is from an election campaign speech by Richard Nixon during the 1968 election campaign against Hubert Humphrey. [↑](#footnote-ref-10)
11. Anonymous, 43. [↑](#footnote-ref-11)
12. Neil Kraus, *Race Neighborhoods, and Community Power: Buffalo Politics, 1934-1997* (State University of New York Press, Albany: 2000). More shockingly, Kraus notes that before 1954, no African American had served on the BMHA board. This is clearly detrimental to the residential mobility of the community’s residents; the housing authority was responsible for substantiating federal funds into successful urban renewal projects. [↑](#footnote-ref-12)
13. Diana Dillaway *Power Failure: Politics, Patronage, and the Economic Future of Buffalo*, New York (Prometheus Books, Amherst: 2006). [↑](#footnote-ref-13)
14. Goldman, 284. [↑](#footnote-ref-14)
15. # William Julius Wilson *The Declining Significance of Race: Blacks and Changing American Institutions* (The University of Chicago Press, Chicago: 1978) 1.

    [↑](#footnote-ref-15)
16. Wilson, 151. [↑](#footnote-ref-16)
17. Paul A. Jargowsky, “Ghetto Poverty among Blacks in the 1980s,” *Journal of Policy Analysis & Management* Volume 13, no.2 (Spring 1994) [↑](#footnote-ref-17)
18. Jargowsky, 295. [↑](#footnote-ref-18)
19. Neil Kraus, *Race, Neighborhoods, and Community Power: Buffalo Politics, 1934-1997* (State University of New York Press, Albany: 2000) 29-33. [↑](#footnote-ref-19)
20. Henry Louis Taylor, Jr. 21. [↑](#footnote-ref-20)
21. Terry Williams, *The Uptown Kids: Struggle and Hope in the Projects* (Putnam Publishers, 1994) [↑](#footnote-ref-21)
22. Sudhir Venkatesh *Off the Books: The Underground Economy of the Urban Poor* (Harvard University Press, Cambridge: 2006). [↑](#footnote-ref-22)
23. Phillipe Bourgeois *In Search of Respect: Selling Crack in El Barrio* (Cambridge University Press, Cambridge: 1996) 77. [↑](#footnote-ref-23)
24. Michael Fortner, “The ‘Silent Majority’ in Black and White: Invisibility and Imprecision in the Historiography of Mass Incarceration,” *Journal of Urban History* Volume 20, No. 10. (November 2013) 3. [↑](#footnote-ref-24)
25. Anderson, 203. [↑](#footnote-ref-25)
26. # Thomas Sugrue, *The Origins of the Urban Crisis: Race and Inequality in Postwar Detroit* (Princeton University Press, New Jersey: 1996) 14.

    [↑](#footnote-ref-26)
27. Sugrue, 18. [↑](#footnote-ref-27)
28. Please see Diana Dillaway and Neil Kraus. [↑](#footnote-ref-28)
29. # Please see Mark Goldman *High Hopes: The Rise and Decline of Buffalo, New York* (State University of New York Press, Albany: 1983) and Thomas M. Stanback and Thierry J. Moyelle, *Cities in Transition: Changing Job Structures in Atlanta, Denver, Buffalo, Phoenix, Columbus (Ohio), Nashville, Charlotte* (Rowman and Littlefield Publishers, Inc.: 1982). For recent and historical media manifestations of this viewpoint, please see David Robinson, “Buffalo Niagara’s unemployment rate dips as fewer seek employment,” *The Buffalo News* (April 24th, 2013) Accessible at <http://www.buffalonews.com/20130423/Buffalo_Niagara_x2019_s_unemployment_rate_dips_as_fewer_seek_employment.html>, and Edward A. Gargan, “In Buffalo, State of the Economy is Key Campaign Issue,” *The New York Times* (October 24th, 1984).

    [↑](#footnote-ref-29)
30. Anonymous, “Profile of Buffalo and its Region,” *Open Buffalo* Non-profit survey accessible at <http://www.ppgbuffalo.org/wpcontent/uploads/2010/06/Buffalo_Profile.pdf>. 3. [↑](#footnote-ref-30)
31. Ibid, 4. In addition to the numerical $2,000 decrease (with inflation rates adjusted), Buffalo’s average individual wage in 1970 was 8% higher than the national average. This demonstrates the considerable [↑](#footnote-ref-31)
32. Mark Goldman *High Hopes: The Rise and Decline of Buffalo, New York* (State University of New York Press, Albany: 1983) 294. [↑](#footnote-ref-32)
33. Dillaway, 200. Through the early 2000s, Blacks failed to reach a 30% board membership rate on important committees even though they comprise more than 40% of the city’s population economic decline that the region continues to experience. [↑](#footnote-ref-33)
34. Ibid. [↑](#footnote-ref-34)
35. Neil Kraus, “Local policymaking and concentrated poverty: the case of Buffalo, New York,” *Cities* Volume 21, No. 6. (2004) 485, and Elizabeth Griffiths, “Race, Space, and the Spread of Violence Across the City.” *Social problems* Volume 60, No. 4 (November 1st, 2013) 499. [↑](#footnote-ref-35)
36. ## U.S. Census Bureau, “Population of the 100 Largest Urban Places: 1950,” *Population of the 100 Largest Cities and Other Urban Places in the United States: 1790-1990* Table 18 (<https://www.census.gov/population/www/documentation/twps0027/tab18.txt>) Accessed September 15th, 2014 and U.S. Census Bureau, “Population of the 100 Largest Urban Places: 1970,” *Population of the 100 Largest Cities and Other Urban Places in the United States: 1790-1990* Table 20 (<https://www.census.gov/population/www/documentation/twps0027/tab20.txt>) Accessed September 15th, 2014. This data was calculated using population data from the U.S. Bureau of the Census. Between 1950-1970, New York City’s population actually increased.

    [↑](#footnote-ref-36)
37. Elizabeth Griffiths, “Race, Space, and the Spread of Violence Across the City.” *Social problems* Volume 60, No. 4 (November 1st, 2013) 499. [↑](#footnote-ref-37)
38. Theodore Caplow *Recent Social Trends in the United States, 1960-1990* (McGill-Queen University Press, Quebec: 1991) 524. [↑](#footnote-ref-38)
39. Kraus, 32. [↑](#footnote-ref-39)
40. Kraus, 40. [↑](#footnote-ref-40)
41. Jargowsky, 289. [↑](#footnote-ref-41)
42. Please see William Julius Wilson *The Declining Significance of Race: Blacks and Changing American Institutions (*The University of Chicago Press, Chicago: 1978) [↑](#footnote-ref-42)
43. Anonymous, “Profile of Buffalo and its Region,” Open Buffalo Non-profit survey accessible at http://www.ppgbuffalo.org/wpcontent/uploads/2010/06/Buffalo\_Profile.pdf. [↑](#footnote-ref-43)
44. Dillaway, 225. Even more strikingly, these levels conclude that jobs were being moved at an equal rate from the city to the suburbs. The city lost 43,000 jobs during this decade while the suburbs gained around 61,000 jobs. This was in large part due to the precedent set by businessmen, lawyers and politicians who guaranteed jobs to Whites and excluded Blacks. [↑](#footnote-ref-44)
45. “Profile of Buffalo and its Region” [↑](#footnote-ref-45)
46. Ibid. [↑](#footnote-ref-46)
47. Dillaway, 225. This statistic increased again from 1980-1990, when Whites were almost three times as likely as Blacks to be self-employed. [↑](#footnote-ref-47)
48. Paul Offner and Harry Holzer, “Left Behind in the Labor Market: Recent Employment Trends Among Young Black Men,” Center on Urban & Metropolitan Policy (April 2002) 7. Buffalo’s -17.1% decrease in employment for young, less educated Black males was higher than Chicago, Pittsburgh, St. Louis, Gary, Philadelphia, Los Angeles and New York. During this same time, Atlanta, Greensboro and Tampa actually experienced job growth for this category between 10-15.8% (7). Offner and Holzer moreover found that this decrease in job growth was directly related to black-non-black segregation rates. Buffalo was cited as the most racially segregated within this study as well (Ibid). [↑](#footnote-ref-48)
49. Kraus, 99. [↑](#footnote-ref-49)
50. James D. Bilotta, “Reflections of an African American on his Life in the Greater Buffalo Area, 1930s-1960s,” Afro-Americans in New York Life and History Volume 13, Issue 2 (July 1989). Compiler James Bilotta stated that the pseudonym Harold Brown was created to protect the identity of the African American male who was providing his account of events of local racism that occurred to him and his family throughout his residence in Buffalo, New York. [↑](#footnote-ref-50)
51. Ibid. [↑](#footnote-ref-51)
52. Ibid. [↑](#footnote-ref-52)
53. Ibid, 48-49. [↑](#footnote-ref-53)
54. Sugrue, 26. [↑](#footnote-ref-54)
55. Ibid. [↑](#footnote-ref-55)
56. Sugrue, 151. [↑](#footnote-ref-56)
57. Kraus, 99-103. [↑](#footnote-ref-57)
58. Letter from Norman Goldfarb, Raphael DuBard and Robert to Chester Gorski, Stanley Makowski, John Elfvin (President, Majority and Minority leader of Buffalo Common Council, March 14th, 1968, SUNY Buffalo Archives, Citizens Council on Human Relations Collection, box 18, folder 1. Accessed October 29th, 2014. [↑](#footnote-ref-58)
59. “Program Component of Buffalo’s Model City Program Application,” prepared by the Department of Human Relations (submitted April 27th, 1967), SUNY Archives, Citizens Council on Human Relations Collection, box 4, folder 1. Accessed October 29th, 2014. [↑](#footnote-ref-59)
60. Ibid. [↑](#footnote-ref-60)
61. Kraus, 39. [↑](#footnote-ref-61)
62. *U.S. vs. Bethlehem Steel,* 312 F. Supp. 997 (1970) [↑](#footnote-ref-62)
63. *U.S. vs Bethlehem Steel* [↑](#footnote-ref-63)
64. Ibid.  [↑](#footnote-ref-64)
65. Ibid. According to government reports, Blacks within the Lackawanna plant were limited to the following departments: brick mason labor, yard work, the sintering plant, coke ovens, blast furnaces, steelmaking, the billet yard and the mill. Combined, these departments contained 83.6% of the location’s Black employees. [↑](#footnote-ref-65)
66. Susan Schulman and Harold McNeil “On the Job, Prejudice Persists Attitudes Translate into Setbacks for Blacks,” *The Buffalo News*, December 1st, 1992. [↑](#footnote-ref-66)
67. Schulman and McNeil. [↑](#footnote-ref-67)
68. Ibid. [↑](#footnote-ref-68)
69. Susan Schulman and Harold McNeil, “Affirmative Action Spawns a White Backlash,” The Buffalo News, November 30th, 1992. [↑](#footnote-ref-69)
70. Ibid. [↑](#footnote-ref-70)
71. Ibid. [↑](#footnote-ref-71)
72. U.S. Census Bureau, “Population of the 100 Largest Urban Places: 1990,” *Population of the 100 Largest Cities and Other Urban Places in the United States: 1790-1990*. (<https://www.census.gov/population/www/documentation/twps0027/>) Accessed September 15th, 2014. [↑](#footnote-ref-72)
73. Ibid. [↑](#footnote-ref-73)
74. Dillaway, 15. [↑](#footnote-ref-74)
75. Schulman and McNeil, “On the Job, Prejudice Persists Attitudes Translate into Setbacks for Blacks” [↑](#footnote-ref-75)
76. Ibid. [↑](#footnote-ref-76)
77. Kraus, 33. [↑](#footnote-ref-77)
78. Jargowsky, 295, [↑](#footnote-ref-78)
79. Ibid, 307. [↑](#footnote-ref-79)
80. Ibid, 289. [↑](#footnote-ref-80)
81. Ibid. [↑](#footnote-ref-81)
82. Denton and Massey, 130. [↑](#footnote-ref-82)
83. Ibid. [↑](#footnote-ref-83)
84. Ibid, 295. [↑](#footnote-ref-84)
85. Ibid, 296. This was reported in a study conducted by Jargowsky and Bane. [↑](#footnote-ref-85)
86. Mark Goldman *High Hopes: The Rise and Decline of Buffalo, New York* (SUNY Press, Albany: 1983) 287. [↑](#footnote-ref-86)
87. Goldman, 287. [↑](#footnote-ref-87)
88. BUILD pamphlet on Organization to End Housing Discrimination, written in part by members of the Citizens Council on Human Relations. SUNY Buffalo Archives, Citizens Council on Human Relations Collection, box 18, folder 1. Accessed October 30th, 2014. [↑](#footnote-ref-88)
89. Ibid, 286. [↑](#footnote-ref-89)
90. Ibid, 288. [↑](#footnote-ref-90)
91. Ibid, 286. [↑](#footnote-ref-91)
92. Kraus, 24. [↑](#footnote-ref-92)
93. Charles Reitz “Racism, Capitalism, and the Schools: Understanding Demographic Data and Educational Change in Buffalo, New York (1930-1977),” Urban Education Volume. 18, No. 4 (January 1984) 493. [↑](#footnote-ref-93)
94. Anonymous, “Buffalo Needs Work Now to Realize King’s Dream 25 Years After His Death, Attitudes Need Change,” The *Buffalo News*, January 18th, 1993. [↑](#footnote-ref-94)
95. Anonymous, “Closing the Racial Divide is Everyone’s Responsibility: Survey Showed Buffalo Still Has Work To Do,” Buffalo News (December 6th, 1992). [↑](#footnote-ref-95)
96. Anonymous, “Closing the Racial Divide is Everyone’s Responsibility: Survey Showed Buffalo Still Has Work To Do.” [↑](#footnote-ref-96)
97. Ibid. [↑](#footnote-ref-97)
98. Susan Schulman and Harold McNeil, “Diversity Gives Spark to Neighborhoods, Churches.” [↑](#footnote-ref-98)
99. Schulman and McNeil, “Diversity Gives Spark to Neighborhoods, Churches.” [↑](#footnote-ref-99)
100. Li Yin, “The dynamics of Residential Segregation in Buffalo: An Agent Based Simulation” *Urban Studies* Volume 46. No. 13. (December 2009) 2753. [↑](#footnote-ref-100)
101. Yin, 2753. [↑](#footnote-ref-101)
102. Letter from Norman Goldfarb to Mayor Stanley Makowski, December 20th, 1974, SUNY Buffalo Archives, Citizens Council on Human Relations Collection, BMHA-CCHR Correspondence 1973-1983, box 18, folder 3. Accessed October 29th, 2014. [↑](#footnote-ref-102)
103. Anonymous, “Buffalo Needs Work Now to Realize King’s Dream 25 Years After His Death, Attitudes Need Change.” [↑](#footnote-ref-103)
104. Anonymous, “Closing the Racial Divide is Everyone’s Responsibility: Survey Showed Buffalo Still Has Work To Do.” [↑](#footnote-ref-104)
105. Letter from David Gay to John Lafalce, Jack Kemp and Henry Nowack from Norman Goldfarb, June 16th, 1975, SUNY Buffalo Archives, Citizens Council on Human Relations Collection, BMHA-CCHR Correspondence 1973-1983, box 18, folder 3. Accessed October 29th, 2014. [↑](#footnote-ref-105)
106. Letter from David Gay to John Lafalce, Jack Kemp and Henry Nowack. [↑](#footnote-ref-106)
107. While researching the SUNY Buffalo archives, I located evidence of two drafts of this ordinance, 1968 and 1973. Also, through correspondences from Norman Goldfarb and Raphael DuFarb to the Buffalo Common Council, Mayor Stanley Makowski, Mayor Griffin, the U.S. Secretary of HUD Carla Hills and other organizations and individuals, it was well documented that the CCHR, NAACP and BUILD attempted to gain support for this plan but they ultimately failed. [↑](#footnote-ref-107)
108. Letter from Norman Goldfarb to Mayor Stanley Makowski, December 20th, 1974, SUNY Buffalo Archives, Citizens Council on Human Relations Collection, BMHA-CCHR Correspondence 1973-1983, box 18, folder 3. Accessed October 29th, 2014. [↑](#footnote-ref-108)
109. Letter from Norman Goldfarb to Mayor Stanley Makowski. [↑](#footnote-ref-109)
110. Terrance Evans is an alias for a gentleman that I interviewed on December 1st, 2014. Terrance is in his thirties and was born and raised in Buffalo’s Fruitbelt. His parents were also born and raised in the Fruitbelt. Shanleigh Corrallo, Interview with Terrance Evans. Interview took place in Williamsville on December 1st, 2014. [↑](#footnote-ref-110)
111. Bilotta, 49. [↑](#footnote-ref-111)
112. *HUD Memorandum*, S. William Green, April 23rd, 1975, SUNY Buffalo Archives, Citizens Council on Human Relations, BMHA-CCHR Correspondence 1973-1983, box 18, folder 3. Accessed October 29th, 2014. [↑](#footnote-ref-112)
113. Anonymous, “Human Relations Commission in Fair Housing Conference,” *Chicago Defender,* (January 29th, 1970) [↑](#footnote-ref-113)
114. Kraus, 55. [↑](#footnote-ref-114)
115. Timothy Cox, “NUL Home Ownership Program,” *Pittsburgh Courier,* July 3rd, 1982). [↑](#footnote-ref-115)
116. Ibid. [↑](#footnote-ref-116)
117. Ibid, 56-57. [↑](#footnote-ref-117)
118. Please see, Faith C. Christmas, “Overton: A Victim of Urban Renewal, Neglect,” *The Chicago Defender,* (January 23rd, 1989). Chicago did not elect its first Black mayor until 1983, and faced similar board membership issues as Buffalo. This article delves into the issues of urban renewal boards that are not staffed with Blacks and do not represent their constituents. It offers usable evidence to compare to Buffalo. [↑](#footnote-ref-118)
119. Anonymous, “Profile of Buffalo and its Region,” *Open Buffalo* Non-profit survey accessible at http://www.ppgbuffalo.org/wpcontent/uploads/2010/06/Buffalo\_Profile.pdf. 2. [↑](#footnote-ref-119)
120. Anonymous, “Profile of Buffalo and its Region.” [↑](#footnote-ref-120)
121. Dillaway, 207. [↑](#footnote-ref-121)
122. Yin, 2751. [↑](#footnote-ref-122)
123. Edward Larkin, “Redlining: Remedies for Victims of Urban Disinvestment,” *Fordham Urban Law Review* Volume 5, Issue 1 (1976) 83-84. [↑](#footnote-ref-123)
124. Irene Pijuan, “Poverty in the City of Buffalo*,” Partnership for the Public Good*, (November 15th, 2008). [↑](#footnote-ref-124)
125. Anonymous, *Open Buffalo,* 2. [↑](#footnote-ref-125)
126. Kraus, 180-181. Specific minority occupancy rates for housing projects in Buffalo during the 1980s are as follows: Ferry Grider, 95% Black, Lang Field, 76% Black, Kenfield, 81% Black, Commodore Perry, 90% Black and Price Courts, 100% Black. Author Neil Kraus moreover noted that these housing projects were denied telephone service, amenities, and milk delivery (182). [↑](#footnote-ref-126)
127. Schulman and McNeil. In this study, the Cheektowaga woman later added to this statement by noting that 25% would be a significant amount and would force her to move. [↑](#footnote-ref-127)
128. Ibid. [↑](#footnote-ref-128)
129. James E. Alsbrook, “Progress Toward Race Equality is Slowed But Not Stopped,” *New Pittsburgh Courier* (August 24th, 1996). [↑](#footnote-ref-129)
130. Yin, 2764. [↑](#footnote-ref-130)
131. Ibid. [↑](#footnote-ref-131)
132. Ibid, 2755. [↑](#footnote-ref-132)
133. Kevin Hart, Stephen Kunitz, Ralph Sell and Dana Mukamel, “Metropolitan Governance, Residential Segregation, and Mortality Among African Americans,” *American Journal of Public Health* Volume 88, No. 3 (March 1998) 437. According to Hart and Kunitz, low levels of residential elasticity were directly related to high levels of mortality within inner-city, African American populations [↑](#footnote-ref-133)
134. Hart et al., 436. [↑](#footnote-ref-134)
135. Anonymous, *Open Buffalo.*  [↑](#footnote-ref-135)
136. Proposed Ordinance from the Citizens Council on Human Relations to the Buffalo Common Council, May 31st, 1968. box 4 folder 7, Citizens Council on Human Relations Collection, SUNY Archives, The University at Buffalo. Accessed October 29th, 2014. The proposed ordinance was first presented to the Common Council in 1968, and was an attempt to prevent anti-discrimination in residential matters in the local arena. According to correspondences from Norman Goldfarb, Co-Chairman of the CCHR, to Common Council members, the proposition was fueled by the failure of state and federal anti-discrimination laws to protect Blacks in Buffalo. In a letter to the President, Majority and Minority leader of Buffalo’s Common Council, Norman Goldfarb argued that passing the ordinance was necessary because, “Failure to pass Johnson’s ordinances (anti-discrimination law) will help maintain Buffalo’s ghetto. It will also highlight the cynicism and hypocrisy of the common council as it refuses to fulfill the city’s pledge in its Model Cities application…(1)” Similar ordinances were proposed in 1976, however, they were never passed due to majority opposition from Common Council Members. [↑](#footnote-ref-136)
137. For example, Councilman Daniel Higgins was a labor leader in Buffalo, and a high ranking member of the Buffalo Yacht Club, a club exclusive to Buffalo’s white, male political elite. Similarly, Councilman Raymond Lewandowski was a member of the Buffalo Yacht Club. In a letter from Norman Goldfarb to Lewandowski, Goldfarb positively identified that during a Common Council meeting, both Lewandowski and Higgins used racially discriminatory remarks while arguing to dismiss the fair housing ordinance proposed by the CCHR. [↑](#footnote-ref-137)
138. Goldman, 284-285. [↑](#footnote-ref-138)
139. Proposed Ordinance from the Citizens on Human Relations to the Buffalo Common Council. [↑](#footnote-ref-139)
140. Ibid. [↑](#footnote-ref-140)
141. Ibid, 500. [↑](#footnote-ref-141)
142. For more detailed data on the funding of expressways under urban renewal, as well as information of specific sources of funding and the HUD department’s proposed funding, please see Letter from Richard Lippold to Mayor Griffin, SUNY Buffalo Archives, Citizens Council on Human Relations Collection, box 4, folder 5. Accessed October 29th, 2014. Included in a subsequent letter in 1981 is data that indicates that funding towards urban renewal and similar projects were redirected to private interests of politicians. For example, funds to HUD were channeled to the Buffalo Philharmonic House: $120,000, WNY Independent Living Center: $20,000, Buffalo Labor Management: $30,000. [↑](#footnote-ref-142)
143. Shanleigh Corrallo, Interview with Terrance Evans. Interview took place in Williamsville on December 1st, 2014. [↑](#footnote-ref-143)
144. Geoff Kelly, “Bury this Big Mistake,” *ArtVoice* (March 3rd, 2010) [↑](#footnote-ref-144)
145. Ibid, 122. Amherst, New York is a suburb north of the city of Buffalo. [↑](#footnote-ref-145)
146. Jane C. Morris, interview with Diana Dillaway, *Buffalo Rising,* June 27th, 2006. [↑](#footnote-ref-146)
147. Goldman, 285. [↑](#footnote-ref-147)
148. Kraus, 122. [↑](#footnote-ref-148)
149. *Arthur vs. Nyquist* case Briefs, 1972. SUNY Archives, Citizens Council on Human Relations Collection, box 8, folder 1. Accessed October 29th, 2014. 6. [↑](#footnote-ref-149)
150. *Arthur vs. Nyquist* briefs, 1972. [↑](#footnote-ref-150)
151. Reitz, 498. [↑](#footnote-ref-151)
152. For more detailed data on historical and modern segregation data for these cities, please see Max Wolff, “Segregation in the Schools of Gary, Indiana,” *Journal of Educational Sociology* Volume 36, No 6 (February, 1963), Anonymous, “School Segregation stays level for Blacks, Up for Hispanics,” *Michigan Chronicle* (April 8th, 1989) and Fran Spielman, “Alderman warns of ‘re-segregation’ of top public high schools,” *Chicago Sun-Times* (July 15th, 2014). [↑](#footnote-ref-152)
153. Please see Mary Pasciak, “Segregation in Buffalo Schools has Returned to Early 1970s level,” *Buffalo News* (April 5th, 2014). [↑](#footnote-ref-153)
154. *Arthur v Nyquist*, 712 F.2d 809 (1976, 1981, 1983) http://openjurist.org/712/f2d/809/arthur-v-p-nyquist-d (accessed November 1st, 2014). [↑](#footnote-ref-154)
155. *Arthur vs. Nyquist* case Briefs, 1972. [↑](#footnote-ref-155)
156. Court Manuscripts for *Arthur vs Nyquist,* 1972-325. SUNY Buffalo Archives, Citizens Council on Human Relations Collection, box 8, folder 3. Accessed October 29th, 2014. 3. [↑](#footnote-ref-156)
157. The Buffalo Plan was a proposed remedy to integrate schools within the Buffalo School District. Despite years of proposals guided by Judge Curtin’s recommendations and drafted by local organizations like the CCHR, the Buffalo Plan was never implemented because the majority of councilman and their constituents disapproved of bussing their children into predominately African American communities. For more detailed information on early drafts and correspondences of the Buffalo Plan resulting from *Arthur vs. Nyquist,* please see *United States District Court, Western New York*, “Plaintiffs comments upon city defendants desegregation plan dated January 5th, 1977, and state defendants plan of December 17th, 1976,” SUNY Buffalo Archives, Citizens Council on Human Relations Collection, box 8, folder 1. Accessed October 29th, 2014. [↑](#footnote-ref-157)
158. *Arthur vs. Nyquist* case Briefs, 1972. [↑](#footnote-ref-158)
159. Ibid. [↑](#footnote-ref-159)
160. Letter from Norman Goldfarb to Stanley Makowski, December 20th, 1974, SUNY Buffalo Archives, Citizens Council on Human Relations Collection, box 18, folder 3. Accessed October 29th, 2014. [↑](#footnote-ref-160)
161. Shujaa, 196. [↑](#footnote-ref-161)
162. Pasciak. This program globally recognized; the New York Times even cited improvements in Buffalo test scores from 45th to 69th percentile. [↑](#footnote-ref-162)
163. Shujaa, 196. This article exposes the racial tension in response to the 1986 implementation of cultural curriculum reforms. Many White teachers complained that it was mandated to teach Black history to students. Other White teachers reinforced the stereotype that Blacks did not know their own heritage, and voiced that they felt worthless or did not have transferable skills because of their disconnection with their heritage. [↑](#footnote-ref-163)
164. Reitz, 495. Data indicates that although segregation rates initially decreased following the *Arthur vs. Nyquist* decision, the influence of members of the Board of Education, Common Council and Buffalo School District staff in the selection process eventually increased the rate of school segregation. [↑](#footnote-ref-164)
165. Ibid. [↑](#footnote-ref-165)
166. Susan Schulman and Harold McNeil, “Amherst Wrong School to Raise Racial Issue,” *Buffalo News,* (April, 1992). [↑](#footnote-ref-166)
167. Schulman and McNeil, “Amherst Wrong School to Raise Racial Issue.” [↑](#footnote-ref-167)
168. U.S. Department of Education*, Education and Bias Related Violence: Presentation to the Governor’s Task Force on Bias Related Violence,* Presented April 10th, 1987, Buffalo New York. [↑](#footnote-ref-168)
169. U.S. Department of Education. [↑](#footnote-ref-169)
170. Ibid. The authors further voiced their disgust with the proposed initiative to integrate Amherst’s elementary schools by stating that the Superintendent “…attempt[ed] to force an unwanted restructuring of our schools on district residents…” and that “reconfiguration is clearly a ‘political; issue…that…is overwhelmingly outweighed by negative outcomes for all children of the district…” [↑](#footnote-ref-170)
171. Pasciak, “Segregation in the Schools has Returned to early 1970s levels.” While suburban students and children placed in the City Honors Program, which was disproportionately White (66% compared to a white population of 20%), students placed in charter schools were subjected to a lottery system with little to no mobility. [↑](#footnote-ref-171)
172. Pasciak, “Segregation in Schools has Returned to early 1970s levels.” By the late 1990s, 29 of 74 Buffalo schools were classified as segregated; none of those classified were 80% or more White. [↑](#footnote-ref-172)
173. Schulman and McNeil. [↑](#footnote-ref-173)
174. Please see Anonymous, “Chicago’s Segregated Neighborhoods,” *Chicago Defender,* (January 23rd, 1989). [↑](#footnote-ref-174)
175. Pasciak. [↑](#footnote-ref-175)
176. Ibid. [↑](#footnote-ref-176)
177. Kraus, 37. [↑](#footnote-ref-177)
178. Ibid. [↑](#footnote-ref-178)
179. Please see http://www.startup-ny.com/. [↑](#footnote-ref-179)
180. Timothy Bates “Political Economy of Urban Poverty in the 21st Century: How progress and public policy generate rising poverty,” in *The Inner City: Urban Poverty and Economic Development in the Next Century,* edited by Thomas D. Boston and Catherine L. Ross (Transaction Publishers, New Brunswick: 1997). 111. [↑](#footnote-ref-180)
181. Timothy Bates “Political Economy of Urban Poverty in the 21st Century: How progress and public policy generate rising poverty.” Because rust-belt cities focus more on service industry, they are most likely to employ inner-city minorities, with the lowest wages. Bates clarified that, “The low wages paid to ghetto residents are embedded in the prices of products and services that the entire community relies upon…(113) [↑](#footnote-ref-181)
182. Bates, 116. [↑](#footnote-ref-182)
183. Henry Louis Taylor, Jr. *African Americans and The Rise of Buffalo’s Post-Industrial City, 1940 to Present.* [↑](#footnote-ref-183)