



Have Anti-Discrimination Housing Laws Worked? Evidence from Trends in Black Homeownership

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Abstract

This paper explores the hypothesis that anti-discrimination legislation has been an important factor in shaping the evolution of minority homeownership spatial trends. It does so by studying homeownership patterns of black and non-black households during the 1970s, 1980s, and 1990s using Census data and data that proxies for the level of enforcement of the Fair Housing Act over time. The results provide unambiguous support for the view that enforcement has been a key factor for black homeownership since the 1970s, as we find a consistent positive relationship between fair housing policy enforcement and black homeownership growth. In addition, we find clear evidence that black homeowners gained access to more diverse and higher-income neighborhoods over time, with the shift occurring beginning in the 1980s and continuing in the 1990s. Importantly, both of these results are race-specific results, as there are no such patterns among non-black homeowners. Taken together, the results are consistent with the view that the housing-related civil rights legislation passed during the 1960s and 1970s helped alter, and reduce, the role that race played in housing markets.

Key Words: discrimination, homeownership, homes, housing, race

The rate of homeownership for families in the United States has steadily grown since World War II, increasing from around 40 percent in 1940 to nearly 70 percent today (U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, 2002).¹ Federal policies, such as the National Housing Act of 1949, have played a catalyzing role for these trends, as they promoted the creation of high quality housing that was accessible to a majority of households (Martinez, 2000).

The overall trends belie significant heterogeneity in homeownership experiences for households of different races. Hovering between 45 and 50 percent, the homeownership rate for black and Hispanic households is far lower than that of white households. This paper examines the nature of this divergence and explores the hypothesis that anti-discrimination legislation has been an important factor in shaping the evolution of minority homeownership spatial trends. It does so by studying homeownership patterns of black and non-black households during the 1970s, 1980s, and 1990s using Census data and data that measures geographic variation in the level of enforcement of the Fair Housing Act over time.

The results provide unambiguous support for the view that enforcement has been a key factor for black homeownership since the 1970s. For each decade in the sample, we find a positive relationship between fair housing policy enforcement and black homeownership growth. In addition, we find clear evidence that black homeowners gained access to more diverse and higher-income neighborhoods over time, with the shift beginning in the 1980s and continuing in the 1990s. These decades were a time in which anti-discrimination laws had been codified and internalized by the market. Importantly, both of these results are race-specific results. We observe no such patterns among non-black homeowners.

These patterns suggest that black homeowners faced a very different housing market in the 1970s compared with the 1980s and 1990s. Moreover, because the effect is race-specific, the results further suggest that race-specific events are likely to have been important catalysts for these trends. They are therefore consistent with the view that the housing-related civil rights legislation passed during the 1960s and 1970s helped alter the role that race played in housing markets.

The next section presents background material on race-based trends and details the major spatial shifts for black and non-black homeowners. Following this, major anti-discrimination laws are reviewed, including scholarly and policy-based assessments of their impact. This section concludes by presenting an alternative view that suggests these laws may have had an important effect. Results and conclusions follow this discussion.

1. Background—Race-based trends in the spatial distribution of homeownership

The analysis begins by tracking how the geography of black homeownership has evolved over time, with particular attention placed on the character of the neighborhoods into which black households moved. A central question in this examination is whether, compared to the neighborhoods in which non-black households lived, the character of these neighborhoods changed over time.

The data in this sample are drawn from the Neighborhood Change Database (NCDB) produced by Geolytics Inc. The NCDB provides tract-level U.S. Census data for 1970, 1980, 1990, and 2000 normalized to 2000 census tract boundaries and makes it possible to analyze the 1970–2000 changes in a geographically consistent area.

Since census tract boundaries change from one census to another, it is not possible to exactly determine values for earlier census years. This makes it necessary to construct estimates from the available data. The basic approach that is used in the NCDB is to create weighting matrices that define 2000 tracts as combinations of 1970, 1980, and 1990 tracts. The data from earlier census years are then normalized to 2000 tract boundaries by calculating weighted sums for population and housing data and as weighted averages for medians. The baseline data for the analysis comprise census tract data from the 50 largest metropolitan areas, measured by central city population in 1970, for 1970, 1980, 1990 and 2000. The final dataset includes information on over 27,000 tracts.²

Table 1 provides the distribution of metropolitan black and non-black homeowners across census tracts grouped according to two criteria: the tract's median family income

Table 1. Distribution of homeowners by tract income.

	1970	1980	1970-1980	1990	1980-1990	2000	1990-2000	1970-2000
Panel A: Black homeowners								
<i>Central city</i>								
Median household income < 50% of MSA MHI	5.00	13.69	8.69	13.54	-0.15	11.99	-1.55	6.99
MHI between 50 and 80% of MSA MHI	42.18	36.58	-5.60	27.12	-9.46	22.65	-4.47	-19.53
MHI between 80 and 120% of MSA MHI	35.17	28.65	-6.52	26.53	-2.12	26.49	-0.04	-8.68
MHI > 120% of MSA MHI	2.79	5.36	2.57	11.30	5.94	13.07	1.77	10.28
<i>Suburban</i>								
Median household income < 50% of MSA MHI	0.25	0.86	0.61	2.21	1.35	2.93	0.72	2.68
MHI between 50 and 80% of MSA MHI	4.50	3.94	-0.56	5.73	1.79	6.15	0.42	1.65
MHI between 80 and 120% of MSA MHI	8.68	7.99	-0.69	8.45	0.46	9.90	1.45	1.22
MHI > 120% of MSA MHI	1.43	2.93	1.50	5.12	2.19	6.82	1.70	5.39
Panel B: Nonblack homeowners								
<i>Central city</i>								
Median household income < 50% of MSA MHI	2.46	1.67	-0.79	5.89	4.22	7.22	1.33	4.76
MHI between 50 and 80% of MSA MHI	13.93	12.84	-1.09	10.02	-2.82	9.77	-0.25	-4.16
MHI between 80 and 120% of MSA MHI	35.71	32.94	-2.77	18.45	-14.49	16.93	-1.52	-18.78
MHI > 120% of MSA MHI	11.61	17.35	5.74	24.05	6.70	22.52	-1.53	10.91
<i>Suburban</i>								
Median household income < 50% of MSA MHI	0.06	0.21	0.15	2.70	2.49	3.71	1.01	3.65
MHI between 50 and 80% of MSA MHI	3.25	3.47	0.22	7.26	3.79	7.68	0.42	4.43
MHI between 80 and 120% of MSA MHI	23.21	20.51	-2.70	15.74	-4.77	15.68	-0.06	-7.53
MHI > 120% of MSA MHI	9.77	11.01	1.24	15.91	4.90	16.50	0.59	6.73

as a percentage of MSA median family income and whether the tract was located in the central city of the MSA.³ The tracts are separated into four income categories: (1) tract median family income (MFI) less than 50 percent of MSA MFI (*low-income*), (2) tract MFI between 50 and 80 percent of MSA MFI (*moderate-income*), and (3) tract MFI between 80 and 120 percent of the MSA MFI (*average-income*) and (4) tract MFI greater than 120 percent of the MSA MFI (*high-income*).

In 1970, black homeowners were much more likely to live in the lower income tracts than the average non-black homeowner. Black homeowners were more than twice as likely as non-black homeowners to live in a low- or moderate-income tract (52 percent to 20 percent). Similarly, over 21 percent of all non-black homeowners lived in high-income tracts while less than 5 percent of black homeowners lived in such tracts. Black homeowners in 1970 were also much more likely than non-black homeowners to reside in central-city census tracts. In 1970, over 85 percent of black homeowners lived in central-city tracts while only 64 percent of non-black homeowners lived in these tracts.

By 2000, the percentage of black homeowners in low- or moderate-income tracts had fallen to 43.7 percent and the percentage residing in central-city tracts had fallen to 74.2 percent. However, this overall trend masks the fact that changes in the distribution of black homeownership in American metropolitan areas were very different in the 1970s than in the 1980s and 1990s.

During the 1970s, the percentage of black homeowners living in low- and moderate-income tracts increased by over 3 percentage points to 55.1 percent. This shift was principally due to an 8.7 percentage point increase in the percentage of black homeowners living in low-income, central-city census tracts. Also, the central-city share of black homeowners remained almost constant during the 1970s.

During the 1980s, by contrast, there was a clear shift in the distribution *away* from low- and moderate-income, central-city tracts into high-income central city and all suburban tracts. In this decade, the percentage of black homeowners living in low- and moderate-income tracts fell by 6.5 percentage points and the share living in high-income tracts increased by over 8 percentage points. Black homeownership also clearly shifted towards the suburbs during this time, as the central-city share of black homeowners fell by almost 6 percentage points. Thus, the spatial changes in the distribution of black homeowners during the 1980s were quite different than those in the 1970s.

Another striking difference during the 1980s is that the experience of black homeowners was much more similar to that of non-black homeowners. During the 1970s, black and non-black homeowners moved into very different neighborhoods. While black homeowners were moving into low- and moderate-income, central city tracts, non-black homeowners during the 1970s were moving out of low- and moderate-income, central city tracts into high-income, central city tracts. In fact, this shift into high-income, central-city tracts was so large that, perhaps surprisingly, the percentage of non-black homeowners living in central-city tracts actually increased by 1.1 percentage points during the decade. In the 1980s, like black homeowners, non-black homeowners moved into high-income areas (increase of 10 percentage points) and out of central city tracts (decline of 6 percentage points). Thus, while the 1970s were a period in which the geographic distribution of black and nonblack homeowners diverged, the 1980s were a period of convergence.

Finally, for black homeowners, the shifts in the 1990s were virtually identical to those of the 1980s. Black homeowners shifted out of low- and moderate-income census tracts into high-income tracts and out of central city tracts into suburban tracts. However, the shifts were of a lower magnitude than those of the 1980s. For non-black homeowners, however, the 1990s were very different than the 1980s. For these households, the 1990s saw remarkable stability in the spatial distribution, a marked contrast to the large shifts in the distribution of non-black homeownership seen during the 1980s. For example, during the 1980s, no income category experienced a shift with a magnitude of less than 2.5 percentage points while during the 1990s no category experienced a shift larger than 1.53 percentage points.

A clear way to measure the spatial divergence and convergence during the entire 1970 to 2000 period is to estimate the percentage of black homeowners who would have to change income categories for the black distribution to be identical to the non-black distribution. In 1970, 32.2 percent of black homeowners would have had to change their income category. By 1980, the number had risen by 4.7 percentage points to 36.9 percent, suggesting a divergence of the two spatial distributions. During the 1980s the number fell by 4 percentage points to 32.8, clear evidence that the geographic distribution of metropolitan black homeownership converged to that of non-black homeownership during the 1980s. The main effect of the stability of the non-black spatial distribution during the 1990s was the continued convergence of the black and non-black distributions. During the 1990s the percentage of black homeowners who would have to change income categories to make the black and non-black distributions identical fell by another 5.6 percentage points, so that in 2000 only 27.2 percent of black homeowners would have had to change income categories to achieve spatial parity.

The results in Table 1 suggest that black homeowners had access to better neighborhoods in the 1980s and 1990s than in the 1970s, but it focuses only on the neighborhood's income and urban location. Tables 2 through 4 present analogous figures using a wider array of tract, county, and MSA characteristics to further explore whether black homeowners seemed to have access to different and higher quality neighborhoods after the 1970s.⁴ Tables 2 and 3 report on the neighborhoods of the average black and non-black homeowner, respectively. Table 4 shows each value for the average black homeowner as a percentage of the value for the average metropolitan nonblack homeowner, as well as the percentage change in the gap for each of the three time periods (1970–1980, 1980–1990, and 1990–2000).

Consistent with the results in Table 1, the figures in Tables 2 through 4 indicate that the typical black homeowner lived in a less affluent neighborhood than the average non-black homeowner in 1970. The average black homeowner lived in a census tract that had people with lower education levels, fewer persons employed in professional and managerial occupations, and higher levels of poverty. The neighborhood of the average black homeowner had approximately 45 percent fewer residents with college degrees, approximately half as many workers employed in professional and managerial occupations, and a poverty rate that was over 1.7 times the rate in the tract in which the average non-black homeowner lived.

Table 2. Neighborhood characteristics of black homeowners.

	1970	1980	1970-1980	1980	1990	1980-1990	1990	2000	1990-2000
Black homeowners	522.27	628.84	20.41%	617.66	600.50	-2.78%	519.96	558.03	7.32%
Tract population	5,260.16	4,695.31	-10.74%	4,766.28	4,611.83	-3.24%	4,582.40	5,217.29	13.85%
Median family income	8,560.38	16,624.06	94.20%	17,616.72	31,674.25	79.80%	30,953.23	47,315.66	52.86%
College graduates	6.84	10.49	53.36%	11.80	14.61	23.81%	15.37	19.53	27.07%
Professional	4.14	6.60	59.42%	7.42	9.29	25.20%	25.31	29.11	15.01%
Poverty rate	19.40	21.05	8.51%	19.33	20.22	4.60%	18.93	16.46	-13.05%
Homeownership rate	58.75	58.86	0.19%	57.63	60.07	4.23%	60.09	63.02	4.88%
Black population share	70.01	72.11	3.00%	59.99	68.90	14.85%	62.55	58.63	-6.27%
Median value of owner-occupied housing	18,084.90	51,274.67	183.52%	52,240.75	105,964.79	102.84%	79,243.49	115,194.14	45.37%
Central	85.70	83.83	-2.18%	84.32	82.55	-2.10%	78.57	74.21	-5.55%
Midwest	21.54	21.56	0.09%	28.80	27.48	-4.58%	26.09	24.56	-5.86%
South	37.86	36.28	-4.17%	34.02	36.97	8.67%	39.60	45.20	14.14%
West	15.83	14.24	-10.04%	13.00	12.07	-7.15%	12.83	24.56	91.43%
Segregation	81.60	73.46	-9.98%	74.56	70.35	-5.65%	71.42	67.54	-5.43%
Median black income	8,232.28	16,532.10	100.82%	17,235.13	33,330.01	93.38%	28,943.15	41,543.30	43.53%
Policy incidence variable	0.71	0.73	1.78%	0.68	0.68	0.00%	0.99	0.99	0.00%
Policy intensity variable	0.21	0.22	1.84%	0.29	0.29	2.45%	476.80	407.59	-14.52%

Table 3. Neighborhood characteristics of nonblack homeowners.

	1970	1980	1970-1980	1980	1990	1980-1990	1990	2000	1990-2000
Black homeowners	70.98	93.64	31.92%	63.44	65.39	3.07%	62.07	98.53	58.74%
Tract population	4,835.10	4,618.77	-4.47%	4,525.41	4,863.97	7.48%	4,932.32	6,018.50	22.02%
Median family income	10,805.88	23,000.98	112.86%	23,787.15	46,844.80	96.93%	40,999.68	66,638.68	62.53%
College graduates	12.23	19.92	62.88%	20.80	27.36	31.54%	26.68	31.85	19.38%
Professional	8.18	11.51	40.71%	12.26	15.06	22.84%	35.10	38.98	11.05%
Poverty rate	11.20	9.96	-11.07%	8.95	8.64	-3.46%	7.76	7.94	2.32%
Homeownership rate	67.77	66.03	-2.57%	66.05	67.24	1.80%	70.20	72.73	3.60%
Black population share	14.83	12.58	-15.17%	9.99	9.22	-7.71%	8.23	9.86	19.81%
Median value of owner-occupied housing	21,941.03	60,690.49	176.61%	61,459.29	131,747.05	114.36%	124,054.61	184,234.82	48.51%
Central	67.36	58.82	-12.68%	65.24	63.55	-2.59%	59.18	57.21	-3.33%
Midwest	15.25	12.51	-17.97%	19.85	18.30	-7.81%	18.17	17.46	-3.91%
South	24.94	30.36	21.72%	30.00	31.35	4.50%	34.42	36.96	7.38%
West	21.39	24.35	13.84%	26.94	26.95	0.04%	26.54	26.68	0.53%
Segregation	79.34	70.21	-11.51%	71.76	65.75	-8.38%	66.91	62.64	-6.38%
Median black income	9,978.16	22,896.59	129.47%	24,620.42	59,580.81	142.00%	41,212.25	55,947.92	35.76%
Policy incidence variable	0.61	0.54	-10.81%	0.51	0.49	-3.05%	0.99	0.99	0.00%
Policy intensity variable	0.18	0.15	-15.03%	0.19	0.18	-2.51%	407.76	377.70	-7.37%

Table 4. Comparison of black homeowner gap 1970–2000.

	1970	1980	1990	2000	1970–1980	1980–1990	1990–2000	1970–2000
Black homeowners	735.80%	973.61%	837.70%	566.36%	32.32%	–13.96%	–32.39%	–23.03%
Tract population	108.79%	105.32%	92.91%	86.69%	–3.19%	–11.79%	–6.69%	–20.32%
Median family income	79.22%	74.06%	75.50%	71.00%	–6.51%	1.94%	–5.95%	–10.37%
College graduates	55.93%	56.73%	57.61%	61.32%	1.44%	1.55%	6.44%	9.64%
Professional	50.61%	60.52%	72.11%	74.68%	19.58%	19.14%	3.57%	47.55%
Poverty rate	173.21%	215.98%	243.94%	207.30%	24.69%	12.95%	–15.02%	19.68%
Homeownership rate	86.69%	87.25%	85.60%	86.65%	0.65%	–1.90%	1.23%	–0.05%
Black population share	472.08%	600.50%	760.02%	594.62%	27.20%	26.57%	–21.76%	25.96%
Median value of owner-occupied housing	82.43%	85.00%	63.88%	62.53%	3.12%	–24.85%	–2.12%	–24.14%
Central	127.23%	129.25%	132.76%	129.72%	1.59%	2.72%	–2.30%	1.96%
Midwest	141.25%	145.09%	143.59%	140.66%	2.72%	–1.03%	–2.04%	–0.41%
South	151.80%	113.40%	115.05%	122.29%	–25.30%	1.45%	6.30%	–19.44%
West	74.01%	48.26%	48.34%	92.05%	–34.80%	0.18%	90.42%	24.39%
Segregation	102.85%	103.90%	106.74%	107.82%	1.02%	2.73%	1.01%	4.84%
Median black income	82.50%	70.00%	70.23%	74.25%	–15.15%	0.32%	5.73%	–10.00%
Policy incidence variable	116.39%	133.33%	100.00%	100.00%	14.55%	–25.00%	0.00%	–14.08%
Policy intensity variable	116.67%	152.63%	116.93%	107.91%	30.83%	–23.39%	–7.71%	–7.50%

The average black homeowner's neighborhood differed from that of the average non-black homeowner in other ways as well. The typical black homeowner lived in a tract much more heavily populated by other black households (450 percent more), was more than 25 percent more likely to live in central city census tracts, and was much more likely to reside in the South and Midwest and less likely to live in the West and Northeast.

In terms of changes over time, the neighborhood of the average black homeowner improved considerably during the 1970s, 1980s, and 1990s. The median family income, the professional occupational share, and the share of the population with college degrees in the tract of the average black homeowner improved continuously across the three decades. These trends broadly mirror those for the average non-black homeowner during the period.

However, a divergence is observed regarding two other variables, the nature of which suggests that black homeowners may have been accessing different neighborhoods in the 1970s than they were in the 1980s and 1990s. In the neighborhood of the typical black homeowner the poverty rate increased slightly in the 1970s and then stabilized and declined after that, while the poverty rate for the typical non-black homeowner fell continuously through the entire 1970 to 2000 period. Similarly, black homeowners in the 1970s and 1980s moved to neighborhoods that were increasingly black, while in the 1990s the black population shares in their neighborhoods fell considerably. By contrast, the black population share for the neighborhood of the average non-black homeowner declined throughout the entire period.

Despite evidence suggesting that black homeowners may have gained access to "better" neighborhoods post-1980, the data show that their neighborhoods continued to lag the neighborhoods of non-black homeowners along almost every dimension analyzed, and lost ground along some important ones (final four columns of Table 4). Relative to non-black homeowner neighborhoods, black homeowner neighborhoods still had lower median family incomes, fewer professionals and college graduates, lower homeownership rates, and higher poverty rates in 2000, and lost ground in terms of neighborhood median family income and poverty rates.

In spite of this, trends in later decades, particularly in the 1990s, offer justification for some optimism. For example, though the poverty rate gap had widened in moving from 1970 to 2000, it had shrunk by about 15 percent in the 1990s. In addition, educational and occupational status gaps also closed over the 30 years from 1970. In 1970, the average black homeowner lived in a tract in which the percentage of residents with college was 44% lower than that of the average nonblack homeowner. By 2000, the gap had fallen below 40% or by almost 10%. The difference in the percentage of professionals in the homeowner's census tract was reduced by almost half.

To summarize, black homeowners during the 1970s tended to move into low- and moderate-income, central-city tracts, while in the 1980s and 1990s they tended to move away from these tracts and into high-income central city and all suburban tracts. By contrast, non-black homeowners showed no analogous 1970s/1980s divide. An examination of a broader set of neighborhood characteristics yielded a similar, albeit less definitive, conclusion. Black homeowners were living in neighborhoods with higher

education levels, an increased presence of professional and managerial workers, and lower poverty rates in 2000 than in 1970. In relative terms, black homeowners made significant gains in educational attainment and occupational status. At the same time, though, the neighborhood income level for the average black homeowner fell relative to those of the average non-black homeowner and the neighborhood poverty rate increased for the average black homeowner relative to the average non-black homeowner. Thus, though there is strong evidence to support the view that black homeowners gained access to better neighborhoods after the 1970s, a clear resolution remains somewhat elusive.

2. Anti-discrimination laws as a possible explanation

The data in the preceding section suggest that black homeowners moved to different and more affluent neighborhoods in the 1980s and 1990s than they did in the 1970s, while non-black homeowners showed no such decadal differences. In trying to explain such a race-specific divergence, one must seek factors that primarily (if not exclusively) influenced the experiences of the black potential homebuying population. One such candidate is the set of laws designed to eliminate discriminatory practices that restricted the spatial housing choices of black households. The change in black homeowner experiences in the 1980s documented above occurred during a time in which many of the major laws in this area were either just being put on the books or were relatively new with methods of enforcement that were being refined to maximize effectiveness. Thus, the 1980s would have been the time when their impact would begin to be manifested in black homeowner outcomes. The remainder of this section highlights the major anti-discrimination laws enacted in the context of housing and homeownership, discusses research on their impacts, and presents the hypothesis that underlies the ensuing empirical analysis.

2.1. Key pieces of anti-discrimination legislation

The restrictions that limited where black households could seek to live and own homes were imposed and maintained through a number of different mechanisms. Institutional arrangements codified the physical separation of black and white residences. For example, in the years following World War II, the Federal Housing Administration and the Veterans Administration maintained policies explicitly promoting race-based segregation (Collins and Margo, 1999). Jim Crow laws, first created in the late 1800s, mandated racial segregation at the state level. Restrictive covenants limiting who could purchase a property were another commonly used tool used to increase and perpetuate segregation (Yinger, 1999). Violent organized activities by groups of citizens, such as lynchings and fire bombings, also served to prevent blacks from moving to certain neighborhoods and encourage segregation (Massey and Denton, 1993). In addition,

discriminatory practices by a host of different market actors, including real estate agents, landlords, and lenders, limited minority access to white neighborhoods. Yinger (1998) details many of these practices in more recent years.

In response to these trends, and in concert with broader changes in race relations, a series of Acts was passed to reduce racial inequities and eliminate racial discrimination. In terms of housing, the Fair Housing Act was a watershed piece of legislation in that it extended civil rights protections beyond public housing and into the arena of private transactions.⁵ It prohibited discrimination in the sale, rental and financing of dwellings based on race, color, religion, sex or national origin and allowed minorities to seek legal redress against policies and practices that had long prevented them from living in homes located in particular neighborhoods. Individuals who felt they had been victims of a discriminatory action could file a complaint with the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), which could investigate the claim and facilitate a voluntary settlement. If the settlement failed, the claimant could pursue a private lawsuit. In addition, the Department of Justice was given the authority to pursue lawsuits against those demonstrating a discriminatory pattern of practice.

Other civil rights legislation focused on discrimination in the credit and finance markets that are crucial for purchasing a home. Originally conceived out of a desire to protect the rights of women to obtain credit, the Equal Credit Opportunity Act of 1974 (ECOA) made it illegal for creditors to discriminate on the basis of age, race, color, religion, marital status, gender, and national origin (Elliehausen and Durkin, 1989). Its goal was to increase the flow of credit to households who had been shut out of credit markets by discriminatory practices. The Federal Trade Commission and the major banking regulatory agencies have responsibility for monitoring the actions of lenders with respect to ECOA. Individuals who believe their rights under ECOA have been violated can file an individual or class action, if appropriate, lawsuit in federal court and collect damages.

The Home Mortgage Disclosure Act of 1975 (HMDA) and the Community Reinvestment Act of 1977 (CRA) both were passed out of a concern that credit was not flowing in sufficient quantities to poorer and minority urban neighborhoods. The particular concern was the practice of “redlining,” in which lenders established policies, originally formal but later unwritten, to not provide credit to neighborhoods with particular demographic mixes. Importantly, unlike the Fair Housing Act and ECOA, which provided a basis for individuals to file lawsuits claiming damages, the HMDA and CRA do not offer individuals legal redress. Rather, the HMDA and CRA empower citizens and community organizations to become involved in the regulatory process and effect change in that way.

The HMDA requires lenders to report on the geographic location of their mortgage loans. It was originally designed to help public officials identify underserved areas that needed public sector support and policy incentives as well as provide individuals with information so they could decide where to place deposits (Fishbein, 1992). However, the HMDA has served as an important tool for scrutinizing a lender’s lending activity and has become a key source of documentation for lenders and community groups in assessing and institution’s lending performance. Indeed, at different times, HMDA data have been cited as evidence supporting and refuting claims of redlining and discrimination.

The CRA grew out of concerns that lending institutions were contributing to the decline of some neighborhoods by accepting deposits from these neighborhoods and investing the funds elsewhere. Moreover, some consumer and community groups believed that federal regulators were not doing enough to deter this disinvestment. These concerns sparked calls for legislation promoting a reinvestment in these distressed communities, which culminated in the passage of the CRA.

The CRA directs the federal banking regulators to encourage lenders to serve their entire community and reinvest, as appropriate, in underserved communities. Regulators are instructed encourage reinvestment, consistent with safe and sound lending practices, as well as examine banks periodically to assess their performance in this regard. Examinations culminate with the assignment of a CRA performance rating that is made available to the public. In addition, regulators must consider an institution's CRA performance when assessing an institution's application for a merger, acquisition, or other change (Garwood and Smith, 1993). This final provision provides an opportunity for consumer groups to weigh in with their assessments of a lender applicant's CRA performance and potentially lengthen the application process or derail it altogether.

2.2. The legislation's impact

There is a widespread view that these legislative efforts have had a relatively limited impact on reducing race-based housing market differences. In a relatively blunt assessment of the post-Civil Rights Act years, Denton (1999) calls the 1968 to 1988 period a "lost opportunity in terms of race relations in the United States" (p. 111). Similarly, presiding Senator Alan Dixon began a Senate hearing on mortgage regulatory scrutiny with:

... it's 21 years since the passage of the Fair Housing Act. Fifteen years since the Equal Credit Opportunity Act was passed in Congress; and 11 years since the Community Reinvestment Act became the law of this land; and still we have discrimination in lending. The problem today is not lack of laws, in my view, it is lack-luster enforcement (U.S. Congress, Senate Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs, 1989, p. 2; taken from Fishbein, 1992, p. 608.)

In fact, the dissatisfaction with many provisions of the original pieces of legislation led to a movement to amend them to strengthen their enforcement and oversight provisions. For example, regarding the Fair Housing Act, few complaints to HUD resulted in settlements and the Department of Justice rarely pursued cases, which led to amendments to the Act that were passed in 1988 (Schill and Friedman, 1999). Even these, though, have not produced groundbreaking changes in discrimination and segregation in the eyes of some.

Much has been written assessing the efficacy of the Fair Housing Act, and a consensus has emerged that the Fair Housing Act and its amendments have had at best very limited success at reducing discrimination. In assessing the Fair Housing Act's impact in a

volume marking its 30-year anniversary, Goering and Squires (1999) conclude from evidence in Feagin (1999), Yinger (1999), and Galster (1999) that there is “no clear sign that even the enactment of the Fair Housing Amendments in 1988 have altered the level of discrimination in rental and sales housing” (Goering and Squires, 1999, p. 6).

Social scientists point to differing views regarding the prevalence of discrimination, with blacks perceiving significant discrimination and whites not, as evidence that society has not progressed significantly in addressing this issue. Moreover, passage of the Fair Housing Act did not precipitate a substantial decline in the degree of racial segregation. Farley and Frey (1994) document only a modest desegregation trend since 1970 and describe the trend as only “small steps toward a more integrated society” (Farley and Frey, 1994).⁶ Recent evidence in Glaeser and Vigdor (2002) drawing on data from the 2000 Census suggests that these small steps continue.

A similar view is held by many regarding civil rights legislation targeted at credit markets, lenders, and lending discrimination. Regarding the ECOA, Elliehausen and Durkin (1989) review the available evidence and conclude there is no “empirical evidence . . . suggesting that ECOA has increased credit availability for anyone” (p. 108).

The HMDA and the CRA provided only indirect means for challenging perceived discriminatory lender practices. The HMDA provisions promoted information dissemination, valuable but only likely to have a large effect to the extent that local communities are organized and coordinated (Squires and O’Connor, 2001). In addition, the CRA was effective only to the extent that an institution received poor CRA performance ratings, which occurred relatively infrequently, or wished to merge or acquire another institution. Amendments to the HMDA and the CRA requiring increased data collection were enacted in part because of this concern (Fishbein, 1992).

2.3. Still a potential for positive impact

Despite these less than rosy assessments of the impact of housing-related civil rights legislation, there is the possibility that these Acts did make an important difference and served to irreversibly change how housing markets operate for a majority of minorities. For example, Elliehausen and Durkin (1989), while not viewing the ECOA particularly positively, did recognize the Act’s importance as a representation of the principles of freedom, justice, and equality.

In fact, this is the view taken by Donohue and Heckman (1991) in their assessment of employment-focused Civil Rights legislation regarding its effect on the economic status of blacks. They argue that the legislation was effective in breaking up a way of life that previously excluded blacks from many sectors of southern society. In much the same way, the viewpoint we highlight here would suggest that the Civil Rights legislation embodied in the Fair Housing Act addressed the same issues in the housing realm.

This view informs the working hypothesis that motivates the remaining empirical work. If the Elliehausen and Durkin (1989) assessment of the ECOA were extended to anti-discrimination legislation more generally, one would conclude that these laws represented a significant turning point in how housing markets treated black households

contemplating entry into homeownership. If so, then it is possible that the changes brought on by the new laws had measurable impacts that improved the quality of life for many black households. While they may not have completely eliminated the many forms of discrimination present in the market, this view would strongly suggest that they did have a positive effect.

In order to test such a hypothesis, one needs a measure of legislative action that permits an assessment of the laws' impact on household outcomes. The ideal measure would be one that focused on actions that materially impacted landlords and homeowners and that were likely to broadly change the way that housing markets operated. Lawsuits filed under anti-discrimination laws are an appealing candidate in this regard. First, lawsuits require a response from the landlord or homeowner defendant. Second, they are typically high profile actions that receive considerable attention and are likely to enter the psyche of other landlords and homeowners. In this fashion, they can serve to discourage others who might consider similar discriminatory practices. Third, lawsuits are not filed at comparable frequencies across all geographic areas. Thus, this measure features geographic variability that permits straightforward econometric identification of an effect.

To that end, data were compiled on legal actions initiated under Title VIII of the Fair Housing Act. Since 1989, the United States Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) has compiled a list of all cases filed under Title VIII. A case is an initial complaint that sparks an investigation by a government agency, which can include HUD, the Department of Justice, and state fair housing authorities. Cases need not become full-fledged lawsuits; agencies typically encouraged settlement of the grievance outside of the courtroom.⁷ During the 1990s, many cases were filed. For example, HUD managed an average of 3,445 cases per year during the 1990s. From these statistics, two variables were created to measure the level of fair housing enforcement in a given tract. The first of these is a dummy variable indicating whether or not the county in which the tract is located had any fair housing enforcement activities during the decade. The second variable is the number of enforcement activities in the county containing the tract during the decade per 100,000 county residents in the beginning year of the decade.

Prior to 1989, data on Title VIII legal actions are not available from HUD. Fortunately, the Tennessee Fair Housing Council (TFHC), as part of the National Fair Housing Advocate Online, has tracked all Title VIII-related lawsuits from the 1960s. These total over 600 in all. Thus, analogous incidence and volume variables could be constructed for the pre-1989 period. This database, while not capturing the identical information as that in the HUD database, offers a similar picture regarding enforcement actions under Title VIII. For example, both datasets show California, Illinois, and New York as being enforcement leaders as measured by number of cases filed.

These data are not perfect. Since cases do not always become lawsuits, some of those cases included in the HUD database may not have sparked the market-wide awareness required to induce changes in behavior. However, conversations with HUD officials suggest that there was not systematic geographic variation in the frequency of cases becoming lawsuits, and so the distribution of cases is likely to mirror the distribution of lawsuits. An additional concern regarding both of these databases is that some complaints may have been settled prior to a case or lawsuit being filed. Again, outreach suggests that,

though this is certainly the case, the incidence of this was roughly consistent across geographies. Thus, the distributions of actions these databases report are taken to be reflective of the distributions of actions that could broadly influence how local housing markets operated.

3. Did anti-discrimination enforcement matter?

With these enforcement variables, it is possible to test for whether black homeownership gains were greater in areas in which there was a higher level of fair housing enforcement. Evidence to this effect would be consistent with the notion that, contrary to the conclusion drawn in much of the literature, fair housing enforcement has been important and has produced measurable positive outcomes for black homeowners.

In the analysis, the change in the number of black homeowners in a census tract is regressed on variables characterizing the tract's characteristics, geographic location, and enforcement environment. While all of the regressors are thought to affect the location decisions of black homeowners, several merit particular note.⁸ First, indicator variables reflecting whether a tract was a lower-, moderate-, or higher-income and whether a tract was in the central city or suburb allow for verifying the different locational trends observed across decades for black homeowners. Further, the median black family income in the tract is included to control for the fact that homeownership prospects for black households were undoubtedly enhanced through general improved work experiences and earnings. Without such a control, it would be difficult to credibly argue that enforcement of laws played an important role. Finally, total tract population is included as a regressor to effectively rescale each dependent variable and ensure that results are not influenced by different population across census tracts.

The regressions were run separately for the 1970s, 1980s, and 1990s. Table 5 reports the results of two regressions for each decade. These vary only regarding the enforcement variable. One specification includes the incidence measure of enforcement while the other uses the per capita measure. The results generated by the former test for a significant relationship between the *existence* of enforcement activity and the change in the number of black homeowners in a tract; results generated by the second regression indicate whether there is a relationship between the *intensity* of fair housing enforcement and the change in the number of black homeowners in a tract.

The regression results in Table 5 for the 1970s, for both specifications, reveal two primary results. First, the growth in the number of black homeowners was higher in tracts located in counties in which there was enforcement activity and that the increase was positively related to the level of enforcement. Specifically, the presence of enforcement increased the change in the number of black homeowners by 18.2 homeowners. Also, an increase in the intensity of enforcement by 1 act per 100,000 people was associated with 17.2 additional black homeowners, all else equal.⁹

The second important result from the 1970s regressions in Table 5 is that, consistent with what was observed previously, black homeownership flourished in lower-income and central city tracts and lagged in high-income tracts. In both specifications, the two

Table 5. Black homeowner regressions 1970–2000.

Variable	1970s				1980s				1990s			
	Coeff	t-stat	Coeff	t-stat	Coeff	t-stat	Coeff	t-stat	Coeff	t-stat	Coeff	t-stat
Intercept	79.73	8.69	86.01	9.34	6.17	1.94	6.91	2.17	-23.00	-1.44	5.85	3.09
Median family income	15.34	2.52	16.02	2.62	-43.43	-15.03	-43.44	-15.04	-4.11	-1.98	-5.23	-2.47
(MFI) < 50% of MSA MFI												
50% < MFI < 80%	7.58	2.59	8.45	2.88	-16.75	-9.66	-17.17	-9.88	-5.96	-3.65	-6.28	-3.78
MFI > 120%,	-9.17	-2.59	-8.72	-2.46	5.31	2.92	5.58	3.07	-0.68	-0.44	-0.69	-0.45
Central city	12.85	4.25	17.74	6.04	-5.67	-3.40	-4.50	-2.78	1.68	1.29	0.08	0.06
Tract population	28.41	8.98	27.25	8.60	15.91	13.45	15.90	13.45	71.07	33.95	70.99	33.68
College graduates	-1.28	-5.98	-1.28	-5.94	-0.22	-1.68	-0.24	-1.85	0.26	2.04	0.29	2.25
Professional	-0.14	-0.37	-0.07	-0.20	0.04	0.18	0.02	0.08	-0.01	-0.11	-0.06	-0.47
Poverty rate	-0.98	-5.34	-0.97	-5.28	-1.93	-15.95	-1.89	-15.61	-4.54	-4.17	-4.97	-4.51
Homeownership Rate	0.81	13.17	0.83	13.41	1.00	11.34	0.98	11.14	1.98	26.80	1.98	26.65
Black population share	5.61	66.95	5.65	67.47	5.37	66.68	5.36	66.50	7.83	112.19	7.86	111.79
Median value of owner-occupied housing	-46.30	-5.49	-46.42	-5.43	-1.25	-0.43	-1.14	-0.39	-15.24	-10.59	-14.02	-9.46
Midwest	5.02	1.30	0.42	0.11	-13.21	-4.96	-15.41	-5.60	0.01	3.17E-03	-1.85	-0.93
South	17.07	4.69	14.51	3.88	-0.14	-0.05	-0.15	-0.06	30.12	18.02	29.32	17.15
West	9.47	1.78	9.58	1.79	2.21	0.84	3.52	1.34	5.09	2.64	2.03	0.98
Residential segregation	1.89	9.31	1.97	9.70	-0.49	-4.02	-0.49	-4.00	1.47	6.00	1.70	6.78
Black income	0.06	1.18	0.07	1.47	0.01	1.00	0.01	1.14	0.02	1.23	0.02	1.19
Policy incidence variable	18.17	7.15			7.00	4.78			27.53	1.73		
Policy intensity variable			17.20	3.47			10.76	5.52			0.0034	0.68
Adjusted R-square	0.4291		0.4265		0.2954		0.2958		0.4649		0.4656	

lower-income tract variables and the central city indicator variable had coefficients that were positive and highly statistically significant. Likewise, the coefficient on the high-income tract variables is negative and statistically significant.

The regression results for the 1980s reveal some differences between the 1970s and the 1980s. The most important difference is that the 1980s saw black homeownership grow in high-income census tracts and lag in lower-income and central city census tracts—exactly the opposite of the pattern in the 1970s. This result is consistent with the view that, in the 1980s, black homeowners began to gain access to better neighborhoods and more geographically diverse residential locations than had previously been available to them.

Despite this key difference, however, the results point to an important similarity between the two decades. In the 1980s, like the 1970s, both the enforcement dummy variable and the variable measuring the intensity of enforcement have coefficients that are positive and statistically significant at a 1 percent level. This means that in the 1980s, like the 1970s, the enforcement of fair housing laws was associated with higher growth in the number of black homeowners in a tract.

Finally, the results for the 1990s bear more similarity to the 1980s than to the 1970s. Once again, while black homeownership lagged in lower-income neighborhoods, its relationship with other factors was not as definitive in this decade. Most importantly, the coefficients for the enforcement incidence and intensity variables are once again positive.¹⁰ However, the coefficient on the enforcement intensity variable is no longer statistically significant. Thus, the regression results for the 1990s support those from the previous two decades, although in a somewhat weaker fashion.

Taken as a whole, the results in Table 5 provide two important results. First, they confirm that black homeowners gained access to different, higher-income neighborhoods over the 30-year period covered by this study. Black homeownership became more geographically diverse, as it became less focused on lower-income, central city tracts and broadened into higher-income and suburban neighborhoods. This dispersion commenced largely after 1980.

Second, fair housing policy enforcement appears to have had a positive impact on black homeownership growth over the entire thirty-year period. The results suggest, however, that the impact of fair housing policy enforcement weakened over time. This weakening of the role of fair housing policy enforcement may be a function of the first key result. If black homeowners were finding it easier to gain access to higher-income, suburban neighborhoods and if the social attitudes that supported residential racial segregation were weakening, then it seems likely that fair housing law enforcement would have less of an impact than in earlier periods.

3.1. *Nonblack homeowner flows*

A final test involves repeating the exercise in Table 5, this time with the dependent variable being the change in the number of *nonblack* homeowners in a tract. This is necessary for two reasons. First, it permits the verification of the race-specific shift from

Table 6. Nonblack homeowner regressions 1970–2000.

Variable	1970s				1980s				1990s			
	Coeff	t-stat	Coeff	t-stat	Coeff	t-stat	Coeff	t-stat	Coeff	t-stat	Coeff	t-stat
Intercept	-1.40	-0.06	-7.41	-0.34	90.82	11.15	92.97	11.35	162.76	3.44	45.32	8.10
Median family income	18.40	1.27	17.95	1.23	-41.40	-5.60	-45.11	-6.08	-35.45	-5.77	-31.65	-5.05
(MFI) < 50% of MSA MFI												
50% < MFI < 80%	-63.91	-9.17	-65.31	-9.37	-60.07	-13.54	-61.06	-13.68	-2.15	-0.44	-0.47	-0.10
MFI > 120%,	86.69	10.28	85.93	10.18	110.29	23.74	108.18	23.22	40.46	8.88	40.70	8.87
Central city	-31.89	-4.43	-38.80	-5.56	-34.29	-8.03	-45.48	-10.95	-66.17	-17.16	-62.13	-15.55
Tract population	429.40	56.95	430.76	57.17	145.00	47.94	145.19	47.82	769.87	124.23	770.15	123.60
College graduates	0.06	0.11	0.07	0.14	3.95	12.00	3.99	12.07	3.75	9.85	3.69	9.61
Professional	-1.56	-1.79	-1.62	-1.86	4.06	7.92	4.08	7.92	2.46	7.07	2.59	7.39
Poverty rate	0.05	0.12	0.05	0.11	-2.71	-8.77	-2.80	-9.02	-186.29	-5.77	-177.22	-5.43
Homeownership rate	11.17	76.23	11.13	75.84	4.93	21.88	4.83	21.28	10.15	4.65	10.15	4.63
Black population share	-6.98	-34.97	-7.03	-35.31	-6.45	-31.36	-6.50	-31.43	-8.45	-40.88	-8.51	-40.91
Median value of owner-occupied housing	100.92	5.02	98.54	4.85	-11.95	-1.61	-23.06	-3.11	-36.73	-8.62	-41.22	-9.41
Midwest	13.19	1.43	20.82	2.26	40.43	5.94	27.17	3.85	73.11	12.81	79.89	13.56
South	14.96	1.73	20.16	2.27	74.66	11.17	67.97	10.15	69.41	14.03	72.98	14.44
West	-4.91	-0.39	-3.88	-0.30	24.74	3.68	18.47	2.75	1.48	0.26	12.42	2.03
Residential segregation	0.11	0.22	0.03	0.06	0.69	2.18	0.48	1.52	-0.86	-1.19	-1.50	-2.02
Black income	0.0015	0.01	-0.02	-0.14	0.22	7.99	0.21	7.84	0.08	1.31	0.07	1.12
Policy incidence variable	-26.88	-4.44			-39.00	-10.40			-113.12	-2.39		
Policy intensity variable			-34.11	-2.90			-6.38	-1.27			-0.01	-4.78
Adjusted R-square	0.6377		0.6372		0.3700		0.3652		0.6049		0.6056	

the 1970s to the 1980s reported above. Second, it provides an additional test of the enforcement variable that helps to establish whether it is truly capturing a race-specific effect. Presumably, anti-discrimination laws were designed to help minority homebuyers. If the relationship between the enforcement variables and black and non-black homeowner flows was similar, it would call into question their validity as a proxy for the effect of these laws. The results of this exercise are reported in Table 6.

The first key result in Table 6 is that non-black homeowners show none of the decadal shifts previously identified for black homeowners. In each of the three decades, non-black homeownership grew in high-income tracts and generally fell in lower-income tracts. Moreover, in all decades, non-black homeowners moved away from central city neighborhoods. Thus, spatial trends for non-black homeowners were consistent over the entire period.

The second key result involves the enforcement variables. In every case the coefficient on the fair housing variables is negative. Thus, in each of the three decades the growth in non-black homeownership was higher in areas that were receiving lower levels of fair housing enforcement. This final result is very important because it indicates that the positive relationship between the growth in black homeownership and fair housing enforcement was unique to black homeowners and provides evidence consistent with the view that fair housing policy enforcement was an effective tool in promoting black homeownership.

4. Conclusion

A consensus has emerged that the legislation of the Civil Rights Era was not particularly effective, as both researchers and policy-makers have noted and expressed frustration with its ineffectiveness in significantly curtailing racial segregation in housing. This paper offers a more sanguine assessment that sheds a different light on these acts. We hypothesize that legislation such as the Fair Housing Act, the Equal Credit Opportunity Act, and the Community Reinvestment Act helped change how U.S. housing markets operate, to the benefit of an important class of black households—homeowners. To demonstrate this, the analysis examines how the geographic distribution of black homeowners evolved during the 1970s, 1980s, and 1990s using data drawn from decennial Censuses.

While univariate analysis offers mixed results regarding the working hypothesis, the multivariate analysis offers unambiguous support for our perspective. First, in every case we find a positive relationship between fair housing policy enforcement and black homeownership growth. Second, we find clear evidence that black homeowners gained access to higher-income neighborhoods during the 1970 to 2000 timeframe. In the 1970s—when many fair lending laws were new and only beginning to influence housing markets—black homeowners were more likely to locate in lower-income census tracts than upper-income tracts. By contrast, during the 1980s and 1990s—decades during which these laws had been codified and internalized by the market—we see the opposite relationship. Black homeownership growth was much higher in upper-income census

tracts than lower-income tracts. Importantly, both of these results are race-specific results. We observe no such patterns among non-black homeowners.

These patterns suggest that black homeowners faced a very different housing market in the 1970s compared with the 1980s and 1990s. Moreover, because the effect is race-specific, the results further suggest that race-specific events are likely to have been important catalysts for these trends. They are therefore consistent with the view that the housing-related civil rights legislation passed during the 1960s and 1970s helped alter the role that race played in housing markets.

As in Donohue and Heckman (1991), the evidence used to support the argument that anti-discrimination legislation has been effective and had positive impacts is relatively indirect and circumstantial. There is no smoking gun showing that the law directly touched individuals that would not have achieved homeownership otherwise. However, the evidence is rather compelling as the trends are very race- and time-specific, which argues against broad-based economic factors as the sole driving factor behind the trends.

To be sure, we are not arguing that civil rights era legislation solved all race-based problems in housing. There is a large, compelling literature that clearly indicates otherwise. Indeed, our finding that black homeowners in both the 1970s and 1980s were more likely to reside in census tracts with higher proportions of black residents is suggestive of a continuing filtering of blacks to neighborhoods with large numbers of black households, which perpetuates segregation. However, we do believe these results indicate that the legislation was not a complete failure and did contribute to the improvement of circumstances for an important segment of the minority population—black homeowners. These households were clear beneficiaries of the new laws placed on the books during the Civil Rights era and were able to live in better neighborhoods as a result.

Our results point to another aspect of this dynamic. We find that black homeowners moved out of the inner city in large numbers during the 1980s and 1990s, which corresponds to the rise of the “urban underclass” as documented by Wilson (1990) and others. It could be that changes in the role that race played in housing markets were a factor contributing to the exodus of more affluent black households from urban communities and the increasing concentration of a poor and despairing blacks in these areas. If true, it suggests that the mechanisms highlighted here may have helped disentangle race from class and raise the profile of class as an enduring and serious social concern. This is an interesting possibility that warrants more attention.

Appendix A: Variable definitions

<i>Variable</i>	<i>Definition</i>
Number of black homeowners	Number of black owner-occupied housing units
Number of nonblack homeowners	Number of nonblack owner-occupied housing units
Tract population	Total tract population
Median family income	Median family income

College graduates	Percentage of tract residents over the age of 25 that have a college degree
Professional	Percentage of tract's employment residents who are employed in professional and managerial occupations
Poverty rate	Proportion of total persons in families and unrelated individuals below the poverty level
Homeownership Rate	Percentage of tract's occupied housing units that are owner-occupied
Black population share	Proportion of total tract population that is black
Median value of owner-occupied housing	Median value of owner-occupied housing for county in which tract is located
Central	Dummy variable equal to 1 if tract is located in county containing MSA's central city
Midwest, South, and West	Dummy variables indicating the Census region in which the MSA is located
Segregation	Value of MSA's dissimilarity index
Black income	Median Income of Black Households in tract
Policy incidence variable	Dummy variable equal to 1 if there was policy activity in the county containing the tract during the decade
Policy intensity variable	Number of policy enforcement activities in the county containing the tract during the decade per 100,000 county residents

Notes

1. The authors would like to thank George Galster for his very helpful comments regarding this paper and Mike Baker and Ying Chen for excellent research assistance.
2. A more detailed description of the tract remapping methodology can be found at the Geolytics, Inc. website (www.geolytics.com).
3. A tract is considered to be a central-city tract if it is located in the county or counties containing the central city of the MSA.
4. Appendix A provides definitions for all of the variables included in the tables.
5. The Fair Housing Act is Title VIII of the Civil Rights Act of 1968.
6. Other work along this vein has identified a more nuanced evolution of the segregation of blacks from whites. For example, Massey and Hajnal (1995) distinguish between segregation at four geographic levels—states, counties, cities, and neighborhoods. Between 1950 and 1990, they document a notable decline in state and county level segregation, but find that black segregation at the municipal and neighborhood levels both increased significantly. On net, they argue that the patterns they identify have continued to minimize black-white contact.
7. For more information on the enforcement mechanisms of Title VIII, see Schill and Friedman (1999).
8. The NCDB included the median value of owner-occupied housing at the tract level only for 1990 and 2000. Thus, while the 1990s regressions measure the variable at the tract level, the 1970s and 1980s regressions measure this variable at the county level.
9. The results involving the enforcement variables are robust to specification variations such as using a raw count rather than a per capita measure and including using lagged enforcement variables. Of course, the 1970s results can not use the lagged measure.
10. In the 1990s, over 99 percent of the tracts were in counties in which there were enforcement activities. Thus, the dummy variable does not provide as much information as it did in the previous decades. However, the enforcement intensity variable should not be affected.

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