

# Preface

## METHODS OF STUDY

I CHOSE TO STUDY neighborhoods because they are the essential place to understand the local processes involved in the maintenance (or demise) of stable racial integration. While numerous studies on residential settlement focus on the impact of economic and demographic conditions and changes on how urban neighborhoods are formed, maintained, and reformulated along racial lines, they do not provide adequate information on microlevel actions that promote or discourage racial separateness. As Richard Taub, Garth Taylor, and Jan Dunham note in their book *Paths of Neighborhood Change*: "If ecological factors are overwhelming [to local residents], it is because of the effect of these facts on the perceptions and actions" of local residents (1984: 186). In other words, this statement has two related implications. First, integration and segregation are experienced by individuals in local communities. Second, while larger social forces (e.g., biased real estate and banking practices) influence local communities, individual action (or inaction) make these outcomes real.

*Beyond Segregation* is the story of the emergence, existence, and maintenance of three racially integrated communities. Using qualitative methods, I examine the vital role leaders and community groups play in neighborhood outcomes. Exploring the microlevel decisions by local leaders, as well as the conflict and negotiations of community groups working to stabilize racially changing neighborhoods, provides insight into the historical context of neighborhoods, the fluidity of neighborhood life, and the role of individual agency. By highlighting the broader lessons that can be learned and the limitations that become apparent as leaders and community groups intervene to stabilize racial change, I seek to advance our understanding of the complexity of racial integration in the increasingly multicultural world of the post-civil rights era and of the relationship between local decisions, collective action, and structural forces.

I set out to identify multiracial and multiethnic communities in New York, Chicago, and Oakland. While the cities differ in terms of region, population size, and political culture, they are all multiracial and

multiethnic, given their racial and ethnic compositions and role as port-of-entry cities for immigrants. Employing a quantitative measure of neighborhood diversity (discussed in Chapter Two), I located neighborhoods that had maintained a multiethnic and multiracial mix for more than a decade and selected three communities for analysis: Uptown in Chicago, Jackson Heights in the borough of Queens, and San Antonio and Fruitvale, adjacent areas of Oakland. These communities make for some interesting comparisons and contrasts. They were all once predominantly non-Hispanic white, experienced racial change over the course of four decades, and yet were able to slow racial transition and stabilize racial integration. The unique history, racial mix, and economic character of each community allowed me to analyze efforts to maintain integration in disparate contexts.

I conducted field research between 1996 and 1999. To paint a complete picture of each community, I collected data from as many sources as possible. First, I conducted more than seventy-five open-ended interviews with leaders in the three neighborhoods to obtain the fullest picture of community life.<sup>1</sup> Community leaders were selected as appropriate informants based on the size of each community and their roles as representatives of organizations and interests that significantly impact community life. They also maintain positions of authority, act as intermediaries when conflict occurs, and can shape and determine the flow of resources available in a community. Although the leaders were not selected at random, care was given to interview leaders from a range of groups—elected officials, political organizations, schools, lending institutions, housing providers, real estate agents and developers, youth-oriented groups, social service agencies, religious organizations, and local advocacy organizations.

Second, I made use of whatever printed data were available. News media accounts, community group reports and newsletters, flyers, and published accounts by scholars and journalists proved excellent sources of community history and reinforced the interview data. Finally, I conducted participant observation by attending community meetings and events, and by exploring the culture of each community.<sup>2</sup> To increase the validity of the study, I tested the information from each source of data against that provided by the others. Each contributed to the overall goal of understanding local responses to multiethnic and multiracial integration, as well as the complex motivations of groups working toward stabilizing racially changing neighborhoods. The use of these methods offers

significant insight into the responses of individuals and groups to the influence of larger social forces.

## PLAN OF THE BOOK

Chapter One outlines the reality of racial segregation and the historical legacy of the prointegration movement's efforts to maintain racial integration across the metropolitan United States. Chapter Two examines residential settlement patterns by race at the neighborhood level over the past two decades. I focus on newly engendered neighborhoods with different forms of racial and ethnic integration marked by a multiethnic and multiracial character, and expanding without the conscious efforts of the prointegration movement. Chapters Three, Four, and Five present the case studies of Uptown, Jackson Heights, and San Antonio–Fruitvale as representatives of the changing form of racial and ethnic integration, including the story of how each community reacted to racial change and how contextual differences led to varied social dynamics, community debates, and organizational approaches.

## Introduction

AS I BEGAN this research, ten years ago, a chorus of scholarly and political voices proclaimed the inevitable decline of the city. The cries rang out about the plethora of problems that threatened urban centers. Claims of cities in the midst of crisis and collapse have continued. The consensus, at least among some scholars, is that older cities, beset by a myriad of social problems, have lost their luster and no longer serve their function as areas of entry for newcomers who seek economic opportunity. Indeed, while there is substantial evidence that the death knell has not rung for cities, a variety of trends in the last decades of the twentieth century painted a disturbing portrait of their health. The movement of manufacturing jobs away from cities and the departure of middle-class taxpayers led to growing numbers of poor residents in need of expensive services just as city revenues were declining. Many cities experienced fiscal crises. They lost federal dollars to fund education, infrastructure, and mass transit. Cities became more polarized between the affluent and the poor, highlighted by the rise and concentration of poverty, homelessness, and crime. In short, cities became symbols of many of our country's larger social problems.

Within this context, one aspect of concern among scholars has been the sharp division in residential settlement by race. A cadre of scholars turned its focus toward understanding the lines of racial and ethnic separation that mark housing in the metropolitan United States. A brief analysis of the literature leads to a fairly direct conclusion: urban space bears a racial stamp. The racial separateness that characterizes urban areas has been a physical, social, and symbolic indication of inequality and reflects the country's failed promise of accommodation and integration. Segregation between whites and nonwhites has reached shockingly high levels; one racial group or another dominates the majority of metropolitan neighborhoods. For example, the average white person in the United States lives in a neighborhood that is more than 80 percent white, while the average black person lives in one that is mostly black. Segregation of blacks and whites has remained at high levels for more than a century. And while Latinos and Asians are less segregated from whites in

U.S. cities and suburbs, they now live in more isolated settings than they did two decades ago.

Such racial division might not be of such concern if it were the simple result of self-segregating attitudes. The dark side of the story of urban growth and development is that high levels of racial segregation have been constructed through institutional discrimination in the real estate and banking industries, and supported by many acts of private prejudice and discrimination. Housing discrimination originated with the Federal Housing Administration (FHA) and antecedent agencies. FHA policies institutionalized a method of assessing mortgage-lending risk that systematically undervalued minority and racially mixed neighborhoods. As a result, segregation has undermined the strength of minority communities by concentrating poverty in them and by amplifying the effects of economic restructuring or change. Compared to residents of many integrated or white neighborhoods, minorities who live in segregated and isolated neighborhoods receive lower-quality education and municipal services and fewer amenities; their job access is more restricted; they are more exposed to crime and violence. This book, akin to a study of the causes of urban decline, focuses on unpacking the institutional mechanisms that perpetuate inequality and urban problems.

The volume of research on the extent of segregation and on the powerful institutional forces that maintain its boundaries makes it difficult to believe that integrated neighborhoods even exist. And, until recently, most scholars have paid scant attention to integrated spaces. The conventional wisdom of racial change has held that the inevitable results of non-whites moving into all-white neighborhoods are racial transition and resegregation. In fact, many scholars have viewed or characterized efforts to stabilize integrated neighborhoods as fragile, if not doomed. Douglas Massey and Nancy Denton, in their popular book *American Apartheid*, take an even more cynical view, claiming that local efforts that attempt to maintain integration are “schemes” that treat merely the symptoms rather than the causes of segregation (1993: 227). From this perspective, efforts to maintain integration do not challenge the larger discriminatory system of housing allocation but only preserve a few islands of integration in a sea of segregation. This view might lead readers unfamiliar with the literature on successful efforts to maintain integration to believe that individuals are powerless to effect change and work toward breaking down the color line.

In reality, a dialectic exists between individual agency and social structures, often overlooked in examinations of race and housing. In this con-

text, I look at local responses to racial change, focusing on the efforts to mitigate structural forces and maintain racial integration. Rather than produce more documentation of the extent and the structural underpinnings of racial divisions, I examine the agency of individuals to effect change (or maintain the status quo) and the social processes that occur in racially mixed neighborhoods.

The thesis of this book is twofold. First, racially and ethnically integrated neighborhoods not only exist but also can be maintained, stabilized, and even promoted through direct and indirect local strategies. Empirical work indicates that racially integrated neighborhoods are not as rare or as unstable as people might think. In fact, racially mixed neighborhoods are not only increasing in number but also becoming more stable (Ellen 2000). Further, qualitative analyses of racially mixed communities reveal that local agents can successfully intervene to prevent racial transition and stabilize integration in the face of racially biased housing markets. Hundreds of communities across the country—in a progressive movement to sustain integrated spaces—have produced effective strategies (not schemes) that challenge the stereotype of integrated neighborhoods as temporary and unstable. These communities illustrate that resegregation is not the inevitable result of structural forces; individual agency plays an important role in shaping the nature of residential settlement patterns.

Second, in our post-civil rights era, there is the emergence of a different “type” of integrated community that challenges many of our assumptions about racial settlement patterns and race relations. Across the country, we are witnessing the emergence of unplanned stable integration that involves multiethnic and multiracial populations. The United States is experiencing one of the most dramatic demographic shifts in its racial and ethnic composition since the early 1900s. Traditionally, the term “race relations” meant social relations between whites and blacks. Today, however, over a fourth of all Americans are nonwhite. In three decades the nonwhite population will double (due largely to increasing Latino and Asian immigration), while the white population will remain relative stable. The increase in racial, ethnic, and cultural diversity has differentially impacted metropolitan areas and cities. The result is not only the growth of multiethnic and multiracial metropolitan areas, but also an increase in the number of multiethnic and multiracial neighborhoods.

The shifts that produce these multiracial and multiethnic communities are related to global economic and demographic changes that affect not only the United States, but also its urban landscapes. For example, the

effect of a tremendous influx of immigrants to cities has recast the social, cultural, and economic character of many communities. One noticeable result is the emergence of a new form of integrated community, a microcosm of the larger U.S. demographic and social changes. Many of these fail to resemble the old models—"ethnic enclaves" or "urban villages" where residents share a common culture and pursue a relatively unified set of interests. Residents of these new integrated communities comprise numerous subgroups with assorted lifestyles, class interests, goals, and ideologies. These subgroups struggle not only against external forces (e.g., developers, City Hall), but also among themselves. These communities differ from well-known models of racial integration such as Oak Park, Illinois, or Shaker Heights, Ohio, in that the established residents and the racially and culturally different incoming groups never intended to be neighbors, and what residents have in common are their differences. What makes these communities fascinating is that, while we might predict that such differences would make integration difficult, many have been able to remain stably integrated.

What follows is a critical look at integrated neighborhoods in the United States that moves beyond segregation and the seemingly intractable social problems that plague urban areas. While some scholars and the public have viewed integrated communities in the United States and efforts to maintain them as temporary, recent research has begun to highlight these places and the strategies used to preserve black-white integrated residential spaces. My goal, however, is to move not only beyond segregation, but also beyond the common story of integrated residential communities to examine integrated areas where residents did not make conscious efforts early in the process of racial change to sustain integration. Such integrated spaces, fast emerging in our nation's urban centers (particularly port-of-entry metropolitan areas), require us to rethink traditional conceptions of race and neighborhood, racial change, and integration. They also provide insight into the prospects and challenges for interracial and interethnic understanding, cooperation, and coexistence in the twenty-first century.

## DESEGREGATION DOES NOT EQUAL INTEGRATION

This book is about racial integration and race relations. Persistent racial inequality in the United States has been a key justification for endorsing integration; that is, integrated settings should improve the life chances of people of color. Yet there has been debate over the relative success or

desirability of integration as a tool for improving racial justice.<sup>1</sup> Scholars and the U.S. public are divided on both issues. Some authors suggest that race relations have improved to the point that blacks, in particular, have been fully integrated into the nation's political and cultural life, as well as its moral community (Thernstrom and Thernstrom 1997; Patterson 1997). Others argue that integration has failed, but for differing reasons (Wick-er 1996; Jacoby 2000). Still others argue that integration is an illusion and searching for it prevents us from a real "reckoning" with racism (Steinhorn and Diggs-Brown 1999). It is beyond the scope of this book to provide a nuanced discussion of the feasibility of racial integration writ large. Such a discussion would involve examining the integration of people of color into the nation's social, political, cultural, and economic life. With that said, it seems clear that integrated housing is one avenue toward achieving racial justice. Indeed, integrated neighborhoods, as the case-study communities in this book attest, represent positive alternatives to the historic patterns of racial segregation and separation. I do not wish to be a Pollyanna, however, so this book's intent is to examine the prospects and limits that this model of integration has for moving our society toward greater equality.

Before moving on, I want to address some definitional and procedural issues. Most studies of residential settlement patterns by race include a call by scholars and policy analysts for federal and state involvement in guaranteeing open housing markets and eliminating discrimination from public life. Such calls are clearly valid, given that antidiscrimination policy is a necessary starting point in reducing segregation. As Ingrid Ellen points out: "Discrimination powerfully limits the ability of minorities to move into predominantly white areas and maintains white areas as an option to which whites can escape" (2000: 174). In other words, housing discrimination limits freedom of choice for minorities and thus perpetuates segregation and white separation from integrated neighborhoods. Freedom of choice in housing is obviously a basic civil right, and securing it for all citizens is a basic requirement.

The question then becomes: where do we go from there? Not everyone agrees about what comes after securing freedom of choice. An important distinction needs to be made at this point between "desegregation" and "integration," terms often used interchangeably and viewed as opposites of segregation. Desegregation is the opposite of segregation; integration is not. For many people, the fight for freedom of choice in housing is really a fight to desegregate the country's neighborhoods and cities. Desegregation, in theory, seeks to make blacks and other people of color full



recipients of the American dream (i.e., quality housing and education, equal access to jobs, and full participation in the polity) through formal efforts to eliminate policies or practices that effectively (intentionally or otherwise) promote segregation, regardless of outcome. The goal of desegregation is not necessarily to achieve integration. Thus, while desegregation efforts can result in an increase in racially and ethnically integrated neighborhoods, it does not necessarily follow that this will occur (as is evident in school desegregation cases). For example, strong homogenous black or Latino communities could emerge. And all minority neighborhoods are not necessarily problematic. In fact, if there is a problem with all-black or all-Latino communities, it is not that they are homogenous; it is that under a discriminatory system such communities have unequal access to jobs, good schools, and quality housing.

Integration in neighborhoods implies creating or sustaining interracial mixing in residential settings and, it is hoped, greater interracial interaction. Integration is more complex and controversial than desegregation, given that it is impossible to legislate. Like desegregation, integration seeks to break down discriminatory barriers and give nonwhites greater access to safe, amenity-rich neighborhoods that contain quality housing and good schools. But integration is more creative than desegregation; it is, in the words of Martin Luther King, Jr., "a genuine intergroup, interpersonal doing" (Washington 1986: 118). This distinction is important, given the potential of interracial or interethnic contact to expand freedom of choice in the housing market.

Two important and related issues need to be touched on here. First, racially integrated neighborhoods provide the type of interracial contact that can reduce prejudicial attitudes (Jackman and Crane 1986; Ellison and Powers 1994; T. C. Wilson 1996).<sup>2</sup> The more contact people have with members of different racial groups, the greater the chance of minimizing mistrust, fear, or suspicion among groups. This "contact hypothesis" is tied to the prospect of greater freedom of choice, in that prejudice is a root motivator for discriminatory acts in the housing market. Interracial contact can reduce the prejudices of white real estate agents and their clientele, thus promoting freedom of choice (DeMarco and Galster 1993).

Second, it seems obvious that an increase in integrated residential spaces in a metropolitan area will reduce overall rates of segregation. Reducing segregation also seems to expand freedom of choice, as empirical evidence suggests that, after controlling for other factors, metropolitan areas with less segregation have lower rates of housing discrimination (Galster and Keeney 1988). Working toward stable

racially integrated spaces is thus a tool to eliminate segregation by getting at discrimination, which obviously limits freedom of choice. I would also argue that if freedom of choice and open housing are to truly exist, a full range of housing choices must be available, including stably integrated neighborhoods. Such neighborhoods have not been a viable option for people of color and whites, given entrenched racial prejudice and discrimination in housing and lending markets. In other words, for freedom of choice “to be more than a hollow prospect presumes that there are actually such [stable racially diverse] neighborhoods from which to choose” (DeMarco and Galster 1993: 147). Racially integrated neighborhoods have long been stereotyped as temporary, of poor quality (with high crime, inferior housing, poor schools, etc.), and likely to re-segregate (Taub, Taylor, and Dunham 1984; Ellen 2000). If freedom of choice in housing is to be fully achieved, these stereotypes have to be challenged and stable racially integrated neighborhoods have to be viewed as a policy goal.

# 1 Racial and Ethnic Segregation and Integration in Urban America

"SEGREGATION THEN, segregation tomorrow, and segregation forever," shouted George Wallace on a chilly Inauguration Day in 1963 in Montgomery, Alabama. While Wallace's insistent cry was a broad rejection of integration in general, he may as well have been talking about how Americans organize residential space. Even after the Fair Housing Act of 1968, U.S. urban areas remain tremendously segregated. This should come as no surprise; a look around any metropolitan area in the United States reveals the familiar pattern—a sizable number of blacks concentrated in central cities (usually impoverished) and whites living in the suburbs or, as George Clinton of Parliament Funkadelic put it, "chocolate cities and vanilla suburbs." Most of us seem to accept this pattern as inevitable, even natural. For many Americans, residential diversity and integration may sound appealing but seem unworkable in practice, as scholars and the media highlight segregated and homogeneous environments and ignore integrated ones. In our current urban landscapes, the presence of gated communities, fortresslike building developments, private security forces, racial ghettos, and a patchwork of isolated, racially homogeneous sprawling suburbs suggests that Wallace was right.

While the weight of evidence indicates that residential segregation has been a predominant feature of modern urban life, it is neither inevitable nor even universal. Racially integrated neighborhoods do exist and can remain stable. Places like Chicago's Uptown, Queens's Jackson Heights, and Oakland's San Antonio–Fruitvale exemplify this reality. And while the focus of this book is not to revisit the existence, causes, and consequences of residential segregation by race highlighted in many scholarly accounts (see Massey and Denton 1993), a brief recounting of the historical and cultural context that supports segregation as a normative, if not valued, feature of modern urban growth and development will set the stage for the story of these three racially integrated communities.

This historical and cultural context is part of what makes it difficult for us to consider integrated neighborhoods as viable and sustainable. Organizer Saul Alinsky echoed a common misperception when he characterized racial integration as merely the time between “the entrance of the first black family and the exit of the last white family” (Sanders 1970: 86). Yet there have been numerous efforts to create and promote racially and ethnically integrated communities in the United States during the last half century. Hundreds of interracial organizations in both urban and suburban communities have actively pursued and achieved stable racially integrated residential environments. The focus of this chapter is the “open housing” movement, which has largely been ignored, given the severity of segregation and its accompanying virulent effects. Communities involved in this movement have proven that despite formidable institutional and individual forces, segregation does not have to be inevitable or “forever”—integration is possible.

## THE LEGACY OF RACIAL RESIDENTIAL SEGREGATION

Segregation in U.S. urban areas did not just happen; there was nothing “natural” about the way urban residential settlement became racially homogenous. Persistent patterns of segregation and the always tenuous possibility of integration evolved over the last century. Before World War I, urban neighborhoods were not as segregated as they are today. Blacks were only slightly residentially segregated from whites and European immigrant groups of similar economic circumstances, as there were few institutional structures to concentrate residents and workers in densely populated areas (Spear 1967; Yancey, Ericksen, and Juliani 1976; Hershberg 1981; Binder and Reimers 1995). Industrialization altered this arrangement, creating densely clustered worker housing and a segregated workforce (Drake and Cayton 1945; Greenberg 1981).<sup>1</sup> The availability of jobs drew both European immigrants and southern black migrants to northern cities. European immigrants initially lived in isolated neighborhoods, but this isolation was short-lived and enclaves were rarely homogenous (Lieberson 1963, 1980; Binder and Reimers 1995). The story was quite different for the large number of southern black migrants recruited to resolve worker shortages and serve as naïve strikebreakers (Grossman 1989; Trotter 1985).<sup>2</sup> Most whites in this period viewed the increasing numbers of blacks with fear, animosity, and hostility. Whites maintained the residential color line through a variety of violent acts, ranging from personal harassment to mob attacks to bombing (Rudwick

1964; Osofsky 1968; Kusmer 1976; Philpott 1978; Hirsch 1983). After the 1920s, more subtle methods such as neighborhood “improvement associations” sprang up to maintain racial boundaries by implementing restrictive covenants and restrictions on interracial sales (Helper 1969; Connolly 1977; Bauman 1987).<sup>3</sup> By 1940, all the major industrial centers in the North had substantially segregated zones and maintained significant levels of segregation between whites and blacks (Cutler, Glaeser, and Vigdor 1999).

These strict racial lines in residential patterns would solidify between 1940 and 1970, as the percentage of blacks in northern cities grew dramatically after World War II.<sup>4</sup> Newly arriving blacks found their housing choices circumscribed to select and narrowly bounded neighborhoods. White attitudes continued to support racial discrimination in housing and the systematic exclusion of blacks from white neighborhoods (Helper 1969).<sup>5</sup> These attitudes translated into action; if blacks did move into the neighborhood, incumbent whites moved out and most white home seekers simply avoided the neighborhood, guaranteeing resegregation (Molotch 1972). Even before restrictive covenants were declared unenforceable in 1948, some real estate agents “eagerly exploited whites’ fears by blockbusting likely areas—selling to a black family, spreading fear among whites that the neighborhood was about to change; buying property from the panicked whites at bargain basement prices; then selling it to middle-class blacks looking for a nice neighborhood at higher prices” (Judd and Swanstrom 1998: 194).<sup>6</sup> In addition, until the 1970s realtors were obligated to steer potential home seekers to neighborhoods whose residents shared their race or nationality (Helper 1969). These private efforts made it less necessary for prejudiced whites to use personal or communal violence to defend their neighborhoods from integration or racial change.

Federal policies institutionalized many of these discriminatory acts and exacerbated racial tensions and color lines in cities. From the 1930s through much of the 1960s, the federal government provided financial support for a housing boom that was effectively put off-limits for blacks. For example, between 1930 and 1960, the Federal Housing Administration (FHA) and Veteran’s Administration (VA) provided loan guarantees that accelerated suburban development by insuring loans and easing the task of purchasing a home (Jackson 1985).<sup>7</sup> And while FHA and VA programs provided tremendous housing and social opportunities to households in the postwar period, they were open only to white home seekers desiring suburban locales.<sup>8</sup> Federal administrators of insured financing

programs promoted segregated housing and neighborhoods by favoring segregation over integration, suburbs over cities, and redlining of racially mixed or minority areas (Bradburn, Sudman, and Gockel 1971).<sup>9</sup>

In addition, government-backed urban renewal and public housing policies sharply limited the housing supply for black home buyers and renters, contributing to racial tensions and sharp lines of racial segregation (Judd and Swanstrom 1998). The housing acts of 1949 and 1954 gave local authorities federal funds to check blight and ghetto expansion by clearing "slum" properties for redevelopment, while turning to the construction of public housing to guarantee replacement housing (Bauman 1987). During the 1950s and 1960s, local public officials with tremendous private sector pressure used urban renewal and public housing, largely in black neighborhoods, to clear and rebuild on land in growing black areas that threatened white business districts and elite institutions (Rainwater 1970; Hirsch 1983). Thus, whites had more opportunities and great incentives to leave their communities, while blacks had fewer options as urban renewal, public housing, and discrimination narrowly defined the communities open to them. Combined with discriminatory institutional practices, racial transition became a striking urban process. The ghetto expanded as a "rolling tide" or "wave" over neighborhoods as a cumulative pattern of invasion and succession took place in U.S. cities (Goodwin 1979). In a relatively short time, the population of various northern cities became virtually all black.<sup>10</sup> Data indicated that in the thirty largest metropolitan areas from 1940 through 1970, segregation levels peaked in northern cities in 1950, edging downward slightly by 1970. In sum, by the end of the 1960s, the average black and white lived in a residential area where the vast majority of his or her neighbors were of the same race, making meaningful contact between whites and blacks outside the workforce extremely unlikely. As a result, integrated neighborhoods were deemed temporary and unstable, bound to resegregate regardless of local efforts to alter the outcome.

Since 1970, there has been some progress toward more integrated cities and regions. For example, from 1970 to 2000, the number of metropolitan areas with exceedingly high segregation indices decreased significantly, and the number of moderately segregated metropolitan areas increased (Glaeser and Vigdor 2001; Farley and Frey 1994). Also, the percentage of whites living in homogeneous white neighborhoods decreased dramatically in both cities and suburbs over this same period (Ellen 1998; Alba et al. 1995). However, racial segregation, particularly for blacks, remains a continuing and significant factor for understanding the spatial patterns

of metropolitan areas and cities. For example, the greatest declines in segregation have come in places where fewer blacks reside and where a long history of segregation does not exist (e.g., fast-growing cities in the South and West), while segregation remains high in metropolitan areas with the largest black populations (Denton 1999; Glaeser and Vigdor 2001). Also, black suburbanization did little to desegregate metropolitan areas or eliminate black-white differences in residential quality.<sup>11</sup> While the movement of blacks to the suburbs did signal the lifting of the suburban-urban barrier for blacks, any optimism about greater residential integration between whites and blacks was short-lived.

Finally, there remains alarming evidence that minorities (particularly African Americans) experience continued and systematic discrimination in the real estate, lending, and insurance industries. Over the last three decades, real estate markets have continued to discriminate (e.g., steering minorities away from particular areas) by excluding minorities from certain neighborhoods, particularly in racially mixed (or potentially mixed) neighborhoods (Galster 1990; Turner, Struyk, and Yinger 1991; Urban Institute 1991; Yinger 1996). Financial institutions have extended far less private credit, fewer federally insured loans, and less total mortgage money to blacks and racially mixed areas than to socioeconomically advantaged white areas (Bradbury, Case, and Dunham 1989; Shlay 1989; Squires 1994). The practice of redlining certain neighborhoods continued between the 1970s and 1990s.<sup>12</sup> More than thirty years after the passage of Title VIII of the 1968 Civil Rights Act, which made it illegal to discriminate based on race, racial and ethnic discrimination in the real estate and lending industries has not abated. Discriminatory practices maintain significant levels of isolation and segregation, stack the deck against racially mixed communities, and perpetuate the assumption that mixed communities are not viable.

What accounts for these variable trends? We can look to two post-civil rights changes: shifts in individual attitudes regarding integrated neighborhoods and the enactment of legal barriers to discrimination. First, as noted, attitude surveys indicated that whites largely endorsed racial segregation in the 1950s and 1960s. However, by 1990, only 20 percent of white respondents agreed with the statement that "white people have a right to keep blacks out of their neighborhoods if they want to, and blacks should respect that right," down from 60 percent in 1964 (Schuman, Steeh, and Bobo 1985). Also, several studies indicate that whites' tolerance of black neighbors has increased over time and they have expressed less desire to move as the percentage of black in-migrants increased (Far-



ley, Schuman et al. 1978; Farley, Steeh et al. 1994). White tolerance for black neighbors, however, drops substantially when blacks represent a sizable proportion of the population (Clark 1986; Schuman, Steeh, and Bobo 1985). Whites appear to accept racially mixed neighborhoods as long as whites are the clear majority, while blacks are more likely to accept an equal proportion of blacks and whites. This gap between white and black attitudes toward integration is central to understanding the persistence of segregation.

Second, since the 1960s, the federal government has passed legislation that was meant, at least in spirit, to “dismantle systems of discrimination” that maintain racial segregation (Squires 1996: 224). The Federal Fair Housing Act of 1968 and the Equal Credit Opportunity Act of 1974 prohibited discrimination in housing and housing finance markets. The passage of the Home Mortgage Disclosure Act in 1975 and the Community Reinvestment Act in 1977 provided communities greater access to information on the location of mortgages and required depository institutions to affirmatively ascertain and be responsive to the credit needs of their entire service areas. These statutes have not eliminated discrimination in mortgage lending and real estate practices, largely because the acts put the onus on individuals and communities to recognize and fight discriminatory behavior. However, at a minimum, these acts have provided community groups tools to successfully fight discrimination and disinvestment. Though it is impossible to measure, the law and the publicity surrounding successful lawsuits arguably have served to liberalize attitudes (Farley and Frey 1994) and to deter some lenders and realtors from discriminatory practices. However, such legislation seems unlikely to unravel decades of federal and local policies that mandated segregation.

## DIRECTING DIVERSITY: THE PRO-INTEGRATION MOVEMENT

It should be obvious that the racial environment in which residential areas have existed over the last century has been one of tremendous segregation. Scholars and researchers have suggested that integrated neighborhoods are the exception, temporary, fragile, and doomed to eventual resegregation. Harvey Molotch, in his study of Chicago’s South Shore neighborhood, went so far as to say that no amount of intervention is likely to reverse the process of racial transition (1972). This view, however, neglects the complexity of an important part of U.S. urban history. Urban and suburban communities over the last half century have organized and struggled to maintain a stable integrated racial composition.



Although these communities have been largely ignored or discounted by scholars as anomalies, no discussion of residential segregation and integration is complete without examining their experience. The efforts to promote stable integration, like the reality of pervasive racial segregation, are part of the sociopolitical context in which neighborhoods and residents existed during the second half of the twentieth century. These communities emerged out of the distinctive social conditions of the 1950s and 1960s, particularly the last wave of southern black migrants to northern cities, neighborhood racial transition, and the civil rights movement. Taken collectively, their efforts formed a social movement that has been referred to as the “open housing,” “neighborhood stabilization,” or “pro-integrative” movement. Regardless of the label, the movement centers on local reaction to racial change, reaction that includes organized and active intervention to prevent racial transition and to preserve racial integration.

These communities emerged from the civil rights movement and involved interracial coalitions working to promote the benefits of integration by developing an array of organizations, social networks, and institutions that focused directly on fostering stable integration (Nyden et al. 1998). Although these communities differ from the diverse communities that have emerged in the last two to three decades (outlined in Chapters Three, Four, and Five), there is much to be learned from them, as they provide a counterpoint to studies of racial segregation. The movement to maintain racially integrated communities provides invaluable lessons for those wishing to break down the barriers of segregation and its harsh effects. These communities show that segregation was not as universal as many scholars or common perceptions might suggest. However, their experience also reveals the depth and strength of the forces that encourage segregation.

### *Neighborhood Stabilization/Pro-integration*

In the early 1950s and 1960s, the last wave of the Great Migration and overcrowded conditions in the established ghettos increased the number of black home seekers in northern cities. Urban renewal, public housing policies, and discriminatory practices reduced the available supply of quality housing open to blacks and as a result forced (or lured) many blacks to look for housing in older white neighborhoods. As blacks entered previously all-white neighborhoods, a variety of factors encouraged racial transition and what scholars have referred to as “invasion and succession.”<sup>13</sup> The pattern typically went like this: a few middle-class black families, seeking to escape overcrowded conditions in the segregat-

ed zones and to gain better housing, would move into a predominantly white neighborhood. As blacks moved in, many whites took their presence as a harbinger of “change” and “decline.” White fear of blacks, unscrupulous acts by the real estate community (e.g., blockbusting, racial steering), discriminatory bank policies in newly integrated areas, and other local factors (e.g., media coverage) quickened the pace of racial transition.<sup>14</sup> A common understanding of racial transition that emerged from this period suggests that when the size or composition of a relatively homogenous area is altered, racial transition occurs. For example, Carole Goodwin, in her book *The Oak Park Strategy*, demonstrates the link between increased black in-migration and racial change in Chicago’s Austin neighborhood. As Austin’s black population increased from less than 1 percent in 1960 to 32.5 percent in 1970, so did racial transition. Goodwin reports that between 1966 and 1973, 148 blocks changed from white to black, with most of this transition occurring between 1970 and 1973 as 113 blocks changed racial occupancy (1979: 48). This process occurred in city after city across the country and contributed to the notion that racially integrated neighborhoods were temporary and unstable.

In the light of rapid transitions of formerly all-white neighborhoods, a “tipping point” hypothesis emerged. This hypothesis assumes that racial transition moves gradually until the proportion of blacks reaches a threshold, the point (obviously variable) when whites no longer feel comfortable with integration or the presence of blacks in the neighborhood. Once this threshold is crossed, whites move out (often rapidly) and fewer whites are interested in moving in; the result is resegregation. A cycle is created that predictably leads to conditions that accelerate racial turnover, assures resegregation, and maintains a perception that segregation is the “natural” and inevitable outcome of city life (Keating and Smith 1996; Ottensmann 1995). The expectation is that as “other” groups “invade,” the neighborhood is deemed vulnerable, making resegregation seem inevitable and integration temporary.

The tipping point, however, was not the result simply of individual preferences or comfort levels. A variety of mediating institutions and groups were influential in hastening the process of racial transition. Consider the following four: real estate brokers, lending agents, schools, and the media. The real estate community has a long history of blockbusting newly integrated areas and reaping hefty profits from the workings of the dual housing market while steering white home seekers away from black or integrated areas. Banks and other lending institutions continue to withdraw credit from commercial and residential areas expe-

riencing racial change. Schools, a major factor in housing choices, can also work against integration. The reality is, regardless of objective standards, that predominantly white schools are perceived as superior and predominantly black schools as inferior. School officials who ignore racial imbalance in schools can prompt resegregation by fueling negative perceptions of the quality of the schools. The media has a substantial influence on individual opinion and perception, and, by and large, mass media accounts of integrated neighborhoods have been unfavorable. Terms like “open housing” or “equal-opportunity housing” are code words for housing for minorities. In sum, since larger social forces always influence individual housing and investment choices, to understand the nature of neighborhood racial change we must consider how these and other mediating institutions can (though they do not always) accelerate the process and pace of racial change. By devaluing integrated neighborhoods as attractive and inviting places to reside, these institutions have contributed to neighborhood racial change and segregated residential spaces.

Fortunately, these mediating institutions do not have complete control over the fate of a neighborhood. Residents in neighborhoods experiencing racial change do not live and move at the whim of discriminatory market forces; not all neighborhoods “tip.” External factors favoring segregation cannot be downplayed, but a neighborhood’s internal reactions to change also require careful consideration. In any area experiencing racial change there is always some “combination of interests, motives, and concrete acts by individuals and groups” that shapes the fate of the community (Goodwin 1979: 4). Existing residents and incoming residents react to change and thus set in motion processes that alter how communities perceive, define, and experience themselves. These processes, along with external factors, have significant impacts on the likelihood of resegregation.

A good example of this syndrome began to occur in communities experiencing racial change between 1950 and the mid-1970s. Neighborhood groups committed to integration maintenance emerged in almost every U.S. city where black in-migration and neighborhood racial change and transition occurred. For example, during the 1950s, neighborhood groups surfaced in the Boston-Edison section of Detroit, Park Hill in Denver, Shaker Heights in Ohio, Shepard Park in Washington, D.C., West Mount Airy in Philadelphia, South Shore in Chicago, and Teaneck, New Jersey.<sup>15</sup> Scores of other groups came to life in the 1960s and 1970s as “the knowledge and experience of earlier groups spread, as civil rights gained

increasing national sympathy, and as the dynamic of racial transition reached into a greater number of neighborhoods and suburbs" (Wiese 1995: 114).<sup>16</sup> Although groups formed independently, in most cases the patterns of resisting resegregation were strikingly similar. Organizations began interracial and demonstrated a mixture of postwar liberalism, sympathy to civil rights, and enlightened self-interest (Wiese 1995). Group members attempted to prevent racial transition in the hope of stabilizing their community, maintaining racial integration, and avoiding resegregation (Saltman 1990). While many community members held liberal attitudes toward racial integration and civil rights, they also valued their homes, wanting neither to move nor to have their housing values plummet. As these groups became aware of each other, a national movement or umbrella organization called National Neighbors was formed in 1969. By the mid-1970s, National Neighbors represented more than two hundred such groups (Saltman 1990).

In many communities, initial organizing efforts did not center solely on racial integration, but on broad concerns of neighborhood stabilization. For example, the Sherman Park Community Association, representing a west-side Milwaukee neighborhood, was initially formed "not in response to an outside threat, but to improve the quality of life" in the area (Valent and Squires 1998). Also, it has been suggested that religious leaders in the West Mount Airy section of north Philadelphia became actively involved in efforts to prevent resegregation so members of their congregations and synagogues would not move to the suburbs (Ferman, Singleton, and DeMarco 1998). These early efforts to "defend" the community from destabilizing forces (Suttles 1972) quickly led to more "conscious communities" (Hunter 1978) and a stronger promotion of racial integration. These conscious communities reacted to racial change by adopting an interventionist approach.

The interventionist approach suggests that residents can achieve neighborhood stabilization and racial integration if they mobilize sufficient resources and institutional networks for collective action early on in the process of change (Galster 1987; Helper 1986; Saltman 1990; Taub, Taylor, and Dunham 1984). This approach puts a premium on organized community efforts to effect change. Richard Taub and colleagues expressed this view after reviewing racial change in various Chicago neighborhoods in the 1970s: "Ecological facts do not, in fact, unidirectionally determine neighborhood outcomes. Corporate and individual decisions always intervene and sometimes modify the connection between ecological circumstances and neighborhood outcomes. . . . What is clear