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Citations:

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Henry Louis Jr. Taylor, Social Transformation Theory, African Americans and the Rise of Buffalo's Post-Industrial City, 39 Buff. L. Rev. 569 (1991).

ALWD 6th ed.

Henry Louis Jr. Taylor, Social Transformation Theory, African Americans and the Rise of Buffalo's Post-Industrial City, 39 Buff. L. Rev. 569 (1991).

APA 6th ed.

Taylor, H. (1991). Social transformation theory, african americans and the rise of buffalo's post-industrial city. Buffalo Law Review, 39(2), 569-606.

Chicago 7th ed.

Henry Louis Jr. Taylor, "Social Transformation Theory, African Americans and the Rise of Buffalo's Post-Industrial City," Buffalo Law Review 39, no. 2 (Spring 1991): 569-606

McGill Guide 9th ed.

Henry Louis Jr Taylor, "Social Transformation Theory, African Americans and the Rise of Buffalo's Post-Industrial City" (1991) 39:2 Buff L Rev 569.

MLA 8th ed.

Taylor, Henry Louis Jr. "Social Transformation Theory, African Americans and the Rise of Buffalo's Post-Industrial City." Buffalo Law Review, vol. 39, no. 2, Spring 1991, p. 569-606. HeinOnline.

OSCOLA 4th ed.

Henry Louis Jr Taylor, 'Social Transformation Theory, African Americans and the Rise of Buffalo's Post-Industrial City' (1991) 39 Buff L Rev 569

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# Social Transformation Theory, African Americans and the Rise of Buffalo's Post-Industrial City

HENRY LOUIS TAYLOR, JR.\*

## INTRODUCTION

THERE have been three stages in the development of the American city—the preindustrial, industrial and post-industrial.<sup>1</sup> At each of these points in time, the black experience has been significantly affected by changes in the city's economic structure, improvements in its transportation technology, changes in its spatial structure, and changes in the form taken by racism. Each stage has also produced for African Americans a new set of problems, difficulties and challenges which, in turn, have been shaped by the public policy options selected and implemented by urban leaders. Links exists then, between the city building process, the economy, public policy, racism and the black urban experience.<sup>2</sup>

Black ghettos did not exist in the preindustrial city. Instead, Afri-

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1. The preindustrial city in American urban history stretches from the late sixteenth century to about 1850. The industrial city extends from about 1851 to 1940. Some scholars divide the industrial city era into two periods: the industrializing city (1851-1879) and the industrial city (1880-1940). The post-industrial city extends from 1940 to the present. C. GREEN, *THE RISE OF URBAN AMERICA* (1965); J. TEAFORD, *THE TWENTIETH-CENTURY AMERICAN CITY: PROBLEM, PROMISE, AND REALITY* (1986); S. WARNER, *PRIVATE CITY: PHILADELPHIA IN THREE PERIODS OF ITS GROWTH* (1968).

2. J. BORCHERT, *ALLEY LIFE IN WASHINGTON: FAMILY, COMMUNITY, RELIGION, AND FOLKLIFE IN THE CITY, 1850-1970* (1980); K. CLARK, *DARK GHETTO: DILEMMAS OF SOCIAL POWER* (1965) [hereinafter *DARK GHETTO*]; R. FOGLESON, *PLANNING THE CAPITALIST CITY: THE COLONIAL ERA TO THE 1920s* (1986); G. NASH, *FORGING FREEDOM: THE FORMATION OF PHILADELPHIA'S BLACK COMMUNITY, 1720-1840* (1988); W. WILSON, *THE DECLINING SIGNIFICANCE OF RACE: BLACKS AND CHANGING AMERICAN INSTITUTIONS* (2d ed. 1980); Hershberg,

can Americans lived in small residential clusters scattered throughout a white dominated residential environment. Whites not only lived on every street where blacks resided, but they usually outnumbered them. This situation, in most instances, had little to do with racial attitudes. The structure of the preindustrial city kept black ghettos from forming. The population had no choice but to mix. Lack of rapid transportation systems, mixed patterns of land use and the ubiquity of cheap housing made the preindustrial city a "walking city", and led to the dispersal of both the immigrant and black populations.<sup>3</sup>

During the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, the rise of an industrial city brought forth a second stage in the development of the black urban experience. During this era, economic change, black population growth, annexation, zoning laws, building codes, subdivision regulation, the rise of homeownership and the spatial reorganization of the city combined with racial discrimination and the blockage of economic opportunities to produce the first black ghettos.<sup>4</sup> Over the past 25 years, historians have written a number of books and articles to explain the rise of the industrial city black ghetto and develop insight into the problems and difficulties faced by blacks during that era.<sup>5</sup>

The rise of the post-industrial city in the years following 1940 ushered in a third stage in the historical development of the black urban community. In this period, a second, and greatly enlarged black ghetto emerged. While scholars know a great deal about everyday life and culture in the industrial city ghetto, they know very little about black life and culture in the post-industrial city ghetto.<sup>6</sup>

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Burstein, Ericksen, Greenberg, & Yancey, *A Tale of Three Cities: Blacks, Immigrants, and Opportunity in Philadelphia, 1850-1880, 1930 and 1970*, 441 ANNALS 55 (1979).

3. L. CURRY, *THE FREE BLACK IN URBAN AMERICA, 1800-1850* (1981); Taylor, *Spatial Organization and the Residential Experience: Black Cincinnati in 1850*, SOC. SCI. HIST., Spring 1986, at 45; Warner & Burke, *Cultural Change and the Ghetto*, 4 J. CONTEMP. HIST. 173 (1969).

4. In this study, the term ghetto refers to a residential area that is dominated (55% or more) by a group and that contains at least sixty percent of the group's population. Residential area refers to a large settlement that is composed of several neighborhood units.

5. Spear argues that the rise of the new middle-class leadership was closely interrelated with the development of Chicago's black ghetto. The middle-class was the driving force behind the development of the institutional ghetto. A. SPEAR, *BLACK CHICAGO: THE MAKING OF A NEGRO GHETTO, 1890-1920*, at 91 (1967); See also K. KUSMER, *A GHETTO TAKES SHAPE: BLACK CLEVELAND, 1870-1930* (1976); G. OSOFSKY, *HARLEM: THE MAKING OF A GHETTO: NEGRO NEW YORK, 1890-1930* (1963); J. TROTTER, JR., *BLACK MILWAUKEE: THE MAKING OF AN INDUSTRIAL PROLETARIAT, 1915-1945* (1986).

6. Scholars have not developed a scheme of conceptualization for studying the postindustrial city. There have been only a few historical studies of the post-industrial city, and sociological studies have typically focused on an analysis of residential segregation or poverty and the underclass. Although the sociological studies have provided us with a glimpse of black life in the second ghetto,

The theory of social transformation, formulated by sociologist William Julius Wilson, represents one of the first major attempts to explain the complex set of social and economic forces that gave rise to the second black ghetto and that shape its everyday life and culture.<sup>7</sup> Wilson's interest in the post-industrial city and the black ghetto stem from his efforts to explain why the socioeconomic condition of low-income blacks rapidly deteriorated following the legislative victories of the Civil Rights Movement and to determine what, if anything could be done about the plight of the poor and underclass.<sup>8</sup>

The Wilson thesis not only attempts to explain the black residential development process, but it also offers policy recommendations on how to attack the economic and social problems of the ghetto. Wilson's ideas have become extremely influential in both scholarly and public policy circles. Any study on poverty and the underclass must cite Wilson's work.<sup>9</sup> Any public policy debate on what can be done about the ghetto's

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their focus on subpopulation groups has hidden as much as they have revealed. See, e.g., DARK GHETTO, *supra* note 2; S. DANZIGER & D. WEINBERG, *FIGHTING POVERTY: WHAT WORKS AND WHAT DOESN'T* (1986); A. HIRSH, *THE MAKING OF A SECOND GHETTO: RACE AND HOUSING IN CHICAGO, 1940-1960* (1983); H. TAYLOR, JR., *RACE AND THE CITY: BLACK CINCINNATI IN HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE, 1920-1970* (forthcoming); *THE REAGAN RECORD: AN ASSESSMENT OF AMERICA'S CHANGING DOMESTIC PRIORITIES* (J. Palmer & I. Sawhill eds. 1984); Hersberg, *et al.*, *supra* note 2, at 55-81; C. Casey-Leininger, *Making the Second Ghetto in Cincinnati, Avondale, 1925-1970*, (1989) (M.A. thesis, available at University of Cincinnati).

7. W. WILSON, *THE TRULY DISADVANTAGED: THE INNER CITY, THE UNDERCLASS AND PUBLIC POLICY* 20-62 (1987) [hereinafter *TRULY DISADVANTAGED*].

8. To develop a deep understanding of social transformation theory and the policy recommendations that evolve out of it, one must study carefully a number of Wilson's most important works. W. WILSON, *THE DECLINING SIGNIFICANCE OF RACE: BLACKS AND CHANGING AMERICAN INSTITUTIONS* (1978) [hereinafter *DECLINING SIGNIFICANCE*]; *The Ghetto Underclass: Social Science Perspectives*, *ANNALS*, Jan. 1989 (W. Wilson spec. ed.); Wilson, Aponte, Kirschenman, & Wacquant, *The Ghetto Underclass and the Changing Structure of Urban Poverty*, in *QUIET RIOTS: RACE AND POVERTY IN THE UNITED STATES, THE KERNER REPORT TWENTY YEARS LATER* 123 (F. Harris & R. Wilkins eds. 1983) [hereinafter *The Ghetto Underclass*]; Wilson, *American Social Policy and the Ghetto Underclass*, *DEMOCRATIC PROMISE*, Winter 1988, at 57-64; Wilson, *Inner-City Dislocations*, *SOC.*, Nov.-Dec. 1983, at 80; Wilson, *Race-Specific Policies and the Truly Disadvantaged*, 2 *YALE L. & POL'Y REV.*, Spring 1984, at 272-90; Wilson, *Social Research and Underclass Debate*, 43 *BULL. AM. ACAD. ARTS & SCI.*, Nov. 1989, at 30-44; Wilson, *Some Reflections on Race, Class and Public Policy*, 5 *URB. LEAGUE REV.*, Summer 1980, at 7; Wilson, *The Changing Context of American Race Relations: Urban Blacks and Structural Shifts in the Economy*, in 5 *CASE STUDIES ON HUMAN RIGHTS AND FUNDAMENTAL FREEDOMS: A WORLD SURVEY* 175 (W. Veenhoven & W. Ewing eds. 1976); Wilson, *The Declining Significance of Race: Revisited But Not Revised*, *SOC.*, July-Aug. 1978, at 11; Wilson, *The Urban Underclass*, in *MINORITY REPORT: WHAT HAS HAPPENED TO BLACKS, HISPANICS, AMERICAN INDIANS, AND OTHER MINORITIES IN THE EIGHTIES* 75 (L. Dunbar ed. 1984).

9. By underclass, Wilson means a heterogenous group of families and individuals who inhabit the ghetto. These individuals are characterized primarily by their "weak attachment to the labor force." Wilson's definition tends to mirror the earlier definition of underclass advanced by Gunnar

economic and social problems must include a discussion of the theory of social transformation.<sup>10</sup> The popularity of Wilson's theory and its growing influence in public policy circles demand that it be carefully scrutinized.

Social transformation theory is based primarily on studies of the black experience in megacities.<sup>11</sup> However, most blacks do not live in such cities. They reside in medium-size and small urban areas. Therefore, it is not known if social transformation theory can be generalized. The purpose of this study is to contribute to this theory by analyzing the black residential development process in a medium-size rustbelt city. It seeks to determine whether Wilson's description of black life in the megacity is characteristic of the black experience in Buffalo; whether social transformation theory provides a general explanation of the black residential development process in post-industrial Buffalo.

Buffalo, New York is an ideal site for a study of black residential development in the post-industrial city. Over the past fifty years, Buffalo's economy has been shifting from heavy industry to service and high technology. During this period Buffalo experienced the same type of demographic shifts and structural changes in its economy and the same type of social and political problems characteristic of other smokestack cities. Therefore, a study of the black experience in Buffalo provides valuable insight into the structure and organization of the post-industrial black residential environment, and helps determine the applicability of Wilson's theory of social transformation to medium-size and small

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Myrdal, who used the word as a purely economic concept to describe the chronically unemployed, underemployed and underemployables. *TRULY DISADVANTAGED*, *supra* note 7, at 143; G. MYRDAL, *THE CHALLENGE TO AFFLUENCE* (1962); Gans, *Deconstructing the Underclass: The Terms Dangers as a Planning Concept*, 56 J. AM. PLAN. A., Summer 1990, at 271-77.

10. To gain insight into the scholarly influence of William Julius Wilson, a search was made of the Social Science Citation Index (SSCI) for the years between 1976 and 1988. The search indicated that most of the significant scholarly works written during this period on poverty and the underclass cited Wilson's studies. I have compiled an extensive bibliography and collection of Wilson's works, including the references obtained from the SSCI search. This information has been placed in a file. See Wilson Project, Citations of Wilson's Work: Social Science Citation Index (1976-1988), Center for Applied Public Affairs Studies' Archives, State University of New York at Buffalo.

11. *The Ghetto Underclass*, *supra* note 8, at 123-51. Wilson does not really define what he means by ghetto. Nor does he distinguish ghettos from other types of black residential settlements. This creates a real problem when attempting to compare findings. For example, recent studies have shown that residential segregation among blacks is increasing. If this is true, then the outmigration thesis of Wilson will need to be clarified. That is, has there been an outmigration of the black middle-class and higher paid workers or has the residential structure of the ghetto been increasingly stratified on the basis of class? Nelson, *Recent Suburbanization of Blacks: How Much, Who and Where*, OFFICE OF ECONOMIC AFFAIRS, DEPARTMENT OF HOUSING AND URBAN DEVELOPMENT (1979); *TRULY DISADVANTAGED*, *supra* note 7, at 20-62.

smokestack cities.<sup>12</sup>

The thesis of this article is that the rise of post-industrial society, the increase in economic and social dislocations, and the widening class schism between middle and lower-income blacks have not led to a social transformation of Buffalo's East Side black community. Although some middle-class and higher paid workers have left the ghetto, many others have remained and become integrated into neighborhood life and culture. Further, many middle-income blacks living in other parts of the metropolis have retained social and cultural links with the East Side community. The East Side, despite being hit hard by structural changes in Buffalo's economy, remains a vibrant, well-organized community, such that Buffalo's low-wage workers and members of the underclass do not live in a hothouse of social isolation and anomie.

## I. SOCIAL TRANSFORMATION THEORY AND THE BLACK EXPERIENCE IN BUFFALO

### A. *Social Transformation Theory*

Wilson's social transformation theory asserts that since 1940, the black ghetto has undergone a radical social transformation (with the most dramatic changes taking place since 1960) due to the blockage of opportunities, declining racism and a shift in the economy from industry to service and high technology. Under this theory, the resulting social changes have been characterized by five overlapping trends.<sup>13</sup> First, since 1960, there has been a decline in the labor force participation of blacks and an increase in their unemployment, underemployment and poverty. Second, these economic dislocations have led to the eruption of severe social problems in the ghetto, including the growth of an underclass, soaring crime rates, murder, drug addiction, alcoholism, out-of-wedlock births, marriage dissolution, single female heads of families, welfare dependency and inadequate schooling.<sup>14</sup> Third, there has been a growing class schism within the black community. As the middle-class and higher paid workers improved their socioeconomic position in the

12. BATTELLE INSTITUTE, PHASE 1 REPORT: AN ANALYSIS OF CURRENT AND SHORT-TERM PROJECTS OF ECONOMIC CONDITIONS IN ERIE COUNTY, A REPORT TO THE ERIE COUNTY INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT AGENCY, 1-11 (Jan. 1984).

13. TRULY DISADVANTAGED, *supra* note 7, at 20-62; DECLINING SIGNIFICANCE, *supra* note 8; Wilson, *The Ghetto Underclass and the Social Transformation of the Inner City*, 19 BLACK SCHOLAR, May-June 1988, at 10-17.

14. Wilson refers to social problems as social dislocations and includes joblessness in his definition. In my study, however, the term joblessness is seen as an economic dislocation rather than as social dislocation. TRULY DISADVANTAGED, *supra* note 7, at 3, 60, 138.

years following passage of the 1964 Civil Rights Act, the income gap between the classes widened. Fourth, and most significantly, as the barriers to residential integration came tumbling down, the middle class and higher paid workers left the ghetto in search of better housing and neighborhood conditions. Today, the black ghetto consists of low-wage workers, the poor and the underclass, all of whom have become socially isolated from the more advantaged members of the race.<sup>15</sup> Fifth, the loss of the middle-class and higher paid workers had a devastating effect on ghetto life and culture. These higher income groups had led black institutions, sent their children to inner-city schools and supported neighborhood shops and retail outlets. They stabilized the ghetto and perpetuated and reinforced black values, attitudes, beliefs and traditions. "In short, their very presence enhanced the social organization of ghetto communities."<sup>16</sup> The outmigration of higher-income groups made it difficult for the remaining low-income groups to sustain basic institutions, including churches, stores, schools and recreational facilities. As these institutions declined, so too did the ghetto's social organization.<sup>17</sup> People lost their sense of community, positive neighborhood identification faded and explicit norms and sanctions against aberrant behavior broke down. In the end, not only did the low-wage workers, the poor and underclass become socially isolated from higher income African Americans, but everyday life and culture in the ghetto itself became a major barrier in the fight for economic and social advancement.<sup>18</sup>

Wilson argues that the ghetto's social transformation moved through two interrelated stages. In the first stage, there was a significant

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15. The concepts of social isolation and concentration are critical to understanding Wilson's theory of social transformation. As the middle-class and higher paid workers move out, the poor and underclass become increasingly concentrated, having only other poor people as their neighbors. This *concentration* causes *social isolation* because, as Wilson suggests, the very poor are now isolated from access to the people, job networks, role models, institutions and other connections that might help them escape poverty. *Id.* at 58, 137, 144.

16. *TRULY DISADVANTAGED*, *supra* note 7, at 143.

17. Wilson argues that one of the most pervasive aspects of social isolation and concentration is the weakening or collapse of social institutions. *Id.* at 143. It should be remembered that Spear argues that the black middle class played a central role in building the institutional ghetto. A. SPEAR, *supra* note 5, at 71-110. The work of Joe Trotter suggests that the higher-paid worker was also a major force in the formation of the first ghetto. J. TROTTER, *supra* note 5.

18. Wilson uses two concepts—concentration effects and social buffer—to explain how the concentration of poverty and social isolation combine to transform everyday life and culture in the ghetto into an obstacle to economic and social advancement. Kenneth Clark best captures the "ghetto life as a barrier to advancement" thesis when he says: "The dark ghetto is institutionalized pathology; it is chronic, self-perpetuating pathology. . . ." *DARK GHETTO* *supra* note 2, at 81; *TRULY DISADVANTAGED*, *supra* note 7, at 144-45.

increase in poverty, unemployment, underemployment and declining labor force participation. In the second, the middle-class and higher paid workers moved out of the ghetto, leaving behind the truly disadvantaged. This outmigration exacerbated the ghetto's economic, social and political problems, and led to the collapse of its organizational structure.<sup>19</sup> Wilson's theory suggests that neighborhoods have "tipping points." Once an unspecified number of "advantaged" people in a neighborhood move out, it passes a "tipping point" after which conditions begin to deteriorate rapidly. Eventually, unless the process is reversed, the "institutional" ghetto is transformed into a "physical" ghetto, inhabited by low-wage workers, the poor and underclass.<sup>20</sup>

Wilson's view of the black residential development process suggests that the first ghetto was a cross-class community in which blacks from across the income spectrum lived together and that these blacks built a "strong" organizational or institutional structure. Wilson's picture of black life in the first ghetto suggests that the class differences among blacks were minimal in the industrial city, that labor force participation rates were higher, and that social problems had not yet begun to "devastate" the black community. In essence, Wilson argues that before the second ghetto, blacks lived in a more cohesive and less complex residential environment. Although poverty, unemployment, low-wages, virulent racism and segregation, (both *de jure* and *de facto*), were part of everyday black life and culture, Wilson argues that the presence of a critical group of middle income residents played a key role in holding the community together, reinforcing values and traditions and leading the fight against racism.

This article analyzes the experience of African Americans in Buffalo during Wilson's "industrial" and "post-industrial" periods in order to determine whether his social transformation theory can explain the changes that have taken place in the residential experience of blacks in Buffalo.

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19. TRULY DISADVANTAGED, *supra* note 7, at 20-62, 125-39.

20. M. Bane & P. Jargowsky, *Urban Poverty Areas: Basic Questions Concerning Prevalence, Growth and Dynamic* (1988) (available at John F. Kennedy School of Government, Harvard University). Wilson does not use the term "tipping point", but his work suggests that he believes that neighborhoods have "points" at which the process of social transformation rapidly accelerates. *The Ghetto Underclass*, *supra* note 8, at 14.

B. *Application of Social Transformation Theory to the Black Experience in Buffalo*

1. *The First Ghetto: Black Life in Industrial Buffalo, 1900-1940.*

According to Wilson, blacks built an institutional ghetto in the industrial city. The institutional ghetto was a cross-class residential environment in which middle-income groups served as social buffers during hard times, led organizations and kept economic and social dislocations from tearing the community asunder.<sup>21</sup>

In the industrial city period, black Buffalo was a small, intimate community. Between 1900 and 1940, Buffalo's black population increased from 1,698 to 17,694.<sup>22</sup> This growth led to the formation of the first ghetto.<sup>23</sup> By the end of the period, over ninety percent of Buffalo's black population clustered in the spatial margin between Virginia Street on the north and Elk Street on the south, and between Main Street on the west and Humboldt Parkway on the east (Map 1). In the industrial city, most blacks were members of the working class. In 1940, for example, 81% of the African American workforce held jobs in domestic service or worked as unskilled or semiskilled laborers.<sup>24</sup> Twelve percent held skilled laborer jobs, while only seven percent were employed as professionals.<sup>25</sup> Most black professionals were musicians, ministers or social workers. There were only a few black doctors, dentists and lawyers, and no black bankers, financiers or brokers.<sup>26</sup>

The black community was dominated by black workers who held jobs in the low-wage sector of the labor market and who were plagued with chronic unemployment. Nonetheless, in this period, blacks still had a high labor force participation rate. For example, in 1940, the black labor force participation rate (LFPR) was equal to that of whites. Even neighborhoods with soaring unemployment rates had high LFPRs.<sup>27</sup>

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21. Wilson, *American Social Policy and the Ghetto Underclass*, DEMOCRATIC PROMISE, Winter 1988, at 58.

22. BUREAU OF CENSUS, U.S. DEP'T OF COMMERCE, SIXTEENTH CENSUS OF THE UNITED STATES, 1940: POPULATION AND HOUSING 391-92 (1942).

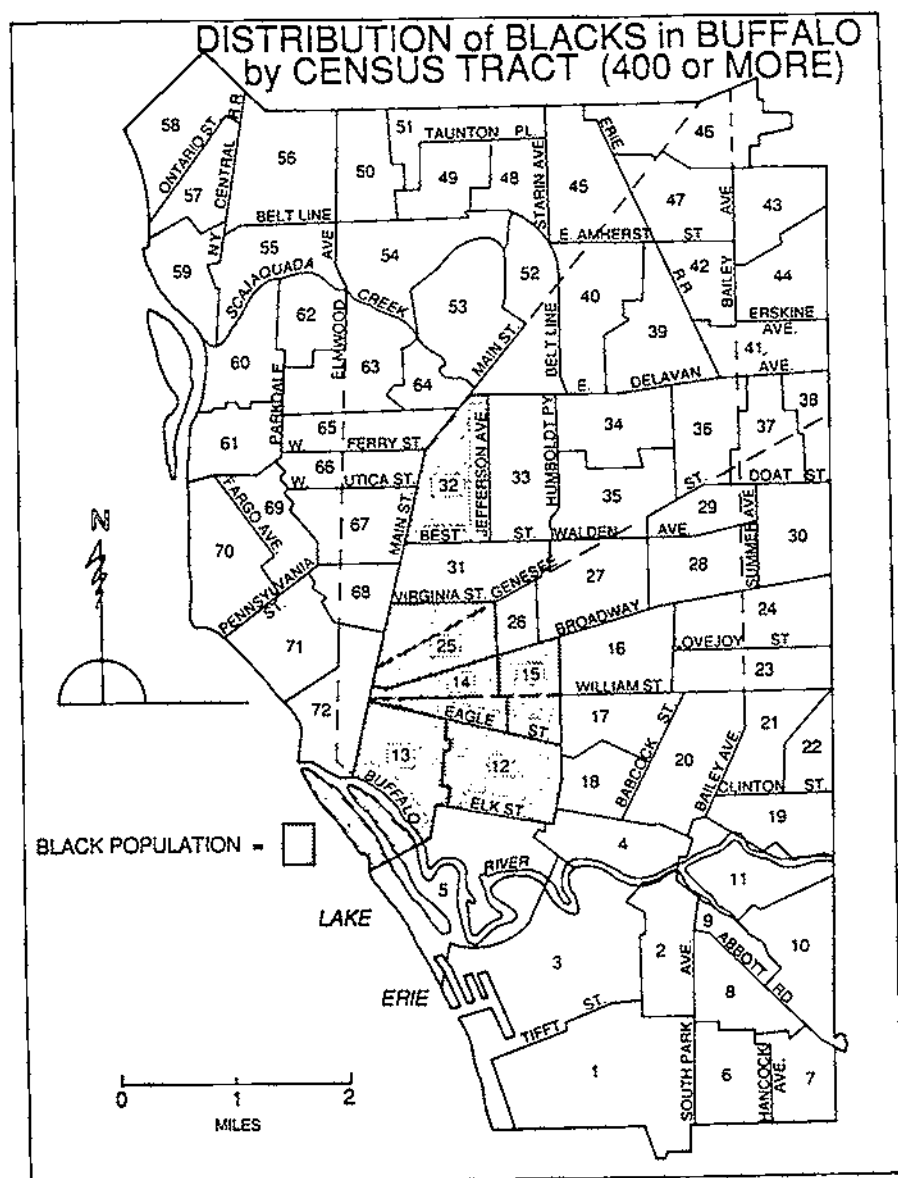
23. L. Williams, *The Development of a Black Community: Buffalo, New York, 1900-1940* (1979) (Dissertation, available at State University of New York at Buffalo).

24. BUREAU OF CENSUS, U.S. DEP'T OF COMMERCE, SIXTEENTH CENSUS OF THE UNITED STATES, 1940: POPULATION AND HOUSING CENSUS TRACTS, BUFFALO, NEW YORK 2-40 (1941).

25. *Id.*

26. BUREAU OF CENSUS, U.S. DEP'T OF COMMERCE, SIXTEENTH CENSUS OF THE UNITED STATES, 1940: POPULATION AND HOUSING 391-92 (1942).

27. Labor force statistics focus on work activities that are directly enumerated in the market by either pay or profit. In this sense, employment is defined as paid work and unemployment as a search for paid work. Members of the labor force are defined as those workers sixteen years or older



Source: U.S. Census Bureau 1940.

Another reflection of this trend can be found in black school attendance records. In 1940, 59.7% of Buffalonians, aged five to twenty-four, were attending school.<sup>28</sup> Blacks had a school attendance rate of 64.6%, nearly five percentage points higher than the citywide attendance rate.<sup>29</sup> Throughout the industrial age, blacks held firm to the belief that education was a vehicle for upward social mobility.<sup>30</sup>

The industrial city black ghetto was a cross-class community in which the middle-class, higher-paid worker and low-wage laborer lived together in the same neighborhood and often on the same street.<sup>31</sup> The industrial city blacks also shared their residential environment with white ethnics, primarily the Germans and Irish. Although class divisions existed in Buffalo's first ghetto, the schisms were not deep enough to be reflected in the structure of the residential environment. While there may have been streets consisting exclusively of middle-income families, or instances in which middle-income families lived together in small clusters located in neighborhoods dominated by the working classes, there were no "purely" middle-income neighborhoods. As late as 1940, there were no significant differences among black neighborhoods in terms of unemployment, median income, years of school completed and labor

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who are either working or looking for work. NAT'L COMM'N ON EMPLOYMENT AND UNEMPLOYMENT STATISTICS, COUNTING THE LABOR FORCE 43-56 (1979).

To develop insight into the employment characteristics of African Americans by census tract, a dataset was compiled based on a decennial analysis of census tracts for each census year between 1940 and 1980. BUREAU OF CENSUS, U.S. DEP'T OF COMMERCE, SIXTEENTH CENSUS OF THE UNITED STATES, 1940: POPULATION & HOUSING, CENSUS TRACTS, BUFFALO, NEW YORK (1942); BUREAU OF CENSUS, U.S. DEP'T OF COMMERCE, SIXTEENTH CENSUS OF THE UNITED STATES, 1950: POPULATION, CENSUS TRACTS, BUFFALO, NEW YORK 8-11 (1951); BUREAU OF CENSUS, U.S. DEP'T OF COMMERCE, EIGHTEENTH CENSUS OF THE UNITED STATES, 1960: POPULATION, CENSUS TRACTS, BUFFALO, NEW YORK 16-25 (1961); BUREAU OF CENSUS, U.S. DEP'T OF COMMERCE, NINETEENTH CENSUS OF THE UNITED STATES, 1970: POPULATION & HOUSING, CENSUS TRACTS, BUFFALO, NEW YORK (1961); BUREAU OF CENSUS, U.S. DEP'T OF COMMERCE, 1980: POPULATION & HOUSING, CENSUS TRACTS, BUFFALO, NEW YORK (1981); Butler, Taylor & Ru, An Economic and Social Profile of Black Buffalo, 1940-1980, Center for Applied Public Affairs Studies' Archives, State University of New York at Buffalo (1990) [hereinafter Economic and Social Profile].

28. Economic and Social Profile, *supra* note 27, at 1.

29. Economic and Social Profile, *supra* note 27; L. Williams, A Study in Community Formation: Blacks in Buffalo, New York, 1900-1930 (1990) (available at Center for Applied Public Affairs Studies' Archives, State University of New York at Buffalo).

30. Williams, *Community Educational Activities and the Liberation of Black Buffalo, 1900-1930*, 54 J. NEGRO EDUC., Spring 1985, at 174-88.

31. The absence of a class-stratified residential environment was primarily a function of size. In large industrial city ghettos, the black residential environment was stratified by class. Frazier, *Negro Harlem: An Ecological Study*, 43 AM. J. SOC., July 1937-May 1938, at 72-88.

force participation<sup>32</sup> The black middle-class and higher-paid workers were the backbone of the black community. They provided the community with leadership and stability. They led black organizations, owned businesses, provided critical services to community residents, served as role models and reinforced traditional black values and beliefs.<sup>33</sup> The industrial city black ghetto was a cross-class, multiracial community in which blacks from across the income spectrum lived together and shared space with working class white ethnics (Map 2).<sup>34</sup>

The low-wages of African Americans determined both the economic character of the ghetto and its location in geographic space. The city's high-rent district in 1939 (\$50.00 or more per month) was located along the western boarder of Main Street, from West Chippewa on the south to Winspear on the north. A moderate to moderately-high rent district (\$29.00 or more per month) was located in South Buffalo, below William Street and to the east of Babcock and Hopkins Streets. Thus, Buffalo's first black ghetto formed on the East Side, along the fringes of the South Buffalo industrial district, in one of the city's low-rent districts. In 1940, this settlement was bordered by Main Street and Bailey Avenue, East Delavan and the Buffalo River. Within this area, blacks occupied the cheapest and most rundown housing (Map 3).<sup>35</sup>

Housing costs and wages determined the type of housing and neighborhood conditions available to black Buffalonians. In 1939, for example, the citywide median rental for dwelling units occupied by blacks was \$19.37, compared to \$29.11 for European Americans (Table 1). Blacks occupied the cheapest, oldest and most dilapidated housing in Buffalo. An astonishing 75% of the black population in 1939 lived in housing officially classified as substandard by the city's Planning Board. The bulk of black occupied housing was built before 1900, and 48% of it needed major repairs.<sup>36</sup>

A wall of high rent kept most, but not all, blacks trapped in the ghetto (Table 1). Some black Buffalonians could afford to live anywhere in the city, but racial residential segregation kept them from moving out

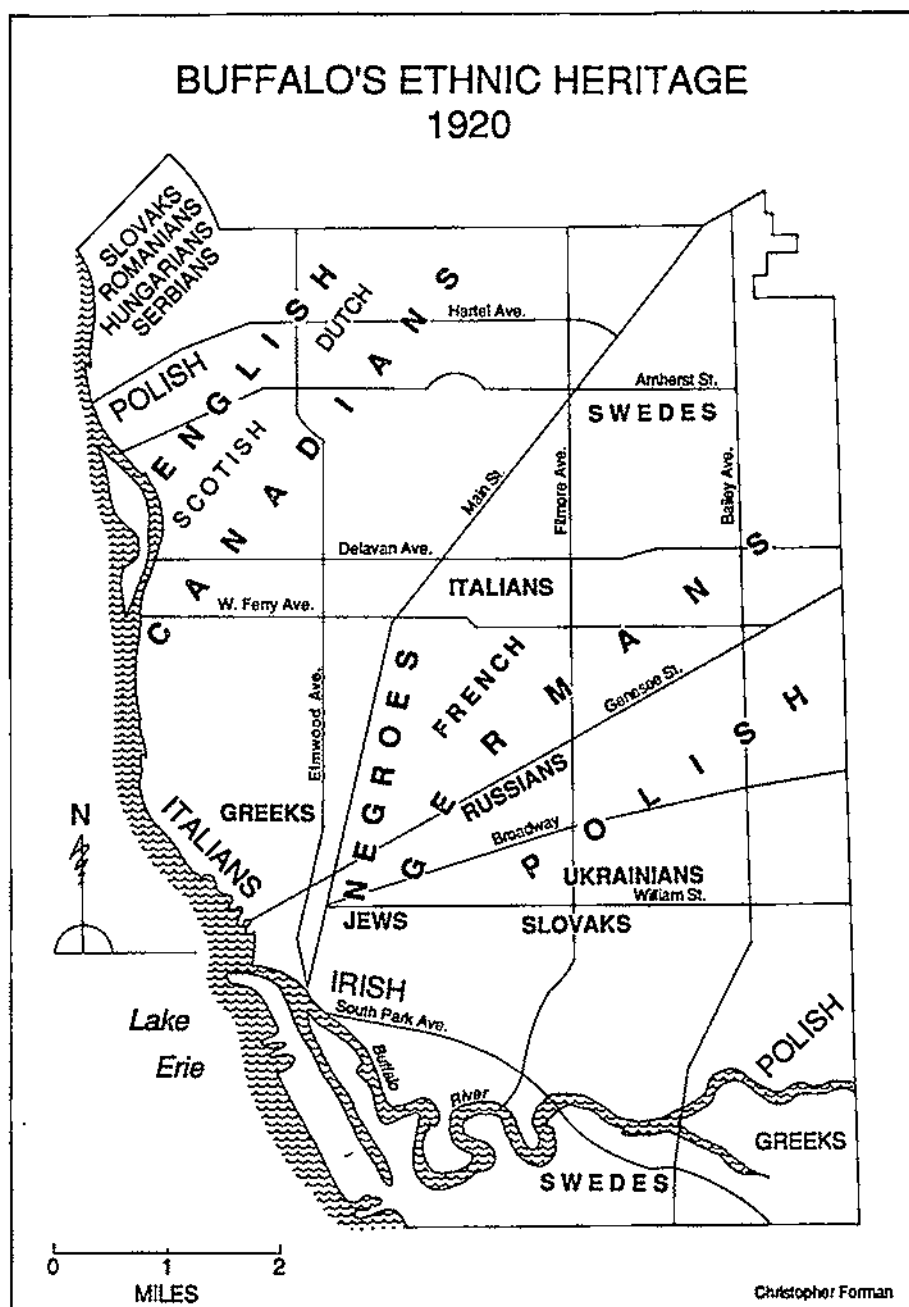
32. Economic and Social Profile, *supra* note 27, at 1. In this study, the terms census tracts and neighborhoods are used interchangeably. In essence, a neighborhood is defined as a census tract.

33. L. Williams, *supra* note 23; A. SPEAR, *supra* note 5, at 71-110.

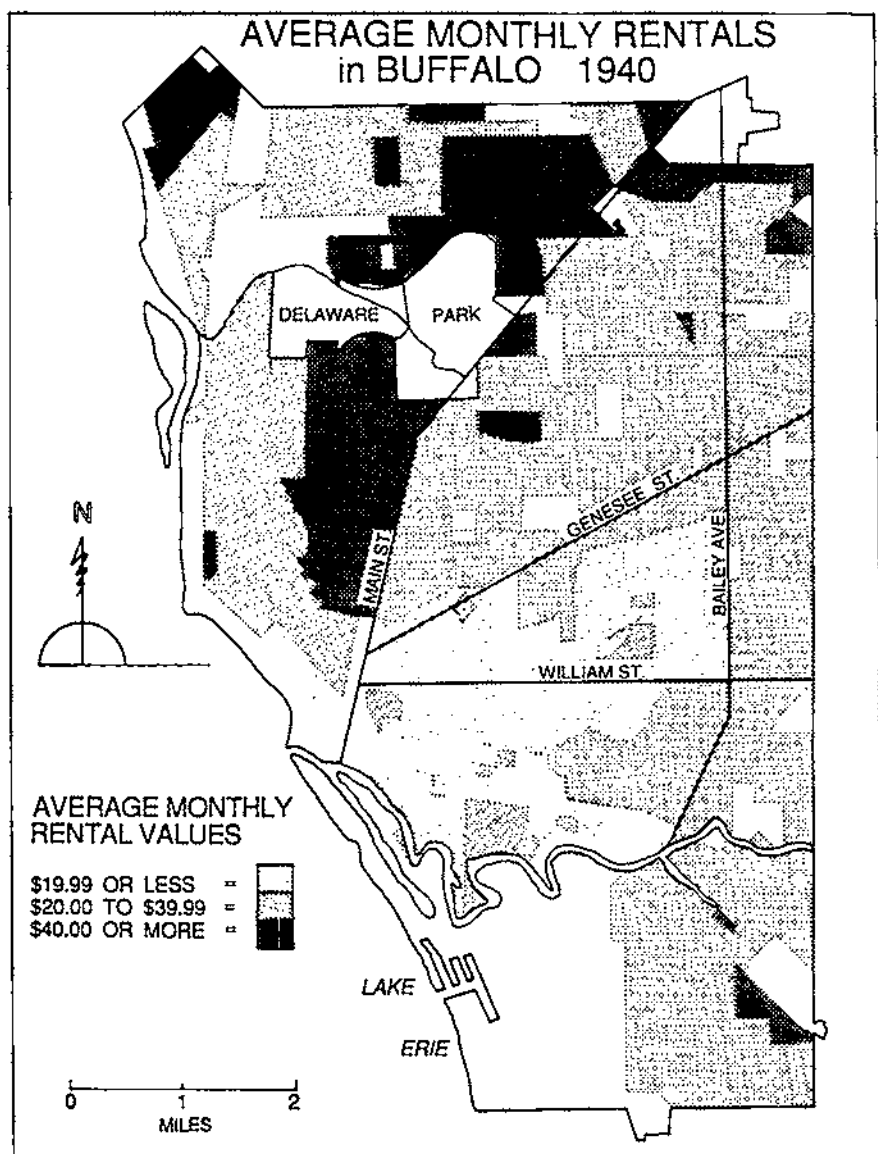
34. V. YANS-MCLAUGHLIN, FAMILY AND COMMUNITY: ITALIAN IMMIGRANTS IN BUFFALO, 1880-1930 (1977); D. GERBER, THE MAKING OF AN AMERICAN PLURALISM: BUFFALO, NEW YORK, 1825-1860 (1989).

35. BUFFALO PLANNING BOARD, REAL PROPERTY SURVEY AND SUPPLEMENTARY LOW-INCOME HOUSING AREA SURVEY, NATIONAL ARCHIVES 90 (1940).

36. *Id.* at 82-84, 132-39, 193-94.



Source: S. Gredel, *Pioneers of Buffalo* (1960) (Buffalo Council of Human Relations).



Source: U.S. Census Bureau 1940.

TABLE 1\*  
PERCENT DISTRIBUTION OF MONTHLY RENTAL BY RACE  
IN BUFFALO, NEW YORK, 1939

Monthly	Black	White
\$ 4.99 - 24.99	81.4	35.5
\$25.00 - 39.99	17.7	53.3
\$40.00 - 74.99	0.9	18.4
\$75 and above	0.0	2.8

\* This data must be interpreted with caution. In the original data, the sum total of the numbers in the white column is 110%. The error is not great enough, however, to alter significantly the comparative distribution pattern. Blacks are overwhelmingly concentrated in low-cost housing.

Source: Real Property Survey 137, at Table 68 (1939).

of the ghetto. At the same time, African Americans chose to live together for cultural reasons. The maintenance and development of their churches, social clubs, businesses, lodges and other institutions, as well as their ability to fight against the various manifestations of racism, demanded that they form a community within the physical ghetto.<sup>37</sup> Indeed, the talent and energy of the middle-class and higher paid workers successfully transformed the physical ghetto into an institutional ghetto that mirrored the larger city and provided community residents with valued goods and services. This desire among blacks to live together and build their own community was not unusual in the industrial city. In Buffalo, the Irish, Germans, Polish, Italians, English and other white ethnic groups clustered together and built their own communities.<sup>38</sup>

Wilson's picture of the industrial city black ghetto accurately portrays the black experience in Buffalo. African Americans in the Queen City lived in a cross-class community in which middle-income groups played a major role in building organizations and providing leadership. As a result, Buffalo's black community fought against racism and retained its group solidarity and sense of racial pride despite dilapidated neighborhood conditions and severe economic and social dislocations. The role played by organizations led by the black middle-class and higher-paid workers was significant:

The literary societies, civil rights organizations, and social and political groups all were united around their promotion of education for the black masses in Buffalo. Each created programs that were all encompassing, for

37. L. Williams, *supra* note 23.

38. V. YANS-MCLAUGHLIN, *supra* note 34; D. GERBER, *supra* note 34.

they developed instruments for individual improvement as well as group advancement. These organizations' projects were important and crucial to the education of their constituents. Their lectures, workshops, and classes supplemented the public school curriculum available to black children and adults. But the organizations went beyond this, for they inculcated blacks with a philosophy of hope and capability which seemed to be the most expeditious means of coping with their urban environment and moving ahead.<sup>39</sup>

2. *Rise of Post-Industrial Buffalo and Emergence of the Second Ghetto.* Wilson's social transformation theory asserts that the rise of post-industrial society led to the break-up of the institutional ghetto. The blockage of economic opportunities combined with declining residential segregation, allowed the middle-income families to leave the ghetto, while those hardest hit by structural changes in the economy were forced to remain. This social transformation led to the demise of the institutional ghetto and the rise of the physical ghetto, where the truly disadvantaged became isolated from the black middle-class and the rest of society. In this new setting, poverty and misery became concentrated, and ghetto life and culture became obstacles to the advancement of African Americans. Most of these changes, Wilson argues, took place in the years following 1960 as structural shifts in the economy deepened.<sup>40</sup>

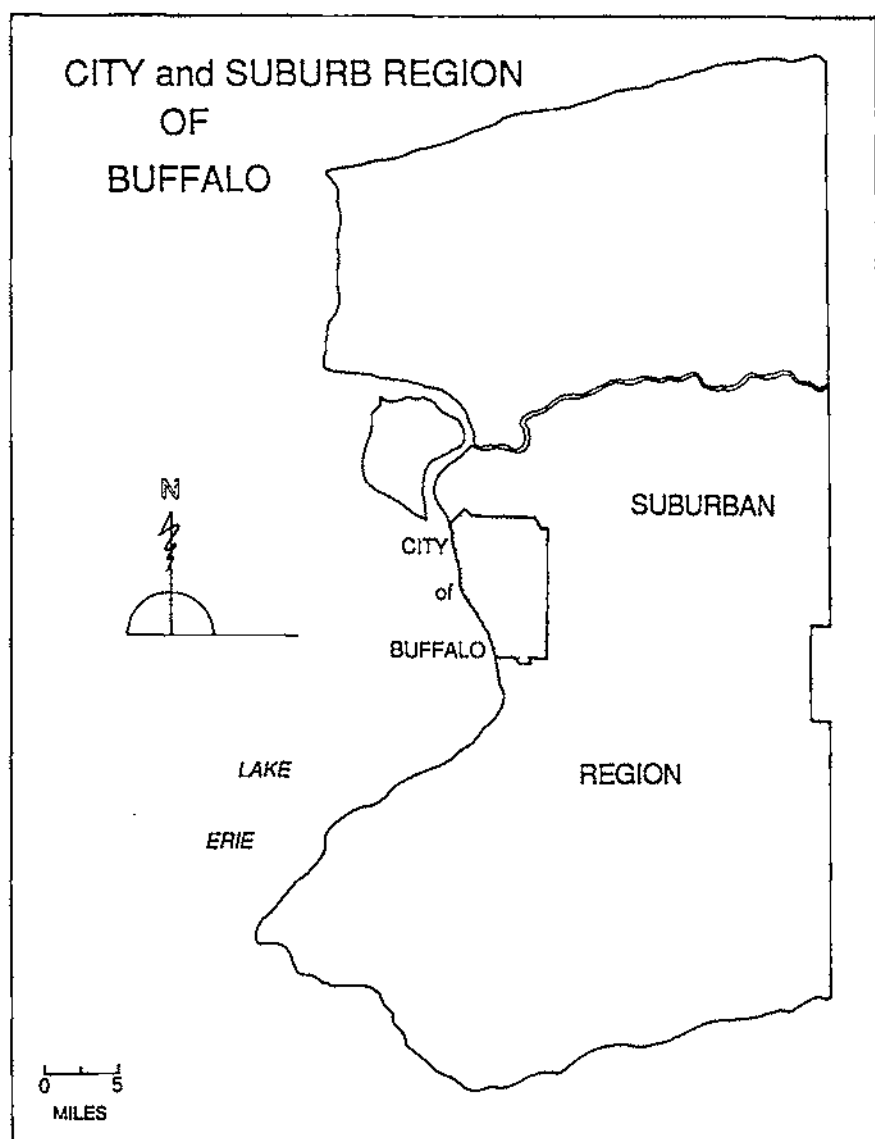
Between 1940 and 1980, the City of Buffalo and the County of Erie underwent a radical transformation as thousands of African Americans poured into the city, and an even greater number of European Americans left for the suburban hinterland. The resulting urbanization of Erie County combined with the influx of blacks to give birth to a post-industrial city characterized by a central city and an outer suburban region (Map 4).<sup>41</sup>

Historically, most people living in Erie County resided in the city proper. In the opening decades of the twentieth century, the suburban hinterland was essentially a rural area dominated by small farms. In 1900, for example, 81% of the county's population lived in the City of Buffalo. Throughout the industrial age, this structural pattern remained essentially the same.

39. Williams, *supra* note 30, at 188.

40. TRULY DISADVANTAGED, *supra* note 7, at 20-62.

41. For an analysis of suburban development in the United States, see K. JACKSON, CRABGRASS FRONTIER: THE SUBURBANIZATION OF AMERICA (1985). The rise of post-industrial society also involved a change in the structure of the economy. See B. BLUESTONE & B. HARRISON, THE DEINDUSTRIALIZATION OF AMERICA: PLANT CLOSINGS, COMMUNITY ABANDONMENT, AND THE DISMANTLING OF BASIC INDUSTRY (1982).



Source: U.S. Census Bureau 1980.

However, in the post-industrial era, the situation changed. In the years following 1940—driven by post war prosperity, low-interest loan rates through the Federal Housing Authority and the Veterans Housing Administration, and structural changes in the home mortgage system—homeownership rose sharply and encouraged suburban development.<sup>42</sup> The success of these public policy initiatives precipitated white flight to the suburban region. Between 1950 and 1970, Buffalo's population dropped by twenty percent, while the suburban population soared. In 1970, suburban dwellers for the first time, outnumbered city residents (Table 2).

Concurrently, the black population exploded. Lured by the promise of high paying jobs in the defense industry and post war prosperity, more than 75,000 blacks poured into the City of Buffalo between 1940 and 1970. The number of blacks jumped from 17,694 to more than 94,000, and from 3.1% to 26.3% of the population. The in-migration of blacks and the out-migration of whites gave birth to a bifurcated residential structure in which blacks were primary concentrated in the inner city, while middle to high income whites dominated the suburban region (Table 2).<sup>43</sup>

This new demographic pattern was reflected in the widening income gap between the central city and suburbs. In 1959, a \$682 difference existed between the median family income of city and suburban residents. By 1979, the difference had jumped to \$5,279. The income schism was also reflected in the quality of housing and neighborhood conditions. Suburban residential settlements were characterized by new housing, amenities and soaring property values.<sup>44</sup> On the other hand, inner city residential settlements became increasingly associated with bad housing, rundown neighborhoods, inadequate schools, high crime rates and declining property values and urban services.<sup>45</sup> Not surprisingly, middle and high-income groups increasingly chose to live in the suburbs, rather than the city. As a result, the suburban region continually increased its population and prosperity at the expense of the city.

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42. DEP'T OF LABOR, THE WAGE EARNERS' PROBLEM OF HOME MORTGAGE AND HOME OWNERSHIP (General Summary) (1934); K. JACKSON, *supra* note 41; Jackson, *Race, Ethnicity, and Real Estate Appraisal: The Home Owners Loan Corporation and the Federal Housing Administration*, 6 J. URBAN EDUC., Aug. 1980, at 419-52.

43. Economic and Social Profile, *supra* note 27, at 1.

44. G. SMITH, ASSEMBLY DISTRICT 141: CENSUS TRACT ANALYSIS, ERIE AND NIAGARA COUNTIES REGIONAL PLANNING BOARD (1988).

45. DARK GHETTO, *supra* note 2, at 81-153; Black in Buffalo, pts. 1-8 (1990) (available at Center for Applied Public Affairs Studies' Archives, State University of New York at Buffalo).

TABLE 2  
THE POPULATION OF ERIE COUNTY BY CENTRAL CITY  
AND SUBURBAN REGION 1900 - 1980

Year	Buffalo City	Suburban Region	% Living in City
1900	352,387	81,199	81.27
1910	423,715	105,270	80.09
1920	506,775	127,913	79.84
1930	573,076	189,332	75.16
1940	575,901	222,476	72.13
1950	580,132	319,106	64.51
1960	532,759	531,929	50.03
1970	462,768	650,723	41.56
1980	357,870	657,602	35.24

Source: U.S. CENSUS BUREAU.

Between 1940 and 1980, a second and greatly enlarged black ghetto emerged in Buffalo. In 1940, the black residential structure consisted of a ghetto on the East Side where over 94% of African Americans lived, and a large cluster located in a predominantly Italian working class residential area on the West Side. This cluster, which bordered the ghetto, was a low-income settlement, with most blacks residing in census tracts 71 and 72. The rest of black Buffalo was scattered across the city's face.<sup>46</sup>

Black population growth forced the ghetto to expand. In Buffalo, ghetto expansion followed the classic "invasion and succession" growth process.<sup>47</sup> As the black population grew, it expanded into white neighborhoods located on the ghetto's borders. Once African Americans invaded a neighborhood, whites started to move out, and the population characteristics of the area slowly changed. Eventually the neighborhood became predominantly black.<sup>48</sup>

Housing costs seemed to determine the direction of ghetto expansion in Buffalo. Blacks, as their numbers increased, moved into those neighborhoods where housing was inexpensive and where the income

46. BUREAU OF CENSUS, U.S. DEP'T OF COMMERCE, SIXTEENTH CENSUS OF THE UNITED STATES, 1940: POPULATION AND HOUSING, CENSUS TRACTS, BUFFALO, NEW YORK 2-40 (1942).

47. K. TAEUBER & A. TAEUBER, NEGROES IN CITIES (1965).

48. Geographers refer to this process of growth as spatial diffusion. B. BERRY & F. HORTON, GEOGRAPHIC PERSPECTIVES ON URBAN SYSTEMS 306-94 (1970); Morrill, *The Negro Ghetto: Problems and Alternatives*, 55 GEOG. REV., July 1965, at 339-61.

level of the residents was not much higher than their own. During the 1940s and 1950s, the ghetto expanded northward between Main Street and Humboldt Parkway (Map 1).<sup>49</sup> In 1960, blacks encountered a wall of high rent housing north of East Delavan Avenue. As a result, ghetto expansion shifted eastward toward Bailey Avenue. Nevertheless, a small group of middle income blacks did push northward past East Delavan into census tract 52.<sup>50</sup> (Map 1). Between 1960 and 1980, the ghetto expanded eastward while continuing its northern movement. By 1980, the ghetto's boundaries extended southward from Main and Winspear to Main and William, eastward from Main and William to Bailey and northward from Bailey to Winspear (Maps 5 and 6). In the forty year period between 1940 and 1980, the black ghetto had grown to mammoth proportions. In 1940, the ghetto occupied only six census tracts; by 1980, it covered 27.<sup>51</sup>

The black middle-class and higher paid workers led the ghetto expansion process. They were the "pioneers" who initially "invaded" white neighborhoods and established black residential beachheads. So, as the ghetto expanded, the newest neighborhoods were formed on the ghetto's "edges" by those blacks with the most stable jobs and incomes. The housing and neighborhood conditions in these newer neighborhoods tended to be the best and most expensive in the ghetto. Conversely, those blacks with the lowest incomes and the most unstable jobs tended to remain behind in the oldest sections of the ghetto, where housing and neighborhood conditions were the worst.<sup>52</sup> This suggests that the housing market triggered a sorting and shifting process that determined where residents lived in the ghetto. While black middle-class and higher-paid workers were over-represented in the newest black neighborhoods, the black poor and low-income workers were over-represented in the oldest ghetto neighborhoods.

## II. THE GROWTH OF ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL DISLOCATIONS

The development of the second ghetto was complicated by radical changes in Buffalo's economy and by the success of the Civil Rights Movement. The shift in Buffalo's economy from heavy industry to service and high technology hit most African Americans with utmost force, while victories on the Civil Rights front opened the doors of opportunity

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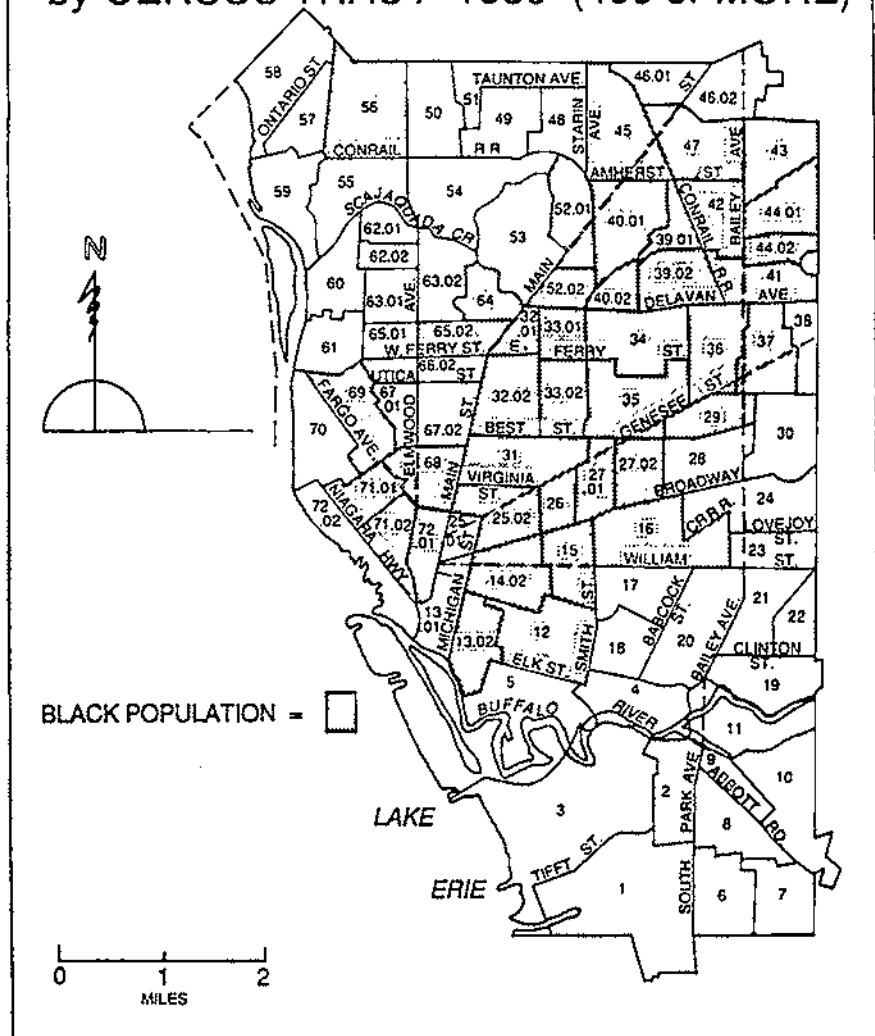
49. Economic and Social Profile, *supra* note 27, at 3.

50. *Id.* at 5.

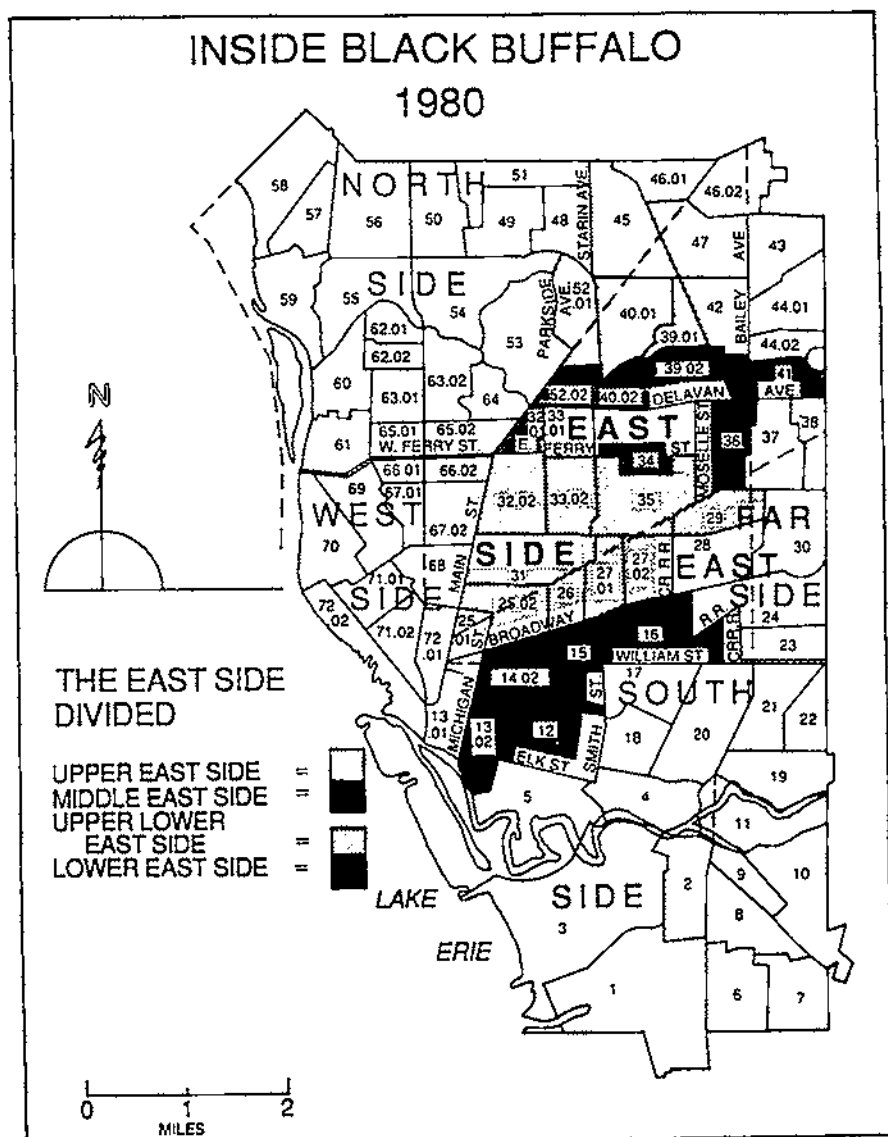
51. *Id.* at 3-12.

52. *See id.*

# DISTRIBUTION of BLACKS in BUFFALO by CENSUS TRACT 1980 (400 or MORE)



Source: U.S. Census Bureau 1980.



Source: U.S. Census Bureau 1980.

for others. As a result, economic and social dislocations within the ghetto grew at the same time that the class schism between middle and low-income blacks widened.

Throughout the post-industrial age, African Americans experienced high rates of unemployment. In both good and bad times the black jobless rate was high. For example, in 1940, it was 26%; in 1960, 16%; and in 1980, 21%.<sup>53</sup> Inside the various black neighborhoods, especially those in the oldest sections of the ghetto, the unemployment rate was much higher.<sup>54</sup> For example, in 1980, while the aggregate black unemployment rate was 21%, there were five census tracts on the East Side with black unemployment rates of 30% or higher.<sup>55</sup> The lack of consistent, reliable work among blacks meant not only the existence of high levels of poverty but also low and erratic incomes (Table 3).

In the 1940s and 1950s, black unemployment did not lead to discouragement and declining participation in the labor force. Black workers continued to search for jobs even though many of their neighbors were unemployed. For example, in 1950, there were 34,819 African Americans living in eight census tracts with 400 or more blacks. None of these tracts had a labor force participation rate below 50%.<sup>56</sup> This began to change after 1960. In 1960, 68,717 blacks lived in fourteen census tracts with at least 400 African Americans. Twenty-one percent ( $N = 3$ ) of these tracts had labor participation rates below 50%. By 1980, there were 90,833 blacks living in forty census tracts. Of these, 28% ( $N = 11$ ) had labor force participation rates below 50%.<sup>57</sup> These figures suggest that beginning in 1960, an underclass which was permanently locked out of the labor force had started to emerge in Buffalo. The problem of black economic dislocation had grown more complex and insolvable.<sup>58</sup>

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53. *Id.* at 1 (figures are aggregate, citywide figures).

54. *See id.* at 9-12.

55. *Id.* at 11-12.

56. *Id.* at 12 (Table 5D).

57. *Id.* at 11-12.

58. In this study, the term underclass is used to define those individuals who have dropped out or who have a weak attachment to the labor force. Also, it should be emphasized that both unemployment and labor force statistics tend to underestimate the full impact of the problems facing African Americans. Inadequate employment is a big problem and it comes in many forms: unemployment, part-time employment, sporadic employment and steady but low-paid employment, and discouraged workers. It includes individuals who are without jobs and are not searching because they believe no suitable jobs can be found. These workers normally return to the work force when they detect an improvement in their employment opportunities. Then there are those individuals who are working part-time but who want to hold full-time positions. Finally, there are housewives who stay at home because they cannot find work. NAT'L COMM'N ON EMPLOYMENT AND UNEMPLOYMENT, COUNTING THE LABOR FORCE (1979).

TABLE 3  
RANK ORDERED POVERTY RATES FOR TWENTY OF  
AMERICA'S LARGEST CITIES, 1980

Cities	Poverty Rate 1980	% Black Poverty
Newark, NJ	33	38
Atlanta, GA	28	35
New Orleans, LA	26	37
Miami, FL	25	39
Baltimore, MD	23	31
Cleveland, OH	22	32
Detroit, MI	22	27
Philadelphia, PA	21	32
San Antonio, TX	21	29
BUFFALO, NY	21	36
Boston, MA	20	29
Chicago, IL	20	29
New York, NY	20	30
Washington, DC	19	22
Oakland, CA	18	25
Los Angeles, CA	16	26
Denver, CO	14	23
San Francisco, CA	14	25
Dallas, TX	14	24
Seattle, WA	11	23
San Jose, CA	8	15

Source: Urban Strategies Council, *A Chance for Every Child: Oakland's Infant, Children, and Youth at Risk for Persistent Poverty*, A Report by the Urban Strategies Council (Feb. 13, 1988).

When blacks did find employment, they usually held the least desirable jobs, located at the bottom of the occupational ladder.<sup>59</sup> African Americans' lowly position on the job ladder was reflected in their income level, which historically was lower than whites.<sup>60</sup> Beginning in 1960, the income gap between blacks and whites began to widen even though thousands of middle to high income whites moved to the suburbs. For example, in 1970, the median household income for the city was 21.4% greater than that of blacks. By 1980, this income gap had grown to

59. Butler, Taylor & Ha-Ryu, *Work and Black Neighborhood Life in Buffalo, 1930-1980*, in 2 AFRICAN AMERICANS AND THE RISE OF BUFFALO'S POST-INDUSTRIAL CITY, 1940-PRESENT 144 (H. Taylor ed. 1990); Economic and Social Profile, *supra* note 27, at 4-12.

60. Butler, Taylor & Ha-Ryu, *Work and Black Neighborhood Life in Buffalo, 1930-1980*, in 2 AFRICAN AMERICANS AND THE RISE OF BUFFALO'S POST-INDUSTRIAL CITY, 1940-PRESENT, at Table 4B (H. Taylor ed. 1990).

35%.<sup>61</sup>

The blockage of economic opportunities caused the black poverty rate to increase. Between 1970 and 1980, poverty among blacks jumped from 28% to 36%, while the white poverty rate fell by almost two points.<sup>62</sup> By 1980, the black poverty rate in Buffalo was higher than the poverty rates in Chicago, Philadelphia, New York City, Detroit and Los Angeles. Only Miami and Newark had a higher proportion of African Americans living in poverty (Table 3).<sup>63</sup> The majority of Buffalo's poor blacks lived in the ghetto. In 1980, 63% of those census tracts where 20% or more of the population lived in poverty were located on the East Side, as were five of the seven tracts where 40% or more of the population lived in poverty.<sup>64</sup>

Poverty also affected the "advantaged" residents who lived in neighborhoods with the poor and underclass. The proportion of black Buffalonians living in "poverty neighborhoods" jumped from 69.4% to 76.2% between 1970 and 1980. Significantly, the percent of blacks living in extremely poor neighborhoods<sup>65</sup> soared from 1.7% to 24% in the same period.<sup>66</sup> Women and youth were especially hard hit.<sup>67</sup> In 1980, 75% of black female heads of families in metropolitan Buffalo had incomes below 125% of the poverty line, and 60% of Buffalo's black poor were 24 years old or younger.<sup>68</sup> The growth of poverty on the East Side eroded property values and reduced revenues in businesses, churches and other social organizations.<sup>69</sup>

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61. *Id.* at Table 5D.

62. BUREAU OF CENSUS, U.S. DEPT OF COMMERCE SUBJECT REPORTS, POVERTY AREAS IN LARGE CITIES: CENSUS OF POPULATION VOL. 2, at 57 (1985); BUREAU OF CENSUS, U.S. DEPT OF COMMERCE SUBJECT REPORTS: LOW-INCOME AREAS IN LARGE CITIES 85-99 (1973).

63. URBAN STRATEGIES COUNCIL, A CHANCE FOR EVERY CHILD: OAKLAND'S INFANT, CHILDREN, AND YOUTH AT RISK FOR PERSISTENT POVERTY 13 (1988).

64. In 1970, the federal government designated any census tract with twenty percent or more of its population living in poverty as a "poverty area." See *supra* note 62; see also H. TAYLOR, THE SPATIAL STRUCTURE OF POVERTY AND THE FIGHT AGAINST POVERTY AND THE UNDERCLASS 16 (A Final Report to the Buffalo Common Council, Commission on Urban Initiatives, The Poverty and Underclass Project) (1990).

65. The Bureau of Census defines an extremely poor neighborhood as one where forty percent or more of the population live in poverty. BUREAU OF CENSUS, U.S. DEPT OF COMMERCE, POVERTY AREAS 57 (1987).

66. *Id.* at 57.

67. See *supra* note 62, at 57.

68. TASK FORCE ON THE STATUS OF WOMEN, WOMEN'S ISSUES: A NEW BEGINNING FOR ERIE COUNTY, 46-49 (1987).

69. Milroy, *An Analysis of Survey Results: The Organizational Structure of Black Buffalo*, in 2 AFRICAN AMERICANS AND THE RISE OF BUFFALO'S POST-INDUSTRIAL CITY, 1940-PRESENT 243-60 (H. Taylor ed. 1990) [hereinafter *Organizational Structure*].

Economic dislocations led to the growth of social dislocations manifested in rising crime rates, decreasing educational achievement and growing class divisions. Between 1980 and 1988, black arrests surpassed those of whites for each year, with the proportion of blacks arrested increasing significantly during the decade.<sup>70</sup> For example, in 1980, blacks comprised 49.5% of all arrests of persons under the age of eighteen.<sup>71</sup> In 1988, they comprised 62% of such arrests.<sup>72</sup> Many of these young people were involved in serious crimes.<sup>73</sup> Between 1980 and 1988, well over one-half of those under eighteen who were arrested for forcible rape were juveniles between the ages of seven and sixteen.<sup>74</sup> These youths accounted for nearly one-half of the burglary, larceny-theft and criminal arrests.<sup>75</sup> A majority of these youths were black.<sup>76</sup> On the other hand, blacks over eighteen in 1987 comprised 79% of the arrests for robbery and over 60% of the arrests for larceny-theft and motor vehicle theft.<sup>77</sup>

Unlike the first ghetto, in the post-industrial ghetto, inadequate schooling became another difficult problem facing blacks. Over time, the academic achievement of black students began to lag behind that of whites.<sup>78</sup> This gap in academic achievement has continued to grow.<sup>79</sup> In fact, a local Job Training Partnership Act official stated that in recent years there has been a sharp increase in blacks entering job training programs with reading levels below the seventh grade.<sup>80</sup> Other job training

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70. City of Buffalo Police Department, Age, Sex and Race of Person Arrested Under 18 years of Age (Apr. 27, 1989) (Department Computer Printout).

71. *Id.*

72. *Id.*

73. *Id.*

74. *Id.*

75. *Id.*

76. *Id.*

77. New York, Division of Criminal Justice Services, Uniform Crime Reporting, Adult Arrest Report, (Jan.- Dec. 1985) (Department Computer Printout); New York, Division of Criminal Justice Services, Uniform Crime Reporting, Adult Arrest Report, (Jan.- Dec. 1986) (Department Computer Printout); New York, Division of Criminal Justice Services, Uniform Crime Reporting, Adult Arrest Report, (Jan.- Dec. 1987) (Department Computer Printout). See also Buffalo Police Department, Annual Report (1985); Buffalo Police Department, Annual Report (1986); Buffalo Police Department, Annual Report (1987).

78. Lomotey & Staley, *The Education of African Americans in the Buffalo Public Schools*, in 2 AFRICAN AMERICANS AND THE RISE OF BUFFALO'S POST-INDUSTRIAL CITY, 1940-PRESENT 157-86 (H. Taylor ed. 1990). This is not to imply that educational equality existed for blacks. The idea presented here is that the educational plight of blacks has worsened.

79. *Id.*

80. J. Bratek, Comments Made at the Economic Development Committee Meeting, Private Industry Council, Economic Development Committee (July 10, 1990). During the summer of 1990, the Economic Development Committee of the Private Industry Council held a series of meetings to develop a strategy to place labor force concerns more prominently on the public agenda. The par-

officials have noted the same problem, which when combined with the high black dropout and suspension rate, demonstrate that a growing number of African Americans are alienated from the educational process.<sup>81</sup> Today, crime, inadequate schooling, drug abuse, teen-age pregnancies, marriage dissolution and the growth of an underclass are several problems facing Black Buffalo.

Finally, between 1960 and 1980, class divisions within the black ghetto deepened. A comparison between the income and educational levels of the highest and lowest income black neighborhoods at two different points in time produces a rough measure of the growing class schism between high and low-income blacks. In 1950, for example, a difference of \$814 existed between the three highest and three lowest income ghetto neighborhoods.<sup>82</sup> By 1980, this difference had grown to an astounding \$12,527.<sup>83</sup> Likewise, in 1950, the difference in median school years completed between the three highest and three lowest income neighborhoods was 2.5 grades.<sup>84</sup> In 1980, only 30% of blacks in the three lowest income ghetto neighborhoods had completed high school, while 67% of those living in the highest income neighborhoods had a high school diploma—a staggering difference of 37%.<sup>85</sup> Although somewhat crude, this measure shows that over time the income and educational gulf between middle and low-income blacks widened significantly.

### III. THE RESIDENTIAL STRUCTURE OF THE GHETTO DURING THE EIGHTIES

The experience of African Americans in Buffalo appears to confirm aspects of Wilson's social transformation theory. Social and economic conditions in Buffalo's ghetto did worsen after 1960, and the class schism among blacks deepened. However, the question remains whether these developments led to a mass exodus of the black middle-class and higher paid workers, the collapse of the ghetto's organizational structure, and the social isolation of the truly disadvantaged.<sup>86</sup>

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ticipants in the discussions consisted of key leaders in human service, education and labor force training areas.

81. *Id.*

82. Economic and Social Profile, *supra* note 27, at 4, 11-12.

83. *Id.*

84. *Id.* at 3.

85. *Id.* at 3, 9-10.

86. A spatial methodology was developed to trace the process of ghetto growth and expansion and to delineate the boundaries of the black ghetto in 1940 and 1980. The basic unit of analysis was the census tract. This unit was selected because its limited size and fixed boundaries permit aggrega-

Between 1960 and 1980, a handful of blacks in Buffalo began moving to other parts of the city and to the suburbs.<sup>87</sup> This outmigration was not, however, simply a process of black middle-class and higher-paid workers fleeing the ghetto. For example, in 1980, there were 4,115 African Americans or 4.3% of the black population, living on the West Side.<sup>88</sup> Many of these were low-income workers (Table 4). There were other low-income black residents living in public housing projects located to the north and east of the East Side.<sup>89</sup> In addition, between 1960 and 1980, a number of middle-class and higher-paid workers moved to the far East Side, on the fringes of the ghetto. In 1980, there were 6,775 African Americans, or seven percent of the black population, living in this area (Table 5).<sup>90</sup> There were about 3,000 black families living in the predominantly white middle-class northern suburbs.<sup>91</sup> Despite this dispersal, in 1980, 79,850, or 84% of the black population, still lived on the East Side.<sup>92</sup>

Moreover, an analysis of the population composition of the East Side shows that the outmigration of middle-class and higher-paid workers did not alter the community's class composition—it remained a cross-class community. The ghetto's residential environment was, however, stratified on the basis of income and housing value.<sup>93</sup> For example, the

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tion into larger units. Census tracts were used in the analysis of the 1940 black ghetto. In later years, when the ghetto expanded, census tracts were grouped together to form larger spatial units. Census blocks were used in the analysis of the black ghetto in 1980. Blocks are smaller units within the census tracts. Their use makes possible a microscopic analysis of the census tract.

To plot the process of ghetto expansion, we identified those tracts in which 400 or more blacks resided and traced their growth over time. A two-tier process was used to determine the boundaries of the black ghetto in 1940 and 1980. At each point in time, the identification of those tracts containing 400 or more blacks represented the initial step in the process. Then, using a multivariate criteria based on the determination of natural barriers and the identification of those tracts occupying a contiguous land mass, the ghetto boundaries were drawn.

In the analysis of the 1980 ghetto, after drawing boundaries for the black community, the area was further divided into subregions. A residential area consists of different neighborhoods and, in most instances, great variation exists among these smaller units. To develop deeper insight into the social and cultural fabric of the 1980 black ghetto, the ghetto was split into four neighborhoods. Then, using criteria based on housing characteristics, population composition, natural barriers, physical characteristics and location, the remaining sections of the City of Buffalo were divided into four residential districts. This division made it possible to compare and contrast the ghetto with other parts of the city.

87. Economic and Social Profile, *supra* note 27, at 5, 10.

88. *Id.* at 12.

89. *Id.*

90. *Id.*

91. *Id.* at 10.

92. *Id.*

93. See Black Residential Development: Statistical Analysis of East Side Census Tracts, Income

TABLE 4  
WEST SIDE BLACK RESIDENTIAL CLUSTER POPULATION  
CHARACTERISTICS, 1980

Census Tracts	N	% Black	HS Grad %	LFPR	Unempl	Income
68	418	9.6	41.2	66.0	27.9	6,312
69	535	5.3	52.3	55.0	22.4	7,778
71.01	1783	27.9	44.1	43.1	37.4	4,353
71.02	954	29.2	55.6	57.2	18.8	5,614
72.01	425	45.7	58.6	36.2	25.0	4,955
Total	4115	34.6	50.4	51.5	26.3	5,802
Black Buffalo	95116	—	48.9	53.1	20.6	8,573
Buffalo	357870	26.6	53.8	54.1	13.1	11,593
Erie County	—	10.1	65.4	59.5	9.5	17,119

Source: U.S. CENSUS BUREAU (1980).

TABLE 5  
FAR EAST SIDE BLACK RESIDENTIAL CLUSTER  
POPULATION CHARACTERISTICS, 1980

Census Tracts	N	% Black	HS Grad %	LFPR	Unempl	Income
43.00	616	09.6	65.4	77.6	21.0	18,750
44.01	1006	21.4	72.4	80.3	11.7	20,547
44.02*	2926	79.4	51.2	42.9	25.7	4,733
41.00	1821	31.8	67.5	68.8	13.9	17,610
37.00	406	07.5	67.5	58.8	30.1	16,339
Total	6775	29.9	64.8	65.7	20.5	18,311
Black Buffalo	95116	—	48.9	53.1	20.6	8,573
Buffalo	357870	26.6	53.8	54.1	13.1	11,593
Erie County	—	10.1	65.4	59.5	9.5	17,119

\* The income level was not used to determine the mean income level of far East Side residents. The income mean in this tract was so low that it would distort the data. Most of the blacks in this tract lived in a public housing project.

Source: U.S. CENSUS BUREAU (1980).

lowest incomes and housing values and the highest proportion of families living below the poverty line were found in the lower half of the East

and Housing Project Subgroup, Black Buffalo Project Record Group (1990) (available at Center for Applied Public Affairs Studies' Archives, State University of New York at Buffalo) [hereinafter Black Residential Development]. This dataset was compiled from the census tract records on Buffalo for 1980. The data was analyzed using the SPSS/PC+ system.

TABLE 6  
INCOME, HOUSING VALUE AND PERCENTAGE OF FAMILIES LIVING  
BELOW THE POVERTY LINE AMONG BLACKS BY  
SECTION OF THE EAST SIDE, 1980

Section	Income	Median Housing Value*	% Families in Poverty
Lower	5,062	10,200	42.4
Upper Lower	7,701	11,000	39.2
Mid	12,272	17,112	19.0
Upper	16,704	22,000	19.0

\* These figures are for the total East Side population, including whites, Hispanics and a very small Asian population.

Source: U.S. CENSUS BUREAU (1980).

Side.<sup>94</sup> Conversely, the highest income and housing values and the lowest proportion of families living in poverty were found in the upper half of the East Side (Table 6). In 1980, for example, the median income for blacks living in the upper East Side was \$16,704, compared with \$5,062 for black families in the lower East Side. Forty-two percent of the black families in the lower East Side lived in poverty, while only nineteen percent of upper East Side black families were poor. Likewise, the median value of owner-occupied housing was \$10,200 on the lower East Side, and \$22,000 on the upper East Side. This suggests that many higher income families moved to the upper half of the East Side in search of better housing and neighborhood conditions, rather than move to other parts of Buffalo or to the suburbs (Map 6).

Data depicting the East Side as stratified on the basis of income must be qualified. In 1980, there were no exclusively high or low-income residential areas on the East Side. Low-income neighborhoods could be found in every section of the community. For example, in census tract 40.02, located in the mid East Side, 53% of the population lived below the poverty line.<sup>95</sup> This low-income neighborhood was sandwiched between two middle-class neighborhoods.<sup>96</sup> In the Masten Park neighborhood, where most people had annual incomes below \$11,000, four of the families surveyed had incomes in excess of \$26,000.<sup>97</sup> Even in those

94. *Id.*

95. *Id.*

96. *Id.*

97. The survey of 125 residents of the Masten Park district was conducted in July 1988 by the Restoration 78 community based organization. The survey was coded and analyzed using SPSS/PC+ by the Center for Applied Public Affairs Studies, State University of New at Buffalo in July

neighborhoods with extreme poverty, people from across the income spectrum lived together. For example, in census tract 13.02, which had a poverty rate of 47%, 12% of the tract's population earned between \$25,000 and \$49,999, with .64% earning \$50,000 or more yearly.<sup>98</sup> Census tract 25.02 had a poverty rate of 43%, yet 4% of its residents earned \$25,000 or more yearly.<sup>99</sup> Every census tract on the East Side had residents from across the income spectrum.<sup>100</sup>

To gain deeper insight into the East Side's residential structure, the income distribution within eight select census tracts was examined. These tracts were designated as low-income settlements by the Buffalo Common Council's Commission on Urban Initiatives, and a comprehensive program to attack the problems of poverty and the underclass within the area developed.<sup>101</sup> The selected tracts, called the target area, fall equally within the upper lower East Side and the middle East Side.

Although a low-income settlement, the target area is nevertheless a cross-class neighborhood. In 1980, 40% of its residents had incomes below \$7,500, with 27% of the families living in poverty (Table 7).<sup>102</sup> Yet, over 30% of the neighborhood's residents had incomes at or above \$15,000, a figure more than \$3,000 above the citywide median. Even within this more compressed geographic region, class integration does not disappear.

Such findings lead to an inquiry whether class integration exists at the block level. Although, comparatively speaking, the census tract is a small geographic unit, it is still too large to reveal the residential pattern at the street level. Class integration may appear at the census tract level, but give way to a rigid pattern of class stratification within the tract. Thus, to gain an even greater microscopic perspective of the class struc-

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1989. We do not know how the survey was conducted or how representative the sample was. Nonetheless, it does provide insight into the problems facing blacks at the neighborhood level. See Masten Park Survey, Black Buffalo Project Record Group (1990) (available at Center for Applied Public Affairs Studies, State University of New York at Buffalo).

98. Dataset 10: Income Distribution by Census Tract, 1980, Poverty and Underclass Database 2 (1990) (available at Center for Applied Public Affairs Studies Archives, State University of New York at Buffalo).

99. *Id.*

100. See Income Distribution by Census Tract 1980, Poverty and Underclass Project Subgroup, Black Buffalo Project Record Group (1990) (available at Center for Applied Public Affairs Studies' Archives, State University of New York at Buffalo).

101. CITY OF BUFFALO'S COMMISSION ON URBAN INITIATIVES, THE POVERTY AND UNDERCLASS PROJECT: ECONOMIC AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY PROPOSAL 2 (May 1990) (available at Center for Applied Public Affairs Studies Archives, State University of New York at Buffalo).

102. Economic and Social Profile, *supra* note 27, at 12.

TABLE 7  
INCOME RANGE FOR TARGET AREA, EAST SIDE AND  
BUFFALO CITY, 1980

Tracts	\$7,499 & below	\$7,500- 14,999	\$15,000- 24,999	\$25,000- 49,999	\$50,000 & over
29.00	36.8	31.7	21.3	9.7	0.3
32.01	45.0	30.7	15.0	9.1	0
32.02	46.5	28.4	13.5	11.2	0.1
33.01	32.8	27.2	17.8	21.1	0.9
33.02	40.6	28.9	18.1	11.6	0.5
34.00	35.9	26.3	22.0	15.0	0.6
35.00	45.3	23.3	20.7	9.0	1.3
36.00	42.1	26.5	23.5	14.4	1.7
Total	40.7	27.4	18.8	12.3	0.6
East Side	42.6	25.4	19.4	11.9	0.5
Buffalo	34.5	25.6	23.5	14.4	1.7

Source: U.S. CENSUS BUREAU (1980).

ture of ghetto neighborhoods, the target area neighborhood was examined at the census block level, and the data showed that even here, the area maintained its cross-class character.<sup>103</sup> Virtually every census block within the area had a middle-class and higher worker core. Although the actual number of higher income families varied from locale to locale, people from across the income spectrum still lived together on each block.<sup>104</sup> Accordingly, on most blocks there lived a small number of college graduates and residents working as executives, professionals, administrators, technicians and salespersons.<sup>105</sup>

The data clearly indicate that the increase in economic and social dislocations on the East Side did not destroy the social fabric of the black community. Although a small number of middle-class blacks and higher-paid workers did move to the suburbs and to other inner-city neighborhoods, the majority stayed behind and remained woven into neighborhood life and culture. Moreover, a survey of 404 randomly selected, registered East Side voters showed that the majority of residents have a positive attitude toward their neighborhoods, and that many are willing to work with other groups to improve neighborhood conditions.

103. A dataset on the census blocks within the target area was derived from the 1980 census block data and analyzed using SPSS/PC+. See Target Area: Census Block 1980, Poverty and Underclass Project, Black Buffalo Files (1990) (available at Center for Applied Public Affairs Studies' Archives, State University of New York at Buffalo).

104. *Id.*

105. *Id.*

When the respondents were asked what they thought about their neighborhood, 11% thought their neighborhood was one of the best places to live in the city, 44% thought their neighborhood was "average, much like any other neighborhood," while 37% thought "it may not be the worst neighborhood, but there are many that are better."<sup>106</sup> Only 7% felt that their neighborhood was the worst in the city.<sup>107</sup> Moreover, these neighborhood residents were knowledgeable about their community and the problems it faced. They knew who the government officials were and what their responsibilities were to the community. According to the survey, 81% of East Side residents believed that their neighborhood was either average or one of the best places in the city to live.<sup>108</sup> Interestingly, the most positive residents tended to live in the most distressed areas of the ghetto. It is indeed ironic that as housing and neighborhood conditions improved, ghetto residents tended to become less positive about their neighborhood.<sup>109</sup>

#### IV. THE ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE OF THE GHETTO DURING THE EIGHTIES

A central component of social transformation theory is the idea that the "truly disadvantaged" become increasingly isolated from middle class and higher paid workers, and that the ghetto's organizational structure—schools, churches, businesses, block clubs, cultural groups—begin to break down as middle-income families move away.<sup>110</sup> The collapse of the organizational structure is, under this theory, the force that transforms the "institutional" ghetto into the "physical" ghetto. As middle-class and higher-paid workers move away, they cease to have contact with inner city residents, and organizations or institutions supported by these stable elements are seriously weakened or disappear altogether.<sup>111</sup> The neighborhoods of the "truly disadvantaged," then, are characterized

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106. A telephone interview was administered to 404 randomly selected registered voters residing on Buffalo's East Side. No effort was made to control for race. Approximately 40% of the sample was white. This figure corresponds to the proportion of whites in the East Side population. The survey had a 95% confidence level and a sampling error of plus/minus 5% for the entire sample and plus/minus 6% for the sample of African Americans. The Black Buffalo Poll, Black Buffalo Project (1990) (available at Center for Applied Public Affairs Studies' Archives, State University of New York at Buffalo).

107. *Id.*

108. *Id.*

109. To arrive at this conclusion a "theme" map was created to show people's attitudes by geographic region using *MapInfo Desktop Mapping Software*, ver. 4.5, Troy, New York.

110. TRULY DISADVANTAGED, *supra* note 7, at 49.

111. *Id.* at 56.

by social isolation and disorganization. Unlike the lively ghettos of the industrial city, social transformation theory suggests that the post-industrial ghetto is a place inhabited by the low-wage worker, the poor and underclass.<sup>112</sup> The ghetto has lost its vibrant culture and no longer serves as a meeting ground for blacks living in other parts of the city and suburbs.

The fact that in Buffalo worsening conditions in the ghetto have not driven out the middle-class and higher paid workers does not necessarily mean that the East Side's organizational structure has not been severely weakened or that the area has the capacity to serve as a "meeting ground" for African Americans living outside the ghetto. To determine whether the East Side continues to have a vibrant organizational structure, and whether the community serves as a "meeting ground" for African Americans living in other parts of Metro Buffalo, a tally was made of black social and political organizations and businesses in Buffalo. A detailed survey was conducted of these groups and enterprises which involved 563 social and political organizations and black businesses. Responses were obtained from 137 organizations and 40 businesses. Computer mapping was used to determine the location of these organizations and businesses in geographic space.<sup>113</sup>

The results of the survey showed that Black Buffalo is still a highly organized community that contains a variety of social and economic organizations including churches, neighborhood block clubs, community-based organizations, cultural groups, youth centers, civil rights organizations, educational institutions, social clubs, formal and informal political organizations and research institutions.<sup>114</sup> The African American community also contains a number of businesses that provide local residents with a range of services. Within the business genre, there is a group of "cultural" businesses such as bars, restaurants, beauty parlors and barber shops that serve as important "meeting" places for African Americans.<sup>115</sup>

The computer mapping project showed that most of these organizations and businesses are located in or on the fringes of the East Side (Map 7). Also, there were several organizations located outside the East Side devoted to activities designed to enhance the quality of life inside the

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112. *Id.* at 7.

113. See *Organizational Structure*, *supra* note 69. The mapping software used in this book is *MapInfo Desktop Mapping Software*, ver. 4.5, Troy, New York.

114. *Id.* at 243-60.

115. *Id.* at 248-50.

ghetto.<sup>116</sup> Most organizations and businesses surveyed have enjoyed a long and stable history, and many have links with blacks living both inside and outside the ghetto. An examination of black churches and businesses illustrates this point.

Many of the churches interviewed indicated that some of their members lived in the suburbs, with one church indicating that sixty percent of its members lived beyond the city's boundaries. This suggests that even when middle-income residents flee the ghetto, many still remain part of its life, making a weekly trek to an East Side church.

Some of the churches are involved in activities designed to improve the quality of black life in the ghetto. St. John the Baptist on Goodell Street, for example, has built low-income and senior citizen housing units in the vicinity of their church. Gethsemane Baptist Church on Grape Street serves as the headquarters for the Black Leadership Forum, a group that contains a wide cross-section of Buffalo's black leadership. Most significantly, the ghetto church is a meeting ground for cross-class congregations. On Sabbath, at special events and at meetings, church members from across the income spectrum come together to worship, discuss common problems, plan the church's future and share friendships.<sup>117</sup>

The black businesses surveyed are also well-established East Side institutions. Most of the cultural businesses have been in existence for eleven or more years, with eighty percent being at the same location since their founding.<sup>118</sup> The other businesses surveyed were equally stable, with seventy percent of the proprietors owning the buildings in which their businesses are located.<sup>119</sup> Forty-two percent of the businesses surveyed indicated that customers reside both in and outside the neighborhoods where they are located. Twenty-nine percent said they were primarily neighborhood businesses and 29% said most of their customers reside outside the neighborhood.<sup>120</sup>

In order to gain deeper insight into the relation between black businesses and the organizational structure of the East Side, the approximate location of 749 black businesses was determined. The computer mapping

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116. For example, the Educational Opportunity Center is sponsored by the State University of New York at Buffalo. Its mission is to identify, counsel, prepare and recommend students with academic potential to colleges and universities. This institution evolved as a result of the struggles of African Americans during the sixties and is currently run by African Americans.

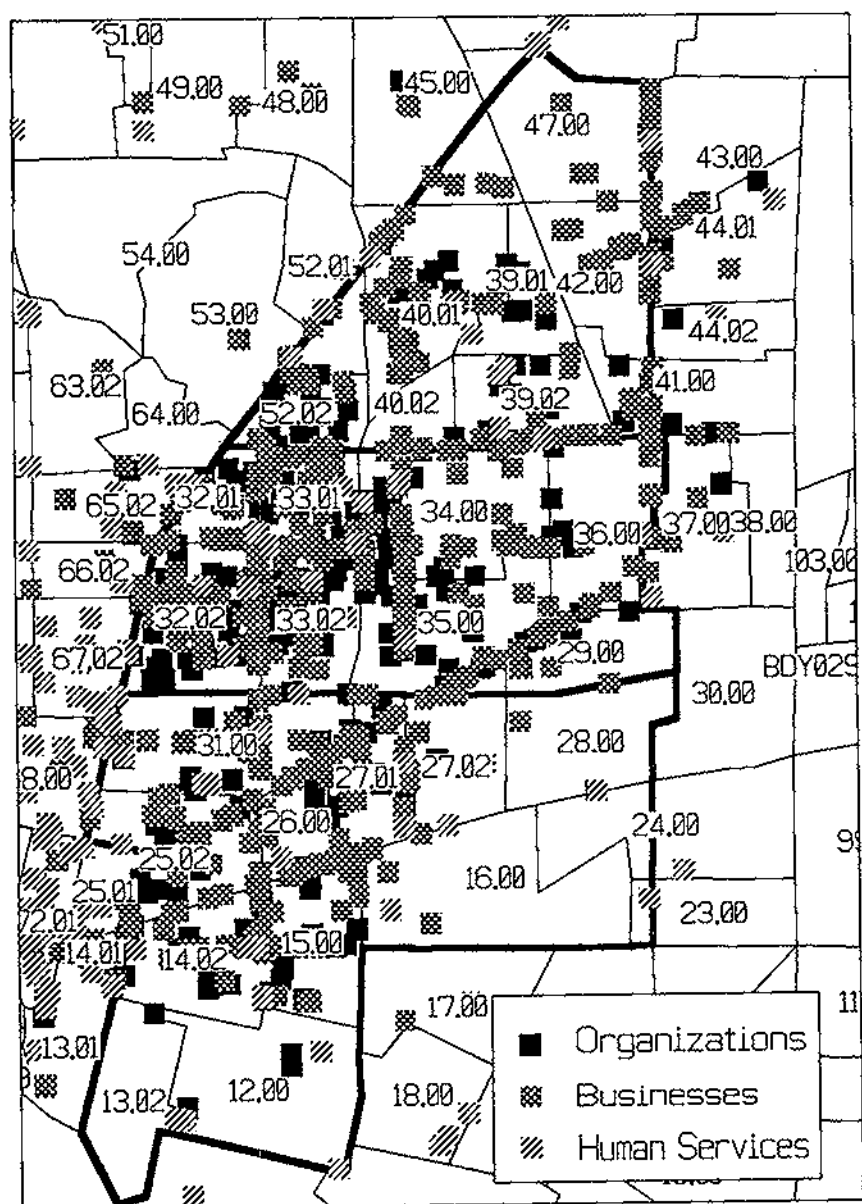
117. See *Organizational Structure*, *supra* note 69, at 248, 251.

118. *Id.* at 248.

119. *Id.* at 253.

120. *Id.*

## BLACK ORGANIZATIONS AND BUSINESSES AND HUMAN SERVICES



Source: Survey of Black Organizations and Businesses and Buffalo's Human Services Organizations (available at Center for Applied Public Affairs Studies, State University of New York at Buffalo).

project showed that 46% of Buffalo's black businesses are concentrated along just eight East Side streets: Jefferson, Fillmore, East Ferry, Genesee, Bailey, Main, East Delavan and Broadway (Map 7).<sup>121</sup> The businesses concentrated along these streets form neighborhood commercial strips that not only provide essential services to the African Americans living within the strip's market area, but also serve as psychological boundaries for neighborhoods. The black community also has two newspapers and several radio and television shows.<sup>122</sup> The black media helps keep ghetto residents informed and serves as a forum when important community issues are discussed.<sup>123</sup>

A district based political system ensures that ghetto residents are well represented in city, county and state government and on the school board.<sup>124</sup> For example, five of Buffalo's thirteen city councilmembers are black, including the council president. Black Buffalo also has two county legislators and the Deputy Speaker of the New York Assembly.<sup>125</sup> The president of the School Board is also president of the Urban League's Board of Directors and the School Superintendent is black.<sup>126</sup>

Contrary to Wilson's social transformation theory, economic and social dislocations and the outmigration of some middle-class blacks and higher paid workers in Buffalo have not led to the social isolation of the truly disadvantaged and have not led to the social collapse of the black ghetto. Buffalo's East Side has a viable organizational structure, with its community serving as a central place for African Americans that live in other parts of Buffalo and its suburbs.

### CONCLUSION

The purpose of this study was to contribute to the theory of social transformation by analyzing the black residential development process in Buffalo, New York. The study concluded that the rise of post-industrial society, the increase in economic and social dislocations and the widen-

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121. *Id.* at 247.

122. The black newspapers are *The Challenger* and *The Criterion*. Several local black leaders have radio talk shows: Arthur O. Eve, Charles Fisher and Carl Johnson. The Langston Hughes Center has a television show and Channel 7 (WKBW-ABC) runs a program called *Buffalo Beat*.

123. Each of the black newspapers and the radio and television shows focus on issues dealing with black community affairs.

124. 1 CHARTER AND ORDINANCES OF THE CITY OF BUFFALO, NEW YORK 1-16.8 (1985).

125. 1991 Roster of Buffalo Common Council Members (available at Buffalo City Clerk's Office, City Hall, Buffalo, New York); 1991 Roster of County Legislators and Officials (available at Erie County Legislature, Buffalo, New York); STATE YELLOW BOOK: A DIRECTORY OF EXECUTIVE AND LEGISLATIVE BRANCHES OF 50 STATE GOVERNMENTS, vol. 11, no. 2, at 530-34 (1990).

126. The president of the Urban League's Board is white.

ing class schism between middle and lower-income blacks have not led to a social transformation of Buffalo's East Side black community. Although some middle-class and higher paid workers have left the ghetto, many others have remained and have become integrated into neighborhood life and culture. Moreover, many middle-income blacks living in other parts of the metropolis have retained social and cultural links with the East Side community. The East Side, despite being hit hard by the structural changes in Buffalo's economy, remains a vibrant, well-organized community. Thus, Buffalo's low-wage workers and members of the underclass do not live in a hothouse of social isolation and anomie.

The findings of this study suggest that Wilson's theory of social transformation must be modified. Wilson is correct in his view of the industrial city black ghetto and in his notion that a significant increase in economic and social dislocations took place after 1960. In Buffalo, there has been a decline in labor force participation over the past thirty years and an increase in poverty, crime, drug addiction, female family heads and other social problems. Moreover, there is evidence that the black middle-class and higher paid workers have begun to move to the suburbs and neighborhoods located outside the ghetto.

Buffalo has not, however, experienced the mass exodus of the middle-class and higher-paid workers hypothesized by Wilson. Nor do the "truly disadvantaged" live in neighborhoods that are socially isolated and disorganized. In Buffalo, the "institutional" ghetto has not been transformed into the "physical" ghetto. Buffalo's ghetto is still a cross-class community with a vibrant organizational structure and with the community still serving as a meeting ground for blacks living in other parts of the metropolis. On this latter point, the data show that even when blacks leave the ghetto they remain culturally and organizationally tied to the region.

This does not mean that the theory of social transformation should be rejected. Many of the changes central to Wilson's explanation of residential development in post-industrial society have begun to take place in Buffalo. In fact, one might say that Buffalo's black community has already passed through the first stage of social transformation, but has not crossed that critical "tipping point"—the line beyond which the process of decay and deterioration accelerates. Viewed from this perspective, Wilson's theory of social transformation can provide, with the following qualification, a "general explanation" of the process of black residential development in the post-industrial city.

The findings of this study suggest that the process of social transformation develops unevenly. In many small and medium-sized cities, the process may be in the very early stages of development, such that the transformation process can be reversed by stopping or greatly reducing the outmigration of the black middle-class and higher-paid workers. This, however, creates an interesting dilemma. Open housing and residential integration were battle cries of the Civil Rights Movement, yet social transformation theory suggests that the emigration of the middle-class and higher-paid workers leads to the economic and social deterioration of the ghetto. Thus, to avoid the concentration effects of poverty, social isolation and anomie, a way must be found to keep the middle-class and higher paid workers in the ghetto.

On the other side of the coin, there is a danger that many policy makers will unquestioningly accept Wilson's social transformation theory as true and inevitable. If this happens, very serious mistakes will be made in formulating and implementing policies designed to attack the problems of poverty and the underclass. Nevertheless, social transformation theory does provide a framework for understanding the black residential development process and the complex changes that are taking place within the post-industrial black ghetto. If used cautiously, it creates a solid foundation upon which public policies designed to ameliorate conditions in the ghetto can be built.