The Roots of Racial Tension:

Urban Ethnic Neighborhoods

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At the opening of the 21st century and for the first time in the nation's history, whites constitute a minority of the total population in the United States' 100 largest cities.[1]

The significant influx of Latinos to urban areas and the steady out-migration of whites, have changed the complexion of cities, "fueling a renaissance in some urban centers and forcing civic leaders to confront wrenching decisions on how to cope with a new and fast-changing citizenry."[2]

Chicago is among the large cities that have experienced a steep drop in its white population and a sharp rise in the number of its Latino residents. As shown in figure 1, the Latino population increased by nearly 41 percent between 1990 and 2000, while the white population declined by almost 15 percent. Accordingly, whites as a proportion of the total population dipped to 26 percent in 2000, down from 38 percent in 1990.[3]

African Americans remain Chicago's largest single group at 36 percent, but even the black population registered a slight decrease (~2.1% from 1990 to 2000) after a steady but substantial rise throughout most of the twentieth century.

Figure 1 about here

In the eyes of many, the decline of the central city is associated with the steady outmigration of whites and the growing presence of Latinos on top of an already large

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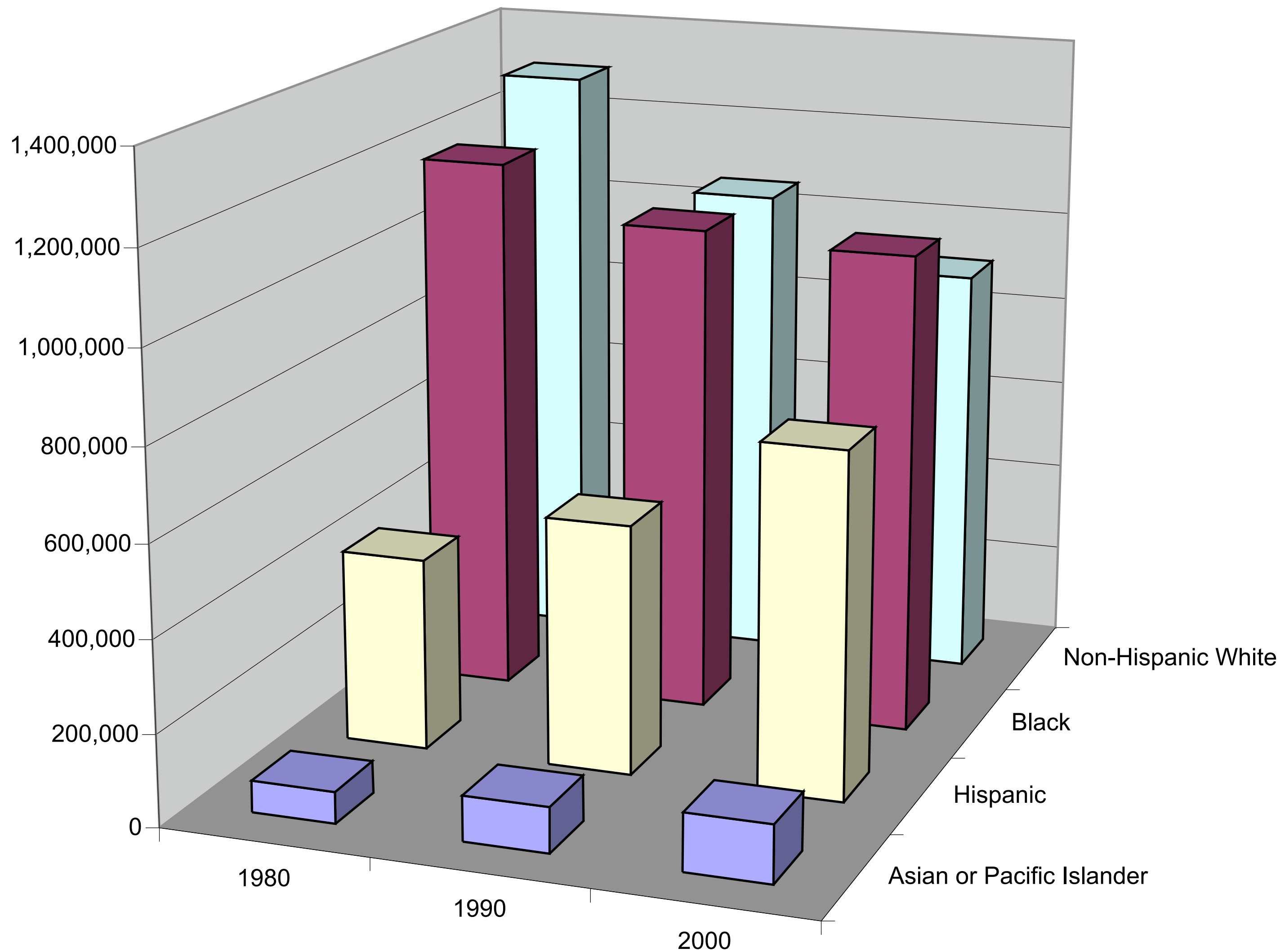
* This paper is based on a larger study, William Julius Wilson and Richard Taub (and several other collaborators, including Erin Augis, Patrick Carr, Chenoa Flippen, Jennifer Johnson, Maria Kefalas, Reuben A. Buford May, Mary Pattilo, Jennifer Pashup, and Jolyon S. Wurr), *The Roots of Racial Tension: Urban Ethnic Neighborhoods.* New York: Alfred A. Knopf, forthcoming, 2003.

1. The racial category "whites" as used in this paper refers to the census classification of "non-Latino whites."

2. Eric Schmitt, "Whites in Minority in Largest Cities, the Census Shows." *New York Times,* April 30, 2001, p. 1.

3. In the 2000 Census respondents are allowed to classify themselves using multiple race categories. In all the figures in this book the category "Latino" includes the small percentage of individuals who listed themselves as Latino and at least one other race. In this book, we use the word "Latino" when referring to a person described in the census as Latino.

Figure 1. CITY OF CHICAGO: Total Population by Race and Hispanic Origin 1980-2000



SOURCES: Census 2000 Summary File (SF 1) 100 Percent Data, 1990 Summary Tape File 1 (STF 1) 100 Percent Data, 1980 Summary Tape File 1 (STF 1) 100 Percent Data.

African-American population. This perception, influenced by beliefs that the cultural traits of Latinos and blacks contribute to urban decay, hardly captures the complex structural factors that transformed American cities in the past several decades.

During the very period when metropolises are undergoing ethnic change, economic and residential life in the urban United States has featured a relentless decentralization. At the edge of metropolitan areas, shopping malls, housing subdivisions, industrial clusters, and corporate offices have been growing at an incredible rate. Accordingly, in the new economy, rapidly developing outer-edge suburbs have become regions of population growth, employment growth, and wealth creation.[4]

The older areas—central cities and inner-ring suburbs—are left behind with growing concentrations of poverty, particularly minority poverty, and "without the fiscal capacity to grapple with the consequences: joblessness, family fragmentation, and failing schools."[5]

With a declining tax base and simultaneous loss of federal funds, municipalities have experienced difficulty in raising sufficient revenue to cover basic services. In some, basic services were cut to avoid bankruptcy court. A particularly poignant example can be seen in the fact that some urban public schools were unable to attract competent teachers and administrators, upgrade their facilities, or even purchase new textbooks.[6]

As political and social forces turned against the cities through the 1980s, businesses became more reluctant to invest in urban areas, and the quality of urban life declined, as evidenced by the spread of pollution and diminishing services. Although fiscal conditions in many cities, including Chicago, improved significantly as a result of the prolonged economic recovery in the latter half of the 1990s and into 2000,[7] by early 2002 the economy has begun to slow, which threatens this brief period of economic progress.

In the nation's largest cities, many urban residents move, if they have the choice, to outlying sections of metropolitan areas. Many of those who remain in or migrate to the city compete, often along racial and ethnic lines, for decent housing, safe neighborhoods,

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4. Bruce Katz, "Beyond City Limits: The Emergence of a New Metropolitan Agenda. Unpublished Manuscript, Brookings Institution, Washington D.C., 1999.

5. Ibid, p. 1.

6. Wall Street rating bonds issued to finance infrastructure and other capital improvements in cities were upgraded during this period, a clear reflection of the cities' improved fiscal outlook. The better rating bonds enable cities to pay investors a lower interest rate for the bonds they sell. This frees up millions of dollars in added revenue that can be used for vital service and infrastructure improvements, such as investments in schools, and it may even produce tax cuts for businesses and residents (U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development 1999).

7. For a more detailed discussion of the feelings of Beltway residents about their neighborhood, see Maria Kefalas, Working-Class Heroes. Berkeley CA: University of California Press, 2003. Kefalas is one of the collaborators in our studty.

and good schools, thereby aggravating inter-group relations and elevating racial and ethnic tensions.

Accordingly, to comprehend fully the dynamics of urban racial and ethnic tensions across the United States it is important to understand that patterns of inter-group competition for these scare resources mainly takes place in neighborhoods. Indeed, the roots of much of the racial tension in America are found in neighborhood social dynamics. And racial tensions originating in neighborhoods are often aggravated by and become inextricably linked to the direction and dynamics of national racial politics.

Given the growing ethnic diversity of urban areas in America, we approached this study with the belief that it would be useful to compare neighborhoods representing different racial and ethnic groups for two reasons: first, to capture the full range of neighborhood inter-group tensions and, second, to explain variations and changes in neighborhood racial antagonisms. We also felt that the most representative neighborhoods would be those that are neither poor nor affluent. We chose neighborhoods that represent mainly the working- and lower-middle classes—neighborhoods, in short, that best stand for ordinary Americans.

In 1992, after devoting a good deal of time to gathering and examining census-type data on working and lower-middle-class Chicago neighborhoods, we selected four—Groveland, Beltway, Archer Park, and Dover. For purposes of confidentially, these names are pseudonyms for neighborhoods in the city's south and west sides.

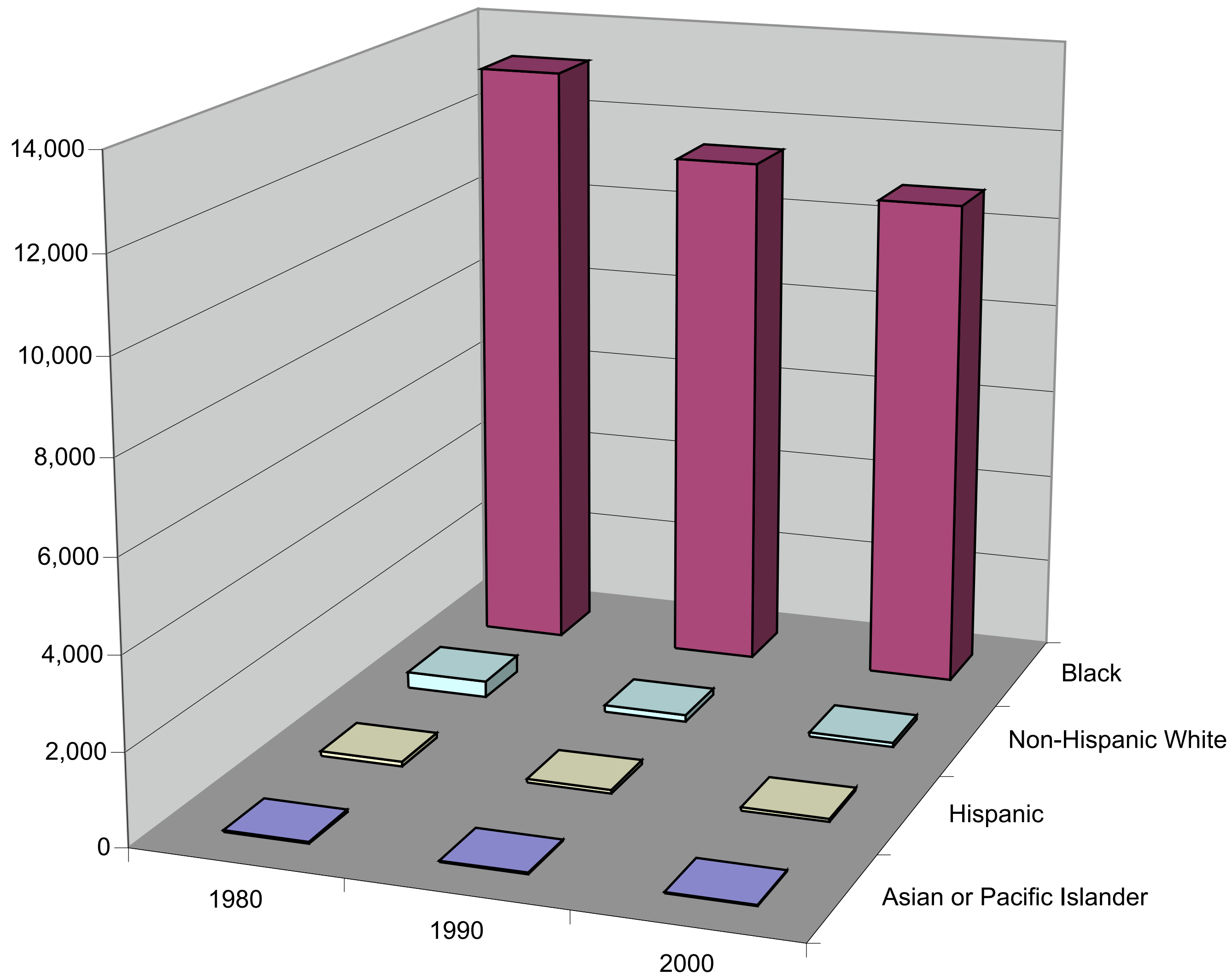
We chose Groveland, a community of close to 12,000 residents and located in the southeastern corner of Chicago, as our African-American community. Lined with neat houses featuring trim yards, this neighborhood's housing stock was constructed in the 1950s and 1960s. Single-family dwellings account for almost 70 percent of all the housing units in Groveland. Although the total population of Groveland has declined slightly since 1990, it remains overwhelmingly African American (95%—see figure 2).

Figure 2 about here

The residents of Groveland work mainly in the government and not-for-profit sectors of the Chicago economy, although a fair number depend on manufacturing for their jobs. Although income and educational levels in Groveland slightly exceed those in Beltway and Dover (and are even higher than those in Archer Park), it has higher poverty and unemployment rates than those in Beltway and Dover. Thus although Groveland is ethnically more homogeneous than Beltway and Dover, it is more heterogeneous in terms of economic class.

We selected Beltway, a neighborhood of slightly more than 22,000 residents located on the southwest side of the city, featuring carefully manicured lawns and gardens dotted with statuary, as our white neighborhood. Beltway's white population is a mixture of

Figure 2. GROVELAND: Total Population by Race and Hispanic Origin 1980-2000



SOURCES: Census 2000 Summary File (SF 1) 100 Percent Data, 1990 Summary Tape File 1 (STF 1) 100 Percent Data, 1980 Summary Tape File 1 (STF 1) 100 Percent Data.

persons of Polish, Lithuanian, and Irish extraction. As shown in figure 3, Beltway was 95 percent non-Latino white in 1980, by 1990 this number had decreased slightly to 92 percent, with a Latino—predominantly Mexican American—group concentrated in

Figure 3 about here

the eastern and less affluent section of the neighborhood and constituting 7.5 percent of Beltway's population. However, by 2000 the white population of Beltway had declined to 76 percent and the Latino population had risen to 21 percent. Similar to Groveland, Beltway's housing stock was constructed in the 1950s and 1960s, and a sizable number of its residents are government (mainly city) employees.

We choose Archer Park, situated on the west side of Chicago as our Latino community. As shown in figure 4, the total population of Archer Park is on the rise: the neighborhood grew from 75,204 in 1980 to 81,155 in 1990 to 91,071 in 2000. Currently, seventy-nine percent of Archer Park's residents are Mexican, and just 3 percent are Puerto Rican. African Americans, who reside in the northeast and north central edges of the neighborhood adjacent to a nearly all black neighborhood, comprise 13 percent of Archer Park's populace. Only 3.5 percent of Archer Park is white, down from 6 percent in 1990 and 24 percent in 1980. Most of the remaining whites are elderly descendants of Eastern

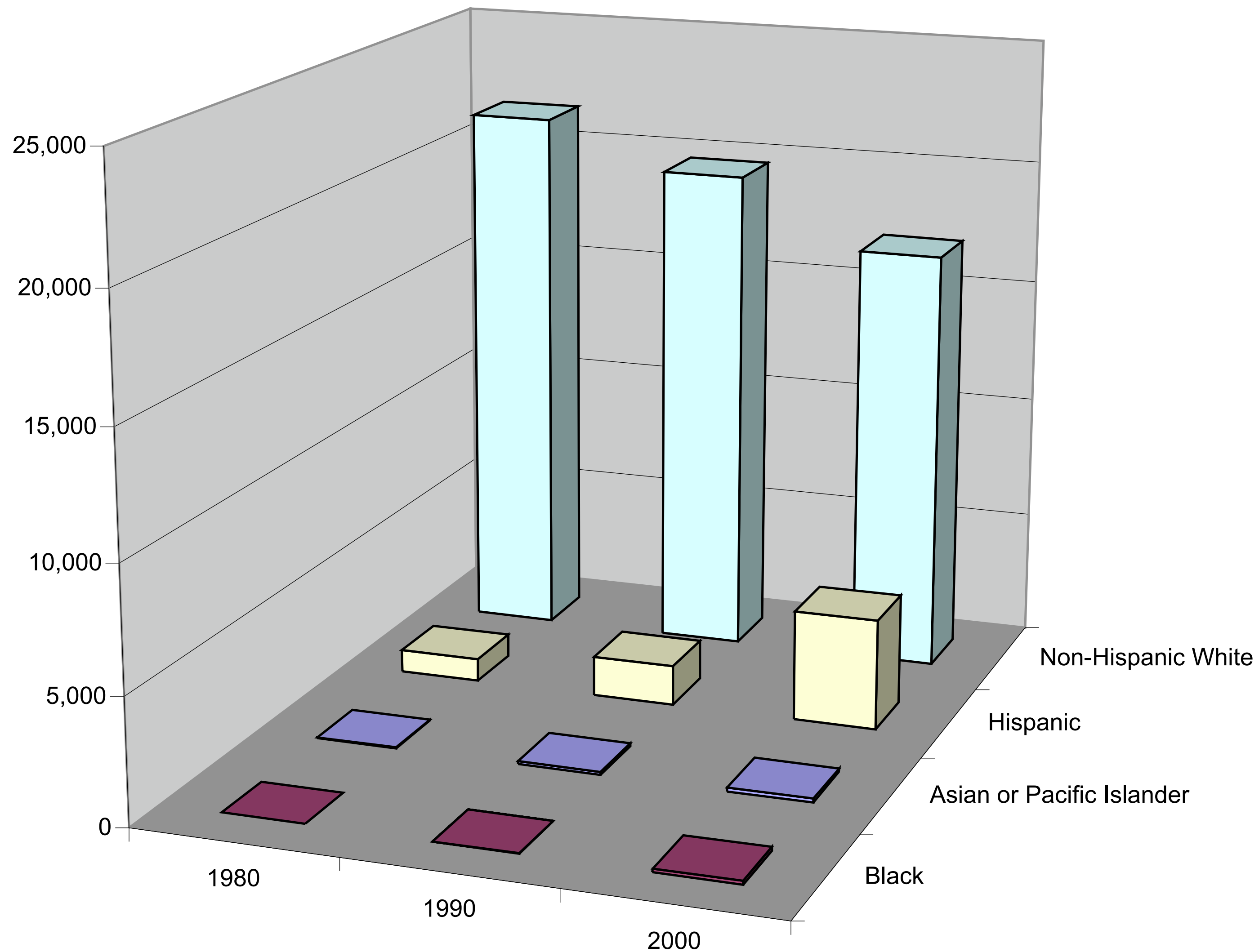
Figure 4 about here

immigrants. Because its Spanish-speaking population has a very high number of recent immigrants, Archer Park is poorer than the other three neighborhoods. The long-term Mexican residents are mainly industrial and service-sector workers whereas the new immigrants work in multiple jobs in the low-wage service sector of the economy.

In order to understand the dynamics of ethnic tension and neighborhood change, we selected Dover, a near west side neighborhood of almost 45,000 residents and located near Archer Park as our white neighborhood in transition. Over the last decade, Dover has experienced a remarkable ethnic transformation. In 1980, 83 percent of the population was white. In 1990, two years before we began our research, 60 percent of the residents were white. However, as shown in figure 5, by the year 2000, the non-Latino white population had plummeted to 18 percent. Seventy-seven percent of the population in Dover is now Latino.

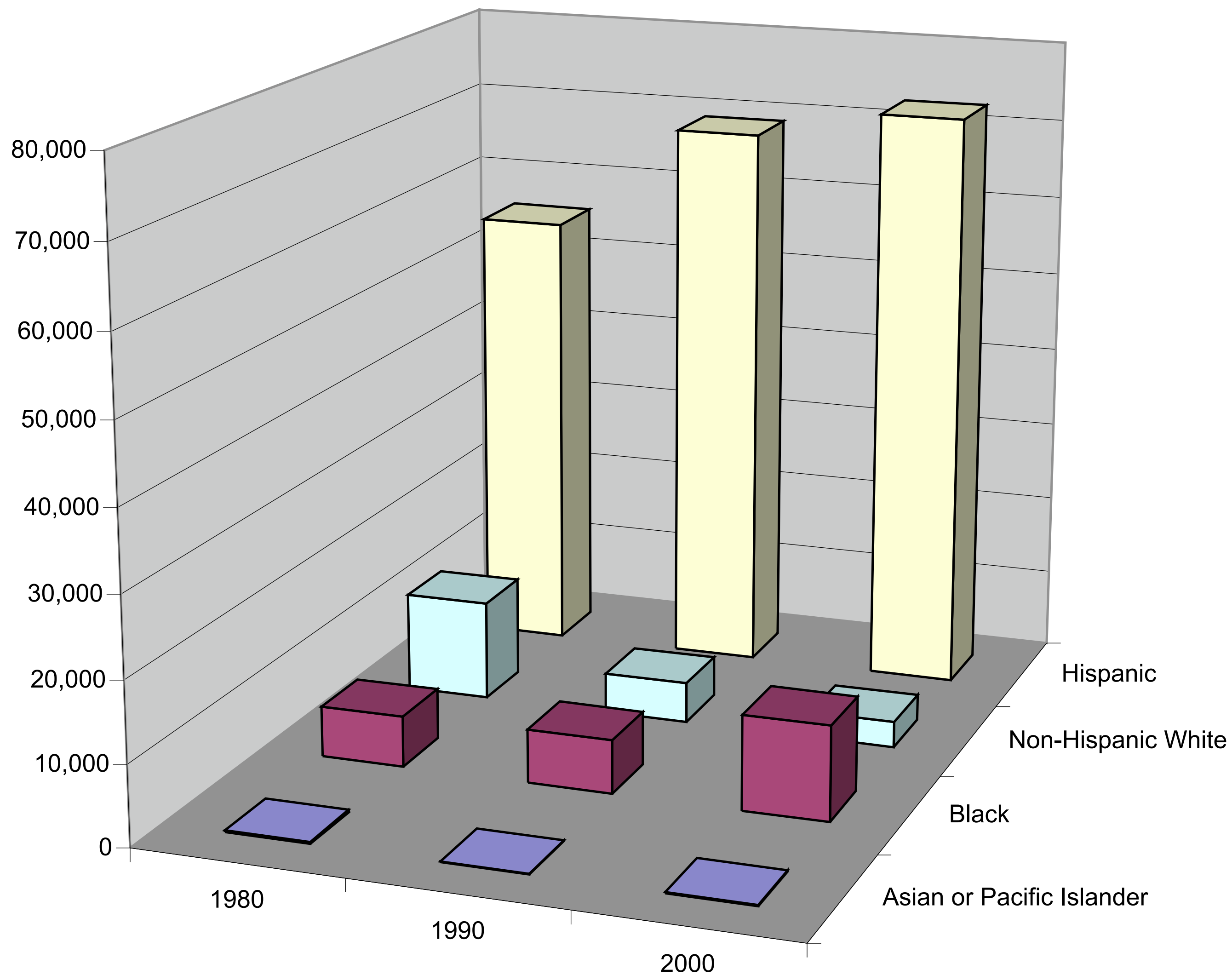
Figure 5 about here

Figure 3. BELTWAY: Total Population by Race and Hispanic Origin 1980-2000



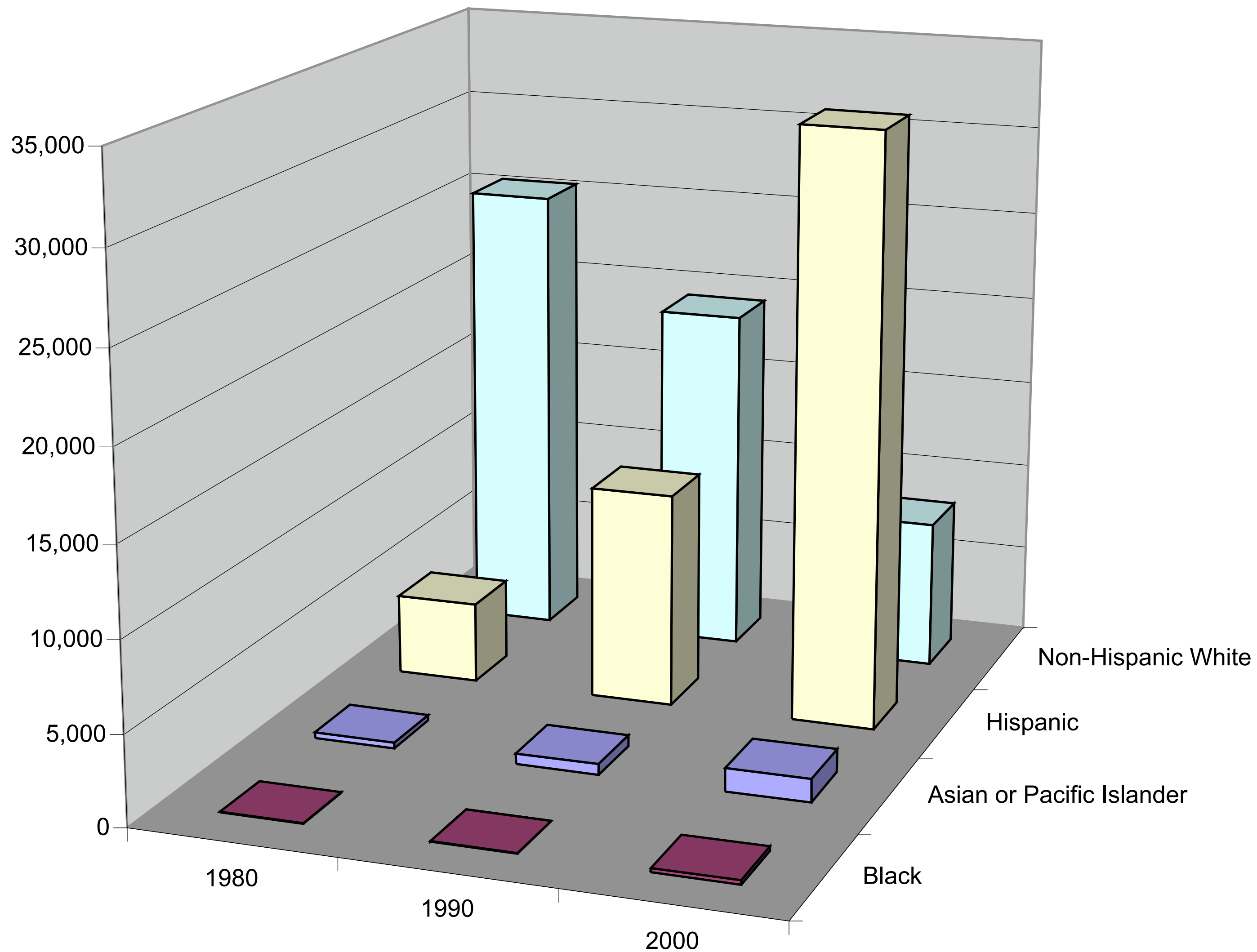
SOURCES: Census 2000 Summary File (SF 1) 100 Percent Data, 1990 Summary Tape File 1 (STF 1) 100 Percent Data, 1980 Summary Tape File 1 (STF 1) 100 Percent Data.

Figure 4. ARCHER PARK: Total Population by Race and Hispanic Origin 1980-2000



SOURCES: Census 2000 Summary File (SF 1) 100 Percent Data, 1990 Summary Tape File 1 (STF 1) 100 Percent Data, 1980 Summary Tape File 1 (STF 1) 100 Percent Data.

Figure 5. DOVER: Total Population by Race and Hispanic Origin 1980-2000



SOURCES: Census 2000 Summary File (SF 1) 100 Percent Data, 1990 Summary Tape File 1 (STF 1) 100 Percent Data, 1980 Summary Tape File (STF 1) 100 Percent Data.

In addition to data collected on behavior that relates explicitly to racial and ethnic concerns in a given neighborhood, including data on the residents' relationships with and perceptions of other racial and ethnic groups in the city, we also observed and documented the manner in which the residents of each neighborhood shared an outlook or worldview, defined and handled their collective problems and maintained social order.

Data on the social and cultural organization of the neighborhood cannot be readily obtained by survey research, but by detailed ethnographic research conducted by researchers trained to observe and record the subtle aspects of social and institutional behavior. The ethnographic method enables the researcher to capture the contextual aspects of social behavior—that is, data on the broader social environment in which the behavior occurs, including background information relevant to the behavior.

Our ethnographic team consisted of 9 University of Chicago graduate student research assistants who immerse themselves in these neighborhoods for almost three years— from January 1993 to September 1995—and provided the research field notes and observations for which this study is primarily based.

Three of the research assistants covered Archer Park while Groveland, Dover, and Beltway were researched by two assistants each. To the best of our ability, we matched the race of our teams with the residents in the neighborhoods where the fieldwork was being conducted. African-American graduate students talked with and visited the residents of Groveland, white graduate students covered Beltway. Although the ethnographic research in Archer Park and Dover was conducted by whites, all five graduate students were fluent in Spanish and so were able to approach residents there on the basis of a shared language.

In Beltway, Dover, and Archer Park, fears, antagonisms, and anger toward African Americans were widespread. However, blacks in Groveland tended not to exhibit such racial hostility toward whites or Latinos. Whereas our fieldworkers in the three non-black neighborhoods recorded expressions of anti-black sentiment in numerous settings, the fieldworkers in Groveland heard remarkably few negative comments about whites and other ethnic groups. To understand these differences in the expression of racial antagonisms requires a consideration of the different social contexts in each neighborhood.

With the looming threat of desegregation, many whites fled ethnic working-class neighborhoods in the South of Chicago in the 1970s. Although most migrated to the suburbs, some relocated to predominantly white working-class neighborhoods in the Northwest and Southwest sides of the city. Beltway was one of these neighborhoods.

The Neighborhood of Beltway

Many of the residents moved to Beltway in response to black encroachment in their former neighborhoods on the south side of Chicago. Since employees of the city of Chicago have to live in the city, and since Beltway is on the western edge of the city, the residents there have gone as far as they can go and yet remain in Chicago. Tucked behind

Midway Airport, Beltway residents feel somewhat protected from the penetration of minorities.

High rates of residential stability and class and racial homogeneity have, over the years, provided the residents and community leaders with a commonly held foundation for social organization and the maintenance for social control. However, residents worry about the future makeup of the community and feel, living at the city boundary, that their "backs are against the wall."[8]

There is a general feeling among the residents of Beltway that African Americans are "taking over the city" and are receiving a disproportionate share of the city's resources. Moreover, they perceive blacks as bearers of substandard values and perpetrators of crime and other social problems that they view as contributing to the decline of American society.

The potential arrival of African Americans and other minorities, including Latinos and Asians, was viewed by many residents as a threat to Beltway's way of life. The residents of Beltway had seen other neighborhoods transformed from white strongholds into racially diverse neighborhoods with increasing rates of social disorganization, declining social institutions and falling property values. They dreaded the possibility that these circumstances could befall their community.

Heightened concerns about race are reflected in the social organization of the neighborhood. Residents are called upon to resist gangs, beautify their own property, support and encourage local businesses, and clean up graffiti. For Beltwayites signs that the neighborhood "is going down" include poorly maintained lawns, graffiti, the appearance of empty lots, large numbers of For Sale signs, and an overt lack of adult supervision of youth. In the eyes of Beltwayites as the neighborhood fabric weakens, the threat of penetration by outside groups increases. For all these reasons, community pressure to maintain a high level of social organization is intense.

The ability of the residents of Beltway to reach and sustain a relatively high level of social organization is enhanced by several factors, including a network of dense acquaintanceships, the presence of extended families, a high level of residential stability, vibrant community organizations, powerful institutional ties, and common ethnic, racial, and class backgrounds. Consequently, common goals, such as maintaining stability in the racial and ethnic mix of the neighborhood, are more easily achieved.

However, the social organization of Beltway also benefits from a "common belief system," widely shared by the residents, that integrates social conservatism, patriotism, and sentiments concerning the adherence to neighborhood standards. This belief system generates a clear set of specific behavioral norms: parents must supervised their children, residents are obligated to the community for the care and appearance of their property,

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8. For further elaboration on these conceptual distinctions applied to Dover, see Chenoa Flippen, one of the collaborators of our study, "Neighborhood Transition and Social Organization: The White Hispanic Case," *Social Problems,* Vol 48, No. 3, pp. 299-321.

and community members must stand together to resist graffiti, gangbangers, and other bad influences usually attributed to minorities and other outsiders. As emphasized previously, they feel that if the neighborhood is allowed to deteriorate, some residents will be encouraged to leave. Blacks and Latinos from neighborhoods that border Beltway could then fill the vacancies.

Given the concerns about keeping the neighborhood stable to prevent the penetration of minorities, the supervision of young people is a growing concern. Many Beltwayites, particularly the older residents, believe that youngsters pose a major threat to the social organization of the neighborhood. Accordingly, the hostility toward young people is palpable.

But despite all the efforts to keep the neighborhood stable, the latest census figures on the demographic makeup of Beltway suggest that they are gradually losing the battle. The white population of Beltway declined by 13.5 percent between 1990 and 2000 and the Latino population nearly tripled, reaching 21 percent. Likewise, the Asian population, although still very small, increased 31 percent during the decade and is now approaching one percent of the population. However, perhaps the clearest symbol of change is the fifteen-fold increase in the number African American residents from only 9 in 1990 to 137 (or 0.6% of the population) in 2000.

Our field researchers were in Beltway during the first half of the 1990s, when the residents themselves were cognizant of the signs that things were beginning to change. It was especially clear that there was a pending increase in the number and proportion of Latino homeowners. As a principal of a local elementary and middle school put it in 1994, "I see more homes up for sale. But part of it is that [whites leaving in response to perceived demographic changes in the neighborhood], and part of it is that there are older families. Moms and Dads have stayed here but the kids are not moving back here. They are selling homes." Asked about the changing racial makeup of Beltway and what the older homeowners think, the Vice Principal of the local high school replied in February 1994, "Sure they fear it, as a practical issue they fear the loss of value to their property." And in 1994 one of the local aldermen had this comment on the influx of people of color in Beltway:

> Oh yeah, racially it's changed and I don't want to say the community is racist. I say the community is very conservative and they're very concerned about their homes, their schools and their property values and they want to be able to walk the streets safely, they want to improve on their homes if they're going to live her for the rest of their lives. They don't want their area to ëgo under' so to speak like . . . certain areas in the other parts of the city.

On the changing face of the neighborhood and the reactions of the residents concerned about diversity, 15-year old Tini Lupinski said, "They think that if one black family gets in, there goes the neighborhood. But the neighborhood has already been gone for a long time, but they don't even realize it."

Nonetheless, Beltway is one of the neighborhoods where white municipal workers of the

city of Chicago, required to live within the city limits, choose to live. Despite the notable demographic changes in Beltway since 1990, the significant presence of these municipal workers combined with Beltway's relatively strong social organization, might prevent the kind of rapid mass exodus of whites that Dover has experienced.

The Neighborhood of Dover

Once an area of working class Eastern European immigrants, Dover has evolved into a haven for Mexican-Americans and therefore serves as an apt example of a Chicago neighborhood undergoing ethnic transformation. In Dover, the white ethnics who "built" the neighborhood fought long and hard to keep it racially exclusive. Whereas the city of Chicago is roughly 36 percent African American, less than one percent of the residents of Dover are African American. Many people encountered on the street use the word "nigger" openly, and explicitly described their efforts to keep African Americans out of the community as righteous.

Although white racial hostility in Dover is notable, there is greater white tolerance for co-residence with Latinos than there is for African Americans. Nonetheless, given the rapid increase in the Latino population of Dover, white hostility toward Latinos was on the rise during the time our researchers collected data in the neighborhood in the first half of the 1990s.

Since 1990 whites have overwhelmingly chosen to exit the neighborhood and are now represented by only 18 percent of the population. Before the Mexican-Americans began to move into the community in large numbers, Dover was struggling through economic decline. Industrial layoffs, coupled with the exodus of many who had acquired the means to purchase newer houses in the suburbs, softened the housing market and lowered property values. The arrival of a large number of Latinos beginning in the 1980s reversed this trend by increasing housing demand. Thus, unlike Beltway, Dover had neither the population stability nor the institutional strength to prevent a rapid ethnic turnover.

Rapid social change challenges institutional arrangements and patterns of behavior. In Dover the recent Mexican arrivals are generally younger than the more established white residents, and language and cultural differences separate the groups. Indeed, for many long-time Doverites the arrival of newcomers parallels a decline in neighborhood prosperity. Patronela, a woman of Polish descent who had lived in the neighborhood for 32 years reported, "They're a different nationality—strange people. They come and go. They don't care about the neighborhood." In the eyes of some of the older white residents, not only are the Mexicans taking over the community, they are contributing to its deterioration.

When asked is this a nice neighborhood, the first response of most white people on the street was that it was very much in decline and rapidly becoming more Mexican. They openly expressed resentment toward their Latino neighbors, and blamed them for the defacement of public property and with reducing public safety. Whites often complained that Latinos were lawless, dirty, unappreciative, and did not pay for their share of community services.

On the street one afternoon, our two fieldworkers met an older Lithuanian man who had lived in the neighborhood for over two decades and worked in a local bar. He had recently moved to the suburbs but on this occasion he had returned to visit his son, who still lived in the community. Of Dover, he offered,

> It's going down—the whole neighborhood. The Mexicans are coming in, and they don't care. It's different now. They don't care. They just start moving in and they want your neighborhood. They don't want you in it, they want it. Now it is all just Mexicans. They put up graffiti, mark up the garage doors…

Mexicans, unwilling to allow their cultural practices to dilute in the "American melting pot," express resentment towards white residents. When asked what it was like living in Dover, one young Latino man who had just recently moved from Pilsen, a Latino enclave to the East, replied, "My neighbor is really grouchy. I say 'Hi,' to him and he just ignores me. But I think it's because our skin is a few shades too dark."

Tensions between whites and Latinos bubble just below the surface, and occasionally erupt in public settings, usually in conflicts over language. An exchange between white and Latino audience members at a public meeting in 1995 illustrates the wall of resistance long-time residents have constructed against Latino efforts to include Spanish alongside English as a civic and commercial language. A Latino man in his thirties stood before the microphone in a room with at least 100 Dover residents and a handful of local politicians, and chastised the meeting organizers for not providing signs and community announcements in Spanish. Although there was an interpreter on hand responsible for translating throughout the meeting, posters with a community calendar were only written in English.

The man's criticism was met with a wave of audible disagreement in the crowd, which found expression in the comments of a white woman who yelled from the back of the crowded room, "This is America!" The man then reiterated his contention that more should be done to accommodate the Spanish-speaking residents who had not yet learned English, an opinion echoed by a Latino woman seated in the front row. Signs of commotion swept through the audience and the white woman fired back, "Well what about the Poles then?" This comment no doubt referred to the substantial Polish community in the neighborhood many of whose members have made the painful transition from native tongue to English and have done so, in their recollection, without the kind of assistance being requested by the Latino community.

This instance vivifies one aspect of the underlying tension that separates the two groups. Latino community members felt as though they were not being allowed to participate in Dover community life because of language barriers, while the Eastern European immigrants and their American born descendants feel that the Mexicans are not putting forth any effort to learn the English language. In fact, some of the white residents consider calls by Latinos to provide public documents and signs in Spanish as arrogant and an affront to the American way of life.

In the face of neighborhood transition, organizations in Dover have either declined,

divided along ethnic lines, or united internally through inter-ethnic networks and coalitions.[9]

Business and civic organizations have been on the path of decline largely due to a reluctance or inability to draw participants from the Latino community. Whether vacancies are created by an aging or fleeing white population, the result is the same: the organizations are withering away. Local churches, on the other hand, have attracted large numbers of Latino members, but cultural clashes have led to ethnic divisions that generally resulted in the two groups segregating themselves.

If there is a commonality between Latinos and whites in Dover, it has to do with their response to African Americans. Latino residents of Dover, including the recent arrivals, are no more amenable to living with African Americans than those of Eastern European descent. Racism in Dover is exacerbated by the fact that many residents of the nearby black community are destitute, so knowledge about African Americans drawn from adjacent areas reinforces the stereotype of black poverty. And while Latino enclaves provide a buffer between Dover and the poor black neighborhoods, it is a thin buffer at best.

Given the proximity to black ghetto neighborhoods, efforts to prevent the busing of students in overcrowded Dover schools to nearby black neighborhood provide the only context and impetus for cooperation between whites and Latinos. Schools, in particular, have been the venues for ethnic unification and integration as white and Latino parents, faced with the threat of an unappealing solution to over crowded schools having joined forces in the battle against bussing.

Vigorously opposing busing and stressing the need for the construction of new schools, white and Latino parents argued that the underutilized receiver schools were inferior and that their location in dangerous neighborhoods place children in harm's way. Since the underutilized schools were predominantly black, statements made about the safety and quality of education cannot be separated from attitudes about race.

Although the main actors in the dynamics of ethnic change in Dover are whites and Latinos, given the nearby impoverished and crime-plagued black neighborhood of Stockton, concerns about African Americans permeate the neighborhood. Despite a recent numerical increase in the small African-American population in Dover, by 2000 the black population was still less than one percent. Moreover, aside from city workers employed by the government—postal employees, bus drivers, librarians, and so on—very few blacks pass casually through Dover. Nonetheless, in conversations with our fieldworkers, both whites and Latinos frequently displayed hostile black sentiments. These sentiments are no doubt aggravated by the community's intense opposition to the bussing of Dover children to schools in the ghetto of Stockton.

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9. For further elaboration on these conceptual distinctions applied to Dover, see Chenoa Flippen, one of the collaborators of our study, "Neighborhood Transition and Social Organization: The White Hispanic Case," *Social Problems,* Vol 48, No. 3, pp. 299-321.

Hostile black sentiments are also displayed in the neighborhood of Archer Park.

The Neighborhood of Archer Park

Over the latter decades of the 20th century, Archer Park transformed from a neighborhood exclusively inhabited by whites, many Bohemian, to a haven for Mexican Americans. Henri Hernandez, the president of the local Chamber of Commerce, proudly describes the community as a well-known Mexican community, "Archer Park is truly unique. It has the largest concentration of Mexicans in the Midwest…If you live, let's say in Kansas, and you're a Mexican, you know about Archer Park."

In contrast to Beltway and Dover, Archer Park allows us to examine the dynamics of inter-group relations in a neighborhood where ethnic control of the community and key institutions is firmly established. Unlike in previous years, when Archer Park was inhabited mainly by whites, racial and ethnic tensions are not related to neighborhood preservation or control of major institutions. Moreover, unlike in Dover, and especially in Beltway, the social organization of the neighborhood does not reflect concerns about ethnic and racial challenges to the prerogatives of the group currently in control of the neighborhood.

Despite a slight numerical increase in the black population in outer fringe areas of the neighborhood, Archer Park shows no signs of an ethnic turnover. The sustained movement of upwardly mobile Mexicans out of Archer Park to Dover and other neighborhoods in the Chicago metropolitan region is counterbalanced by the steady stream of foreign-born Mexicans into the neighborhood. Given the absence of a challenge to Mexican control of the neighborhood and its key institutions such as the schools, groups dedicated to specifically Mexican or Latino issues are notably absent and concerns about discrimination are muted.

But there is another factor that may play a role in the diminished role of race and ethnicity in the social organization of Archer Park. Of the four neighborhoods in this study, Archer Park is fairly distinct in its status as a "stepping stone community." For example, Dover, which ranks above Archer Park in terms of housing prices and class status, includes many residents who once lived in Archer Park.

Our field researchers observed signs of transience rather than permanence in Archer Park, a view confirmed by the remarks of most residents who aspire to move. Further, even long-time Archer Park residents exhibited feelings of longing for another community. Accordingly, aside from lack of a perceived threat to Mexican dominance in Archer Park, the relatively lower commitment to the neighborhood as a permanent place of residence decreases concerns about the future of the neighborhood and its institutions, or of ethnic or racial changes in the neighborhood.

What does concern the Mexican population of Archer Park is their relative status vis-‡-vis African Americans. Unlike in Beltway and Dover where hostility toward blacks is associated with neighborhood preservation and access to and control of local public schools, Mexican animus toward African Americans in Archer Park involves attempts to

differentiate themselves from blacks in terms of social prestige. This is accomplished in two main ways. Mexicans explicitly describe the actions of African Americas as socially unacceptable in their desire to escape the stigmas of poverty and criminal activity routinely ascribed to minorities such as blacks and Latinos in the United States. And many Mexicans interviewed by our field workers more explicitly set themselves apart from African Americans by commenting on the undesirability of dark skin or of "looking black."

A widespread feeling of racial competition in the larger city of Chicago also pervades Archer Park. The Mexicans believe that they are competing with African Americans for scare resources in the city, and they furthermore conclude that blacks have already received an unfair share of these resources.

The Neighborhood of Groveland

However, the residents in the African American neighborhood of Groveland exhibited a different kind of racial sentiment that stands in sharp contrast not only to the residents of Beltway, Dover, and Archer Park, but also to the description of black racial antagonisms in recent literature depicting the "rage of the black middle class."[10]

Although the residents of Groveland are not members of the privileged class of African Americans, there is little evidence of the kind of racial hostility toward whites or preoccupation with the racial issues highlighted in the literature on the racial views of the black middle class.

When whites, usually workers, appear in Groveland, their presence did not generate negative comments. Indeed, black interactions with the few whites who work or live there tended to be congenial. When the black residents of Groveland report experiences of racial discrimination, it is frequently accompanied by a sad shake of the head with expression such as "you know how white people are." Indeed the racial discourse often describes how whites do numerous things better than blacks e.g., organizing political action or preparing catering trays in super markets. Conversations in the neighborhood clearly reveal a preference for goods and services provided by and for whites.

Thus, whereas racial and ethnic hostilities are palpable in Beltway and Dover and evident, if not as intense, in Archer Park, in the African American neighborhood of Groveland such antagonisms are hardly visible.

Groveland, a community of lower-middle class black residents, presents an interesting case study for evaluating racial dialogue. This neighborhood openly expresses and negotiates the notion of what it means to be African American in today's society. Although interracial contact within Groveland is minimal, race remains a frequent topic of discussion. However, unlike in Beltway, Dover, and Archer Park, the racial dialogue is not infused with hostile expressions about other groups. In fact, discussions pertaining to race overwhelmingly reflect concerns about forging a positive black identity.

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10. See Ellis Cose, *The Rage of a Privileged Class.* New York: HarperCollins, 1993.

In the center of the local park, a building houses a collection of pictures and stories commemorating the lives of famous blacks who have succeeded in various fields. In selecting images and music for public consumption, residents exert control over the cultural sense they wish to convey to visitors as well as the image of black identity they wish to reinforce for themselves.

As a middle-class community, the upkeep of the neighborhood remains an important priority, and Groveland's block clubs play a critical function in this regard. Moreover these informal local networks help to ensure that newcomers observe the traditions established by the older members of the community. The lines that separate Groveland and the rest of society are not merely roads or train tracks, but rather a prevailing concept of what, in a larger sense, it means to be an African American, and, more specifically, what it means to be a black living in Groveland.

When Groveland residents spoke to our fieldworkers about interracial matters, their words seldom reflected animus toward other ethnic groups, a sharp contrast to the racial perceptions our field workers observed in the three other neighborhoods. Indeed, positive evaluations of white businesses and positive comments about white individuals and neighborhoods were not infrequent.

In assessing these relatively congenial racial attitudes, it is important to consider the following. In 1990, approximately one-third of the employed population in Groveland worked for the city, state, or federal government. This figure is five times the proportion of employed government workers in Archer Park, almost four times the proportion in Dover, and twice the proportion in Beltway. Civil service jobs, particularly those obtained through formal tests or examinations, not only significantly reduce competition along racial lines, they make it less likely that racially motivated actions will determine hiring, salary increases, and promotions. In addition, blue-collar workers in Groveland tend to hold unionized jobs in which supports for workers do not reflect racial differences. For all these reasons, Groveland adults are far less likely than upper-middle class professional blacks to openly and directly compete for jobs with whites and other ethnic groups, to be in employment situations where they feel the slings and arrows of racial slights, and to encounter "glass ceilings"—the invisible but impenetrable barriers to more ideal job assignments. Moreover, the limited involvement of Groveland's black residents with whites and other ethnic groups outside the sphere of employment, minimizes the impact of prejudice and other racial indignities.

Even more important, Groveland residents are not confronted with an influx of other ethnic groups into the neighborhood, and so they do not face competition for the cultural and material resources of their community. The combined white, Latino, and Asian population is small and declining. Accordingly, African Americans firmly control the institutions in Groveland.

However, the diminished role of race in the social organization of the neighborhood of Groveland does not remove the residents' anxiety about neighborhood change. The residents do express some concern about the pressures of living near inner-city ghetto neighborhoods. Groveland is a black lower-middle class neighborhood, so residents

possess more economic and social resources to enhance the quality of community life than do those of the less economically advantaged neighborhoods around them. And given the possibility that their neighborhood could undergo a class transformation if significant segments of the ghetto poor penetrate, Groveland's current residents closely scrutinize newcomers. As any neighborhood, there is no singular prescribed code of style. Indeed, there is a constant struggle to define normative patterns of behavior or conduct. Nonetheless, newer residents often challenge the traditions established by the older neighbors, thereby increasing anxiety about the future of the neighborhood.

Commenting on the newer residents to the neighborhood, Mariane Johnson remarked,

> In fact over the next 5 to 8 years…that's going to be the time the houses are going to be available…And that's when things are going to begin to turn. They're turning now, but they're going to be a real influx of people. I'm not sure [in what direction] because you know I haven't been too impressed. You know, just on this street, we've had a couple people move in and they're not, you know, they don't understand about block clubs, you know. The block, you know, we have people they trying to work on they cars on the street. And this may sound really trivial, but however, if you don't maintain your standards. We have garages and alleys, that's where you do that stuff, back there, okay.

The Racial and Ethnic Separation of Neighborhood and Social Policy Dilemmas

The findings of this research suggest several general principles that have profound implications for social policies in addressing the problems of racial and ethnic antagonisms in large American metropolises. In general, when the residents perceive that in-migration presents a real threat to the ethnic makeup of their neighborhood, they will react by either exiting or by joining forces with other neighbors to resist the change. The stronger the social organization of the neighborhood, the more likely that local residents will remain and take steps internally to keep the area stable. Residents are more likely to choose to depart a neighborhood when they feel that its resources, including the social organization of the neighborhood, are insufficient to stem the tide of ethnic change.[11]

The greater this feeling among residents, the more quickly the neighborhood reaches what social scientists call "the tipping point," that is, the beginning of a very rapid ethnic turnover.[12]

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11. Albert O. Hirschman. Exit, Voice, and Loyalty: Responses to Decline in Firms, Organizations, and States. Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press, 1970.

12. Thomas C. Schelling, "Dynamic Models of Segregation," *Journal of Mathematical Sociology* 1 (1971), pp. 143-186; Thomas C. Shelling, *Micromotives and Macrobehavior* (New York: Norton, 1978), pp. 135-66; Richard P. Taub, D. Garth Taylor, and Jan D. Durham, *Paths of Neighborhood Change: Race and Crime in Urban America.* Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1984; William A. V. Clark, "Residential Preferences and Neighborhood Racial Segregation: A Test of the Schelling Segregation Model." *Demography,* 1991, Vol 28, pp. 1-19; and John Yinger, *Closed Doors, Opportunties Lost: The Continuing Costs of Housing*

However, the literature on neighborhood ethnic change does not provide a general set of arguments that relate the tipping point to neighborhood social organization, arguments that would help explain more fully why some neighborhoods reach the "tipping point" more rapidly than others, or why some neighborhoods undergoing ethnic change never reach the tipping point.

The findings of this study suggest a positive relationship between the strength of neighborhood social organization and the length of time it takes to reach the "tipping point" after an ethnic invasion occurs. In our comparisons of Beltway and Dover, we highlighted the fact that Dover, unlike Beltway, had neither the institutional strength nor the population stability to prevent a rapid ethnic turnover. Whereas Dover struggled through a period of economic decline prior to the en masse in-migration of Mexicans that resulted in significant out-migration of white residents, housing vacancies, and declining property values, Beltway, by contrast, had been a model of population and institutional stability until 1990. However, although Beltway experienced some population movements in the 1990s, it remains an overwhelmingly white community and continues to feature institutions and organizations that effectively resist unwanted neighborhood changes.[13]

Nonetheless, despite the high level of social organization, in the 1990s Beltway experienced a notable decline in its white population, a significant rise in its Latino population, as well as small but symbolic increases in its Asian and black populations. Although whites still constitute more than three-quarters of the residents, the community is not nearly as ethnically homogeneous as in previous years. The question remains: how

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Discrimination. New York: Russell Sage Foundation, 1995.

13. For instance, in an effort to reinforce neighborhood stability Beltwayites created the Home Equity Program to reduce housing turnover in the community. At the time of purchase, residents have their homes appraised. If they wait for at least five years before putting their property up for sale, they will be reimbursed for any depreciation in the value of their house. This plan was devised to entice new residents to remain in the community for at least five years and take part in neighborhood social activities. Moreover, participants in this program are required to oversee the maintenance of their property. Ultimately, the program was conceived as a way to eliminate concerns over declining housing values, concerns that induce residents to leave the neighborhood. As an administrator of the Program put it, "What we need is for people to stay here, so we try to make that possible. The way it works is that the people won't have a financial reason to leave so we have a better chance of them staying in the neighborhood."

Efforts to resist neighborhood ethnic change occur in other ways. The Beltway Civic League pressed their aldermen to oppose Chicago's new mortgage program. This program would enable eligible residents of Chicago to purchase property by receiving low-interest loans and assistance with down payments. Proponents of the program viewed it as a way to increase housing demand and thereby stabilize neighborhoods. Beltway is one of the Chicago communities affected by the program because property in the neighborhood is relatively affordable. However, rather than viewing the program as a way to promote demand for land in the area, the Beltway Civic League felt that the program could destabilize property values and ultimately attract lower income non-whites to the neighborhood. Accordingly, Beltway aldermen strongly opposed the mortgage subsidy program despite accusations that their opposition was racially motivated.

long can the community prevent the neighborhood from reaching the dreaded "tipping point?"

Although the immediate future of Beltway is in doubt, a few decades ago Groveland changed from white to African American and Archer Park shifted from white to Latino. In the 1990s, Dover was one of the latest Chicago neighborhoods to undergo an ethnic turnover, from white to Latino. For the most part, these population transformations have generated incredible racial and ethnic tensions.

However, once a neighborhood has been transformed ethnically and the prospects for further change are nil, racial and ethnic tensions within the neighborhood subside. Groveland, and to a lesser extent Archer Park, are cases in point. Nonetheless, since urban neighborhoods are divided racially, ethnically, and culturally, the potential for ethnic conflict in the larger city is always present because groups are far more likely to focus on their differences rather than on their commonalities. Although they may be comfortable in their own ethnic neighborhoods, these groups are likely to view themselves as competitors in terms of political, social and cultural resources in the city

America is often described as a melting pot constantly featuring an ever-changing blend of races and cultures. Indeed, many citizens still cling to the notion that the residential desegregation of neighborhoods is achievable.[14]

However, the research we conducted strongly suggests that neighborhoods in urban America, especially in large metropolises like Chicago, will remain divided, racially and culturally for the foreseeable future.

As I see it, the challenge facing American metropolises is how to minimize racial and ethnic antagonisms given this inevitable diversity. Some clues on how to confront this challenge arise from our study. I have in mind those situations that create a sense of interdependence between the ethnic groups. For example, white and Latino parents in Dover set aside their ethnic antagonisms when they saw the need to join forces to prevent the busing of their children to black inner-city neighborhoods.

A more positive example is a situation in Beltway that I did not discuss because of time constraints, but that deserves brief mention in this context. White and Latino parents of children in the Beltway public schools joined with the parents of the black children who were bussed into the Beltway schools to address the problem of an autocratic Local School Council. The positive interaction of the younger white and Latino parents with the African American parents in confronting the Local School Council was not the result of greater ethnic tolerance. Rather, the situation was conducive to uniting the races because all shared a common concern—the education of their children.

Social psychological research on interdependence reveals that when people believe that

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14. One of the most forceful and articulate arguments for this point of view is provided by Douglas S. Massey and Nancy A. Denton, *American Apartheid: Segregation and the Making of the Underclass.* Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1993.

they need each other, they relinquish their initial prejudices and stereotypes and join in programs that foster mutual interaction and cooperation.[15]

The implication is that urban leaders, especially political leaders, should work to create situations that foster feelings of interdependence, situations that enhance cooperation, not competition.

Unfortunately, as long as groups in the United States are sorted into ethnically and racially monolithic neighborhood, they are more likely to highlight racial differences rather than commonalities and therefore less likely to see the need and appreciate the potential for mutual political support across racial and ethnic lines. That is why it is so important to create an atmosphere of coalition building, an atmosphere that would bring together the leaders of these diverse communities to identify goals and concerns shared by the various groups.[16]

I believe that goals specifying the improvement of public schools, expanded libraries, better parks, cleaner playgrounds, more efficient public transportation, and more reliable community services ranging from street cleaning to garbage collection could provide the common ground on which many diverse groups could meet. Such a coalition might also provide the political muscle to pressure for greater federal support for cities.

Indeed, racial and ethnic tensions in urban areas can also be reduced if the nation commits itself to an urban policy designed to enhance the quality of life of all residents. I indicated previously that when the political and social forces turned against the cities, the quality of urban life declined, including diminishing services. Many financially secure residents are therefore encouraged to move to the suburbs, and those who remain find themselves competing along racial and ethnic lines for limited resources, including housing, neighborhoods, schools, parks and playgrounds.

In short, Americans residing in large metropolises will continue to be separated in neighborhoods along racial and cultural lines. And given this incredible and growing diversity, it is imperative that urban leaders work to fashion situations of interdependence whereby individual racial and ethnic groups come to realize that they cannot achieve desirable common goals without the help of other groups. Creating a sense of group interdependence in a divided city would clear the path for inter-group cooperation and greatly diminish the potential for racial and ethnic conflict.

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15. See: D.W. Johnson, R. Johnson and G. Maruyama, "Goal Interdependence and Interpersonal Attraction in Heterogeneous Classrooms: A Meta-Analysis." In *Groups in Contact: The Pscyhology of Desegregation* (edited by N. Miller & M.B. Brewer). Orlando: Academic Press, 1984: 187-212. Also, see: Susan T. Fiske, "Stereotyping, Prejudice, and Discrimination," in D.T. Gilbert, S.T. Fiske, and G. Lindzey (Eds.). *The Handbook of Social Psychology* (4th ed.). New York: McGraw Hill, 1998.

16. William Julius Wilson, *The Bridge Over the Racial Divide: Rising Inequality and Coalition Politics.* Berkeley CA: University of California Press, 1999.