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De Jure School Segregation as the Result of Racist Housing Policies

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Abstract

It is no secret that African Americans have been and continue to be marginalized in American society. A revival of racial justice movements and protests have brought the issue back into the public eye across the country and even here at UVM. As this is being written, black lives matter flags fly high across campus and the Waterman building is serving as the epicentre of a demonstration motivated by the unfair treatment of minority students in a university setting. While black lives matter movements and others like it have been helpful in bringing to light the current position of minorities in America, understanding how it is that the state of affairs got to where they are is paramount. A commonly believed narrative is that the rising levels of segregation since the end of court ordered integration are the result of innocent private decisions, otherwise known as de facto or voluntary segregation.¹ This paper will argue that modern segregation is in some significant parts the result of a combination of court decisions and discriminatory housing policies that have had long-term detrimental consequences for the education of African American Youth.

¹ Reardon, Sean F., Elena Tej Grewal, Demetra Kalogrides, and Erica Greenberg. "Brown Fades: The End of Court-Ordered School Desegregation and the Resegregation of American Public Schools." *Journal of Policy Analysis and Management* 31, no. 4 (2012): 876-904.

Introduction

Tracking the course of racial housing discrimination in America is no simple task. There hasn't been a singular, linear progression that started with the abolition of slavery and ends with modern segregation. Housing discrimination has come in countless forms at different times and in different places across the country. While it would be nearly impossible and well beyond the scope of this paper to provide a complete and comprehensive story of how the United States has become segregated, it is possible to understand the story by analyzing snapshots of different areas in the country at different times.

Douglas Massey has described the evolution of housing discrimination as a "moving target". He draws from previous work done by Stanley Lieberson that views the issue of inequality from the pessimistic view that "racial or other interest groups will tend to take as much as they can for themselves and will give as little as necessary to maintain the system and avoid having it overturned."² Using this assumption Lieberson shows that no matter what is done to chip away at the issues of inequality, a new and more discreet form of discrimination will sprout to take its place. In the same vein but with a slightly less pessimistic view, Massey uses the moving target metaphor. He eloquently simplifies Lieberson's work by saying:

If whites are selfishly motivated to discriminate against blacks to enhance their own material

²Lieberson, Stanley. 1985. *Making It Count: The Improvement of Social Research and Theory*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

well-being, then when the government forces them to end a particular discriminatory practice, they will simply look for other means to maintain white privilege. If an older discriminatory mechanism based explicitly on race becomes impossible to sustain, whites will substitute new ones that are more subtly associated with race. The specific mechanisms by which racial stratification is achieved may thus be expected to change over time as practices shift in response to civil rights enforcement. Whenever one discriminatory pathway is shut down, another is soon invented.³

Viewing discrimination in this light makes the issue seem less like a never ending cycle and more like a series of targets to be knocked down, a series of challenges to be conquered rather than a never ending systemic loop.

Using Massey's view of housing discrimination as a moving target, this paper seeks to illuminate a number of the more glaring historical examples of discriminatory practices that have been sponsored by the federal government or local governments and have had lasting effects on levels of neighborhood segregation. This paper additionally seeks to tie together the story of sponsored residential segregation with that of increasingly segregated schools in the post-busing era to show the deleterious effects that segregated schools have on the education of African American youth. At the micro level, this paper will look specifically at the development of segregation in Cleveland, Ohio throughout the twentieth century in order to provide a cohesive story of how a once racially harmonious area has become one of the most segregated places in the United States.

³ MASSEY, DOUGLAS S. 2005. "Racial Discrimination in Housing: A Moving Target." *Social Problems* 52 (2): 148–51.

I will use a historical case-study analysis to test the hypothesis that government housing policies were at least a partial driver of segregation in Cleveland from 1940-2010. While I may not be able to conclusively determine a cause and effect relationship between government sponsorship and modern segregation, I can provide enough potential relationships to tell a convincing story that is certainly more than simple coincidence. Understanding this connection will require laying out a historical framework that sets the stage and helps to fill in the gaps of the increasingly complicated dynamic that exists between government action and segregation.

The layout of this paper is designed to provide an understanding of the mechanisms through which the government has sponsored residential segregation, and to follow the consequences of such interventions. For this reason, the paper begins with a section explaining sponsored housing segregation that occurred at the federal level. It then moves to a smaller scale by explaining ways in which local governments acted to support housing segregation. With federal and local discriminatory housing tactics established, the paper moves on to explain the consequences of living in segregated neighborhoods and attending segregated schools. The Cleveland section pulls everything together by providing a case study of the racial development that occurred in a metropolitan area during a large part of the 20th century.

1. Federally Sponsored Housing Discrimination

The federal government became a major player in housing discrimination with Franklin D. Roosevelt's introduction of public housing. Due to housing and material shortages during the Great Depression and World War II, only the wealthy could afford to purchase homes or rent apartments. To remedy this housing shortage, FDR created the first public housing programs for civilians not engaged in defense work. Since the creation of the Public Works and Federal Housing Administration's as part of the New Deal, the US government has been sponsoring segregation at the federal level through government funded public housing projects that have been explicitly racially segregated across the country. Projects created after World War II were officially designated as being either for whites or blacks.⁴ Even the so called integrated projects had separate buildings for whites and blacks.

1.1 Public Housing

This kind of residential segregation followed a pattern that had been well established in other New Deal programs. The Tennessee Valley Authority, which was created in 1933 with the mission of bringing jobs and economic growth to a region that had been ravaged by the Depression, developed a model village of 500 homes in Norris, TN that were open only to whites. The housing that the TVA provided for African Americans were dilapidated barracks in comparison.⁵ The Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC), which created work camps for jobless youth and young adults, followed the

⁴Rothstein, Richard, "The Racial Achievement Gap, Segregated Schools, and Segregated Neighborhoods- A Constitutional Insult", 21-30.

⁵ "The Color of Law: A Forgotten History of How Our Government Segregated America: Richard Rothstein: 19.

same bigoted pattern of segregating camps. The CCC national director, Robert Fechner, established that the agency would not “force colored companies on localities that have openly declared their opposition to them.”⁶ These “alphabet agencies”, established as part of the New Deal with the intent of easing economic struggles, operated under overtly racist policies.

The Public Works Administration was established in 1933 with the goal of alleviating the national housing shortage while creating jobs in construction. The effort was led by Secretary of the Interior Harold Ickes, a past president of the Chicago NAACP. Despite the original intent for public housing to only be made available for working class white families, Ickes was able to provide an unprecedented level of commitment to the housing needs of African Americans. Of the 47 projects erected by the PWA, seventeen were assigned to African Americans, six were segregated by building, and the rest were for whites only.⁷ Even a liberal leader and racial activist as prominent as Ickes, who successfully pushed for the creation of African American public housing, didn’t dare propose integrated PWA developments.

During his time at the helm, Ickes established the “Neighborhood Composition Rule”. This set the standard that public housing should not disturb the pre-existing racial composition of the neighborhoods where it is placed. This position prevented the government from taking an active role in desegregating housing. If neighborhoods are already segregated, creating a rule preventing public housing from shaking up the racial composition of neighborhoods will ensure that they stay that way. Fear of local

⁶ Ibid, 20.

⁷ Ibid, 21.

responses prevented the Federal Government from using its new position as a housing provider to help integrate society, and instead reinforced or even created segregation. Many of the areas that the PWA designated as being either for “whites only” or for “blacks only” were previously integrated.⁸ By giving these areas such labels, the PWA effectively segregated areas that were previously harmonious, and in doing so directly contradicted their own neighborhood composition rule.

In 1937, Congress scrapped the PWA program and replaced it with the U.S. Housing Authority (USHA). The newly established USHA required localities that wanted housing projects to establish their own agencies that could then use federal subsidies to build. The authority continued the racially based policies of the PWA. Its manual stated that, “It was undesirable to have projects for white families in areas now occupied by Negroes” and that “The aim of the authority should be the preservation rather than the disruption of community social structures.”⁹ Similarly to the PWA, the USHA rarely abided by its own neighborhood composition rule when it came to providing mixed occupancy projects in areas that were previously integrated. The housing authority had no issue raising white projects in white areas and black projects in black areas, but almost never erected mixed projects in integrated areas. This kind of selective housing construction led to a reinforcement of segregation rather than a continuance of the pre-existing racial atmosphere. The lack of integrated public housing in integrated areas necessitated the moving of people from racially harmonious areas to segregated areas if they wished to enjoy more affordable, public housing.

⁸ PWA. 1939. *America Builds*. Public Works Administration, Division of Information.

⁹ USHA. 1939. Bulletin No. 18, *Manual on Policy and Procedure*, U.S. Housing Authority, February 13.

While the PWA and USHA worked to reinforce civilian segregation, the Defense Housing and Community Facilities and Services Act, sometimes referred to as the Lanham Act, played an important role in reinforcing urban industrial segregation by financing segregated housing for workers in the defense industries. Some cities erected segregated housing while others only provided for whites and left African Americans to fend for themselves. In either case the result was more intensely segregated urban areas after the influence of the PWA, USHA, and Lanham Act. These agencies and acts of Congress can certainly not be wholly to blame for the racial climate and the presence of segregation, but it obvious that they were complicit in its reinforcement.

The Federal Housing Administration, created by the National Housing Act of 1934, suppressed the growth of wealth in the African American community by refusing to insure individual mortgages for African American families in white neighborhoods.¹⁰ The FHA was created to regulate the mortgage industry so that homes would be more affordable and available. Not being able to get home insurance is a massive deterrent to black families hoping to move into the often nicer white neighborhoods. At the same time as the FHA refused insurance to black families, the Federal Reserve and bank regulators like the Comptroller of the Currency, and later on the Office of Thrift Supervision approved policies that refused loans to black families in white suburbs and often even in black neighborhoods.¹¹ This is not segregation as a result of “innocent

¹⁰ Kimble, John. 2007. “Insuring Inequality: The Role of the Federal Housing Administration in the Urban Ghettoization of African Americans.” *Law and Social Inquiry* 32 (2), Spring: 399-434

¹¹Rothstein, Richard, “The Racial Achievement Gap, Segregated Schools, and Segregated Neighborhoods- A Constitutional Insult”, 21-30.

private decisions” or “voluntary housing choices”. This is federal agencies discriminating against African Americans and violating their rights to equal protection.

The housing shortage had intensified by the time World War II ended and President Truman took office. Millions of veterans returned home and sought shelter that didn't exist for their newly formed families. In response, Truman proposed a new public housing effort that ultimately became the 1949 Housing Act. Political pressure from Southern Democrats who wanted public housing, but also wanted it to be segregated, put liberal leaders in a sticky situation whereby they had to choose whether to enact a segregated public housing program or no program at all. With conservatives fighting against public housing, segregating the program was the only way to garner enough support to pass the legislation. Senator Paul Douglas recognized this fact when he said “ I should like to point out to my Negro friends what a large amount of housing they will get under this act... I am ready to appeal to history and to time that it is in the best interests of the Negro race that we carry through the housing program as planned rather than put in the bill an amendment which will inevitably defeat it.”¹²As foreseen, Congress rejected any proposed integration amendments and adopted the 1949 Housing Act which continued to allow separate housing projects to be designed for blacks and whites.

Richard Rothstein takes issue with Senator Douglas's notion that erecting these segregated projects was in the best interest of the African American community and provides a myriad of reasons as to why. While African Americans were certainly able to

¹² Davies, Richard O. 1966. *Housing Reform During the Truman Administration*. Columbia: University of Missouri Press.

move out of their tenements and into nicer, newer buildings; the lasting impacts more than paid the price. “African Americans became more removed from mainstream society than ever, were packed into high-rise ghettos where community life was impossible, where access to jobs and social services was more difficult and where supervision of adolescents and even a semblance of community policing was impractical.”¹³ The NAACP and a few brave congressmen took this stance at the time. Among them was Representative Vito Marcantonio who said “ You have no right to use housing against civil rights... Housing is advanced in the interest of the general welfare and in the interest of strengthening democracy. When you separate civil rights from housing you weaken the general welfare.”¹⁴ Representative Marcantonio’s words take on newfound weight ex-post as the ways in which housing was used in the battle against civil rights can be readily seen, and as the negative effects of such use permeate through today’s societal structure.

1.2 Sponsored Relocation

Once housing shortages eased and raw materials were freed up, the federal government subsidized the relocation of white people to suburbs through a number of mechanisms including racially stipulated federal loans given to construction companies for housing developments such as Levittowns.¹⁵ The construction of these massive Levittown housing developments that started on the east coast and moved across the

¹³ “The Color of Law: A Forgotten History of How Our Government Segregated America: Richard Rothstein: 31-32

¹⁴ Julian, Elizabeth K. 2008. “Fair Housing and Community Development: Time to Come Together.” *Ind. L. Rev.* 41: 555.

¹⁵ Kushner, David. 2009. *Levittown: T Two Families, One Tycoon, and the Fight for Civil Rights in America’s Legendary Suburb*. New York: Walker and Co.

country was perhaps the most aggressive and blatant form of government funded racial housing segregation.

To erect these large-scale projects, the Federal Housing and Veterans Administrations recruited mass-production builders and paid them with federal loans. These loans included the explicit condition that “no sales be made to blacks and that each individual deed include a prohibition on re-sales to blacks, or to what the FHA described as an incompatible racial element.”¹⁶ To prohibit the sale of homes to “incompatible racial elements” is to not allow any integration whatsoever. It legally creates racial pockets and bubbles from which people cannot hope to escape. The purpose of these housing developments was to provide affordable housing for working class families, but they were only made available to whites. Excluding African Americans from this kind of affordable housing not only creates or reinforces segregation, it also economically handicaps African Americans as they are stuck paying more money for less quality housing than their white peers enjoy.

The ability of white families to more easily and cheaply relocate out of public housing and into affordable developments like Levittown made public housing an increasingly African American program. This dynamic had become obvious as early as 1952 when the Truman administration responded to a situation where large numbers of housing units that had been designated for whites remained vacant, while African American housing units had lengthy waiting lists. To rectify the situation a “racial equity formula” was introduced that required segregated local housing authorities to build

¹⁶ Rothstein, Richard, “The Racial Achievement Gap, Segregated Schools, and Segregated Neighborhoods- A Constitutional Insult”, 21-30.

projects for black families in proportion to their need.¹⁷ While this is a good step towards providing an equitable amount of housing for whites and blacks, it was much too little and much too late.

1.3 Changing Face of Public Housing

It wasn't until the 1950's that public housing was transformed from affordable living for middle class families into a "warehousing system for the poor".¹⁸ This change can largely be attributed to real estate industry lobbyists who insisted that public housing was socialism that posed a threat to private enterprise. While this argument held little weight during a time when private enterprise had failed to fulfill the demand for housing, it gained steam once the housing shortage eased. This resulted in new regulations that set strict income limits for families that wished to live in public housing. As middle class families were forced out of public housing under these new rules, only the poorest families remained. This had negative consequences for both the conditions and reputations of public housing projects.

With the succession of Truman by Eisenhower, a Conservative-Republican regime took power that halted any of the small steps toward non-discriminatory housing practices that had been made under the previous administrations. Eisenhower's administration warned against moving too quickly towards eliminating racial segregation from federal programs, took the stance that the Supreme Court's decision in *Brown vs.*

¹⁷ Davies, Richard O. 1966. *Housing Reform During the Truman Administration*. Columbia: University of Missouri Press.

¹⁸ Atlas, John, and Peter Dreier. 1994. "Public Housing: What Went Wrong?" *Shelterforce* 74, October-November.

Board of Education did not apply to housing, and formally abolished the policy that African Americans receive public housing of equal quality to that of whites.¹⁹

By the 1960's, urban public housing had become so predominantly African American that civil rights activists had little ground to argue against the discriminatory assignment of housing based on race. They instead turned their attention to what had become a bigger issue, the purposeful placement of new African American projects in neighborhoods that were already segregated, thus reinforcing racial isolation. The Chicago Housing Authority came under fire for this very reason in 1976 when the Supreme Court agreed that the CHA had unconstitutionally selected sites in order to maintain the city's segregated landscape.²⁰ Despite the Court's finding, too little was done too late once more and African American families in Chicago saw no change as the segregated landscape was already too well established.

Looking back on his time as California's housing commissioner in the early years of WWII, Carey McWilliams wrote "the federal government had in effect been planting seeds of Jim Crow practices throughout the region under the guise of 'respecting local attitudes.'"²¹ This statement perfectly and succinctly summarizes the underhanded manner in which the government went about helping to segregate America's cities. As Rothstein puts it, "We can only wonder what our urban areas would look like today if, instead of creating segregation where it never, or perhaps barely, existed, federal and

¹⁹ LAMB, CHARLES M., and ADAM W. NYE. "Do Presidents Control Bureaucracy? The Federal Housing Administration during the Truman—Eisenhower Era." *Political Science Quarterly* 127, no. 3 (2012): 445-67.

²⁰ *Hills v Gautreaux*. 1976. U.S. Supreme Court, 425 U.S. 284.

²¹ Johnson, Marilyn S. 1996. *The Second Gold Rush: Oakland and the East Bay in World War II*. University of California Press.

local governments had pushed in the opposite direction, using public housing as an example of how integrated living could be successful.”²² Unfortunately, this train of thought remains purely academic as the effects of government sponsored segregation permeate through American cities with a persistence that has been historically difficult to gain traction against.

2. Locally Sponsored Housing Discrimination

At the local level, de jure segregation has been slightly harder to track as it has manifested in thousands of smaller acts of government around the country, opposed to large scale acts of the federal government that were debated on the floors of Congress. Some examples of such petty local action include the denial of access to public utilities, the rezoning of land that African Americans wanted to build on, the routing of interstate highways in such a way that they created racial boundaries or shifted the residential placement of African American families, and the choosing of school sites that forced families to move to segregated neighborhoods if they wanted their children to be educated.²³ This section will shed light on a few of the more severe examples of local tactics that were used to preserve a segregated society. Keeping Massey’s moving target metaphor in mind, these incidents represent only a tiny portion of the overall picture, and are intended only to provide a general understanding of the ways in which local municipalities forced segregation upon African Americans. There should be no

²² “The Color of Law: A Forgotten History of How Our Government Segregated America: Richard Rothstein: 37.

²³ Ibid, 122.

doubt that the scope of such tactics extends far beyond what has been academically documented.

2.1 Zoning

Local racial zoning laws were a popular method of enforcing segregation early on in the post reconstruction South and in select Northern cities. Towns across the country implemented policies that forbade African Americans from being within town borders after dark. Even unassuming towns like Glendive, Montana boasted in 1915 that the “Color Line is Drawn in Glendive” and that “the sun is never allowed to set on any niggers in Glendive.”²⁴ Even though most of these small town racial policies were never formalized in written ordinances, they were written in local newspapers and enforced by the police receiving government pay checks.

Formal racial zoning ordinances were a tool more often employed by cities that already had such large African American populations it would be impossible to remove them all. Baltimore implemented the first such policy in 1910 when it adopted an ordinance that prohibited African Americans from buying homes on blocks where whites were the majority, and whites from buying homes on blocks where blacks were a majority. Other cities that adopted similar zoning rules included but are not limited to: Atlanta, Birmingham, Miami, Charleston, Dallas, Louisville, New Orleans, Oklahoma City, Richmond, and St. Louis.²⁵

²⁴Loewen, James. 2005. *Sundown Towns*. New York: Simon and Schuster.

²⁵*Fordham Law Review*. 1957. “Constitutional Aspects of Legislation Prohibiting Discrimination in Housing.” Vol. 26 (4):675-83.

The constitutionality of such ordinances was challenged relatively quickly with the Supreme Court's 1917 decision in the case of *Buchanan v Warley*.²⁶ This case involved an African American man being denied the ability to purchase a home on a previously integrated block in Louisville, Kentucky on the basis of a racial zoning ordinance. Louisville's ordinance prohibited African Americans from living on blocks with a majority of white residents. When Buchanan, a white man, was prohibited from selling his home in a white majority neighborhood to Warley, an African American man, Buchanan sued Warley in order to complete the sale. In making its decision, the court heavily relied on the idea the Fourteenth Amendment was intended to protect the freedom of contract opposed to the rights of freed slaves. Under this lens, the Court ruled that racial zoning ordinances interfered with the right of a property owner to sell to whomever they wished.

Despite this ruling, many states were reluctant to adhere to its implications and chose to ignore or challenge the Court's ruling by continuing to enforce racial zoning. Cities justified their ordinances by saying the *Buchanan* ruling did not apply to their slightly different rules. The Atlanta City Planning Commission published a draft of their zone plan in 1922 which divided the city into white and colored districts with the explanation that, "race zoning is essential in the interest of the public peace, order and security and will promote the welfare and prosperity of both the white and colored race."²⁷ Ignoring for the moment the absurdity behind the assertion that racial zoning promotes the "welfare and prosperity" of African Americans, it seems pretty clear that

²⁶ *Buchanan v. Warley*. 1917. U.S. Supreme Court, 245 U.S. 60.

²⁷ Whitten, Robert Harvey. 1922. *The Atlanta Zone Plan: Report Outlining a Tentative Zone Plan for Atlanta*. City Planning commission.

this ordinance violates the decision made in the *Buchanan* case. Attorneys for the city argued that Atlanta's situation was different because it designated entire neighborhoods for black or white residence without regards to the previously existing racial characteristics of said neighborhood, and because it addressed only where people could live and not who could purchase the property. The Georgia Supreme Court ultimately agreed that these differences were not sufficient enough to escape the ruling in *Buchanan*, and found the city plan unconstitutional in 1924.

Similar cases of cities attempting to ignore or escape the *Buchanan* ruling by making slight alterations to their ordinances and arguing that the need to maintain order was more important than the right for people to live where they choose occurred in Virginia, Alabama, Florida and Texas. Other cities that chose to respect the *Buchanan* ruling were forced to find newer, sneakier ways of keeping African Americans away from white communities.

Condemning and rezoning properties for alternative uses to prevent African Americans from building homes was a popular strategy used by local governments through the 1950's and 1960's, until an incident in St. Louis caught national attention in 1969. In St. Louis County, a Methodist non profit organization proposed building a federally subsidized, racially integrated complex for moderate and low income families in the white suburb of Black Jack. The voters in Black Jack responded by incorporating their community and adopting a zoning ordinance that prohibited the future development of more than three homes per acre. Such an ordinance made developing the new housing impossible, so several African Americans sued the city.

Ultimately, a federal appeals court ruled in favor of the African Americans citing that the opposition of the housing development was “repeatedly expressed in racial terms” and that “racial criticism [of the proposed development] was made and cheered at public meetings. The uncontradicted evidence indicates that, at all levels of opposition, race played a significant role, both in the drive to incorporate and the decision to rezone.”²⁸ While this case was a definite victory in the battle against government sponsored segregation, it illuminates the racial motivation that was often behind seemingly innocuous local acts of government.

The court’s ruling even recognized that residential segregation was “in large measure the result of deliberate racial discrimination in the housing market by the real estate industry and by agencies of the federal, state, and local governments.” This kind of recognition from a federal court was nice to see, but did little-to-nothing to rectify the situation. By the time the court case was resolved, five years had passed and financing was no longer available. The publicity and hostility surrounding the development scared off any investors. When it comes to fighting legal battles over housing segregation, justice delayed is too often justice denied.

2.2 Highway Construction

One of the more devious ways local governments reinforced housing segregation was through the construction of interstate highway routes. Most of, if not all of, the examples of government sponsored housing discrimination discussed in this paper have revolved around the goal of separating white and African American residential areas.

²⁸ *Park View Heights v. Black Jack*. 1972. U.S. Court of Appeals, Eighth Circuit, 407 F. 2d 1208.

Highway construction took things even a step further by attempting to uproot the unseemly, black communities that segregatory policy had created. This idea is colloquially referred to as “slum clearance”, and has had negative lasting effects on the spatial segregation and impoverishment of black communities.

As early as 1938, Secretary of Agriculture Henry Wallace proposed that the highway system could be used to accomplish “the elimination of unsightly and unsanitary districts”. This sentiment of using the highway system as a tool to achieve slum clearance persisted throughout its development. The Highway Research Board was proud of the fact that interstate highways were “eating out slums” and “reclaiming blighted areas.” The executive director of the American Association of State Highway Officials Alfred Johnson, a man who was instrumental in writing the 1956 Highway Act went so far as to say that “ some city officials expressed the view in the mid-1950’s that the urban Interstates would give them a good opportunity to get rid of the local ‘niggertown.’” City officials using highway systems paid for by the government to eradicate ‘niggertowns’ is a clear cut case of sponsored housing discrimination.²⁹

Examples of highways being being constructed in areas that disproportionately affect African American Communities can be seen across the country. Detroit used federal urban renewal funds in 1962 to tear down African American Neighborhoods and build I-75 which lead to the Chrysler manufacturing plant. Of the 4,000 families that were displaced, 87 percent were black. Although a federal court of appeals ultimately ruled that officials knew the highway construction would disproportionately affect African

²⁹ Mohl, Raymond A. 2001. “Urban Expressways and the Racial Restructuring of Postwar American Cities.” *Jahrbuch Für Wirtschaftsgeschichte/Economic History Yearbook* 42 (2): 89–104.

American homes without providing assistance in finding new ones; the decision came 12 years late. Most of the families who had been affected had either moved on or could not be found.³⁰

This same story can be told from Camden, New Jersey, where interstate highways destroyed 3,000 low income housing units between 1963-1967; all the way to Santa Monica, California where the Santa Monica Freeway destroyed Sugar Hill, the cities most prosperous black middle-class area in 1954. It wasn't until 1965, after most of the interstate system had been completed, that the federal government began requiring that new housing be provided for those who were forced to relocate due to the construction of the interstate highway system.

2.3 School Placement

Prior to the Supreme Court's decision in *Brown vs Board of Education*, local authorities, primarily in the south, were able to use the strategic placement of schools to create racial zones and codify segregated areas. The idea was that by placing the only schools that served African American children in designated African American neighborhoods and not providing transportation to the school for African American children who lived elsewhere, the parents of these children would have to move into the segregated area in order to get an education for their child. The use of this tactic has been documented in Austin, Texas; Indianapolis, Indiana; Atlanta, Georgia; and Raleigh, North Carolina.³¹

³⁰ "The Color of Law: A Forgotten History of How Our Government Segregated America: Richard Rothstein: 127

³¹ Ibid, 133.

City planners in Austin were able to avoid the constitutional issues involved with explicit racial zoning laws by developing a master plan for the city in 1928 that created incentives for African Americans to move into the Eastside area. These incentives included: closing schools and parks for African Americans that were outside the Eastside area, constructing a new segregated library on the Eastside, opening an improved segregated high school on the Eastside, and in 1938 choosing the Eastside as the location for a new all-black public housing project called Rosewood Courts. The fact that the integrated neighborhood of Wheatsville went from having an African American population of sixteen percent in 1930, to one percent in 1950 illustrates how effective this tactic of enforcing segregation was.³²

Using the desire of African American families to obtain an education for their children and utilize other basic public services against them, is one of the more nefarious methods of enforcing segregation one can imagine. As Rothstein puts it, “Taken in isolation, we can easily dismiss such devices as aberration. But when we consider them as a whole, we can see that they were part of a national system by which state and local government supplemented federal efforts to maintain the status of African Americans as a lower caste, with housing segregation preserving the badges and incidents of slavery”³³ It is especially easy at the local level to dismiss individual acts of sponsored segregation as coincidence. However, when viewed as part of a larger picture under the scope of housing and school segregation, it’s quite clear that

³² Koch & Fowler, Consulting Engineers. 1928. *A City Plan for Austin, Texas*. Reprinted by Austin, Texas, Department of Planning, February 1957.

³³ “The Color of Law: A Forgotten History of How Our Government Segregated America: Richard Rothstein: 122.

these actions were deliberate and effective in achieving the goal of a segregated society.

3. Consequences of Residential/ School Segregation

With the backdrop of government sponsored housing segregation well established at this point in the paper, it's possible to carry the story through today where the lasting effects of such sponsorship continue to be felt in our Nation's school system. Since school zoning is, and historically has been, done geographically; the segregation seen in neighborhoods is also seen in classrooms. In 2011, thirty-nine percent of black students attended schools that were more than ninety percent minority, and in 2006 the typical black student attended school where fifty-nine percent of students were low income.³⁴ These two simple statistics taken together illustrate the fact that African Americans are disproportionately attending underfunded, segregated schools. The basic idea behind all of this being that having segregated neighborhoods has directly translated into segregated school districts.³⁵ The separate but equal doctrine was ruled unconstitutional over 60 years ago because of its inherent inequality, yet African American students today continue to attend schools plagued by de jure segregation and the injustices that accompany its masquerading as de facto.

Sociological researchers have done a lot of work to show the negative consequences students face as a result of attending underfunded, segregated schools. Gregory Palardy conducted a study on *High School Socioeconomic Segregation and*

³⁴ Rothstein, Richard. "What have we-De Facto Racial Isolation Or De Jure Segregation?" *Human Rights* 40, no. 3 (08, 2014): 8-10.

³⁵Rothstein, Richard, "The Racial Achievement Gap, Segregated Schools, and Segregated Neighborhoods- A Constitutional Insult", 21-30.

Student Attainment using data from the Education Longitudinal Study of 2002.³⁶ In this study, Palardy uses regression analysis to come to the conclusion that socioeconomic segregation is strongly related to high school graduation and college enrollment. After controlling for an array of student and school factors, he found that students who attended schools with a high socioeconomic composition were sixty-eight percent more likely to attend a four year college than students who attended a low socioeconomic composition school. Palardy recognizes the relationship between socioeconomics and race by saying his “findings suggest that integrating schools is likely necessary to fully addressing the negative consequences of attending a low SEC school.” The history of African Americans being marginalized in American society ties together socioeconomics, housing, and the school system to create a perfect storm of oppression.

3.1 Concentration of Poverty

Massey and Kanaiaupuni conducted a study in 1993 that sought to examine the relationship between public housing, race and poverty concentration. Using census tract data from Chicago between 1950-1980, they were able to show that public housing projects were targeted to poor, black neighborhoods and that the presence of these projects has played an important role in the concentration of poverty.³⁷ As Massey and Kanaiaupuni point out, the environments experienced by poor blacks and poor whites are not the same :

³⁶ Palardy, G. J. 2013. “High School Socioeconomic Segregation and Student Attainment.” *American Educational Research Journal* 50 (4): 714–54.

³⁷ MASSEY, Douglas S., and Shawn M. KANAIAUPUNI. 1993. “Public Housing and the Concentration of Poverty.” *Social Science Quarterly* 74 (1): 109–22.

“In 1980 the average poor white family in the Chicago SMSA lived in a neighborhood where 10 percent of the families were poor, whereas the average poor black family lived in an area that was

37 percent poor. In addition, our calculations show that 18 percent of poor black families lived in tracts that were more than 50 percent poor, compared to under 1 percent of poor white families. Given the same objective economic status, in other words, poor blacks and poor whites face vastly different environments in which to live, work, and raise their children. These differences are explained primarily by the different structural constraints that the two groups face, not from their differences with respect to income or education.”³⁸

Falling within the category of different environments in which to raise their children is the difference in education their children receive as a result of racial and socioeconomic segregation. Neighborhoods full of disadvantaged, black families cannot fund schools the same way that neighborhoods of advantaged, white families can. Since disadvantaged white children more often live in areas that are above their socioeconomic level, it is easier for them to receive a quality education and move up the social ranks, than it is for the disadvantaged black children who are stuck in underfunded, segregated schools.

Massey and Kanaiaupuni conclude their paper with a quick rundown on the mechanisms through which public housing has concentrated impoverished African Americans:

“Public Housing concentrates poverty because federal guidelines explicitly require public housing applicants to be poor and because projects apparently generate class-selective migration into neighborhoods that contain them. Public Housing thus represents a key institutional mechanism

³⁸ Ibid, 119.

for concentrating large numbers of poor people within a small geographic space, often within dense, high-rise buildings. Because low income projects were systematically targeted to black neighborhoods in a discriminatory fashion, this institutional mechanism greatly exacerbated the degree of poverty concentration for one group in particular- blacks."³⁹

Basically, the placement and the characteristics of public housing have helped to accentuate the geographical concentration of impoverished African Americans. When this finding is considered within the context of the previously discussed finding that attending low SES, segregated schools has lasting negative consequences on academic achievement; the story of government sponsored housing discrimination leading to an inequitable and segregated school system that keeps African Americans marginalized becomes clear.

3.2 Academic Achievement

Camille Z. Charles, Gniesha Dinwiddie and again Douglas S. Massey conducted research on the ability racial segregation has to undermine academic achievement in their 2004 paper, *The Continuing Consequences of Segregation: Family Stress and College Academic Performance*. Using data from the National Longitudinal Survey of Freshman, the researchers were able to see which demographics were more likely to experience stressful events in their freshman and sophomore years of college. Stressful life events included for the purpose of this study were broken down into three categories: death in social network, crime in immediate family, and social problems in family. Social problems acts as an umbrella category that includes everything from illness/disability and unplanned pregnancy to homelessness divorce and a myriad of

³⁹ Ibid, 120.

other life events that could have a negative impact on schooling. The results of their data analysis showed that African American students from segregated neighborhoods experience higher levels of family stress than other students, and that this burden plays a role in undermining the academic success of students even after they have left the actual neighborhood.⁴⁰

The authors do a fantastic job summarizing this phenomenon whereby African American students continue to feel the effects of segregated neighborhoods without physically being there anymore:

“Segregation is an exogenous fact of American life that disproportionately exposes the friends and relatives of minority students to social problems, thereby increasing the odds that someone in their social network will experience a stressful life event. In this way, segregation, interacting with income inequality, produces higher rates of family stress, which undermines academic performance in several ways: by distracting students psychologically from their studies; by undermining their physical and emotional well being; and by necessitating competing investments of time, money and energy to attend to family issues. Through no fault of their own, minority students become ensnared in a web of relationships that undermine their academic performance on campus.”⁴¹

Even when kids are able to work hard enough and achieve highly enough to get out of their segregated neighborhoods and attend higher learning institutions, they are constantly being dragged back home and brought down by the black hole of opportunity these segregated neighborhoods create.

⁴⁰ Charles, Camille Z., Gniesha Dinwiddie, and Douglas S. Massey. 2004. “The Continuing Consequences of Segregation: Family Stress and College Academic Performance.” *Social Science Quarterly* 85 (5): 1353–73.

⁴¹ *Ibid*, 1356.

3.3 Limited Mobility

The negative consequences African Americans experience as a result of segregated housing permeate through nearly every aspect of their lives. The lasting effects of residential segregation on black social and economic well being extend well into adulthood as African Americans attempt to move upward in society.⁴² Some of the best work done to illuminate this situation was again conducted by Massey and his colleagues at the University of Pennsylvania. They assembled an eclectic data set from the City of Philadelphia in 1980 that included census tract data on race and housing characteristics, information on school characteristics and quality from the Research Division of the Philadelphia Department of Education, Crime Data from the Philadelphia Criminal Justice Coordinating Office, and birth/death rates from the Pennsylvania Department of Vital Statistics and Philadelphia Department of Health. Using this data the researchers are able to take an in depth look at the ways in which African Americans who achieve higher socioeconomic standing attempt to, and are often barred from, using that higher status to improve living conditions by moving to more affluent areas.

The more interesting part of their paper for my research are the conclusions made by the authors regarding the consequences that African Americans face as a result of their extremely limited mobility within a highly segregated society. As the authors put it:

⁴² Massey, Douglas S., Gretchen A. Condran, and Nancy A. Denton. 1987. "The Effect of Residential Segregation on Black Social and Economic Well- Being." *Social Forces* 66 (1): 29–56.

“At this point it seems fairly clear that the undeniable persistence of racial segregation in American cities is far from neutral in its effect on black social and economic well-being. At least partly because of racial segregation, and possibly largely because of it, middle class blacks are subjected to higher rates of crime, less healthy environments, and more dilapidated surroundings than their white counterparts. More important, they must live with people of considerably lower social class, and send their children to inferior schools with students from much less advantaged families than their own.”⁴³

While this quotation is certainly full of consequential statements, perhaps the most notable yet underlooked one is that residential segregation paired with African American immobility has created a situation whereby even advantaged black children of a higher SES background are forced to attend school with disadvantaged peers. This dynamic helps to perpetuate the inferior social status of African Americans generationally. Even if a black person is able to elevate in society and earn themselves a higher economic and social status, in spite of all of the barriers that have been discussed in this paper so far, their children will likely end up attending the same lousy school in the same segregated neighborhood facing the same barriers of segregated living that their parents faced. The same cannot be said for white families who rise in the socioeconomic ranks, move into more affluent areas, and are able to send their kids to the kinds of schools that provide them with the tools to continue climbing.

3.4 Poor Standardized Test Performance

Massey and his colleagues use this phenomenon to help explain the historically poor performance of African Americans on standardized tests. It has been well

⁴³ Ibid, 53.

documented that even when controlling for family income, African American students lag well behind white students on SAT scores. A study conducted by Biemiller in 1984 illustrated this discrepancy by showing that African American students in the highest income category achieved average scores that were lower than the average white scores in the lowest income category.⁴⁴ While this achievement gap at first appears puzzling, when viewed under the light of black immobility and housing segregation the mystery disappears.

Controlling for income doesn't take into account the fact that higher income levels do not translate into finer living situations for African American families in the same way they do for white families. Controlling for income levels incorrectly assumes that black and white students from families that earn similar amounts face similar problems. As Massey and his colleagues put it:

“Controlling for income in no way equalizes the access of blacks and whites to educational resources. Because of residential segregation, middle class blacks must send their children to public schools with children far below their own class standing, children with more limited cognitive, linguistic, and social skills. Given the strong effect of peer influences and environment on aspirations, motivation, and achievement, it is hardly surprising that so many young black people, even those from stable middle class families, fail to achieve high test scores or educational distinction.”⁴⁵

The gap in SAT scores reflects often overlooked disadvantages that black students are faced with everyday. The sum total of these disadvantages over the students lifetime

⁴⁴Biemiller, Lawrence. 1985. "Black Students' Average Aptitude-Test Scores Up 7 Points in a Year. " *The Chronicle of Higher Education*.

⁴⁵ Massey, Douglas S., Gretchen A. Condran, and Nancy A. Denton. 1987. "The Effect of Residential Segregation on Black Social and Economic Well- Being." *Social Forces* 66 (1): 54.

leads to the scoring discrepancies society has seen, whereby the average African American student performs significantly worse than the average white student. Seeing this kind of gap in a mechanism like standardized testing, that is often viewed as a bastion of meritocracy, is extraordinarily telling of how far reaching the effects of living in a segregated society can be.

Even the United States Supreme court has recently appeared ignorant to these facts. In 2007, the court passed down a decision with lasting implications for the American school system. In the case of *Parents Involved in Community Schools v. Seattle School District No. 1*, the court made a ruling that prohibited school districts from making racial balance a factor in assigning students to schools. The case involved a school district in Seattle that allowed students to apply to the high schools they desired within the district. This situation often led to certain schools being oversubscribed to, and a system was put into place to determine which students would be admitted to which schools.⁴⁶

Among considerations was a racial factor intended to promote diversity that would give underrepresented racial groups an advantage in applying to schools needing diversity. Even though this feels very similar to affirmative action programs that have been deemed constitutional, the decision of the court was to prohibit such racial balancing in high schools by arguing that the districts goals were not narrowly tailored or clearly beneficial enough. This effectively made court ordered integration a thing of the

⁴⁶ *Parents Involved in Community Schools v. Seattle School District No. 1, et al.* 2007. U.S. Supreme Court, 551 U.S. 701.

past in an environment where much of the progress made through the very same type of integration has been unraveled.

In the Court's opinion voiced by Justices John Roberts and Clarence Thomas, "Desegregation efforts are impermissible if students are racially isolated, not as the result of government policy but because of societal discrimination, economic characteristics or any number of innocent private decisions, including voluntary housing choices."⁴⁷ This decision demonstrates a severe lack of knowledge on the subject of American History by the US Supreme Court. The court seems to incorrectly think that the segregation seen today is *de facto* (based in social fact and reality) rather than *de jure* (based in law and government intervention). The previous pages of this paper have shown a number of the mechanisms through which government policies racially isolated African Americans. The historical facts presented dictate that government policy had at least an impact on levels of racial isolation, so by the Court's own logic, government policy should be allowed to have an impact on desegregation.

4. Cleveland Case-Study

Studying the ways in which the American government has helped to segregate its cities, and the implications that this segregation has for the schooling of African American children, is extraordinarily helpful in understanding the racial stratification of America. However, this macro study lacks a necessary element of continuity that helps to complete the picture. To remedy this problem, and provide a broader understanding

⁴⁷ Ibid.

of how racist government interventions have played out, the focus of this paper will shift to a qualitative study of housing segregation and its history in the city of Cleveland, Ohio.

The idea to use Cleveland came from an interesting passage I came across while reading Richard Rothstein's *The Color of Law*. In it, Rothstein uses Cleveland as an example of a city that was well integrated prior to government intervention.

"The Central neighborhood had been a packed but racially mixed tenement community, housing African Americans along with Italian and Eastern European immigrants. Langston Hughes, the African American poet, playwright, and novelist, recounts in his autobiography that when he attended Central High School in the late 1910's, he dated a Jewish girl and his best friend was Polish."⁴⁸

Today, Langston Hughes would likely be dating a black girl and his best friend would also most likely be black. Simple web searches and demographic maps show that modern Cleveland is severely stratified by race.

This transition from an area of relative racial harmony to an area of extreme segregation is the ideal case study for looking at the effects of government enforced housing segregation and the ability it has to alter a city's identity. Other cities, like Chicago, experienced substantial segregation that predated federal government interference. While local and federal action certainly helped to cement segregated neighborhoods in areas like this, the transition is much more difficult to attribute. Cleveland's location in the Midwest is also preferable because it avoids some amount of

⁴⁸ "The Color of Law: A Forgotten History of How Our Government Segregated America: Richard Rothstein: 22.

historical racial prejudice that has been prevalent in many areas around the country, most famously in the South. The private actions taken in these more charged areas would muddle the issue of how much segregation can be attributed to the government and considered de jure. Of course private action still plays a role in segregation that is impossible to eliminate entirely from analysis, but the idea is that a Mid-western town that was at one point relatively integrated, and does not have a particularly volatile history of private action either for or against segregation, provides for the least number of confounding variables in my analysis of how the city has ended up segregated.

I use a case method study of residential segregation in Cleveland to differentiate between federal and local government actions that likely contributed to racial stratification. At the base of my analysis is decadal maps of census tract data on the percentages of African Americans living in three parts of Cleveland from 1940-2010 provided by the US Census. While shifts in the colors of these maps are obvious on the surface, understanding the driving forces behind such change requires delving deeper into the history of Cleveland.

4.1 History of Housing in Cleveland

Between 1900 and 1920, the population of Cleveland doubled from 381,768 to 796,841. This influx of predominantly unskilled workers predictably led to a housing shortage. With WWI under way, the Cleveland Chamber of Commerce attempted to gain funding from the Federal Wartime Emergency Housing Program in order to build housing for African Americans in the Old Central area. This plan never came to fruition as the war ended prior to the Chamber gaining funding, but the goal of housing African

Americans in the Central area of Cleveland did not die. Housing issues, especially for African Americans, increased in the post war years as more and more families sought affordable places to live.⁴⁹

State legislator Ernest J. Bohn took it upon himself to study the housing issues in Cleveland, and presided over the first national slum-clearance conference in 1933. To garner support for public housing and to convince Clevelanders that the cities slums were a liability, Bohn launched a study that examined the area between Central and Woodland avenues from E. 22nd to E. 55th. His study concluded that the decrease in tax revenue relative to the cost of city services in this slum area was costing the city \$51.10 per resident annually.⁵⁰ Because of this study and the attention it garnered, Cleveland received the first three public housing projects sponsored by the PWA. These three federally financed housing projects: Cedar-Central, Outhwaite, and Lakeview Terrace; were built between 1935-1937 with two of the three being placed in Central Cleveland and the other, Lakeview Terrace, being placed slightly westward.

Established in 1933, again largely through the efforts of Bohn who served as director from conception until 1968, the Cuyahoga Metropolitan Housing Authority was originally an advisory and coordinating entity for the improvement of housing for low-income families and the elimination of slums.⁵¹ Members of the Authority informally served on the Cleveland Housing Committee that advised the PWA during its

⁴⁹ Campbell, Thomas. n.d. "Public Housing." Case Western Reserve University: Encyclopedia of Cleveland History. Accessed April 19, 2018. <http://case.edu/ech/articles/p/public-housing/>

⁵⁰ Ibid.

⁵¹ "Cuyahoga Metropolitan Housing Authority." Case Western Reserve University: Encyclopedia of Cleveland History. Accessed April 19, 2018. <https://case.edu/ech/articles/c/cuyahoga-metropolitan-housing-authority/>

construction of the aforementioned projects. It wasn't until the creation of the USHA in 1937 that the CMHA stopped being simply a consultant, and started taking an active role by using federal grants and loans to begin developing, constructing, and operating low-rent housing.

In order to comply with a statute that required cities to contribute twenty percent of what they received in federal subsidies, the CMHA engaged in "equivalent elimination". The idea behind equivalent elimination being that for every new unit of housing built by the Housing Authority, the city would pay to demolish or bring up to code one substandard dwelling. While the federal government paid for new segregated projects that geographically isolated blacks, the local government paid to destroy the slums they came from. This was an extraordinarily efficient method for creating and cementing racially stratified pockets around a city. While slums may not have provided favorable or even acceptable living conditions, they were not forcefully segregated in the way that public housing projects were. Moving families into segregated projects and demolishing the at least somewhat integrated areas they came from eliminated the possibility of achieving any level of natural integration.

The CMHA came under fire for its separation of blacks and whites in public housing estates when the NAACP began an extensive picketing campaign in the late 1940's. Soldiers returning home from war had once again created housing shortages and put a microscope on the actions of the public housing authority. A city ordinance was even passed in 1949 that banned racial discrimination in public housing, but in practice this did little to nothing to remedy the situation. Discrimination remained

prominent in Cleveland public housing with a report from the 1966 U.S. Civil Rights Commission hearing in Cleveland showing that African American public housing tenants were still concentrated in a few estates. During the hearing, tenants described living in neighborhoods that were segregated and in poor condition.⁵²

Cleveland also saw some pretty massive shifts in population during the 1950's and 1960's as the African American population swelled from the influx of approximately 100,000 Southern Blacks, and the outflow of even greater numbers of whites to suburbs. Also in effect was the method of using highway construction to clear slums, displacing thousands of Clevelanders by the late 1960's. By this point, the racial boundaries of Cleveland had been established and civil rights groups were pushing back and asking the government to take an active role in desegregation.

The implications this residential segregation had for the school system quickly became clear. The facts that In 1963, ninety-three percent of Cleveland's elementary school students attended segregated schools, and that seventy-eight percent of middle school and eighty-three percent of high school students also attended all white or all African American schools, led to the Cleveland school board implementing busing to end segregation in the mid 1960's.⁵³ However, this busing system was not effective in reversing the effects of segregation as African American students continued to be kept separate from white students within the same schools.

⁵² United States Commission on Civil Rights. 1966. *Hearing Held in Cleveland, Ohio, April 1-7, 1966*. U.S. Government Printing Office.

⁵³ Patterson, James T. *Brown v. Board of Education: A Civil Rights Milestone and Its Troubled Legacy*. New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2002.

The continuing issue of segregated schooling in Cleveland came to light once more in the controversial 1976 case, *Reed v. Rhodes*. This case involved a group of African American students within the Cleveland Public School System and their parents filing suit against the city for “pursuing policies, customs, and practices in the operation of the city public school system in a manner that had the purpose and effect of perpetuating a segregated system.” Judge Frank Battisti presided over the case and delivered a lengthy decision. In the court's opinion,

“[The] defendants (City and State) discriminated against plaintiffs by numerous acts and omissions, the purpose and effect of which were to foster and maintain a segregated dual school system; that these numerous constitutional violations had systemwide impact entitling plaintiffs to a systemwide remedy; and that both the City and State defendants are constitutionally liable for having maintained a *de jure* segregated public school system. This Order is addressed to remedying that condition and restoring plaintiffs to substantially the position they would have occupied had these violations not occurred. As stated in the Remand Opinion, the finding of systemwide *de jure* segregation mandates a comprehensive, systemwide plan of desegregation which eliminates the systematic pattern of schools substantially disproportionate in their racial composition to the maximum extent feasible”⁵⁴

The court went on to order a comprehensive plan for desegregation that included busing, equal opportunities, and academic improvement requirements. The Cleveland school district as such spent the 1980's and 1990's attempting to achieve racial integration. This lasted until 1998 when Judge White ended the desegregation of Cleveland by ordering that “ [A]ll vestiges of past discrimination and segregation have been eliminated to the extent practicable; and Defendants have demonstrated a good faith commitment to their

⁵⁴ *Reed v. Rhodes*, United States District Court for the Northern District of Ohio, 455 F. Supp. 569 (1978)

constitutional obligations.”⁵⁵ Judge White failed to account for the role that residential segregation plays in school segregation. Even if one believes that all “vestiges of past discrimination and segregation had been eliminated to the extent practicable”, a shaky statement at best, it seems clear that ending active desegregation in a city that is geographically segregated will result in resegregating schools. School desegregation efforts were able to temporarily gain African Americans some level of equal access, but did nothing to eliminate the underlying issues that created the segregated schools in the first place. This idea is supported by the fact that Cleveland schools today are largely segregated once more (Table 3, Appendix).

4.2 Method & Analysis

This paper purposefully ignores the role played by the banking and real estate industry in segregating America to instead focus on the role the government has played in sanctioning or directly implementing segregated housing. While redlining and blockbusting were certainly detrimental to African Americans seeking equal housing, they were often private ventures with less direct ties to government funding. For the same reasons, I have purposefully avoided discussing white flight in too much depth.

Keeping Cleveland’s complex history in mind, I began my analysis using the Social Explorer website. To further narrow down my focus, I selected three distinct areas within Cleveland by noting patterns while looking at the changing racial structure of Cleveland between 1940-2010, and keeping in mind the placement of public housing.

⁵⁵ Reed v. Rhodes, United States District Court for the Northern District of Ohio, 1F. Supp.2d 705, 757 (1998)

These areas included Central Cleveland, East Cleveland, and Cleveland Heights. Central Cleveland was the area with the highest percentage of black residents at the beginning of my analysis in 1940, and contained by far the highest concentration of family public housing constructed before 1950. East Cleveland was initially the “most white” area I examined, with only one percent of its population being black. It was also the location of senior public housing, and saw the largest “switch” in racial composition, going from containing one percent to eighty-three percent African American residents during the period examined. Cleveland Heights was similar to East Cleveland in that it began with very low levels of African American residents at around 1.2 percent in 1940. Where Cleveland Heights differed was in its development into a relatively integrated area with a population of 35.9 percent African American residents in 2010, and in its lack of any available public housing. Three parts of the same greater metropolitan area, but each one racially evolving in unique ways and containing different public housing availability. Such a conundrum naturally led to my wondering the extent to which these different developments could be attributed to the government sponsored housing segregation I’ve been lamenting, and whether or not these developments have manifested in segregated schools today.

To test these hypotheses I researched each area on its own to see if I could tease out any differences in government policy, primarily through the location of public housing, that could feasibly contribute to their complex racial developments. I marked each of the areas with any public housing developments and public high schools that stand within them. I then researched when the public housing developments were

opened, and found statistics on the current racial makeups of the high schools (Table 3, Appendix). To help complete the story, I calculated the percent change in black residents of the three areas that I mapped decade by decade (Table 1, Appendix). This required me to calculate the aggregate percentage of African Americans in each of my mapped areas at decadal intervals (Table 2, Appendix). By seeing how the areas surrounding differently available public housing have evolved, and checking in on modern levels of school segregation, I hope to tie together the stories of government sponsored residential discrimination and modern school segregation in a meaningful way. It is important to note that my population data is divided simply into black and non-black residents. This means that when I say an area contained eighty percent black residents, the remaining twenty percent are not necessarily white residents. Asians, Hispanics, Latinos, and other non black residents would be included in that twenty percent.

Central Cleveland had already established high percentages of African American residents by the 1940's, and has appeared as a hotspot for black residents throughout the twentieth and early twenty-first centuries. Looking at the maps of Central Cleveland in the appendix, most of the area I analyzed had black residents between sixty and ninety percent, with some of the area north and west of Invictus High School showing below ten percent. On aggregate, this area of Central Cleveland was already 65.7% African American in 1940. Public housing was instituted quickly in this area with Olde Cedar, Cedar Central, Outhwaite Homes, and Carver Park all being built by the PWA and USHA before 1945. The placement of such a high concentration of public housing

in a small part of Cleveland that had the highest percentage of African Americans living in it is notable.

Earlier in this paper I referenced the PWA and USHA's practice of erecting public housing in areas that were already highly segregated in order to reinforce residential segregation. This appears to be the situation in Central Cleveland where four projects were erected within a few blocks of each other in the area most populated by African Americans. The fact that this area grew more and more segregated during the period I looked at, up to the point that large sections had black residence above ninety percent by 2010, seems to support the effectiveness of using public housing placement to reinforce residential segregation. The 20.5% increase in the percentage of African American residence between 1940 and 1950, the decade when most of the public housing in Central Cleveland was erected, is the largest jump that this area saw during the period I examined.

Residential segregation in this area has certainly translated into a segregated school system, as we see the percentage of African American students attending Invictus and East Technical High School's in Table 3 at ninety-eight and ninety-six percent respectively. While it's not reasonable to make the argument that segregation in Central Cleveland was a direct result of government intervention, it is reasonable to argue that segregation may not have reached such an extent as it has today without such a high concentration of segregated public housing. Had these projects been

spread out across the city, perhaps racial segregation in Central Cleveland would not be so extreme.

The second area I looked at was East Cleveland. This area of Cleveland struck me because of how drastically its racial character evolved during the period. East Cleveland went from being a ninety-nine percent white area, to an eighty percent black area in just the seventy years I was looking at. An interesting and easily overlooked component to the story of public housing segregation is the placement of housing for the elderly. While East Cleveland is not home to any public housing for families, it does have two senior developments for people over sixty-two years old.

The role that senior housing plays in the story government sponsored housing segregation and resultant school segregation is not as clear as the role played by family housing. Bickford and Massey conducted a study in 1991 which found that elderly and subsidized public housing was primarily white, while family and authority owned projects were largely minority.⁵⁶ Providing public housing for the elderly in predominantly white areas, and for families in predominantly African American areas, theoretically helps to reinforce residential segregation. My analysis shows little evidence for this dynamic because by the time these two senior developments were opened in 1971 and 2013, East Cleveland was already transitioning to a primarily African American area. Looking at the maps and at the first two tables in the appendix, one can see that there was a drastic change in demographics that occurred between the 1940's and 1970's. The lack

⁵⁶ Bickford, Adam, and Douglas S. Massey. 1991. "Segregation in the Second Ghetto: Racial and Ethnic Segregation in American Public Housing, 1977." *Social Forces* 69 (4): 1011–36.

of family public housing in this area did not result in less segregation today.

Understanding how East Cleveland made this transition required more research into the history of housing in the area.

Early in the 20th century, the housing stock in East Cleveland was comprised of moderately priced homes in working class areas, and extraordinarily expensive homes in exclusive areas that housed the likes of John D. Rockefeller. This “mansion district” did not survive for long, as most of the area was subdivided and developed before and after WWII. East Cleveland maintained a solid reputation through its development and prided itself on good government, low taxation, a high level of municipal services, and a good academic reputation.⁵⁷ The area was home to a mix of ethnic and income groups prior to the 1960’s when the African American population began to swell.

Much of this swell can be attributed to East Cleveland’s aging and less expensive housing stock relative to other suburbs like Cleveland Heights or Shaker Heights. “In 1960, the median value of owner occupied housing in East Cleveland was \$15,100; this is only 8 percent higher than in the city of Cleveland but 20 to 30 percent less than the median value in the neighboring cities of Euclid and Cleveland Heights.”⁵⁸ A similar pattern could be seen in rents, where on average rents in East Cleveland were slightly higher than in Central Cleveland, but significantly lower than in Cleveland

⁵⁷ Keating, W. 2010. *The Suburban Racial Dilemma: Housing and Neighborhoods*. Temple University Press.

⁵⁸ Ibid, 80

Heights. This made East Cleveland an attractive area for African Americans who wished to escape the inner city.

East Cleveland was much more available to African Americans than other surrounding suburbs that only the most affluent blacks could afford to move in to. As African Americans moved to East Cleveland in droves during the 1960's, the familiar stories of white flight and blockbusting began to unfold with help from the real estate industry. Housing prices declined and many businesses in East Cleveland closed or relocated. This led to a decrease in tax revenue for the city that in turn caused municipal services to fall off. By 1990, the black population in East Cleveland had reached eighty-one percent, and East Cleveland had the highest poverty rate in Cuyahoga County.⁵⁹ The rapid resegregation of East Cleveland appears to be more a story of basic economics and sketchy real estate practices than one of government action. An argument can be made that the failure of East Cleveland's local government to confront housing turnover and white flight with race conscious approaches, that were adopted in other suburban areas, contributed to the current state of affairs. However, it is difficult to place too much blame on the city for utilizing race neutral policies.

The final area I chose to focus on was Cleveland Heights. This area struck me because it maintained a white majority while the areas around it swelled with African Americans. While the maps definitely show an increase in African American residence, this increase is nothing like what was seen in the neighboring area of East Cleveland. Cleveland Heights has managed to maintain a level of integration much higher than its

⁵⁹ Ibid, 93.

surrounding areas. I touched upon the housing situation in Cleveland Heights briefly while discussing its higher rents and home prices relative to East Cleveland. Cleveland Heights was home to a strong Jewish community throughout the early 1900's. Until 1960, the African American population in the area was less than ten percent.

Similar to East Cleveland, Cleveland Heights began to see an influx of African Americans during the 1960's. However, after seeing how the resegregation situation unwrapped in East Cleveland, Cleveland Heights responded by actively opposing resegregation and encouraging integration, instead of taking a race neutral stance like East Cleveland.⁶⁰ The Real Estate Advisory Committee to the State, and the Heights Community Congress organized to facilitate integration in Cleveland Heights. Additionally, The Heights Citizens for Civil Rights was a mostly white, citywide citizens group, which formed in 1964 to support civil rights and racial integration and to prevent resegregation in Cleveland Heights. Its membership included many who became prominent in fair housing and civil rights affairs in the city.

When comparing the development of segregation in Cleveland Heights vs. that of East Cleveland, neighboring places within the greater Cleveland area that experienced similar backgrounds, it seems that the efforts of Cleveland Heights to promote diversity were quite successful. By 2000, percentages of whites and African Americans were pretty much equal. This is in stark contrast to East Cleveland in 2000, which had become close to entirely black. It also seems the later migration of African Americans into Cleveland Heights allowed local officials to learn from what had happened in East

⁶⁰ Ibid, 114.

Cleveland a decade prior. One can see the effects of this in today's school system, where East Cleveland's public high schools are comprised of between 97 percent and 100 percent African American students, while Cleveland Heights High School has a student body that is 77 percent African American.

Although a student body of 77 percent African Americans is preferable to one that is 97 or 100 percent African American, it's interesting that the 77 percent black student body is not reflective of the racial composition in the area surrounding the school, that is around 35 percent black. For this reason I chose to include one of the nearby private schools in Cleveland Heights, the Beaumont School, to see if white parents sending their children to private school opposed to public school was a factor in this discrepancy between neighborhood and school racial demographics. I additionally put together a table that compares the racial composition of the schools I included, to the racial composition of the areas they are located in (Table 3 in Appendix).

The nearby Beaumont school, only a few blocks from Cleveland Heights High, is only 18 percent African American. Table 3 shows every public school included in this study reporting a higher percentage of African American students than what would be representative of the area. The only private school, on the other hand, shows the opposite effect whereby less black students attend Beaumont School than what would be representative for the area surrounding it. White families choosing to, and being financially able to, send their children to private school more often than black families leads to public schools, even in integrated areas, becoming more segregated. This is

another example of the economic disadvantages and limited mobility faced by African Americans contributing to the segregation of America's school system. It's also important to remember that simply the higher price of housing in Cleveland Heights relative to East Cleveland would have precluded many disadvantaged African Americans from moving in as quickly as they did to East Cleveland. The more gradual integration of Cleveland Heights could quickly and easily morph into resegregation with the fall of housing prices or changing white attitudes.

This case study allows me to contrast the roles of federal and local public policy in generating greater or lesser residential segregation over time. The identities of Cleveland Heights and East Cleveland as their own cities, with different local governments and activist groups, within the Cleveland Metropolitan Area, lends itself to such an analysis. East Cleveland, where there was the largest change in racial makeup, shows how powerful racism working through "market forces" alone, rather than through federal housing policies, can be.

The experience of Cleveland Heights on the other hand seems to indicate how powerful local government and activism can be in offsetting the larger forces of residential segregation and creating integrated areas. However, even in the more progressive Cleveland Heights, my research indicates that white families are sending their children to "whiter" private schools in rather high numbers. Market force can also not be ruled out due to the facts that housing in Cleveland Heights has been historically more expensive than in surrounding areas, and that African American families have less

wealth to attain this more expensive housing. While the percent changes in Cleveland Heights racial makeup appear quite large, it is important to note that this represents a change from around one percent to around thirty percent black residents; compared to Central Cleveland which already had percentages of black residents around sixty five percent at the beginning of the period. Central Cleveland fits the paradigm of public housing being targeted to poor black neighborhoods and reinforcing segregation that was discussed in the 1993 Massey and Kanaiaupuni article referenced on page twenty-five.

Conclusion

Recognizing that I could not possibly account for all the forces that have contributed to something as complex as the development of segregated neighborhoods, the purpose of this paper was to reasonably establish that government sponsorship at least played a role. In lieu of trying to account for all such contributing factors, I decided to explain a number of them in some depth, and to illustrate in greater detail the role of public housing. My analysis of Cleveland does not draw a direct causation between public housing placement and future levels of segregation, but rather suggests a correlation between the two whereby public housing was purposefully placed in areas with existing high levels of African American residence. I have supported this correlation with a historical analysis that supplements the argument for there being a connection. The basic idea being, while I may not be able to conclusively determine a cause and

effect relationship between government policy and residential segregation in Cleveland, I can provide enough potential relationships to tell a convincing story that is certainly more than simple coincidence.

Determining the most effective strategy to combat a problem as complex and systemic as this one could be the subject of an entire thesis in itself, so I am hesitant to offer potential solutions. However, given my research it appears that the pro-integration attitudes of residents and civic groups in Cleveland Heights were at least helpful, if not instrumental, in slowing down the course of resegregation. This lends credence to the purpose of writing this paper in order to educate and change the attitudes of public perception regarding African American segregation. Understanding that African Americans have not chosen, but have rather been forced into, segregated living conditions is a major step towards solving the problem.

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Appendices

Year that Public Housing Projects Opened:

Central Cleveland

Olde Cedar: 1937

Cedar-Central: 1937

Outhwaite Homes: 1935

Carver Park: 1943

King Kennedy High Rise: 1971

East Cleveland

Mildred L. Brewer (senior housing): 2013

Apthorp Tower (senior housing): 1971

Cleveland Heights

None

Current Percentage of African American Students in Student Body:

(provided by US News)

Central Cleveland

East Technical School: 96%

Invictus High School: 98%

East Cleveland

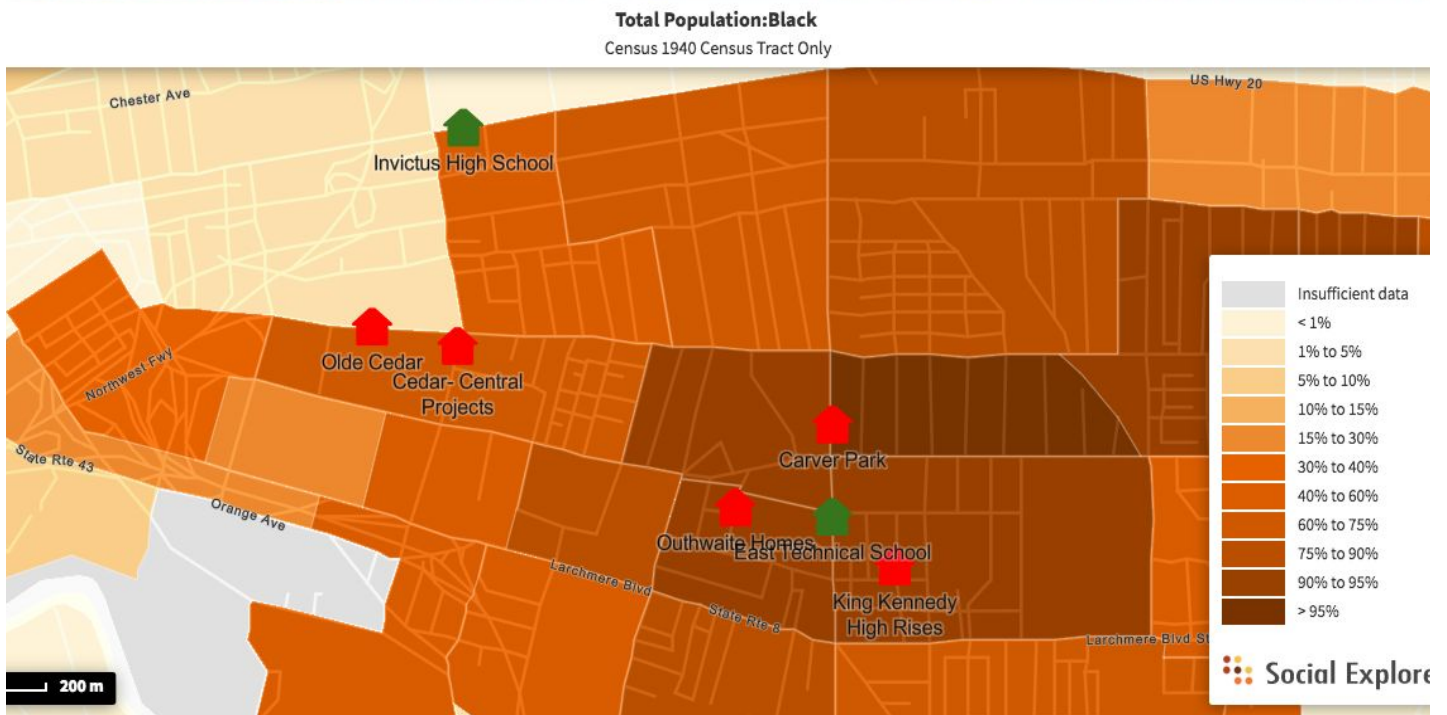
Glenville High School: 97%

Shaw High School: 100%

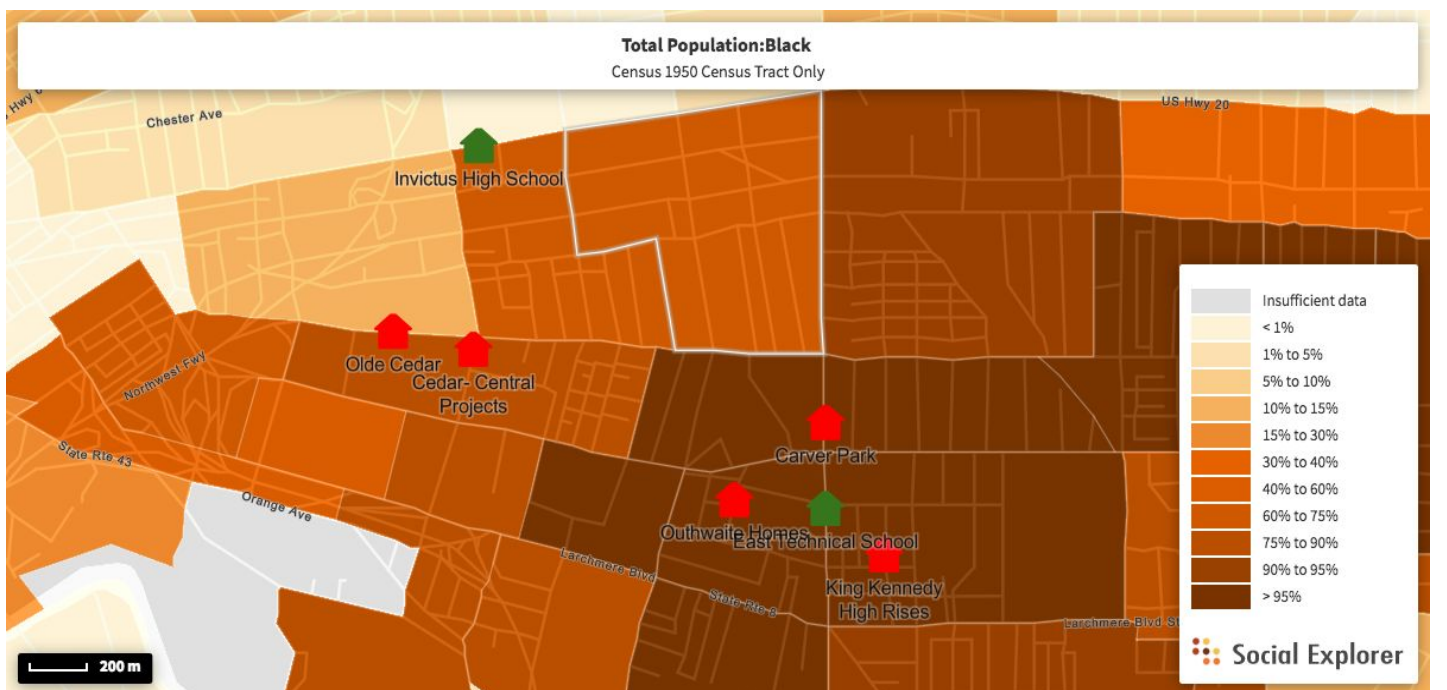
Cleveland Heights

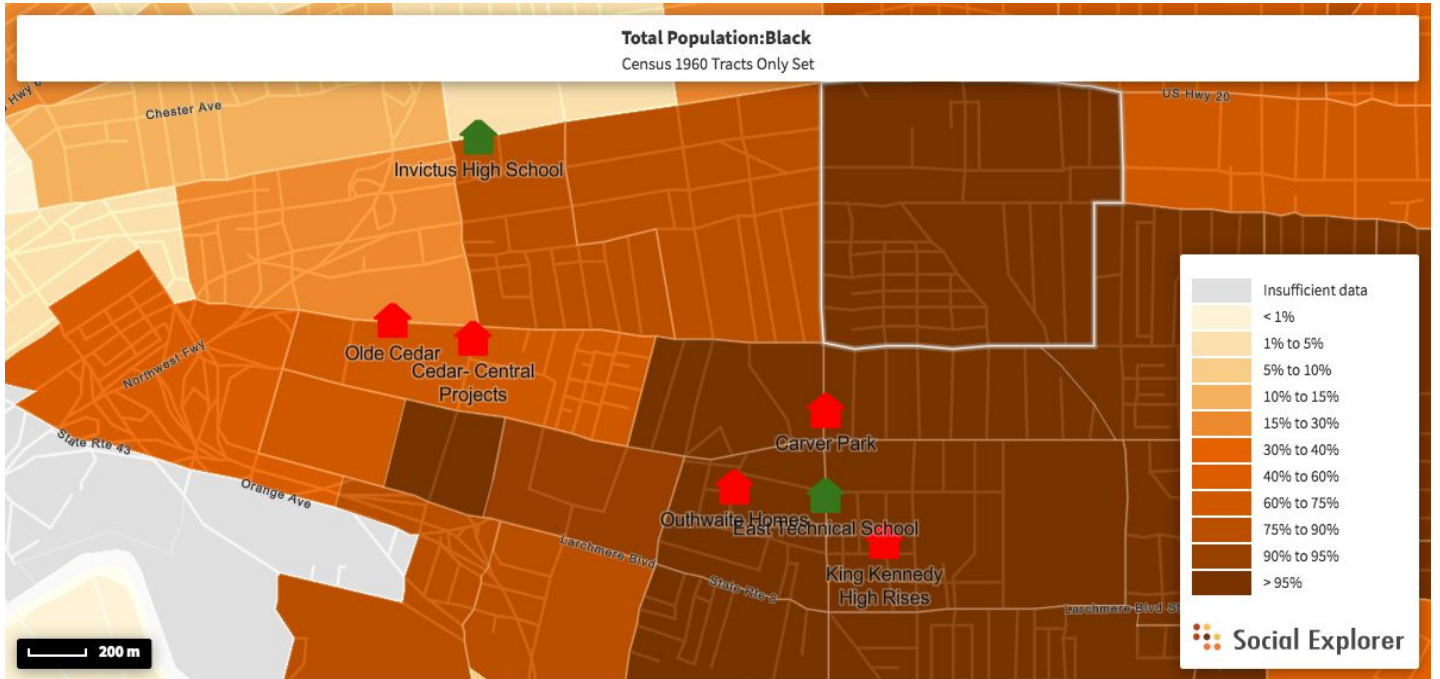
Cleveland Heights High School: 77%

Beaumont School (Private): 18%

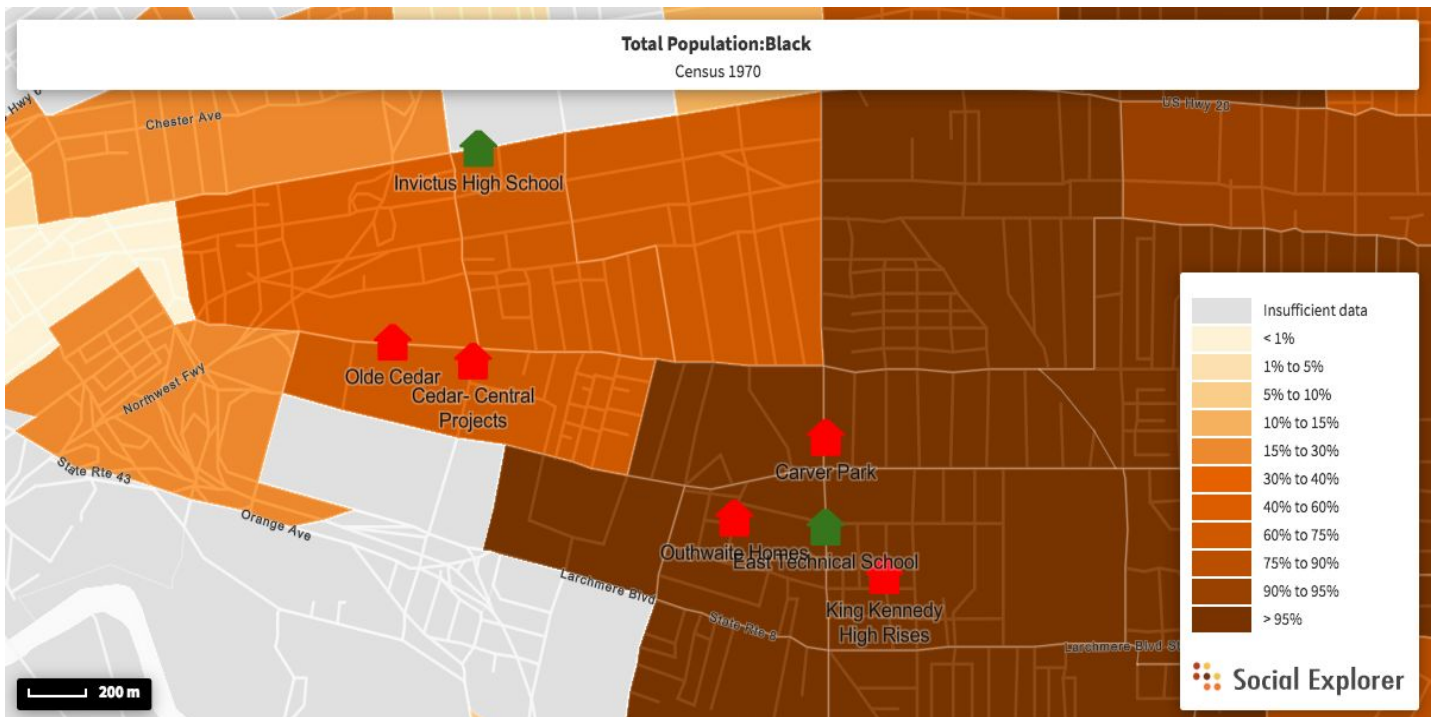


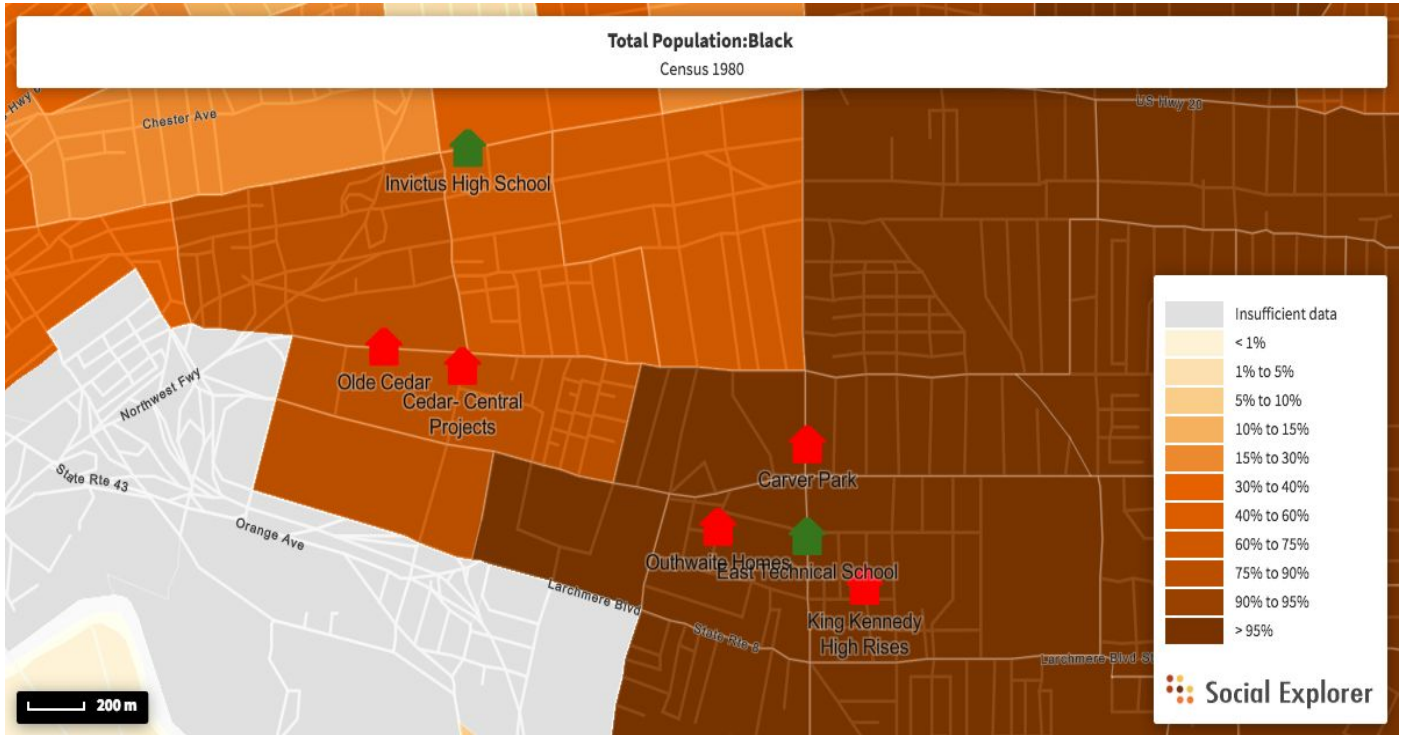
Central Cleveland





Central Cleveland





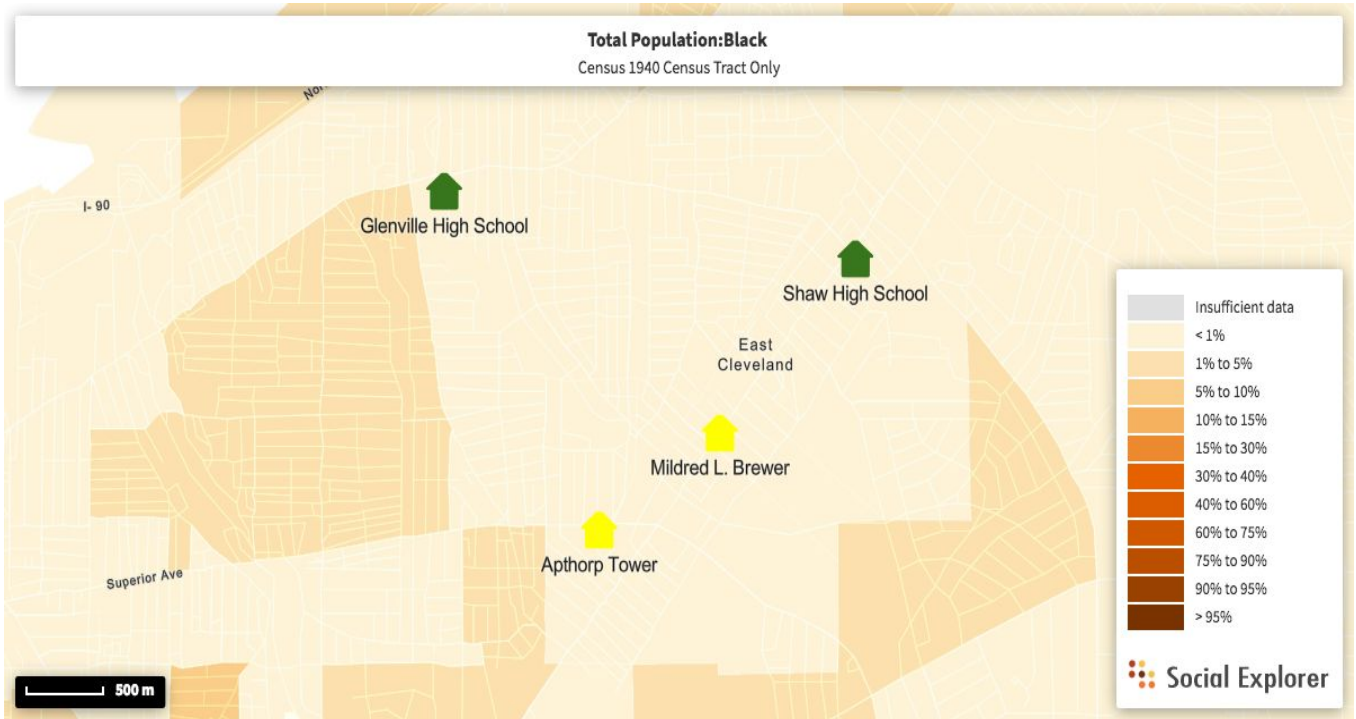
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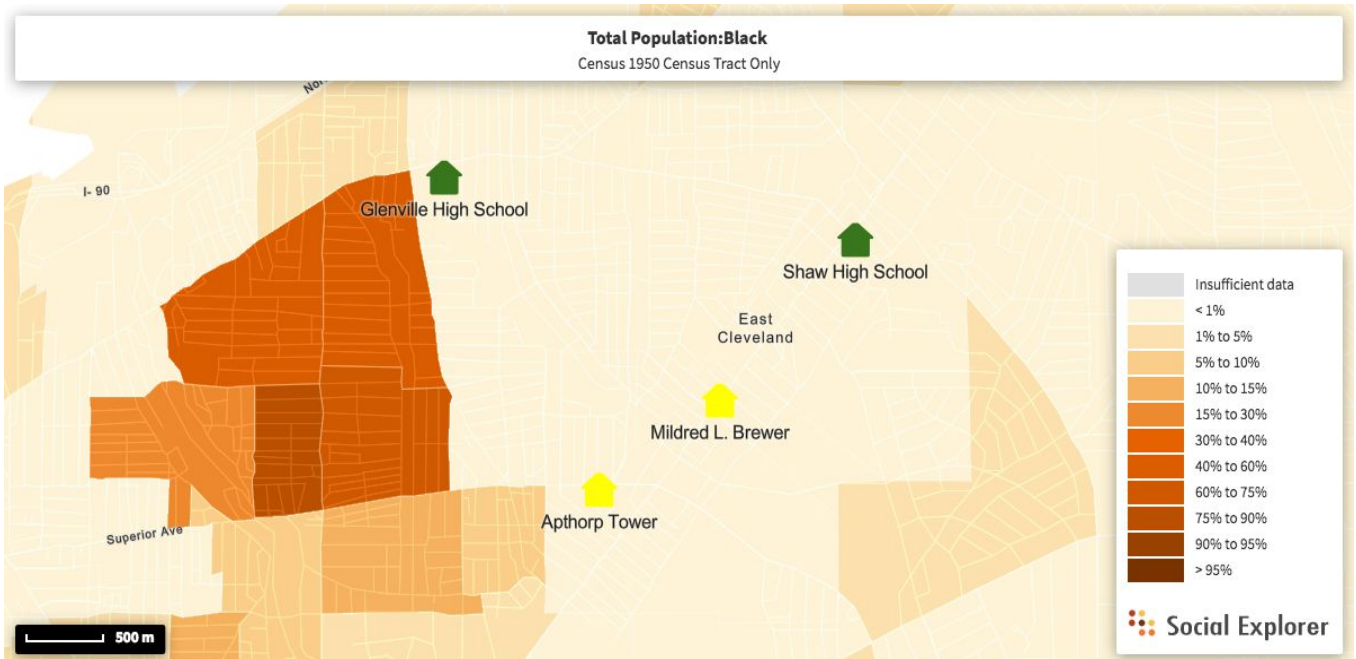


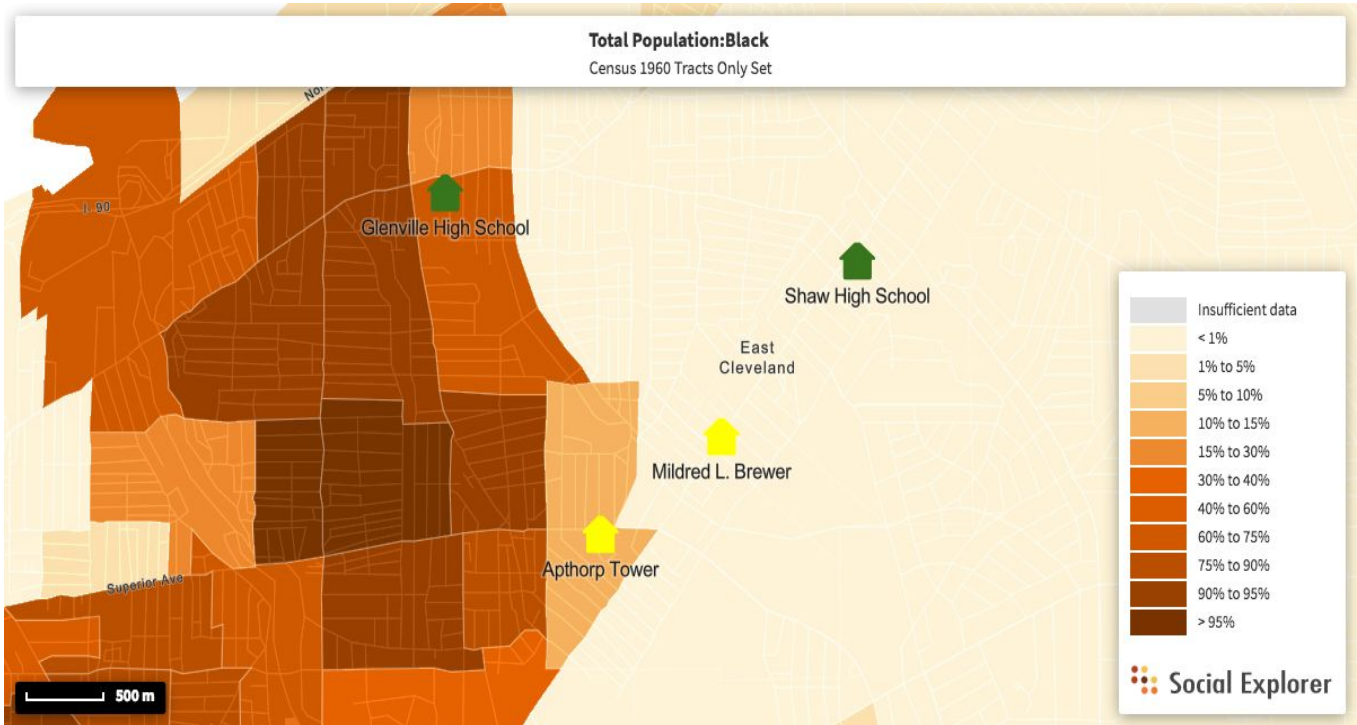
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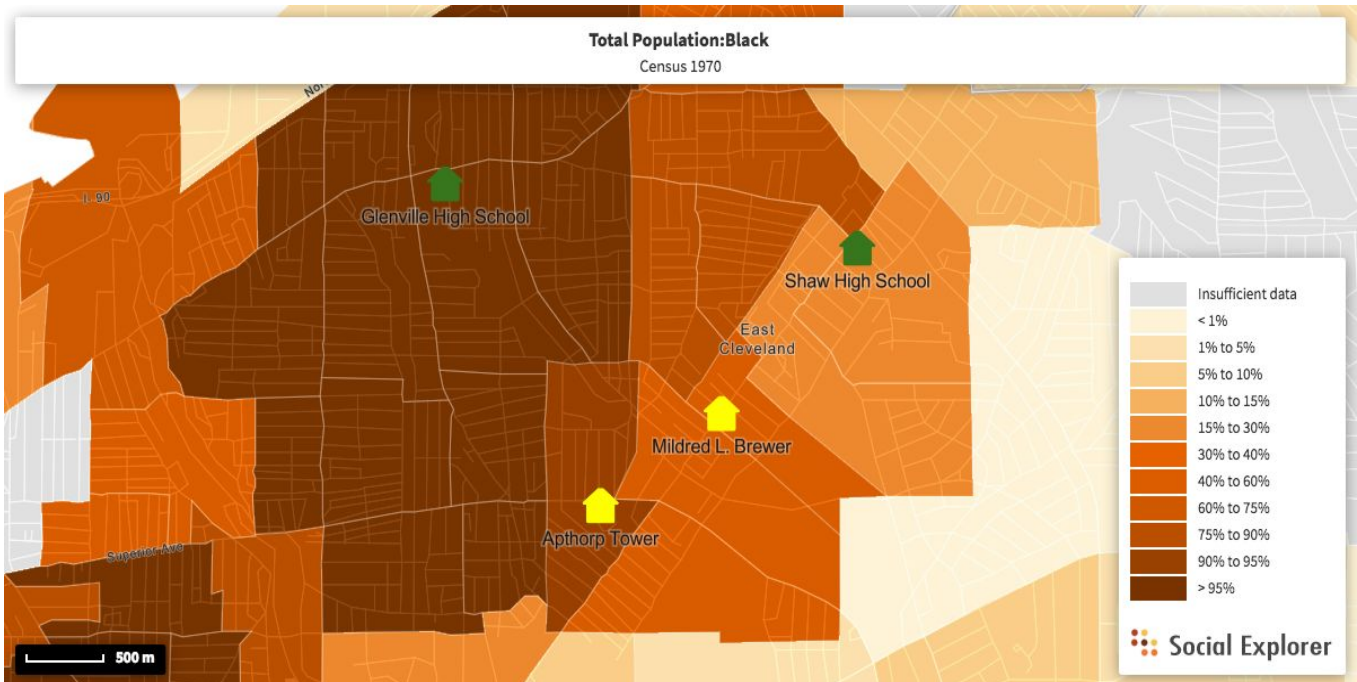


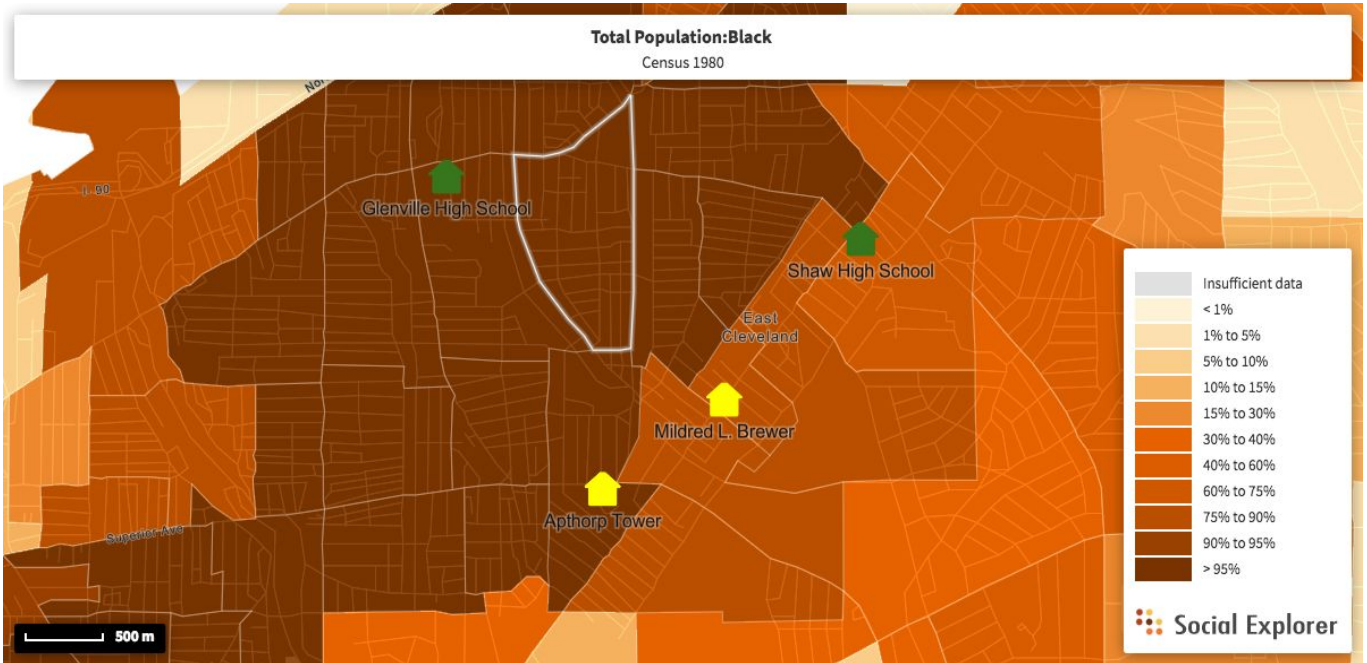
East Cleveland



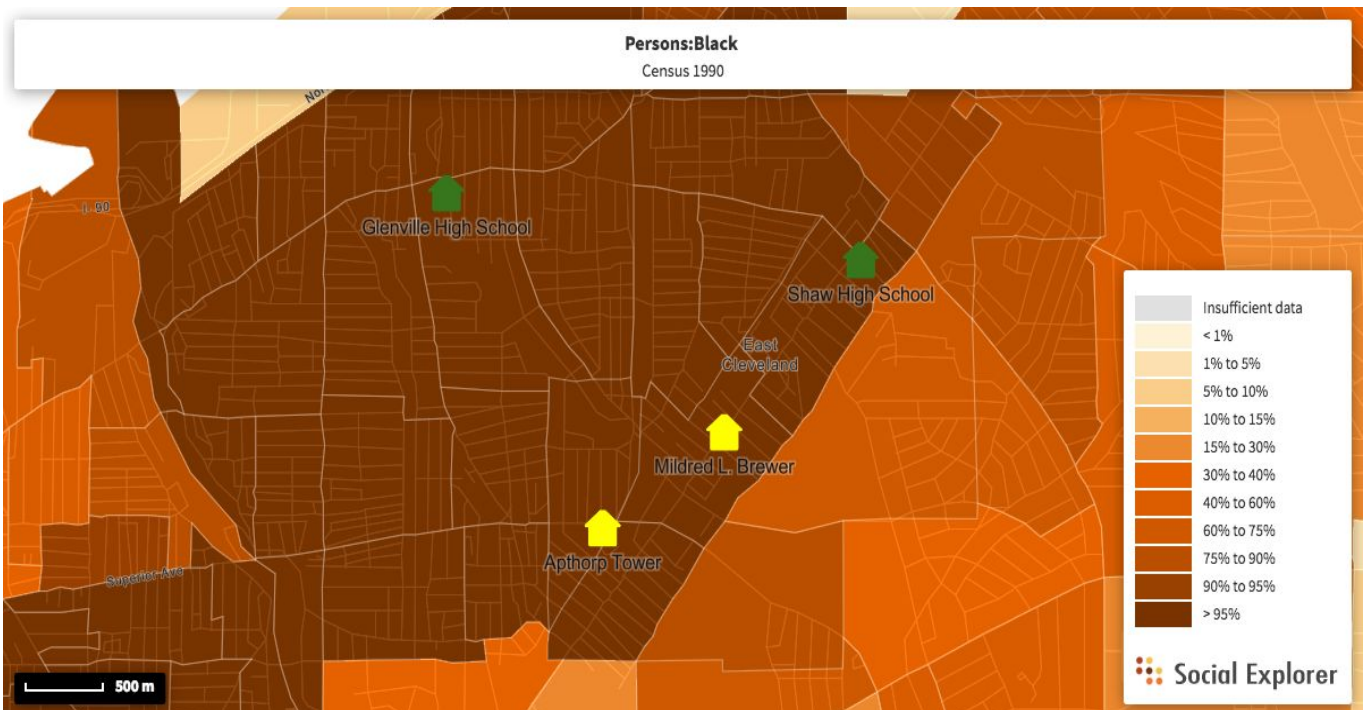


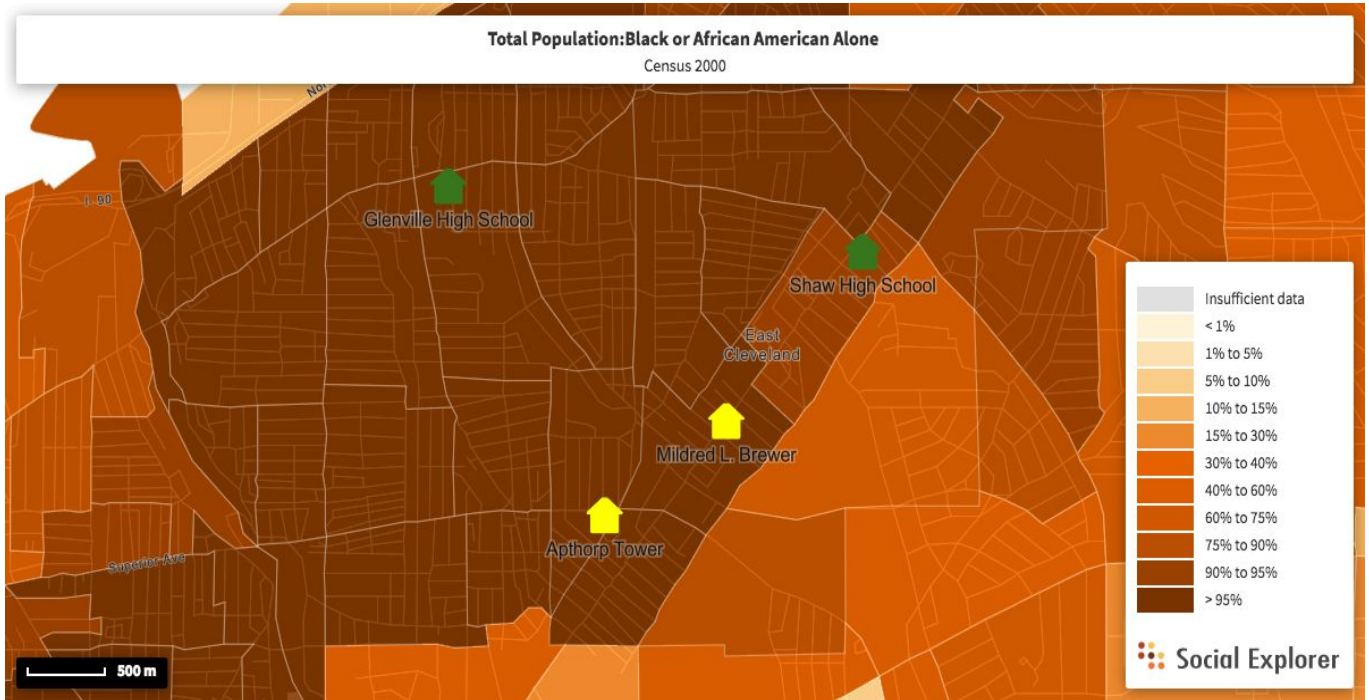
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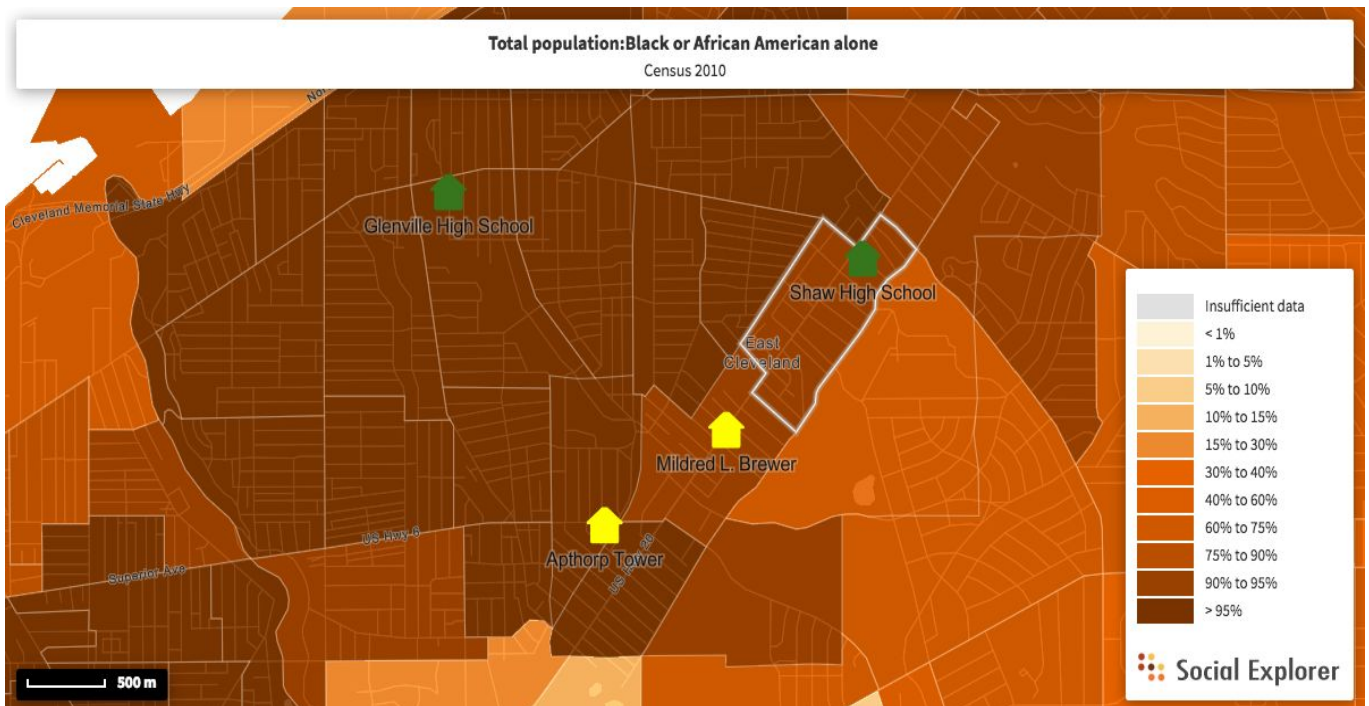


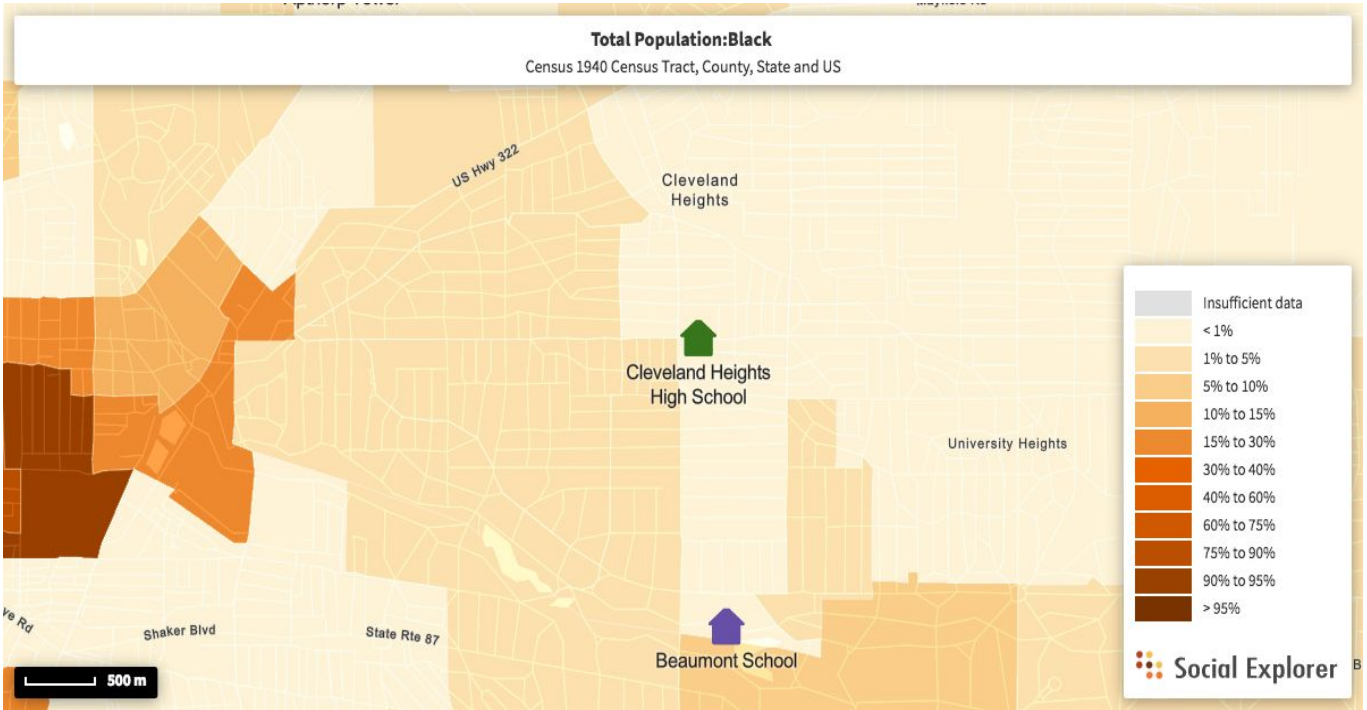
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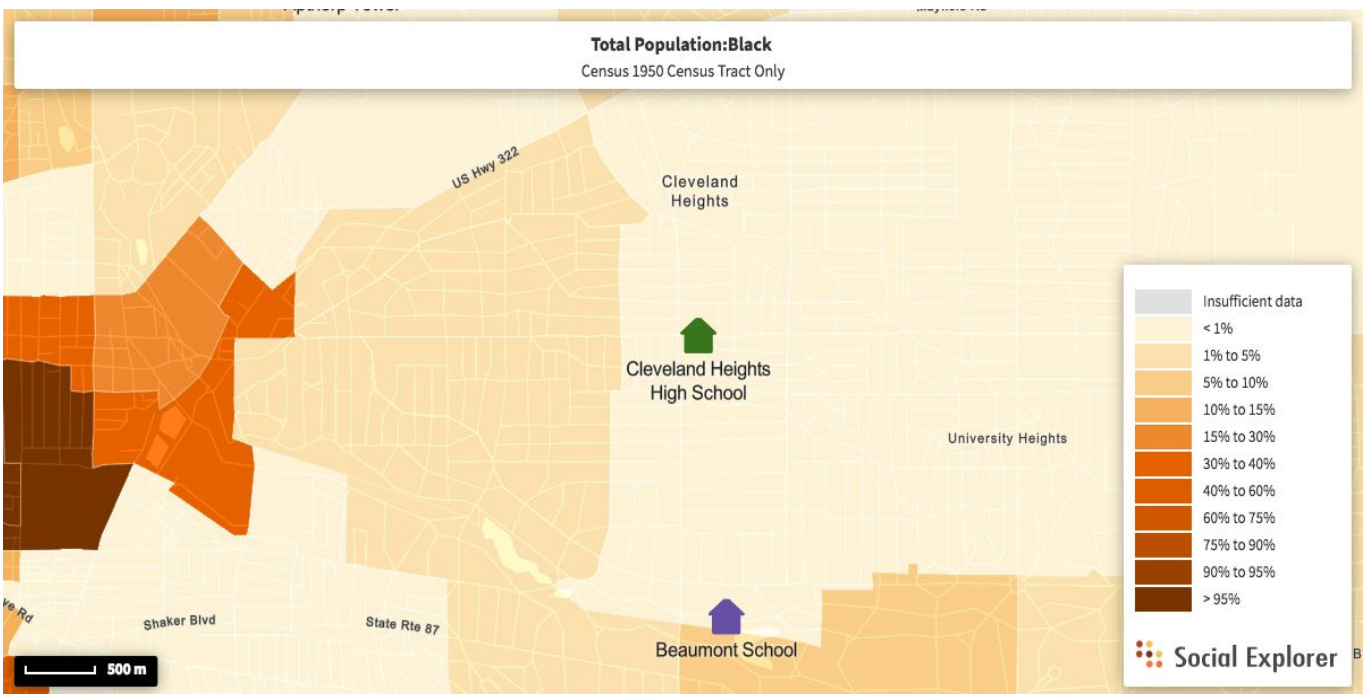


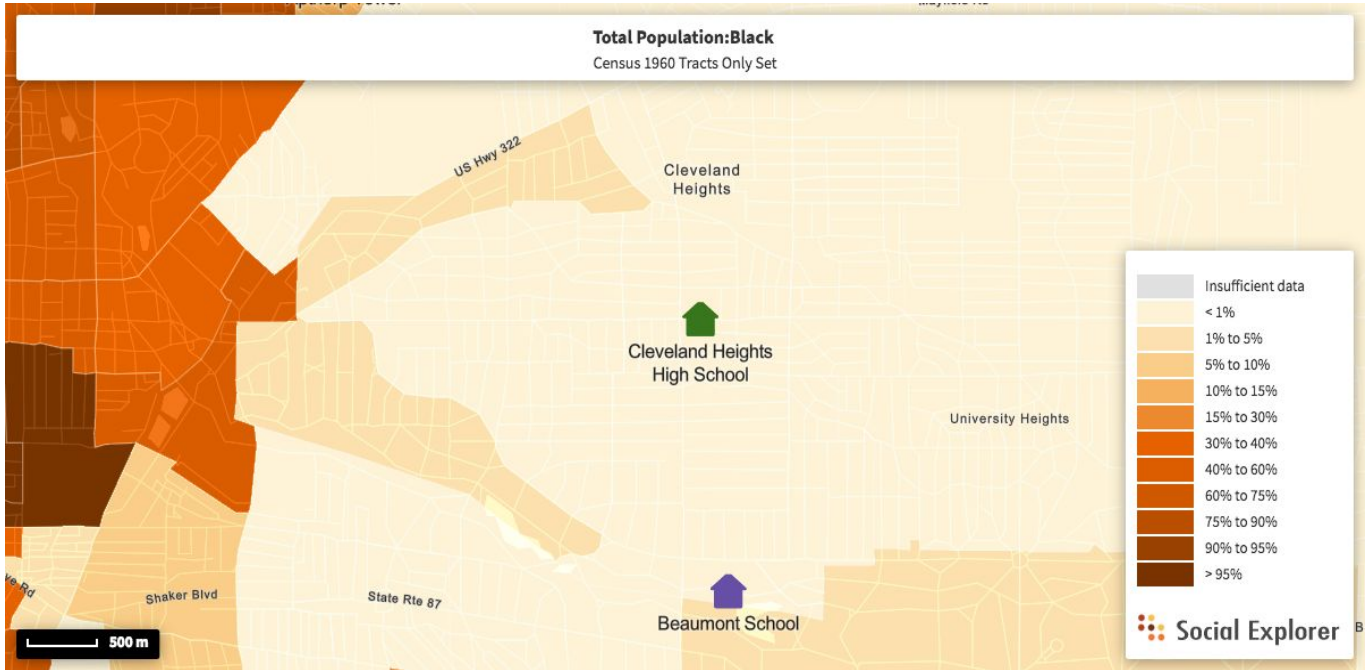
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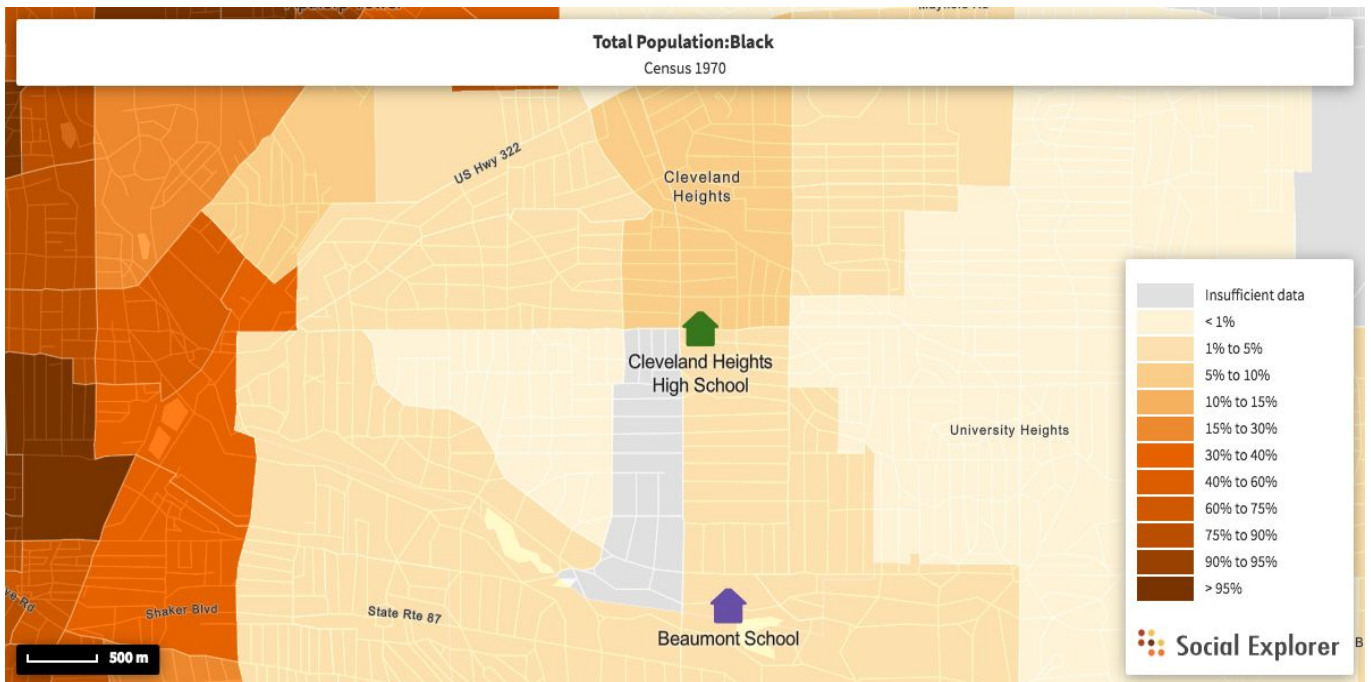


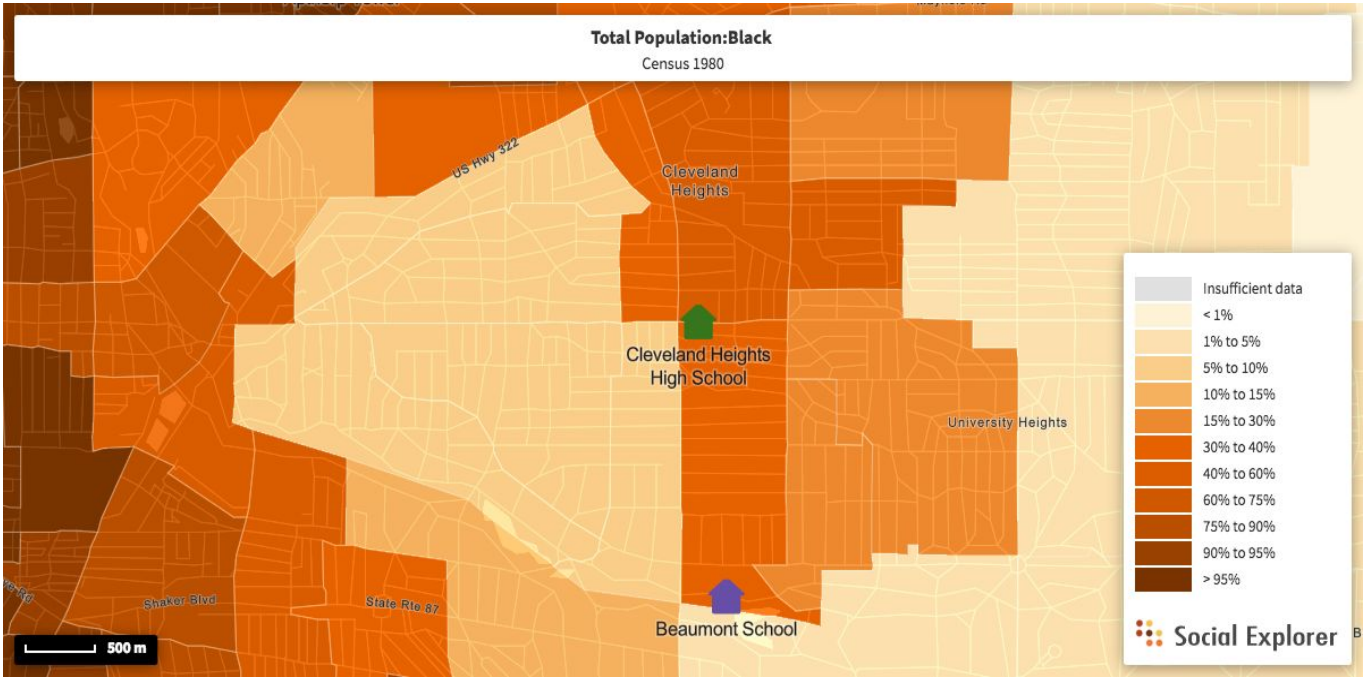
Cleveland Heights



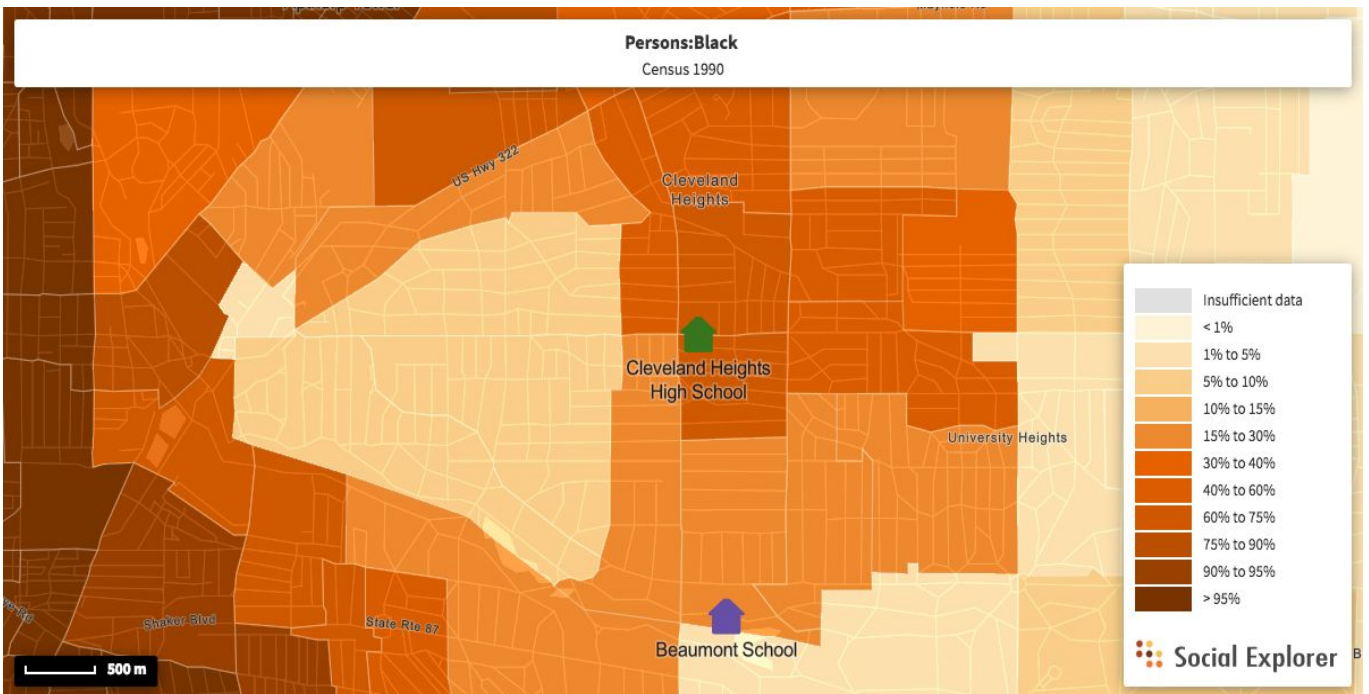


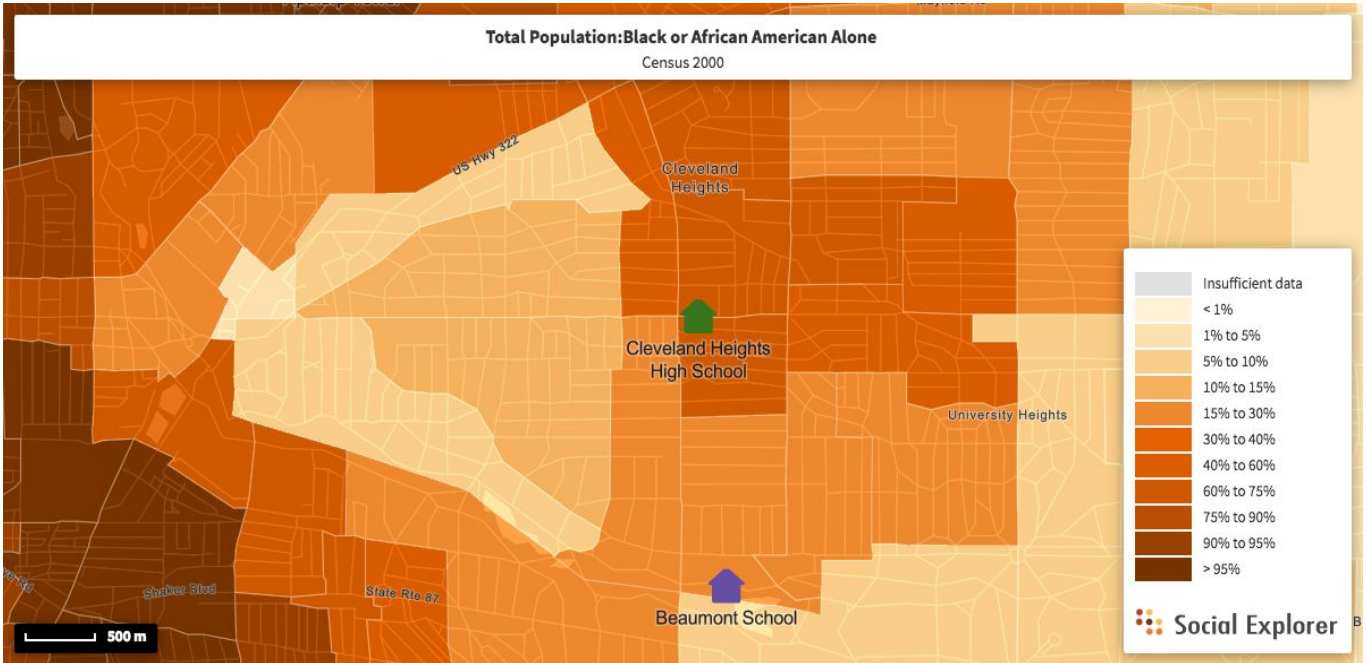
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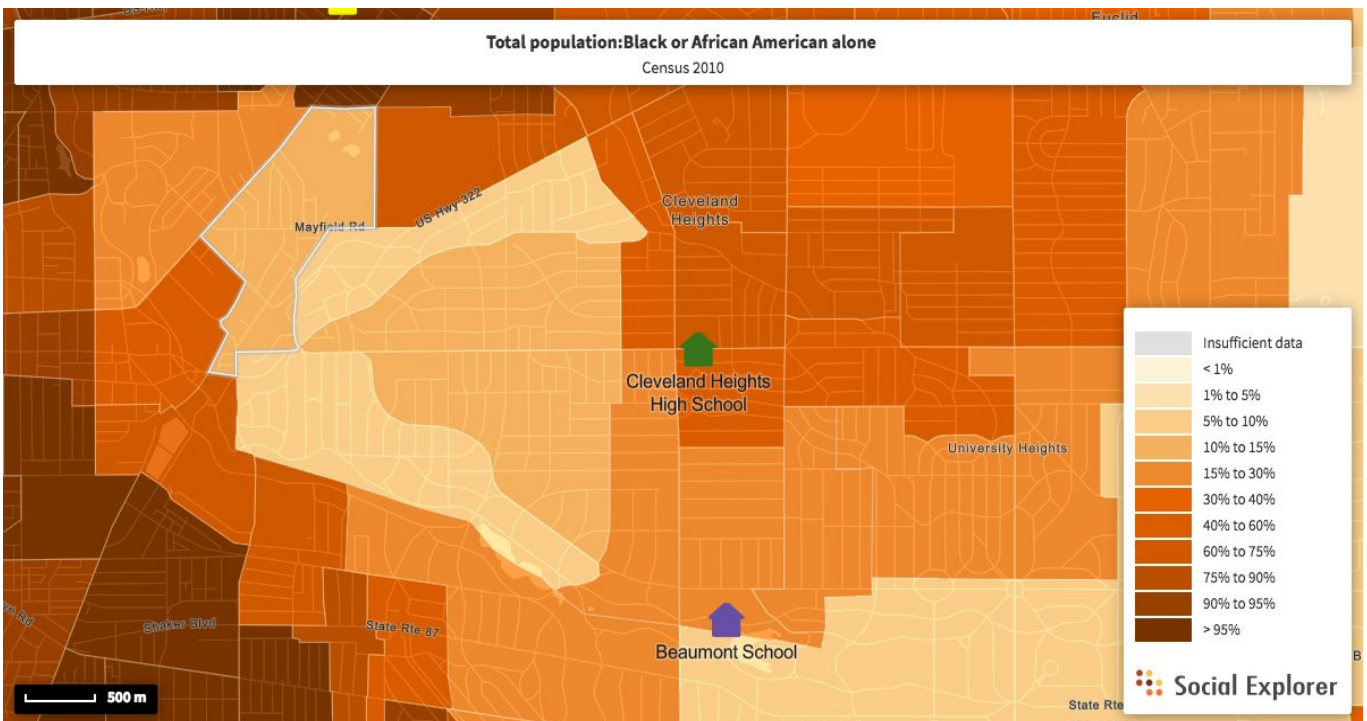


Cleveland Heights





Cleveland Heights



**Percent Change in Percentages of African American Residents
(Decadal)**

Table 1.

	Central Cle.	East Cle.	Cle. Heights
1940	0	0	0
1950	+20.5%	+1,020%	-25.0%
1960	+7.7%	+208%	-55.6%
1970	+0.3%	+69.3%	+1,225%
1980	+1.2%	+24.1%	+339.6%
1990	+2.1%	+11.7%	+30.0%
2000	-1.6%	+6.7%	+11.6%
2010	-7.7%	-3.0%	+6.2%
Entire Period	+22.2%	+8,280%	+2,891.7%

*Data for Calculations Provided by Us Census

**Percentages of African American Residents in Cleveland Areas
(Decadal)**

Table 2.

	Central Cleveland	East Cleveland	Cleveland Heights
1940	65.7%	1.0%	1.2%
1950	79.2%	11.2%	0.9%
1960	85.3%	34.5%	0.4%
1970	85.6%	58.4%	5.3%
1980	86.6%	72.5%	23.3%
1990	88.4%	81.0%	30.3%
2000	87.0%	86.4%	33.8%
2010	80.3%	83.8%	35.9%

*Data for Calculations Provided by US Census

Comparing Percentage of Black Residents In Area to Percentage of Black Students In Local High Schools

Table 3.

	Central Cleveland		East Cleveland		Cleveland Heights	
	East Tech	Invictus	Glenville	Shaw	Cl. Heights	Beaumont
%Black Students (2018)	96	98	97	100	77	18
%Black Residents (2010)	80.3	80.3	83.8	83.8	35.9	35.9

*School Data Provided by US News,
*Residential Data Provided by US Census