Researching Resistance to Residential Segregation

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Overview

• Introduction: The Not-So-Secret History of Residential Segregation
• Hands-On Exercise: Where should we look and what can we infer?
• Group Discussion
The History of Residential Segregation

• Recap from last week: What were some of the mechanisms underlying residential segregation?
Restrictive Covenants

16. RACIAL RESTRICTIONS. No property in said Addition shall at any time be sold, conveyed, rented or leased in whole or in part to any person or persons not of the White or Caucasian race. No person other than one of the White or Caucasian race shall be permitted to occupy any property in said Addition or portion thereof or building thereon except a domestic servant actually employed by a person of the White or Caucasian race where the latter is an occupant of such property.

17. ANIMALS. No fowl or animal other than song birds, dogs or cats as household pets, shall at any time be kept upon land embraced in this Addition.

18. AMENDMENTS. The owner or owners of the legal title to not less than 300 residence lots in said Addition may at any time by an instrument in writing duly signed and acknowledged by said owner or owners, terminate or amend said Mutual Easements of Blue Ridge Addition, and such termination or amend
Federal Housing Administration Underwriting Guidelines

**Mortgage Risk Districts Established by FHA.** Chicago Housing Authority, 1938. University of Chicago Map Collection.

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**FHA Underwriting Manual, April 1936, Part II, Sec. 2**
Homer Hoyt, “One Hundred Years of Chicago Land Values” 1933
“Instructions for dividing the city into neighborhoods”

“Having completed the rental map, you are to draw a blue pencil around all blocks in which there are more than 10% negroes or race other than white...”

Homer Hoyt, n.d. NARA II RG 31, UD-UP 6, Folder: Neighborhood Risk Tech. – Misc.
A hidden history?

*When Affirmative Action Was White* by Ira Katznelson

*The Color of Law* by Richard Rothstein
Four Roles of Advocacy Groups

- **Detection**
  Collect individual grievances
  Aggregate into broader patterns

- **Information**
  Learn about scope, causes of exclusion
  Link to specific policies, regulations, business practices

- **Contestation**
  Challenge legitimacy of policy, regulations
  Challenge economic/market based explanations for exclusion

- **Expansion**
  Change formal laws, administration
  Change market practices
Letters to NAACP

“if there is anything you can do for a colored couple of a good community who are desirous of building a house but cannot seem to have it financed because of their color.”

“The other two men are white and we are Negroes and we know that the reason we can’t get this loan is because of their prejudice and I am wondering if other Negroes are having this same trouble, and if so, what are they doing about it.”

NAACP Papers, Group I-C-307, Folder: Housing: June-Sept. 1937
The Valuation Officer should investigate areas surrounding the location to determine whether incompatible races and social groups are present. To this end, it is
necessary that properties which continue to be occupied by the same social and racial classes, a change in social or racial occupancy generally leads to instability and a reduction in values. The question of whether changes should be found adequate before a high setting is given to the future. Once

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“At the outset we felt that perhaps these complaints were isolated incidences of local prejudice...The conclusion is inescapable that the Federal Housing Administration has a general procedure with respect to guaranteeing mortgages on property purchased or built by Negroes.”

Roy Wilkins to Stewart McDonald (Federal Housing Administrator), 10/12/38

NAACP Group II-L-17, Folder: Housing – Federal 1938-9
Responses to this discovery:

“Colored people have been branded as slum-dwellers without ambition to live in good houses and yet when they seek better housing, they are told by the government that they must remain in certain areas.”

(Chicago Defender 12/31/38)

FHA not “using the funds and power of all the citizenry on the side of sound housing and social policies.”

Walter White to FDR, 10/28/44, Archives II RG 31 CCSF, Box 5 Racial Restrictive Covenants
Some outcomes:
- Early 1940s: Removal of reference to race in Underwriting Manual
- 1948: Shelley vs. Kraemer rules restrictive covenants unenforceable
- 1954: Voluntary Home Mortgage Credit Program

Albert Cole (Top Federal Housing Official)
“You in the private industry of finance have a social, ethical, and, yes a political responsibility” to serve minority needs.
“If private enterprise will not provide for them, then the Government proposes to assist him to get the home financing he needs on terms equal to those afforded others.”

Four Roles of Advocacy Groups

Detection → Information → Contestation → Expansion

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National Council of Negro Women, Mississippi, 1965
National Archives for Black Women’s History, Series 14, Slide 1043
Breakout Rooms

1) What challenges (practical, inferential) do these sources and presentation suggest about studying resistance to segregation?

2) What are the strengths and weaknesses across different types of documents (e.g., historical newspapers, letters to interest groups, internal communications, government documents)?

3) Considering the above questions, how might students be guided to study resistance to segregation in Connecticut? What resources or methods should they consider if they want to study these issues closer to home?