

## American Apartheid

Massey, Douglas S. & Denton, Nancy A. *American Apartheid*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1993.

Douglas S. Massey & Nancy A. Denton, *American Apartheid* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1993),

### 1. MISSING THE LINK (1-16)

No group in the history of the United States has ever experienced the sustained high level of residential segregation that has been imposed on blacks in large American cities for the past fifty years. This extreme racial isolation did not just happen; it was manufactured by whites through a series of self-conscious actions and purposeful institutional arrangement that continue today. (Douglas S. Massey & Nancy A. Denton, *American Apartheid* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1993), )2.

Deleterious neighborhood conditions are built into the structure of the black community. They occur because segregation concentrates poverty to build a set of mutually reinforcing and self-feeding spirals of decline into black neighborhoods. When economic dislocations deprive a segregated groups of employment and increase its rate of poverty, socioeconomic deprivation inevitably becomes more concentrated in neighborhoods where that group lives. The damaging social consequences that follow from increased poverty are spatially concentrated as well, creating uniquely disadvantaged environment that become progressively isolated – geographically, socially, and economically – from the rest of society. (Massey & Denton. *Apartheid*, 2).

Kenneth B. Clark argued that the dark ghetto's invisible walls have been erected by the white society, by those who have power, both to confine those who have *no* power and no perpetuate their powerlessness. The dark ghettos are social, political, educational, and – above all – economic colonies. Their inhabitants are subject peoples, victims of the greed, cruelty, insensitivity, guilt, and fear of their masters. Massey & Denton. *Apartheid*, 3.

The Kerner Commission of the President Lyndon B. Johnson reported that the United States was 'moving toward two societies, one black, one white – separate and unequal. Prominent among the causes that the commission identified for this growing racial inequality was residential segregation. The Kerner Commission further informed white Americans that 'discrimination and segregation have long permeated much of American life; they now threaten the future of every American.' What white Americans have never fully understood – but what the Negro can never forget – is that white society is deeply implicated in the ghetto. White institutions created it, white institutions maintain it, and white society condones it. Massey & Denton. *Apartheid*, 4.

Footnote: In the aftermath of the 1960's riot erupted in the nation's ghettos, President Lyndon B. Johnson appointed a commission chaired by Governor Otto Kerner of Illinois to identify the causes of the violence and to propose policies to prevent its recurrence. The Kerner Commission released its report in March 1968 with the shocking admonition. Massey & Denton. *Apartheid*, 3

In the ensuing national debate on the causes for this persistent poverty, four theoretical explanations gradually emerged: culture, racism, economics, and welfare. Oscar Lewis identified a 'culture of poverty;' this culture originated in endemic unemployment and chronic social immobility, and provided an ideology that allowed poor people to cope with feelings of hopelessness and despair that arose because their chances for socioeconomic success were remote. In individuals, this culture was typified by a lack of impulse control, a strong present-time orientation, and little ability to defer gratification. Among families, it yielded an absence of childhood, an early initiation into sex, a prevalence of free martial unions, and a high incidence of abandonment of mothers and children. Oscar Lewis further argued that once the culture of poverty was established, it became an independent cause of persistent poverty. Massey & Denton. *Apartheid*, 5

This idea was further elaborated in 1965 by the Harvard sociologist and then Assistant Secretary of Labor Daniel Patrick Moynihan, who in a confidential report to the President focused on the relationship between male unemployment, family instability, and the intergenerational transmission of poverty, a process he labeled a 'tangle of pathology.' He warned that because of the structural absence of employment in the ghetto, the black family was disintegrating in a way that threatened the fabric of community life. Massey & Denton. *Apartheid*, 5.

Black disadvantages were attributed not to a defective culture but to the persistence of institutional racism in the United States. The black urban underclass came about because deeply imbedded racial practices within American institutions – particularly schools and the economy – effectively kept the blacks poor and dependent. In other words, the defective culture was created as the consequence of racism and segregation. Massey & Denton. *Apartheid*, 6.

## **2. THE CONSTRUCTION OF THE GHETTO (17-59)**

## **3. THE PERSISTENCE OF THE GHETTO (60-82)**

## **4. CONTINUING CAUSES OF SEGREGATION (83-114)**

University of Chicago's National Opinion research survey found that 62 percent of non-black respondents thought that blacks were lazier than other groups, 56 percent thought them more prone to violence, 53 percent saw them as less intelligent, and 78 percent thought them less self-supporting and more likely to live off welfare.

Douglas S. Massey & Nancy A. Denton, *American Apartheid* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1993), 95.

## **5. THE CREATION OF UNDERCLASS COMMUNITIES (115-147)**

## **6. THE PERPETUATION OF THE UNDERCLASS (148-185)**

## **7. THE FAILURE OF PUBLIC POLICY (186-216)**

**8. THE FUTURE OF THE GHETTO (217-236)**