

Chicago is probably one of the most diverse places in the country of the United States; primarily because of the multiple races living in the urbanized city and full of social/cultural differences that compose it to be this melting pot of diversity. However, among that diversity lies boundaries that have been imposed socially and culturally by races against other races that they have become imbedded in the city. These racial boundaries can easily be seen within the neighborhoods of Chicago and are physically imposing to those who see it as well as emotionally evoking as it's a disappointing truth that despite our modernized ideals we as a city of diversity still live in traditional ideals. Unfortunately it is a harsh reality to admit that segregation is still very much amongst us and is lurking within the neighborhoods of the Chicago communities.

The federal government helped create the social gap between whites and minority by allowing finances to be put toward housing establishments and by doing so it made it difficult for the minorities to receive equal opportunities as the whites did thus making segregation in Chicago neighborhoods. A movement on the issue was brought to light when Martin Luther King Jr marched through Chicago with hopes of equal housing opportunities for blacks. The outcome was a law on better living conditions for blacks and minorities. To experience the march was Chicago's history makers Mary Flowers. Mary Flowers was an elected member to the Illinois House of Representatives from Chicago's 31st District. Mary Flowers was a child when he marched through and her mother didn't let her join because of how the outcomes would be towards the march. During the late 90's the middle class of a white family would obtain over 8 times more in finances than that of a black family. However, this racial gap in wealth was not only for blacks but Latinos as well as their gap was of 12 times less the white family. This wealth gap created itself as whites were locating in the suburbs as the homes were more spacious and larger due to their incomes while the minorities were not given the same luxuries in tax bases

and were located in urban cities. This allowed them a lower quality in living as they were forced to have minimal paying jobs and use public services.

An example of the racial boundaries is a current territory transformation of the Puerto Rican community of Humboldt park and their invasion of the whites coming to claim their generations of culture in that specific neighborhood. A speaker in the issue is Jose Lopez, who has spent his life fighting for the rights of Puerto Ricans and their home in the Humboldt Park area as he has built two community centers and a mental health facility, and has helped run several campaigns for local politicians while teaching the history of Latin America at Northeastern Illinois University. In this case it is the Latino neighborhoods that are transforming into white territory one by one across the Northwest Side. Jose's response to the issue is "What's happening is, populations are being displaced and dispersed across Chicago and then it's mostly white, wealthy newcomers who come in and do not care about preserving cultural identity. They want to get rid of it and erase it."

In relation to the wealth gap came about racial boundaries which separated the whites and the minorities by neighborhoods. A well-known racial boundary is of whites living in the suburbs and blacks living in ghettos in the west and south side of Chicago. The Chicago ghettos were notorious for their violence as they had shootings, robberies, rapes, fires, joblessness, single-parent families, horrible conditioned schools and high alcoholism/heroin addiction rates, abandoned buildings and vacant lots. Due to such low income minorities were not given much of a choice for their living conditions and even if affordable were not welcomed in white neighborhoods.

Through this social trend of the wealth gap, it continued throughout generations that still occur in the present and were so entitling that despite there being political laws and attention going toward the issue; they would go to waste in efforts as they did not eradicate the issue for there is even an obvious gap with racial boundaries in the present time.

Yolanda Santiago

Lincoln Park High School - African American History – Racial Boundaries in Chicago Neighborhoods

Works Cited Page

**Interview Clips:**

Flowers, Mary, The HistoryMakers Digital ArchivDr. Martin L. King in her neighborhood.

<http://thmdigital.thehistorymakers.com/iCoreClient.html#/&s=6&args=57685>

MacNamara, Jack - Growing up in 1950s White Chicago -

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1keJdlpjfDg>

Lincoln Park Students Share their Neighborhoods – Original Video – Yolanda Santiago

Oak Park El (Chicago Transit View) – Original Video – Yolanda Santiago

**Other sources**

Austin Talks- <http://austintalks.org/>

Oak Park - <http://www.oak-park.us/>

Chicago Reader Article - <http://www.chicagoreader.com/chicago/chicago-politics-segregation-african-american-black-white-hispanic-latino-population-census-community/Content?oid=3221712>