White Flight in Hartford County, CT: 1950—2010

WHAT IS WHITE FLIGHT?

“White flight” is a term that has arisen to encompass the movement of white residents away from metropolitan centers to surrounding suburban areas. The motivations for this movement can range from increased mobility via highways, dispersion of jobs, or racial tension. Inversely, minorities are often unable to leave unsatisfactory inner city conditions due to racial restrictions, economic restraints, or the constraints that “inelastic cities” pose (Sacks). The effects of white flight, among others, are lower rates of job creation, lower average income, lower population growth, higher poverty levels, and higher income gaps (Frey).

BACKGROUND

Hartford is a perfect case-study of white flight and its effects on the economic health and racial integration of a city. Hartford’s population has been steadily shrinking since its peak population of 177,400 people in 1950 (Sacks). By 1980 the number of people employed in Hartford was 116 thousand, but less than a quarter of the employees were city residents (Strong and Grant).

The causes of white flight are many, but the effects are single-handedly detrimental to a city’s racial integration, economic health, and to the people who occupy it.

REFERENCES


1960: Racial Demographics

Source: NERGIS, MAGIC

1980: Racial Demographics

Source: NERGIS, MAGIC

2010: Racial Demographics

Source: NERGIS, MAGIC