

The End of Segregation? Hardly. A More Nuanced View from the New York Metropolitan Region

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

(Full report available at www.urbanresearch.org/projects/hardly-the-end-of-segregation/.)

The Manhattan Institute (MI) report, *The End of the Segregated Century*, by Edward Glaeser and Jacob Vigdor, makes bold claims about the decline of African-American segregation. The authors point to several developments that have contributed to this decline: the end of the all-white neighborhood; depopulation of ghettos; black migration to suburbs and less segregated metropolitan areas; gentrification and immigration.

We agree with the report that the integration of Black Americans continues to advance, a development we applaud; **but the end of segregation, or even of the segregated century, is not at hand.** Our analysis of the MI report's claims focuses on the largest metropolitan area in America, centered on New York City. **Here we find a more nuanced picture.** We use detailed maps, sometimes down to the level of the city block, to investigate the population dynamics in some iconic neighborhoods, and we uncover a picture that mixes integration with renewed segregation. **Further, we identify a critical blind spot in the MI report's approach that leads it to view all-minority neighborhoods, in which blacks and Hispanics live side by side, as relatively integrated.**

In particular, our analysis examines:

- **gentrification in Central Brooklyn**, a heavily Black area, where the entry of many Whites and Asians appears linked to a Black exodus;
- **growing diversification and integration in Central Harlem**, as Whites, Hispanics and Asians enter this long-standing, predominantly Black area;
- **complex changes, including some reconstitution of Black segregation, in southeast Queens** as Asians and Hispanics enter what has been a middle-class Black area;
- **the weakening of White predominance in Manhattan's Upper East Side** but without a significant increase in Black integration;
- **growing minority concentrations in some parts of suburban Nassau County**, as the Hispanic population increases in predominantly Black areas, such as the Village of Hempstead;
- **unstable integration in other parts of Nassau County**, as the numbers of Asian, Black and Hispanic residents grow in largely White areas, while White numbers decline;
- **what appears to be integration according to the MI approach in the South Bronx**, an iconic poverty area, **where in reality Blacks and Hispanics are the great majority of residents.**

This last example reveals that the blind spot of the MI approach leads it to overstate the decline of ghettos because it overlooks a new form of ghetto, concentrated poverty areas of Black and Hispanic residents.

In closing, we show that, by comparison with the more conventional approach to measuring segregation, the MI approach tends to understate Black segregation especially in metropolitan regions that have large Black and Hispanic populations, such as Houston and Los Angeles. The report thus overstates the decline of segregation on a nationwide scale.