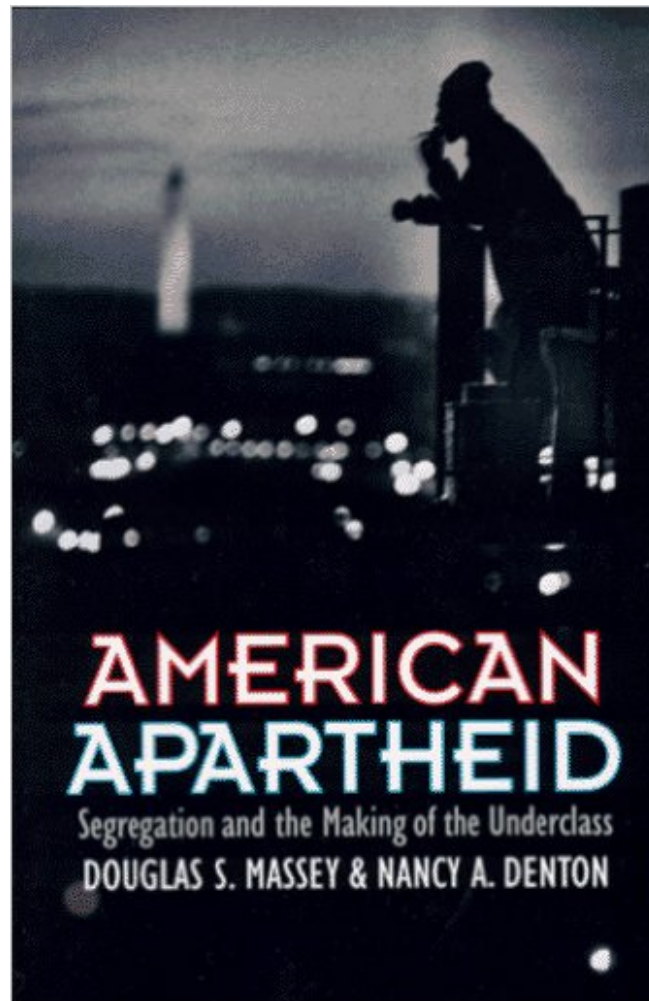


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# American Apartheid: Segregation And The Making Of The Underclass



## Synopsis

This powerful and disturbing book clearly links persistent poverty among blacks in the United States to the unparalleled degree of deliberate segregation they experience in American cities. *American Apartheid* shows how the black ghetto was created by whites during the first half of the twentieth century in order to isolate growing urban black populations. It goes on to show that, despite the Fair Housing Act of 1968, segregation is perpetuated today through an interlocking set of individual actions, institutional practices, and governmental policies. In some urban areas the degree of black segregation is so intense and occurs in so many dimensions simultaneously that it amounts to "hypersegregation." The authors demonstrate that this systematic segregation of African Americans leads inexorably to the creation of underclass communities during periods of economic downturn. Under conditions of extreme segregation, any increase in the overall rate of black poverty yields a marked increase in the geographic concentration of indigence and the deterioration of social and economic conditions in black communities. As ghetto residents adapt to this increasingly harsh environment under a climate of racial isolation, they evolve attitudes, behaviors, and practices that further marginalize their neighborhoods and undermine their chances of success in mainstream American society. This book is a sober challenge to those who argue that race is of declining significance in the United States today.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

This is the most important book explaining the causes of African-American disadvantage in the U.S. today. Packed with data and argumentation, it documents the devastating impact of residential

segregation on African-American socioeconomic prospects. One of the best features of the book is the way it subsumes other prominent explanations of African-American disadvantage--for example, William J. Wilson's spatial-mismatch hypothesis, and "culture of poverty"/"black cultural pathology" theories--within its theoretical framework.

This book is more painful to read than *Eichmann in Jerusalem*, *Germinal*, or the pornographic *The Rehnquist Choice* by John Dean. But everyone should try. The book first describes how white Americans have kept their residential neighborhoods white since about 1920. Initially by simply murdering African-Americans trying to move in. Then with widespread restrictive deed covenants. More recently, with loan institution redlining, and low-income public housing under-funding and ripoffs. Most recently, add, with pervasive real estate agent ruses, misdirection, and discouragement. This history needed telling clearly and succinctly. Subsequently, the book defines "apartheid" rigorously and identifies it in sixteen urban areas in the country, urban areas containing a substantial percentage of all African-Americans. The book then looks at the living conditions of the most isolated, homeless and hopeless, drug-and-violence-obsessed African-Americans, and identifies apartheid as a cause, if not the cause, of these conditions. John Dean's book says that Nixon in the early 1970's required his three Supreme Court appointees, the most important of whom was Chief Justice William Rehnquist, to be "right" on the race-residential question and, essentially, to look with disfavor on federal efforts to enforce the Fair Housing Act with respect to single-family homes. Consequently, American residential neighborhoods -- already less integrated in 1970 than in 1920 -- are less integrated now than in 1970. Between 1920 and 1970 the racial prejudice of individuals probably could be blamed. In the thirty-five years since Rehnquist commenced to "put his stamp" on the United States Supreme Court, it's been the snowballing insanity of our electoral system and its deformed progenies, based on money and gerrymandering undisturbed by Court rulings, that get the credit.

"American Apartheid" is excellent. It pulls back the curtain on the real-estate industry's malfeasance vis-a-vis black Americans. And, more importantly, it reveals the systemic collusion of local, state and federal gov't in said matter. All of them acted as "dis"-honest brokers who, for half a century, targeted blacks for ghetto-ization in the form of urban (Indian-like) reservations. Housing discrimination - A metastatic aspect of racism which has befouled the land for 145 years.

The authors do a magnificent job in the allocution of their theory, which is a forgotten issue for social

justice and equality in American discourse. The statistical data and charts definitely illustrate the multitude of points illuminated by the authors. The statistics are thorough however not boring or overwhelming, thus the authors make great efforts to add flesh to the numbers. A litany of historical details and information are provided in each section providing a background and link to the causes and effects of this issue. For example, the failed policies and ineptitude of the government at the federal and state level, the racism of presidents, the racist's attitudes of those of influence, the tracking methods and surveys of racial prejudice truly denote how the ghetto and residential segregation was not only formed but also maintained. The book also makes the point that many of the laws and institutions that were enacted to protect the public from these acts of racism were complicit and willing participants and that whenever a new policy was made or a court case was settled, a new strategy was invented to maintain the status quo. This was a new area of thinking for me, thus prompted me to seek additional reading materials, cited in the bibliography, which cover this subject. I appreciate how varying opinions and viewpoints are offered, which will be satisfactory for those who appreciate dialectical thinking. This is a brilliant book and a must read for those who desire to expand their knowledge of social consciousness on modern issues.

No understanding of racial dynamics in the United States can be complete without a working knowledge of segregation, and Massey & Denton's exploration of the subject leaves little to be debated. Creatively and expertly researched, the book thoroughly documents the methods and strategies employed by whites in the ongoing battle for wealth and property in the United States. Particularly damning are the chapters on institutional racism, segregation and the links between governmental policy and the disastrous course of racial equality in the 20th century. While I think Massey & Denton leave a little to be desired in their cultural critique and suggestions for improvement, their research is so well presented and argued that even conservative Charles Murray (who authored the exemplar of late 20th century scientific racism, *The Bell Curve*) recommends the book. Get this book. It will change the way you think about race and wealth in America.

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