
Westchester County, New York, is one of this nation’s wealthiest suburbs. For decades, the county has been accepting federal and state financial funding for economic- and community-development projects. From 2000 to 2006 it accepted $77 million in Community Development Block Grants (CDBG), on the strict condition that they be used to provide affordable housing. However, the county was selective in allocating the grant money to its municipalities, 32 of which are upscale, predominantly white communities, and whether for this reason taken alone or in tandem with other factors, only 13 of the municipalities were found by 2006 to have constructed their fair share of affordable housing. The settlement of the lawsuit stipulates that within seven years the county must complete the construction or acquisition of 750 affordable-housing units, 630 of them to be built in communities where African-Americans make up less than 3 percent of the population and Hispanics less than 7 percent. Houses and apartments for moderate-income people are to be marketed to non-whites, mostly in New York City. But critics of the plan have questioned the effectiveness of the Affordable Housing Pact in fighting racial segregation while already the approval of the Pact have had major political and socioeconomic consequences for the Westchester municipalities. This thesis seeks to answer the questions: What specific effects does a national housing policy have on local communities?

The methodology used identifies four levels as having been impacted by the lawsuit: Federal, county, local, and the affected families. Each has its own particular legislative power and each utilizes different strategies, policies, and political powers to address racial segregation. In addition, each level has been analyzed, in terms of its response to the Westchester lawsuit settlement, with respect to its main policy, leading agency, strategy, and political relevance. A case study was conducted at the municipal level to identify potential affordable housing allocations. The problem being studied here is not that of mixed-income development but rather of race segregation regardless of income, which has a different outcome and this must be emphasized because there appears to be a widespread misunderstanding that the case is about low-income families when in fact the lawsuit targeted minority populations, regardless of income. Finally, let it be noted that findings have been identified and broken down into the four levels of policy and each level’s findings have been analyzed from the political, socio-economic and cultural standpoints.