THE COST OF URBAN CHANGE TO NEIGHBORHOOD SCHOOLS:  
THE CASE OF YOUNGSTOWN, OHIO, 1946-1997

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By  
Margaret T. Nardy  

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A dissertation written by
Margaret T. Nardy
B.A., Youngstown State University, 1995
M.A., Youngstown State University, 1998
M.S. Ed., Youngstown State University, 2010
Ph.D., Kent State University, 2017

Approved by

_________________________________, Chair, Doctoral Dissertation Committee
Vilma Seeberg

_________________________________, Member, Doctoral Dissertation Committee
Natasha Levinson

_________________________________, Member, Doctoral Dissertation Committee
Kenneth Bindas

Accepted by

_________________________________, Director, Foundations, Leadership and Administration
Kimberly S. Schimmel

_________________________________, Interim Dean, College of Education, Health and Human Services
Mark A. Kretovics
This study was designed to trace the phenomena that led to the degeneration of the neighborhood school system in a city in decline. Youngstown, Ohio, once a thriving, populous, steel-producing town, has been in a steady state of decline since the late 1970s. This study used socio-historical research methods and relied on selected literature primarily on how deindustrialization, suburbanization, and relevant social and education policies have affected the Youngstown school system’s decline.

This study argued that Youngstown’s school system decline is a result of deindustrialization, suburbanization, and educational and social policies, all of which played a significant role in the dismantling of its neighborhoods and neighborhood schools. The study explored the specifics and dynamic interactions of both national and local facets of deindustrialization, suburbanization, and social policies relevant to the school system.
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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Youngstown, Ohio, situated in Mahoning County in northeast Ohio exemplifies the transition over time from an agricultural settlement, to canal town, to iron manufacturer, to a major steel producer (Blue, Jenkins, Lawson, & Reedy, 1995). Throughout its history a myriad of races and nationalities chose to live and work in the valley. Over time, as new immigrants arrived, they often settled in close proximity to either family, or to find friends or their sponsor that helped them immigrate. As a result, single ethnic groups occupied large sections of the city. Initially each ethnic enclave retained its own native customs and most established schools, churches, and even newspapers written in its particular language. Not surprisingly, these working class neighborhoods were often clustered close to the mills.

However, these neighborhoods were not strictly bounded as in some larger cities, and intra-neighborhood mobility was permissible with the notable exception of African Americans. Indeed, there seemed to be a sense of solidarity through both economic upswings and downturns within the working class neighborhoods. Their comradeship was reflected in the cultural values they shared: hard work, family, social relationships, and education and these were mirrored in their neighborhoods, homes, schools, and churches (Blue et al., 1995; Rury, 2005).

Just as industrialization in general, and steel manufacturing in particular had brought people to Youngstown, conversely deindustrialization, suburbanization, and federal, state, and local policies succeeded in dismantling a once thriving community. As
an example, in 1950, the city had a population of nearly 170,000 and 40 public schools; in 1970, Youngstown had a population of nearly 140,000 and 39 public schools. However, by 1990 the city’s population had drastically reduced to 96,000 and 25 public schools. I contend that these phenomena specifically influenced the city’s deterioration and loss of neighborhood schools. However, these were my preliminary understandings as I started the research and ultimately the research did not bear out exactly as I had thought.

**The Study, Purpose Statement, Research Question(s)**

This study contends several factors on both a national and a local level had an impact on the devolution of the city of Youngstown. This study explores how that post-war social, political, and economic factors exacerbated the city’s problems within its neighborhoods and eventually the schools located in them (Welsh, 2009) from a historical perspective. Although this study focuses on the city of Youngstown, the phenomena that occurred here also occurred in many industrial-based cites across the country due in part, to deindustrialization, suburbanization, and social and educational policies.

The purpose of this study is to explore how the post-war social, political, and economic phenomena, over time, influenced how the city of Youngstown’s decline related to the dismantling Youngstown’s neighborhood schools as a result of deindustrialization, suburbanization, and political and educational policies.

Applying a socio-historical analysis, my overarching research question is what specific phenomena, over time, influenced the dismantling of Youngstown’s
neighborhood schools? How did these changes evolve? When did these changes take place? Are there similarities in similar processes in other cities?

**The Problem of Urban Decline**

This study contends several factors on both a national and a local level had an impact on the devolution of the city of Youngstown and its neighborhood schools. These general processes describing the problem are introduced next.

**Deindustrialization**

In its most fundamental form, deindustrialization is the process of widespread, systematic disinvestment, or movement of capital in a nation’s or a region’s basic productive capacity (Bluestone & Harrison, 1982). Theoretically, disinvestment is supposed to free labor and capital from relatively unproductive uses in order to put them to work in more productive ways. In its heyday, Youngstown was considered a mid-sized city, but also one of the three largest steel producers in the U.S. Its downfall was that it was primarily a one-industry city. When the steel mill shutdowns occurred, it was especially shocking to the community.

Although many assign September 1977 as the high point of deindustrialization in Youngstown, the steel industry had been in decline for years, due in part to the strikes of the 1940s and 1950s; and to steel companies disinvestment in their operations and unwillingness to invest in new steel technologies or equipment in the 1950s and 1960s (Linkon & Russo, 2002). Further, in 1969 Youngstown Sheet and Tube, then the nation’s eighth largest steel-making firm, was purchased by the New Orleans-based and headquartered conglomerate, the Lykes Corporation (Bluestone & Harrison, 1982).
Although Lykes had sought to maintain a low profile, it was a far-reaching consortium involved in ship building, real estate, banking, and ranching (Buss & Redburn, 1983). Though a conglomerate, Lykes was a much smaller company with assets of $137 million compared to Youngstown Sheet and Tube’s $806 million and if the size differential was not problematic enough, the management of Lykes knew nothing about steel-making (Bruno, 1999). The acquisition itself was financed mainly by a loan that Lykes promised to pay off out of Youngstown Sheet and Tube’s very substantial cash flow (Bluestone & Harrison, 1982). However, during the next eight years Lykes used Youngstown Sheet and Tube’s cash to amortize that debt and expand its non-steel operations by investing capital needed for renovating the steel mills into its non-steel subsidiaries (Bluestone & Harrison, 1982; Buss & Redburn, 1983), essentially pursuing a strategy of planned disinvestment, thus accelerating the decline of the already antiquated mills (Buss & Redburn, 1983).

Yet perhaps most significant to Youngstown, this merger meant that all of the local steel mills were now owned by outside corporations and thereby not committed to reinvestment in their operation, nor in the community (Linkon & Russo, 2002, p. 48). On September 19, 1977, Youngstown Sheet and Tube abruptly closed its Campbell Works resulting in the immediate loss of nearly 5,000 jobs. Additionally, U.S. Steel closed its mills in 1979 and 1980 and Republic Steel followed in the mid-1980s (Bruno, 1999) culminating in the loss of 50,000 jobs in basic steel and related industries (Linkon & Russo, 2002). The disinvestment in the steel mills and ultimately the community had far
reaching implications. As Lustig (1985) contended, “the loss of jobs and tax bases and the threat to its continuity as a living community, restricted its autonomy, self-determination and authority as a governing body” (p. 132). Indeed, in the case of Youngstown, the closings highlighted a longer-term process in which the community lost control of its economic base, came to rely more heavily on decisions made elsewhere, and on external assistance (Buss & Redburn, 1983). The closings altered and continued to change the community wreaking havoc in all aspects of the city, and as a consequence, the population dwindled, property values declined, resulting in the loss of tax revenues to the city and its schools.

**Suburbanization and Urban Concentration of Poverty**

Like deindustrialization, suburbanization is a process that evolved over time and is fueled by a series of phenomena. Suburbanization is usually characterized by rapid population growth on the periphery of a city, loss of population at the city center, an increase in the average commute to work, a rise in socioeconomic status of suburban residents, and a concentration of the poor in the city center (Jackson, 1985). For the purposes of this study, I focus on two primary factors that contributed to suburbanization in Youngstown: the building of the interstate and in-migration and out-migration.

**Building the Interstate**

In *Crabgrass Frontier: The Suburbanization of the United States*, Jackson (1985) contended that the idea of the suburb as a residential place, as the place outside city walls, is as old as civilization and an important part of the ancient, medieval, and early modern urban tradition (p. 13). Yet the process of suburbanization, defined as the systematic
growth of peripheral areas superseding that of core cities, first occurred around 1815 in the United States and Great Britain (Jackson, 1985, p. 13).

Additionally, advances in transportation precipitated suburban growth. For instance, in the United States between 1815 and 1875 the innovation of new modes of transportation such as the commuter railroad, the horse-car, and the cable car gave momentum to a new pattern of how the city and its outlying areas were planned, that is, a deliberate division between commercial and residential areas and between the poor and the rich (Beauregard, 2006; Jackson, 1985). The early 20th century saw the invention of the automobile and as it became more affordable and eventually mass-produced it allowed people to live farther away from the central city. Still, the automobile’s absolute integration into American life came slowly due to the cost of the vehicle, the absence of highways or paved roads, and the scarcity of gasoline (Beauregard, 2006; Jackson, 1985).

During the years between 1906 and the end of World War II, however, not only did the cost associated with driving fall, but better roads were built (Jackson, 1985), and new possibilities in shopping, living, and working were opened up, enabling wage-earners to live and work in peripheral areas outside their own neighborhood, often without penetrating the center of the city, or even the city at all (Beauregard, 2006; Jackson, 1985).

Although Jackson (1985) contended that suburbanization has been occurring since the beginning of America’s formation, it is most often linked to the time period after World War II. For example, at the end of WWII, the nation collectively breathed a sigh of relief, and peacetime brought prosperity to the country. Youngstown was no
exception. With more disposable income than ever before, many people bought either their first car, or a second one. This in turn led to the construction and/or improvement of roads which eventually led to the building of freeways, interstates, and interchanges that made traveling easier. The interchanges in particular sought to reduce traffic congestion on the main thoroughfares and expedite the time it took to reach the center of the city where most businesses were located. But room had to be made to build the interchanges creating the first of several phenomena that would have an influence not only on the demise of the centrality of the downtown, but also the fragmentation of the neighborhoods and ultimately the neighborhood schools found therein.

Robert Beauregard, a professor of Architecture at Columbia University, asserts that the interstate highways harmed central cities in four major ways. The first was that the interstate highways gave rise to the trucking industry by increased competition between railroads and inter-coastal shipping which led to the diminishing reliance on urban rail yards and ports; and it enabled businesses that relied on trucking to relocate outside the city where they would have better access to the suburban market via the new regional highway network (2006). Second, the interstate highway made it possible for suburban workers to commute to their jobs in the central cities, where the majority of business districts were still located. Third, the interstate highways created high-value intersections in the suburbs, which became ideally suitable for regional shopping malls, which in turn reduced expenditures in the downtowns of central cities. Finally, the interstate highways decimated urban neighborhoods, eliminated housing, and disrupted communities (Beauregard, 2006). Indeed, two types of suburbanization that had an
impact on the decline of central cities were government investment in suburban-serving highways that shattered many inner city neighborhoods, and the disinvestment by fleeing corporations which robbed city residents not only of adequate access to jobs, but to the jobs themselves (Duany, Plater-Zyberk, & Speck, 2000; Linkon & Russo, 2002).

**In- and Out-Migration**

The mass movement of Black in-migration, which eminent sociologist William Julius Wilson referred to as the Second Great Migration from the rural South to the cities of the Northeast and Midwest from the 1940s through the 1970s, had a profound impact on the transformation of the inner city and surrounding suburbs (Wilson, 2012, p. 267). The Second Great Migration was, in part, due to changes in agricultural practices in the South, which spurred Blacks to move North in search of work. Employment in the steel mills was a major factor in the tremendous influx of African Americans into the Mahoning Valley during the 1940s and 1950s (Beverly, 2002). In fact, 7,000 Blacks migrated to Youngstown between the years 1940 and 1950 and another 10,000 arrived between the years 1950 and 1960 (Beverly, 2002; U.S. Census Bureau, 1960). In Youngstown, as was often the case in other cities as well, the newest migrants settled into poorer sections of the city, which were located closer to the steel mills (Beauregard, 2006; Blue et al., 1995; Wilson, 2012).

Indeed, many of these neighborhoods were former White neighborhoods that quickly became segregated and both middle-class and lower-class Blacks filled the housing vacancies created by a significant concomitant white out-migration to the suburbs, a phenomenon that is commonly referred to as White flight (Wilson, 2012).
Out-migration, specifically the flight of White households, was a major influence in postwar suburban expansion, connecting central-city decline to suburban prosperity. These suburban peripheries had been relatively insignificant, but eventually became pivotal in the social, economic, and political life of the metropolitan region (Beauregard, 2006).

In Youngstown, a postwar booming steel economy helped workers to move to the suburbs and begin the process of adopting a middle-class lifestyle. For African Americans this meant that more families could afford to buy homes in the city. Because such a large portion of Youngstown’s population worked in the steel industry, these changes had a profound impact on the physical landscape (Linkon & Russo, 2002). Though suburban migration began in the 1940s, the trend would escalate in the 1950s as Youngstown’s African American population grew, and Hispanics arrived in the area, again revising some patterns of ethnic neighborhoods as a steady stream of Whites fled to the suburbs (Bruno, 1999; Linkon & Russo, 2002). As a result, ethnic enclaves broke down and began to dissolve. And as the once ethnically and racially integrated neighborhoods became more segregated, lending and real estate practices supported the practice of discriminatory housing laws. This ensured that Black home buyers would not be approved for home loans, especially in the suburbs. As Whites moved out, more African American and Hispanics moved in creating a population shift exacerbated by the development of two public housing projects bordering the downtown area, and reinforced by transportation patterns, specifically the interstate exchange, both of which were part of larger urban renewal efforts (Linkon & Russo, 2002).
Migration also promoted suburbanization in Youngstown, just as it had in other cities because suburban growth tended to be more robust around the older central cities in the Northeast and North-Central regions of the country (Beauregard, 2006). However, the decline of manufacturing jobs, the influx of Blacks into the city, increasingly scarce housing, and the desegregation of public schools influenced White out-migration.

**Social and Educational Policies**

Social policies are normally reactive, that is, they are usually considered or mandated as a response to some event or anticipated event. Such is the case with the two social policies that most affected the city of Youngstown and its neighborhood schools. The first, the National Interstate and Defense Highway Act of 1956 [NIDHA], was established for the creation of a uniform road system that would enable military personnel and equipment to be moved quickly to anticipated targets in the event of a nuclear attack or an enemy invasion (Beauregard, 2006; Jackson, 1985). The second social policy I contend also contributed to the gradual disappearance of Youngstown neighborhood schools is the 1965 Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) and its subsequent implications.

After the United States attacked Japan with atomic bombs in 1945, Americans became obsessed with the possibility of such an attack on their own soil. However, this obsession was not necessarily unfounded. Following the United States victory in World War II, the U.S. considered itself a superpower. But the threat of the Soviet Union’s technological advances evoked near-hysteria. One result of the perceived Soviet Union threat was the federal government’s increased promotion of science, math, and
engineering in all levels of education. Another result was the National Interstate and Defense Highway Act of 1956, which was enacted to protect American cities (Gelfand, 1975; Mohl, 2002).

In fact, at the top of the public policy agenda was the need to address the vulnerability of urban areas, in particular the industrial cities. Military strategists thought that key industrial cities that produced steel, motor vehicles, and airplanes were most likely to be prime targets (Beauregard, 2006; Gelfand, 1975). So initiatives were proactively introduced to prepare and protect the country and its central cities in case of an attack.

But protection of major industry in larger cities was not the only concern; major cities also had high concentration of individuals and a nuclear attack on one or more of these prime targets would result in mass destruction and massive casualties. To avoid this potential scenario, the federal government proposed another initiative: the dispersion of population from the central cities. According to Beauregard (2006), the solution resonated with incipient suburbanization, the trend to lower densities, and the emergence of smaller cities embedded in multi-centered metropolitan areas (p. 150). The rationale was to provide a safeguard to its citizens by dispersing population and industry to satellite communities on the periphery of the central cities in case of an attack. This dispersion highlights the further exacerbation of suburbanization and the rise of the edge cities (Beauregard, 2006; Gutfreund, 2004). As might be obvious, the NIDHA and the initiative of dispersion were specifically formulated in response to a possible invasion. Additionally, the new highways of the 1960s and 1970s were designed to provide
suburbanites with better access to downtown and were located on the cheapest land available, land that was usually confiscated from poor neighborhoods. The devastation wrought by such inner-city highways was extreme (Duany, Plater-Zyberk, & Speck, 2000; Gelfand, 1975). Yet one must wonder if much thought was given to the long-term impact of the highways or dispersion policy and their effects on the cities or the residents of its neighborhoods. And although this federal policy was intended to protect America’s citizenry, it failed to keep its communities and neighborhoods intact and thus had an impact on the gradual disappearance of neighborhood schools.

The second social policy I contend impacted the gradual disappearance of Youngstown neighborhood schools is the 1965 Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) and its subsequent consequences. Part of Lyndon B. Johnson’s War on Poverty, the ESEA was originally implemented to emphasize equal access to education for certain categories of the poor and minorities and called for the nationwide establishment of high standards and greater accountability associated with federal funds. The ESEA marked the largest involvement to date of federal government in education by way of policy initiatives.

**Brief History of Federal Involvement in Education**

Although the history of education in the United States is the history of a locally organized, locally funded, and locally governed enterprise (Conley, 2003), federal interest in education has continually increased. Local governance of education worked throughout American history when the community held common values and similar attitudes with regard to beliefs about the roles and purposes of a public education system.
(Conley, 2003). However, according to Conley (2003), this consensus began to dissolve in the post-World War II era as issues of racial equality moved to the top of the national policy agenda, and as the composition and fiscal needs of urban districts sharply diverged from those of their suburban and rural counterparts (p. 19). And increasingly, federal interest and involvement in education stemmed from at least four goals: promotion of democracy; assurance of equality of educational opportunity; enhancement of national productivity; and strengthening of national defense (Center on Education Policy, 2000).

The premise behind these goals can be seen in the 1957 National Defense Education Act. The National Defense Education Act [NDEA] represented a significant advancement of federal involvement in education, and its goal was to heighten national security through the strengthening of specific education programs (Conley, 2003). And although the Act did not involve the federal government directly in the operation of schools, it did serve to direct educational policy. Ultimately, the linkage between national priorities and the educational system was reinforced, and the precedent for a federal education policy was more firmly established (Conley, 2003).

However, the 1965 Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) was the single most significant legislation promoting federal authority in education to that point. The goal of the ESEA was to eradicate poverty by focusing federal resources on the poor so that they might utilize education as a stepping-stone to a better life (Conley, 2003). Most importantly, the law led to the creation of a federal education bureaucracy and the capture of state education bureaucracies, which were partially financed to implement federal policy (Conley, 2003). Subsequently, with deeper specification of the federal role
in education, policy, rules, and regulations followed each piece of federal legislation (Conley, 2003).

Federal aid to education is significant because historically under the Constitution, education was a power reserved to the states; individual states controlled their local education by establishing minimum curricula, teacher qualifications, and facilities through local taxation (Conley, 2003; Kirst, 1995). The issue of federal aid to education had been raised periodically in Congress since the 1870s and had consistently failed to pass due to opposition to government domination, fear of forced racial desegregation, concern over the loss of local control, and disagreement on whether nonpublic schools should be included in the distribution of funds (Ravitch, 1983, p. 5). In a political move as a means to pass the act through the legislature and to avoid public outcry, the ESEA specifically required the distribution of funds be channeled through individual states first, then to local districts.

The ramifications of both federal involvement and the distribution method proved to be far-reaching. For instance, in order to receive funding under Title I, districts were required to submit annual objective evaluations of educational effectiveness of their programs (Ravitch, 1983, p. 9). However, over the course of the first 15 years of its implementation, federal involvement shifted from educational equality to a focused concern on tightening the rules on resource accountability. As a result, federal rules and regulations proliferated, and sanctions were developed for non-compliance. Strict financial regulations were employed to ensure that funds were spent for services to Title I
eligible students, which in turn substantially dominated and defined the shape of local Title I programs (Kirst, 1995).

Yet not all school districts were eligible to receive federal funding. An integral component of the ESEA is Title I, which mandates the method of designating where and how funds get distributed. One requirement for Title I funds was that the school must have at least 40% of its students from low-income households as defined by U.S. Census data (education.laws.com, n.d.; education.week.com, 2004). Further, as per the parameters of the Act, monies were distributed in a rather convoluted manner: funding is first sent to State Education Agencies (SEAs), next to Local Education Agencies (LEAs), and finally to the schools (Kirst, 1995). The bureaucratic aftermath of the ESEA led to the increase of SEAs having interceded in local school policy, the centralization of schools, and structural changes to state tax sources (Kirst, 1995). Subsequently, it is my contention that the gradual loss of local control, the migration of Whites from the central cities to the suburbs, the concomitant concentration of poverty and Blacks in left-behind neighborhoods, and the centralization of city schools had an impact on the slow, yet steady disappearance of Youngstown’s neighborhood schools.

**Conceptual Frame**

The study will describe how Youngstown neighborhood schools were dismantled to highlight how federal policies and urban change through the phenomena of deindustrialization, suburbamization, and urban renewal altered the landscape of the city, its neighborhoods and neighborhood schools.
My conceptual frame rests on my observations of historical investigations such as Linkon & Russo (2002) and Bruno (1999) who have written about Youngstown’s decline, seminal works regarding deindustrialization (Bluestone & Harrison, 1982; Cowie & Heathcott, 2003) and suburbanization (Jackson, 1985; Beauregard, 2006) and authorities on urban renewal (Gelfand, 1975; Gutfreund, 2004; Teaford, 2000; von Hoffman, 2008).

Linkon and Russo (2002) explore the local culture of Youngstown and its struggle over memory after the loss of the steel mills and the aftermath of deindustrialization, while Bruno (1999) sought to understand how former steel workers dealt with the loss of the steel industry. This led me to research deindustrialization in order to understand the complexities of what happens when a community loses its industry, and in the case of Youngstown, specifically, its only major industry (Bluestone & Harrison, 1982; Cowie & Heathcott, 2003). After learning the impact the automobile had on the steel-making industry and the subsequent effects on transportation patterns in cities (Jackson, 1985; Mieszkowski & Mills, 1993; Mohl, 2002; Beauregard, 2006), I then researched suburbanization of which the building of the Interstate was an integral part (Jackson, 1985; Beauregard, 2006). Asking why these patterns played out in the manner they seemed to, I then examined the phenomenon of urban renewal and its effects on cities (Gelfand, 1975; Gutfreund, 2004; Teaford, 2000; von Hoffman, 2008) and what part urban renewal played in promoting racial segregation (Wilson, 1996; Beverly, 2002; Massey, 2015; Denton, 1999; Glaeser & Vigdor, 2012). Finally, my research investigated the role federal, social and economic policy had on African Americans suppression of
movement and its relation to segregated neighborhoods (Quick, 2016) and how urban renewal policy and the building of the Interstate under that policy was designed to promote White flight to the suburbs and further racial segregation in the central city (Coates, 2014; Rothstein, 2015).

These historical investigations construct my conceptual frame and using a socio-historical analysis of the patterns I have explored perhaps I can offer a systematic, organized picture of a complex, sometimes chaotic historical process and provide a deeper understanding of its nature and consequences that by extension might offer insight into other similar processes of decline in other locales and times.

**Approach**

In this study, I conducted a socio-historical analysis of a case study through historical investigations of patterns and processes. In general, a case study focuses on developing an in-depth description and analysis of a specific case or event to provide a deep understanding of its nature and consequences. The case study data collection strategy relies on multiple sources such as interviews, observations, documents, and artifacts and analyzes data through description and emergent themes (Creswell, 2007). Further, the design for historical analysis requires a systematic process of describing, analyzing, and interpreting the past based on information from selected sources as they relate to the topic under study (Weirsma & Jurs, 2005). It is worth noting here the importance for the researcher to maintain an open minded about what is collected, as this could lead to the possibility of an evolving design as the research proceeds. Finally, socio-historical research is valuable in identifying trends of the past and using such
information to predict future patterns and implications for related trends (Weirsma & Jurs, 2005). More specifically, however, socio-historical analysis examines historical events utilizing social concepts. Kilbourn (2006) made the distinction:

While a historical analysis is merely a description of people and events from the past, a socio-historical analysis examines history using social concepts such as industrialization, urbanization, socialization, etc., not only to describe history, but also to understand it perhaps in a way that not even the people living at the time understood it. (p. 422)

The focus is on factors external to the individual such as social conditions in the community or society. Finally, socio-historical research, according to Leedy and Ormond (2005), consists of looking at a string of seemingly random events and developing a rational explanation for their sequence, speculation about cause-and-effect relationships among them, and drawing inferences about the effects on individuals and the society in which they live (p. 161).

Using a socio-historical analysis, the study will explore the events, policies, and social dynamics and interpret them to understand how Youngstown neighborhood schools were systematically dismantled.

**Need for the Study**

While the devolution of Youngstown’s steel industry has been well documented, a discussion of the effects on neighborhood schools has not been researched. Considering the paucity of literature investigating a possible connection between the consequences of deindustrialization and/or urban change and schools, Bettis (1994) concurred that most
educational literature about urban schools are often de-contextualized, as if urban schools exist apart from the urban social and economic changes swirling around them (p. 84). This study will attempt to fill in the gap in the deindustrialization literature by looking at the socio-historical context of the demise of urban neighborhood schools.

**Significance**

This study will put forth “an original contribution that offers a novel or new perspective; . . . [and] contributes to knowledge” (Lovitts & Wert, 2009, p. 4). Offering a conflict theory perspective on social phenomena, the study of the impact of deindustrialization, suburbanization, and federal, social and educational policy in neighborhoods and neighborhood schools in Youngstown, Ohio, is relevant across a broader sweep of history. Economic downturns and federal and local policy and practices continually shape our lives and at times seemingly without consideration to the long-term consequences for a community and its schools. This study hopes to provide a coherent picture of the dynamics of the loss of neighborhood schools.

**Limitations**

The primary limitation of this study is the lack of generalizability to other situations or places. The local circumstances of this community are time and place specific and therefore should not be used to explain the past or future experiences of other communities. However, just as the city of Youngstown has many facets, so does the story of public education in Youngstown. This study focuses on only a selection of those facets. The selection was conducted by looking only at the larger phenomena that
Youngstown experienced in relationship to its neighborhood schools rather than issues of within-school governance.

**Chapters**

This study examines how the phenomena of deindustrialization, suburbanization, and selected social and educational policies affected the neighborhood schools of Youngstown, Ohio.

Chapter 2, Part 1 provides an in-depth definition of deindustrialization; reviews the history of suburbanization; and explores the far-reaching implications of the National Highway Interstate Defense Act (NIHDA). Part 2 reviews literature on suburbanization and migration (White flight) and the concentration of racial poverty on the neighborhood schools. Chapter 2, Part 3 explores, in depth, the Elementary and Secondary Education Act and how it affected the neighborhood schools.

In Chapter 4 the findings are presented following Part 1 to 3 outline of the Literature Review. Subsequently the findings will be interpreted to draw out patterns of developments using the theoretical framework. Chapter 5 discusses Youngstown’s phenomena of deindustrialization, suburbanization, and selected social and educational policies and how they contributed, over time, to the loss of city’s neighborhood schools in terms of the literature and by comparison to other de-industrialized cities neighborhood schools presented in Chapter 2. Commonalities and differences in developments throw further light on the Youngstown experience.
CHAPTER II
REVIEW OF LITERATURE

This study examines the historical circumstances behind the decline of Youngstown’s neighborhood schools. To understand the phenomena examined in this study, this chapter reviews the relevant literature on deindustrialization, suburbanization, and selected social and educational policies.

Part 1, Deindustrialization

According to Steven High (2013), this particular field of research emerged in the 1970s and 1980s as a political response to the successive waves of mill and factory closures that devastated towns and cities, displacing millions (p. 994). There are, he claimed, three distinctive waves of scholarship: the initial activist generation working with social movements in the 1970s and 1980s (Bluestone & Harrison, 1982; Buss & Redburn, 1983; Cizmar, 1978; Hill & Negrey, 1987; Lustig, 1985; Newman, 1985), the cultural meaning of deindustrialization in the early 2000s (Bruno, 1999; Cowie & Heathcott, 2003; High, 2002; Linkon & Russo, 2002), and most recently, the socio-cultural exploration of working-class culture in a post-industrial era (High, 2003; Safford, 2009; Walley, 2013).

However, due to the time constraints of this study, the literature review focuses primarily on the first wave of research. Interestingly, within much of the first wave of literature, many authors questioned whether deindustrialization was actually occurring or if it could be explained as merely a short-term downturn in the economy.
Economists Bluestone and Harrison (1982) wrote their seminal work in the early 1980s in an effort to explain the phenomenon that was taking place country-wide, but particularly in the industrial Midwest. In essence, deindustrialization is the widespread disinvestment in basic industry, such as manufacturing. Looking for reasons, they wrote, some blamed it on spiritual decay or moral corruption, some blamed it on the Japanese; still others blamed it on big government and some on the workers themselves (p. 13). However, they continued, the deeper cause lay squarely on the shoulders of the corporations themselves:

Because of shrinking profits, management found it could no longer afford the social contract (union regulations) and maintain its accustomed level of profits. Instead of accepting the new realities of the world marketplace, one firm after another began to contemplate new ways to circumvent union rules and to hold the line on wages. The solution was capital mobility. For one enterprise, this entailed disinvestment. When entire industries adopted this strategy, the result was deindustrialization. (Bluestone & Harrison, 1982, p. 17)

Additionally, this disinvestment, or movement of capital, can be accomplished in four different ways: the first is the redirection of profits generated from a particular industrial site’s operations without the management tampering with the establishment itself. However, if this is done repeatedly over time, eventually the original site will deteriorate. A second method of disinvestment is to consciously relocate capital by deliberately failing to replace worn out or obsolete machinery in order to use profits to invest elsewhere. A third method of shifting capital involves management reallocating or
selling equipment resulting in a lower production level, and hence lowering profits. And finally, the most drastic method of disinvestment is for management to completely shut down the site and its operations (Bluestone & Harrison, 1982, p. 7). This last method is the one that is most often associated with deindustrialization, but in fact all four methods fall under the umbrella of the term. The last method also has the severest consequences, especially if a shutdown occurs during a recession, or if it occurs in a small or remote community where few, if any other jobs exist.

In town after town, city after city, large or small, factories, mills, and plants shut down (Bensman & Lynch, 1987; Dandaneau, 1996; High, 2013; Safford, 2009; Walley, 2013). From large economically diversified cities like Chicago and St. Louis, to the smaller or less economically diverse cities such as Flint, Allentown, Homestead, and Youngstown (Buss & Redburn, 1983; Cizmar, 1978; Hill & Negrey, 1987; Linkon & Russo, 2002; Marcus, 1985; Safford, 2009) and the places in between—none escaped the ravages of deindustrialization. And although the outcomes from the closings varied, and the coping strategies differed, one thing remained constant: the devastation inflicted on and felt by the communities where industry was located.

The ripple or multiplier effects of deindustrialization go beyond the obvious loss of jobs and income. According to Bluestone and Harrison (1982), multiplier effects also include the negative effects on satellite businesses, decrease in personal and commercial tax receipts and revenue, and increased demand for public assistance and social services. Furthermore, in those communities where plant closures take with them a large portion of total local revenues, the entire public sector can suffer often causing layoffs among
police, school, and sanitation workers (Bruno, 1999; Buss & Redburn, 1983; Cizmar, 1978; Linkon & Russo, 2002; Lustig, 1985; Marcus, 1985; Safford, 2009). Additionally some of these multiplier effects are felt immediately, whereas others take time to work through the community; some will dissipate, whereas others may become permanent (Bluestone & Harrison, 1982, p. 67).

The Great Lakes

To gain a deeper understanding of the widespread impact of deindustrialization, I will explicate the composition of the Industrial Midwest, which ultimately became known as the Rust Belt. The term Rust Belt became synonymous with areas of the country that experienced deindustrial-related social problems (Dandaneau, 1996, p. xx), and refers to the transformation of the Industrial Midwest due to virtually every city and town located therein losing major employers in the 1970s and 1980s (High, 2002, p. 101). The term is a reference to the Rust Belt’s proliferation of rusting factories, declining home prices, population losses, high unemployment, and general income malaise (Safford, 2009, p. 3). The Rust Belt consists of Ohio, Michigan, Indiana, Illinois, Wisconsin, and Pennsylvania. These states in particular saw entire industries disappear, displacing millions of American workers (High, 2002, p. 101). Writing in 1987, Hill and Negrey chose to study the Great Lakes area as a singular region based on three common characteristics: ecological, economic, and political.

Ecologically they contended, the Great Lakes “share a fragile web of water, air, minerals, flora, and fauna; The industries in the region pose hazards to the ecosystem by toxic pollutants which ultimately implicate all the Great Lakes states to a shared fate”
Economically, the Great Lakes region contains limestone, coal, and iron ore for the production of steel. This industrial crescent they postulated is a pathway to the St. Lawrence Seaway which links the Great Lakes states to one another as well as to the Atlantic Ocean and European markets, thus forming an urban-industrial society (Hill & Negrey, 1987, p. 583). Finally, these states are co-operating more to establish a firmer regional identity precisely because these states have established ties with each other and the rest of the world through the relations of production their cities promote (Hill & Negrey, 1987, p. 583).

Communities

Still another characteristic the Great Lakes share is their communities that industry built and deindustrialization ravaged (Gordon, 2008, p. 9), even though each of these communities is unique, diversified by size, ethnicity, and shared cultural values.

The term community can refer to bounded geographic locations, as in the case of neighborhoods or alternatively to the relationships or networks with similar interests or goals which can include or transcend geographical boundaries (Safford, 2009, p. 137; Sanders & Galindo, 2014, p. 104). Communities can also be thought of as networks of individuals and institutions such as families, schools, and faith organizations that provide members with resources and support (High, 2003, p. 10; Sanders & Galindo, 2014, p. 105).

Further, High (2003) extended the definition of community offering that it might be best defined as (a) social interaction, (b) a spatial process, and/or (c) as imagined reality. In the first sense, community identity develops out of face-to-face social
interactions of everyday life. In the spatial process, he continued, places develop, institutions form, and local identities are constructed (p. 10). And finally, community is an imagined reality where people associate themselves with others they have never met. This third element allows communities to extend well beyond personal social networks and local places to encompass a region or nation (High, 2003 p. 10; Safford, 2009, p. 137). Certainly this is the case for the Great Lakes region.

Nearly every city and town in the Industrial Midwest felt the negative effects of deindustrialization. Bensman and Lynch (1987) wrote that “economic stability is critical for sustained community life” (p. 208). With industry or manufacturing dwindling or completely disappearing, communities suffered. For places like southeast Chicago, St. Louis, and Flint (Bensman & Lynch, 1987; Dandaneau, 1996; Gordon, 2008; Walley, 2013) to Homestead, Allentown, and Youngstown the social costs of deindustrialization went beyond loss of jobs and income, it affected the very infrastructure of communities from small businesses and schools, to police and fire fighting forces (Bensman & Lynch, 1987, p. 209).

The economic and social organization of industrial regions was tightly interwoven (Safford, 2009, p. 5) and regions and industries were defined by their core product (steel, textiles, and automobiles): cities’ and communities’ very identities were sculpted from the type of industrial production produced and tied directly to the industries that resided in them (Safford, 2009, p. 5). The location of factories dictated settlement and transportation patterns of incoming workers in many neighborhoods and life revolved around the factories and plants (Bensman & Lynch, 1987; Dandaneau, 1996; Gordon,
2008; Marcus, 1985; Safford, 2009, p. 5). As the long-term effects of deindustrialization deepened, communities that were built on workers’ pride and strong ethnic and religious ties began to crumble.

And although nearly every city, town, and community in the Industrial Midwest was affected by deindustrialization, larger and economically diverse places had alternative industries to turn to such as southeast Chicago and St. Louis.

Even places such as Allentown and Pittsburgh, heavily devastated by the downward spiral of the steel industry, managed to recover. This, however, was not the case for cities like Flint, Homestead, and Youngstown. These latter cities were solely dependent on a single industry (automobile production and steel, respectively), and when the plants and factories closed their doors, the destruction to their communities was overwhelming (Bensman & Lynch, 1987; Dandaneau, 1996; High, 2002; Marcus, 1985).

Safford (2009, p. 173) maintained while there may be a tendency in any community toward establishing and maintaining stability, communities are not inherently static (Jacobs, 1961, p. xxvii). Certainly not a truism but to individual communities that had industry and jobs for generations, the plant and mill closures of the 1970s and 1980s were simply unimaginable. So that beyond the immediate shock, sense of uncertainty, and suffering, these places experienced a deeper civic and social crisis (Marcus, 1985; Safford, 2009, p. 5), transcending the damage inflicted on workers and their families and caused serious problems for their towns (Marcus, 1985, p. 162). Like many Midwest cities, Allentown, Homestead, and Youngstown shared many of the same characteristics of other steel communities: the worry of long-term unemployment on the stability and

**Part 2, Suburbanization**

Suburbanization is a process involving the systematic growth of fringe areas at a more rapid pace than that of core cities, and as a lifestyle that involves a daily commute to jobs. The continued out-migration of Whites from the central cities was a result of market forces and government policies resulting in the depopulation of central cities, urban decay, and a concentration of lower-income residents in the inner city (Jackson, 1985).

**Causes and Consequences**

The most basic definition of suburbanization is the growth of areas on the fringes of cities. The consequences of suburbanization usually result in the depopulation of central cities, urban decay, and a concentration of lower-income residents in the inner city. The review of the literature, however, reveals that the causes of suburbanization are not as straightforward.

For example, most of the literature begins with the postwar period as the starting point for the onset of suburbanization. But as Jackson (1995), Bruegmann (2005), Beauregard (2006), and Rybczynski (2005) explained, suburbanization has been an
inherently constant phenomenon in all cities in the industrialized Western world and whose cities have all experienced a dispersal of population from the center to a lower-density periphery (Rybczynski, 2005, p. 4).

The majority of the studies cite personal economic prosperity, the building of the interstate, the rise of automobility, in- and out-migration as causal factors for suburbanization (Beverly, 2002; Gordon, 2008; Linkon & Russo, 2002; Posey, 2012; Wilson, 2012). Some include subdivisions of single-family homes and the rise of urban malls and shopping centers as additional factors (Duany et al., 2000; Mohl, 2002; Posey, 2012). Further, a minority of the studies claims urbanization, suburbanization, and sprawl are simply part of a natural evolution of events (Cox, Gordon & Redfearn, 2008; Mieszkowski & Mills, 1993). Bruegmann (2005) and Cohen (1979) attributed suburbanization as merely a result of personal and household decision-making (Cohen, 1979, p. 341). Cox et al. (2008) chose to use the term dispersal rather than migration or suburbanization to explain the depopulation of central cities to the periphery. They claimed suburbanization occurred in the 20th century because “it could” and claimed it is a “natural trend based on consumer preferences and larger trends, notably rising wealth and transportation and communication improvements” (p. 34).

Theory of Suburbanization

According to Mieszkowski and Mills (1993), there are two classes of theories regarding suburbanization. The first is referred to as natural evolution theory and posits that residential growth takes place from the inside out, “usually around a port or railhead, making commuting to and from work easier. And as land and housing becomes filled in,
development moves to open tracts of land in [what we now call the suburbs]” (p. 136). It is usually the higher income groups that build on the periphery, whereas the older, centrally located units filter down to lower income groups. This “natural” working of the housing market, they contended, leads to income-stratified neighborhoods (Mieszkowski & Mills, 1993, p. 136). Additionally, the change in the modes of transportation from streetcars, commuter railroads, and then to the automobile led ultimately to the construction of the freeway, and although the building of the freeway increased the size of the urban area, it also caused a decrease in cities’ residential density while increasing the density in suburban locations (Mieszkowski & Mills, 1993, p. 136).

Conversely, Mieszkowski and Mills (1993) offered a second class of explanations, the fiscal-social problems approach, which stresses central city problems such as high taxes, low quality public schools and government services, racial tensions, crime, congestion, and low environmental quality (p. 137). These problems lead affluent central city residents to migrate to the suburbs, which lead to a further deterioration of the quality of life and the fiscal situations of central cities, which induces further out-migration (Mieszkowski & Mills, 1993, p. 137).

The History of the Interstate

A majority of authors and researchers cite the building of the Interstate system as one of the most significant factors in the changing of America’s city landscapes and either claim or allude to the fact that the building of the highway system ultimately was a maligned attempt at urban renewal (Gelfand, 1975; Gutfreund, 2004; Hayden, 2003; Mohl, 2002; Rose, 1979).
Plans for interregional and interstate highways dated back to the 1920s and were revived in the late 1930s and early 1940s, and some larger cities actually began planning and building some urban expressways in the late 1940s and early 1950s. Yet the Truman administration did little to advance the national highway network, focusing instead on slum clearance and urban redevelopment (Mohl, 2002, p. 9). However, half-way through President Eisenhower’s first term, changing circumstances brought the neglected plans for building an interstate highway network to the forefront of national policy debates.

Postwar urban and metropolitan growth stimulated new thinking about highway needs in the cities. The shift of urban population to the metropolitan periphery posed problems; with new suburbanites still working in the central cities, it created enormous traffic congestion in the limited number of arterial highways and within the cities. Additionally, public transportation declined as automobile use and ownership increased. By 1955, some 61 million vehicles clogged the nation’s roadways (Gelfand, 1975, p. 223; Mohl, 2002, p. 10).

But the emerging metropolitan transportation crisis was impeded by the maze of governmental jurisdiction that cut across urban areas. The urban/metropolitan transportation problem demanded a metropolitan solution, but regional transportation or planning approaches had not yet been developed. Under the circumstances then, the idea of building interstate highways through the cities and connecting them with distant suburbs seemed to offer a necessary solution to the mid-1950s transportation crisis.

Eisenhower’s reasoning to support a gigantic federal highway program was multifarious. He reasoned it would meet essential transportation needs of the nation; it
would serve as a major impetus to national economic development; the project would generate tens of thousands of jobs and put billions of dollars in the American economy; and finally, due to the danger of the Cold War, he was conscious of the need to improve evacuation routes in major cities in case of nuclear attack (Beauregard, 2006, p. 152; Gelfand, 1975, p. 227; Mohl, 2002, p. 12).

Although there was much disagreement and debate on issues such as funding such a project, in 1954, as a core component of his domestic agenda, President Eisenhower made a commitment to resolve the differences among highway groups and gather broad support for the National Highway Interstate Defense Act (NHIDA): a 42,000-mile national system of defense which was projected to cost $26 billion. The hope was to forge a new consensus on how to finance highway expansion. After two years, Congress passed the Federal-Aid Highway Act of 1956 (FAHA) that turned the 1944’s Act highway network from a theoretical plan into a concrete reality, thereby facilitating the continued suburbanization and de-concentration of America (Gutfreund, 2004, p. 55).

By 1958, cost estimates for the Interstate system were $41 billion. And since construction was to be administered by states with 90% federal financing, state highway engineers would determine the locations of highways. Yet in the process of creating routes into cities and towns, highway engineers destroyed many older neighborhoods, especially those inhabited by people of color (Beauregard, 2006, p. 84; Hayden, 2003, p. 166).

Historian Mark Rose (1979) noted that highway engineers were overconfident about “solving problems through technical expertise; and they had neither the skills nor
the inclination to deal with leaders speaking for neighborhoods, flower gardens, parks, natural beauty, or non-growth” (p. 69). Still, in every state, the building of the interstate enriched automobile, truck, oil, construction, and real estate interests by providing infrastructure worth billions of dollars to open up new suburban land for speculation and development (Hayden, 2003 p. 167). Ironically, no federal venture spent more funds in urban areas and returned fewer dividends to central cities than the national highway program (Gelfand, 1975, p. 222).

Unlike the comprehensive housing bill passed just two years before, the 1956 interstate measure lacked the slightest bit of planning-conscious language. It handed responsibility over to the highway engineers, who by training and education were not prepared to do anything more than to build sound highways cheaply. According to Gelfand (1975), urban renewal had the statutory obligation to relocate those it displaced, but Congress imposed no such handicap on road construction (p. 227). Indeed, Congress seemed to have forgotten that there was an urban renewal program; the 1956 Highway Act made no provisions for coordinating these complimentary endeavors (Gelfand, 1975, p. 228).

**The Federal Government and the Interstate**

Alternatively, there are others who offer a differing perspective for an explanation of suburbanization (Duany et al., 2000; Gelfand, 1975; Gordon, 2008; Suarez, 1999). To them, suburbanization was brought about by two external factors: the federal government and corporations. They contended government investments in suburb-serving highways
left the central city neighborhoods sundered, and fleeing corporations, which left city residents without adequate access to employment.

The authors echoed Jane Jacobs’ (1961) sentiments that “America’s inner cities did not wither away all at once or by chance” (Duany et al., 2000, p. 153; Jacobs, 1961, p. xxviii). For most of the 20th century, central cities have suffered unanticipated consequences of government policy and urban planning. The building of the massive interstate system for daily commuting made it easy to abandon the city for a house on the periphery, whereas federal loan programs, targeting new construction exclusively and farther away from the city, encouraged the deterioration and abandonment of urban housing (Duany et al., 2000, p. 153).

In “The interstate and the cities: Highways, housing, and the freeway revolt” (2002), Raymond Mohl documented the powerful urban transformations America’s cities have experienced after World War II. He cited the massive de-concentration of the central city population, the shift of economic activities to the suburban periphery, the deindustrialization of metropolitan manufacturing, and a racial turnover of population (p. 1). Mohl (2002) attributed these changes to “various government policies, tax and mortgage policies, public housing programs, and urban redevelopment schemes” (p. 1). But mostly he attributed the dramatic changes and fragmentation of the central cities to the building of the interstates. Central to Mohl’s (2002) concern regarding the interstates and the urban expressways was that they not only penetrated through the cities, but also ripped through residential neighborhoods, leveling wide swaths of urban territory. Additionally, according to Mohl (2002),
It was obvious (retrospectively) that neighborhoods, communities, businesses, churches, and schools would be destroyed and yet it was considered an acceptable cost of creating new transportation routes, facilitating economic development of the cities, and converting inner-city land to more acceptable or more productive uses. (p. 3)

**Second Great Migration and Urban Renewal**

Wilson (2012) and Beverly (2002), while including highways and corporate flight in their explanation of suburbanization, simultaneously extended it to include the Second Great Migration of African Americans from the South to the North and Midwest as a factor of suburbanization. In *The Truly Disadvantaged* (2012), Wilson wrote of the impact of the Second Great Migration (in-migration) of African Americans that lasted 30 years, from 1940 until 1970, was longer and more sustained than the first Great Migration which began at the turn of the century and ended during the Great Depression. The Second Great Migration, he contended, had a prolonged impact on the central cities (Wilson, 2012, p. 268). As the Black population grew in the North, it created greater demands for housing and pressures mounted in White communities to keep Blacks out and ultimately For Whites to move to the periphery altogether (out-migration; Wilson, 2012, p. 268). Indeed, many of these neighborhoods were former White neighborhoods, and both middle and lower-income Blacks filled the housing vacancies created by the significant White out-migration (Wilson, 2012, p. 269).

However, 1970 marked the end of the Second Great Migration and two developments affected the course of the population movement to and from (or in and out)
of the city. First, the decline of manufacturing jobs was no longer a strong pulling factor thus ending the southern Black migration to the North, and caused many city neighborhoods, especially those in the Midwest and Northeast, to change from densely packed areas of recently-arrived migrants to communities eventually abandoned by the working and middle classes (Wilson, 2012, p. 269). Second, Wilson (2012) posited, transportation improvements made it easier for workers to live outside the city and industries gradually shifted to the suburbs because of the increased “residential suburbanization” of the labor force and the lower cost of production (p. 269).

Racial Segregation and Urban Decline

The Black urban ghetto was created in the late 19th and early 20th century as a result of the first Great Black Migration out of the rural South. It was through deliberate actions taken by White Americans to isolate African Americans spatially and thus marginalize them socially, economically, and politically (Massey, 2015, p. 572). In 1924 the National Association of Real Estate Brokers adopted an article in its code of ethics stating that “a Realtor should never be instrumental in introducing into a neighborhood . . . members of any race or nationality . . . whose presence will clearly be detrimental to property values in that neighborhood.” That particular clause remained in effect until 1950 (Helper, 1969, p. 201, quoted in Massey, 2015, p. 573).

Beginning in the 1930s, federal regulations disfavored the extension of mortgage credit to homeowners in mixed-race neighborhoods and utilized methods to ensure Black immobility such as restrictive covenants, which prohibited integration in specific areas (Glaeser & Vigdor, 2012, p.1). Restrictive covenants bound property owners within a
specific geographic area to prohibit selling or renting to African Americans. Once
signed, and if violated, the property could be sued in court for breach of contract. This
practice was banned by the Supreme Court in its 1948 Shelly v. Kramer decision
(Massey, 2015, p. 573).

However, by mid-century segregation reflected the operation of both government
and market forces. Besides the federal government, other participants included lenders,
the Realtors Code, the Federal Housing Administration mortgage program, and along
with bank and insurance discrimination culminated in creating the pattern of segregation
in U.S. cities (Denton, 1999, p. 111; Glaeser & Vigdor, 2012, p.1). And similar to the
previous mechanics of segregation, racially-based mass suburbanization in the post
World War II period was substantially tied to federal policies.

For instance, according to Massey (2015), in 1937, the Federal Housing
Administration (FHA) was authorized to create a mortgage insurance program that would
revolutionize housing and lending markets throughout the nation (p. 573). And although
contingent on established criteria, the agency would insure up to 90% of the loan’s value
against default, essentially giving banks a risk-free way of making money. And the
requirement of small down payments and low monthly installments made mass home
ownership possible, thus becoming the cornerstone of wealth creation for the White
middle class (Jackson, 1985, p. 206).

After the war, this program was followed by the Veterans Administration (VA)
loan program of a similar type. This combination of FHA and VA financing, coupled
with new construction techniques, made it cheaper to buy a new suburban home than to
rent comparable older dwellings in the central city. The bias in favor of suburbs was exacerbated by FHA regulations that favored new construction, single-family homes, and large lots (Jackson, 1985, p. 206). The exodus, however, was exclusively for Whites.

The discriminatory practices regarding lending to Blacks manifested itself through a process referred to as red-lining. Although originally developed by the Home Owners Loan Corporation (HOLC), the FHA and the VA also used the practice to keep neighborhoods segregated. The maps were color-coded and categorized neighborhoods according to their creditworthiness, using red to indicate risky neighborhoods that were ineligible for federally insured loans (Massey, 2015, p. 574). Neighborhoods that were black or perceived to be in danger of becoming black were automatically colored red, cutting them off from credit and institutionalizing the practice of red-lining (Jackson, 1985, pp. 208-209; Massey, 2015, p. 574). This practice continued into the late 1960s until well after the 1968 Fair Housing Act was forced through Congress by President Lyndon B. Johnson.

The Senate passed the legislation in the wake of the Martin Luther King Jr. assassination in an effort to address, at least symbolically, the anger of African Americans who were rioting in the nation’s ghettos (Massey, 2015, p. 571; Yinger, 1999, p. 94). The 1968 Fair Housing Act expressly banned many of the public actions and private practices that had evolved over the years to deny Black’s access to housing (Massey, 2015, p. 575; Wilson, 1996, pp. 48-49). Specifically, the Act outlawed the refusal to rent or sell to someone on the basis of race, color, religion, or national origin; to deny a dwelling; it prohibited racial discrimination
in the terms and conditions of the rental or sale; it barred discrimination in real
estate advertising; it banned agents from making untrue statements about a
dwelling’s availability in order to deny access to Blacks; and it enjoined real
estate agents from making comments about the race of neighbors or in-movers in
order to promote selling. It also makes unlawful discrimination in access to real
estate brokerage services and in mortgage lending, as well as harassment or
intimidation of people because they meet their obligations or exercise their rights
under the Act. (Massey, 2015, p. 576; Yinger, 1999, p. 94)

Despite the passage of the Act and the substantive and wide-ranging prohibitions,
however, the housing market did not magically open up for Blacks. Indeed, the
structures and processes that created the Black ghetto were well institutionalized in
private practice and public policy by the time the civil rights began and nowhere near
enough to combat the institutionalized social structure of segregation (Massey, 2015, p.
582; Denton, 1995, p. 110).

Unfortunately, asserted Jackson (1985), the corollary to the achievement was the
fact that the FHA programs hastened the decay of the inner-city neighborhoods and the
neglect of the core cities in part by stripping them of much of their middle-class
constituency (p. 206) and leaving behind a concentrated population of Blacks with a large
share of poor residents. Hence, the ever-increasingly concentrated Black neighborhoods
inevitably threatened districts where elite Whites held place-bound investments, and for
protection they turned to urban renewal and public housing programs to block the
expansion of black settlement toward imperiled zones (Massey, 2015, p. 574; Wilson,
This was achieved through several means: by razing Black neighborhoods for redevelopment, which rarely occurred, under the guise of urban renewal; by constructing public housing, a federally funded institution, in other Black neighborhoods to house the displaced residents, thereby dramatically increasing the geographic concentration of Black poverty; and by building interstates and expressways that further destroyed (mostly Black) neighborhoods and separating them from traditionally White neighborhoods (Glaeser & Vigdor, 2012, p. 9; Massey, 2015, p. 574).

While the effects of segregation, housing discrimination, and federally funded public housing policies are complex and multi-faceted, these policies imposed costs in terms of poorer schools and neighborhood quality, fewer neighborhood amenities, restricted access to jobs and rising neighborhood crime and violence (Denton, 1999, p. 110). To be sure, it would be easy to think of these policies as having meaning for only persons of color, Blacks, or poor people, but the effects of these policies extend beyond those who are its victims; it is the long-term costs of having citizens not able to contribute to their fullest because of poverty, poor education, and lack of jobs that is borne by society as a whole (Denton, 1999, p. 113).

Indeed, the continued execution of land use policy, that is, the use of federal funds and local taxation to pay for its infrastructure expansion and the building of suburban communities and schools ever farther from the city core have proved disastrous. The result left cities depopulated, segregated, and poor. The lofty hopes and dreams of the Civil Rights movement dimmed.
In their 2012 study Orfield and Luce discussed the contemporary ramifications of discrimination and re-segregation. They contend discrimination continues in housing and mortgage-lending practices, exclusionary zoning, racially biased school-boundary decisions, disproportionate placement of government-subsidized affordable housing in segregated and unstable integrated neighborhoods, and through personal prejudice and preference (p. 29). All but the last are prohibited by federal and state civil rights laws.

Thus Black-White residential segregation remains intense. In the metropolitan areas where Blacks form the largest percentage of population, particularly in the Northeast and Midwest where local government is highly fragmented, segregation remains virtually unchanged. Further, according to Orfield and Luce (2012), public-school segregation, after dramatically improving during the era of civil rights enforcement (1968-1990), has significantly eroded (p. 4). Blacks are now almost as racially isolated from Whites as they were at the time of the 1964 Civil Rights Act (Orfield & Luce, 2012, p. 4). They continue “the core non-white neighborhoods, particularly those that have been non-white for the longest time, are isolated from educational and economic opportunities” and that “in those neighborhoods, many schools—public and charter—are failing” (Orfield & Luce, 2012, p. 4). The authors listed the ongoing, long-term effects for these neighborhoods which results in:

Banks not lending, businesses not prospering, and worsening economic conditions even in periods of national economic growth. Additionally, property values and tax capacity decline as needs for services intensify; tax rates increase and services decline because the city has to tax the lower-valued real estate more intensively.
Ultimately, businesses and individuals with economic choices choose not to locate there, and as conditions worsen, existing businesses and individuals leave. (Orfield & Luce, 2012, p. 4)

Finally, the authors reveal that the ongoing effects of segregation result in a declining core city and inner ring suburbs while new land is developed for predominantly White communities at the periphery, even in metropolitan areas with stagnant populations (Orfield & Luce, 2012, p.5). In the large metropolitan areas, for example, they offer time-series maps of integrated neighborhoods that reveal expanding rings of racial integration which emanate outward, ahead of similarly expanding non-white core areas. And each decade, the ring of integration moves farther outward into inner and (sometimes) middle suburbs, and the expanding core of non-white segregated areas grow to include larger portions of the central city and/or large parts of older suburbs, overtaking neighborhoods that were once integrated, which in turn accelerates re-segregation (Orfield & Luce, 2012, p. 4). This process creates integrated areas surrounded by an expanding, largely White peripheral ring at the edge of metropolitan settlement. It also leaves the core of non-white segregated areas in concentrated poverty, since non-white suburbanization began in earnest in the 1970s the cities have been losing many of their minority middle-class families as well, leaving the cities with an escalating concentration of poverty (Orfield, Bachmeier, James & Eitle, 2006, p. 13).

With regard to education, this means that the central city school districts become extremely isolated by race and poverty. Since the minority communities are constantly expanding along their boundaries and virtually all-White development are continuously
being constructed on the outer periphery of suburbia, the central cities have a continual increase in their proportion of Blacks and Latinos (Orfield et al., 2006, p. 12). In areas with many fragmented school districts, not only the city, but also substantial portions of suburban rings may face high levels of segregation. Further, most of these systems have faced recurrent fiscal and political crises for years and have low levels of educational achievement (Orfield et al., 2006, p. 13).

Using Detroit as a prime example, they report that although the population has not grown in the last 50 years, the city has expanded more than 60% in urbanized land area (Orfield et al., 2006, p. 5). Hence essentially, Detroit taxed itself to “build new rings of predominately white, exurban communities of escape, while causing its central city to become one of the most segregated and dysfunctional municipalities in the United States” (p. 5). Conversely, Orfield and Luce (2012) believe integrated communities have the greatest chance of success at eliminating racial disparities in educational and economic opportunity (p. 2). Detroit’s educational demise was exacerbated by the 1974 Milliken v. Bradley decision, which reversed lower court plans to desegregate metropolitan Detroit and provided a drastic limitation on the possibility of substantial and lasting city-suburban school legislation (Orfield et al., 2006, p. 6). The result has left metropolitan Detroit’s school system as one of the poorest, most segregated, and under achieving in the United States (Orfield et al., 2006, p. 20). However, during the last 15 years, plans have been evolving to include more educational reforms and choice mechanisms to try to achieve desegregation and educational gains simultaneously by trying to change the
pattern of segregated housing that underlies school segregation (Orfield et al., 2006, p. 20).

Youngstown’s Experience

In his (2002) history thesis “African American Experience in Youngstown, 1940-1965,” Michael Beverly explained the impact of the Second Great Migration locally. The war in Europe had created a pressing need to produce steel, and thus created a need for unskilled workers in the Mahoning Valley (p. 1).

Employment in the steel mills was a major factor that led to the influx of African Americans to the Valley in the 1940s and 1950s. For example, 7,000 Blacks migrated to Youngstown in that time period, and another 10,000 African Americans in the 1950s and 1960s (Beverly, 2002, p. 5). To the African Americans, the steel mills offered better wages, better education, and a perceived lack of segregation (Beverly, 2002, pp. 6, 10). Beverly also documented the effects of the building of the Interstate and urban renewal in Youngstown and its neighborhoods, particularly Black neighborhoods.

In “Roots of Urban Decay: Race, Urban Renewal, and Suburbanization in Youngstown Ohio, 1950-1977,” Sean Posey’s (2012) history thesis looked in detail at the effects of urban renewal, including highways, and the suburbanization of Youngstown, Ohio. As the title of his thesis suggests, Posey’s purpose was to examine the roots of urban decay that led to Youngstown’s fragmentation (p. iii).

Posey’s (2012) research revealed that the roots of the urban renewal campaigns of the 1950s and the 1960s can be traced back to the “slum” clearance programs of the 1930s. “Slums were considered rundown multi-ethnic neighborhoods” (Posey, 2012,
largely created by the rapid period of industrialization between 1860 and 1930. Consequently, affordable housing never caught up with the inundation of immigrants to booming industrial towns. After the Housing Act of 1954, and the creation of an urban renewal administration, the term “urban renewal” became popular as American cities embraced urban renewal as a solution to combat “blight,” a term used to describe declining central city conditions (Posey, 2012, p. 21).

In 1952, two separate events would change the physical landscape of the city of Youngstown. First, the city began construction on nearly 3,000 housing units located in underdeveloped areas on the East and West sides of the city. These projects were presented as part of the city’s first phase of urban renewal, but it also guaranteed the destruction of homes and neighborhoods that would not be replaced with the building of the new units (Posey, 2012, p. 23).

Second, the entire country was on the bandwagon to build interstates and Youngstown was no exception. The city devised a plan that called for the construction of approximately eight and a half miles of arterial highway and five miles of an inner-belt expressway. According to Posey (2012), it was the hopes of the city that the interstate would halt the erosion of downtown real estate values; lure suburban shoppers back to the city; and finally city planners had hoped the highway system would alleviate the issue of spreading slums (p. 28). It did not work, but instead succeeded in fragmenting the city and its neighborhoods.

Local historian Thomas Welsh (2009) asserted that it had a particularly deleterious effect on cultural institutions and landmarks, specifically Catholic churches
and parochial schools. For example, the highway system demolished St. Anthony’s church and St. Ann’s church and its elementary school in 1960 on the North side of the city (p. 184). Moreover, the building of the highway also dispersed ethnic neighborhoods on the east side and traditional neighborhoods and schools in the inner city (Welsh, 2009, p. 185).

**Part 3, ESEA and Educational Policy**

Although the history of American education was a localized enterprise, educational policies have morphed over time reflecting the changing needs of society. The 1965 Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) is such an example, reflecting the importance to expand and improve educational programs.

**Brief History of the American Concept of Education**

The history of education in the United States is the history of a locally organized, locally funded, and locally governed enterprise (Conley, 2003, p. 16). Traditionally, most everyone operated within a constrained set of beliefs about the role and purposes of a public education system, which allowed similar policies and structures to be implemented in a wide range of settings (Conley, 2003, p. 19). This consensus began to dissolve in the post-World War II era as equality issues moved to the top of the national policy agenda and as the composition and fiscal needs of urban districts sharply diverged from those of their suburban counterparts (Conley, 2003, p. 20; Kirst as cited in Ravitch, 1983, p. 29; Rury, 2005, pp. 182-184).

The 1957 National Defense Education Act (NDEA) represented a significant advancement of federal involvement in education. The goal of the Act was essentially to
heighten national security through the strengthening of specific education programs. Thus the linkage between national priorities and the educational system was reinforced, and the precedent for a federal education policy was more firmly established (Conley, 2003, p. 21; Ravitch, 2000, p. 362).

The 1960s brought elevated national awareness of inequality in many areas of American society concerning race, educational opportunity, gender, for example. To begin the process of countering these, President Lyndon B. Johnson called for an all-out War on Poverty, which began with the Employment Opportunity Act of 1964 (EOA). The Act established the Job Corps and training and work study allowing youths to learn skills while working on government projects while the pre-school program Head Start was launched in the summer of 1965 (Spring, 2001, p. 374).

The Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (ESEA) was signed by President Johnson to “provide financial assistance . . . to expand and improve educational programs by various means . . . to meet the educational needs of educationally deprived children” (quoted in Spring, 2001, p. 374). Hence the federal role in education expanded further to attempt redress the seemingly intractable social inequality (Rury, 2005, p. 182). The federal government became a major source of funding and policy initiatives, with education developing into an important issue in national politics and federal social policy (Rury, 2005, p. 183).

State Role

Ultimately, the law led to the creation of federal education bureaucracy and the capture of state education bureaucracies, which were financed to implement federal
policy (Conley, 2003, p. 21). Perhaps the most ostensive of the federal government’s role in education was Title V of the ESEA, which provided funds for strengthening state departments of education or SEAs (Spring, 2001, p. 375). Channeling federal money through the SEAs also allayed fears of federal control of education, which was a longstanding apprehension of the American people (Kirst, as cited in Ravitch, 1983, p. 27; Spring, 2001, p. 375). Writing in 1992, Wirt and Kirst explained that the shift in the state role has been drastic and the rate of involvement has increased dramatically (p. 256), and further the capacity of the SEAs to intercede in local school policy has mushroomed in the last 20 years (Wirt & Kirst, 1992, p. 299). A principal reason for state intervention is the presumptive notion that only the state can ensure equality and standardization of instruction and resources rather than the local education departments (Wirt & Kirst, 1992, p. 298).

Wirt and Kirst (1992) continued that the daily job of implementing state policy goals rests in the hands of anonymous bureaucrats in the SEA. When the century opened, these agencies were tiny, but with successive waves of school reform policies were left with the SEAs to administer and so they expanded greatly (p. 288). So much so that state-level legislative staff increased by 130% between 1968 and 1974; and by 1972 three-quarters of the SEAs staff had been on their jobs for less than three years (Wirt & Kirst, 1992, p. 299). These substantive changes have become possible in large part due to an increase in institutional capacity of states to intervene in local affairs (Wirt & Kirst, 1992, p. 299). As Ravitch (1983) lamented, the result of new politics of the schools rotated around a state-federal axis rather than a state-local axis (p. 322).
**Local Control**

Traditionally, education had been a local matter, directed by locally elected school boards and funded by local taxes (Conley, 2003, pp. 16, 19; Kirst, 1995, p. 29). The trend toward centralization and educational bureaucracy roughly began with the NDEA, but was more firmly implanted with the ESEA of 1965 and has continued since (Kirst, 1995, p. 29). According to Kirst,

Large-scale changes in education have been made at the expense of local discretion. School boards, local superintendents of schools and local central administrations have all lost influence. Those whose influence has increased over time include the federal government and the state, the courts, interstate networks and organizations (such as the teachers’ standards board), private business, teacher and administrative collective bargaining groups, and community-based interest groups composed of non-education professionals. (p. 25)

Further, governance changes over the years has challenged the original local control choices concerning who should govern schools and local school authorities can no longer control their agendas nor shape decision outcomes (Kirst, 1995, pp. 27, 52; Wirt & Kirst, 1992). And while many LEAs favor a decentralized, flexible system of schooling, SEAs and reformers on the other hand favor centralization and advocate school consolidation (Tyack, 2003, p. 150).

Indeed, the drive to consolidate small schools and districts proved largely successful (Ravitch, 1983, p. 329). For example, in 1948 there were 89,000 school districts nationwide and in the 1960s there were 130,000 school districts; by 1995
however, there was a mere 15,020 school districts (Kirst, 1995, p. 27; Ravitch, 1983, p. 327). Perhaps more telling, Ravitch (1983) furthered, was that while total enrollment in elementary and secondary schools nearly doubled between 1945 and 1980 from 23 million to 40 million, the number of schools dropped from 185,000 to 86,000 nationwide (p. 327).

The loss of schools is Youngstown’s story as well: consider the unchecked deterioration of its industrial infrastructure and resultant loss of a tax base, the out-migration of its population to the suburbs, and the urban renewal and highway projects that targeted older residential neighborhoods. These types of urban change ultimately adversely affected business and institutions such as schools.

In the city of Youngstown, most of the schools were located in neighborhoods and were usually within walking distance. Yet as the suburbs flourished, the city languished. Many neighborhoods that were once thriving began to disintegrate or were abandoned, leaving neighborhoods to decay and taking a significant institution with it: the school (Hallman, 1984, p. 40). As Hallman (1984) posited, schools are an important part of neighborhood life and can have a unifying influence on the community (p. 196). Neighborhood changes, he continued, occur because of social and economic forces operating within the metropolis and the nation (Hallman, 1984, p. 100).

Indeed, no neighborhood is an island, completely isolated from its broader environment. Neighborhood change can also occur because of decisions by corporate conglomerates or other private industry to shut down or relocate manufacturing plants, by the re-distribution of population, or by changes in economic activities within cities.
(Hallman, 1984, p. 273; Murphy, 1978, p. 257) and schools often reflect these changes as well. Finally, out-migration helped erode the local tax base and since schools rely primarily on their funds to operate, the declining property tax bases have severely curtailed schools’ ability to raise revenue (Murphy, 1978, p. 259; Rury, 2005, p. 200).
CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

This study contends that several phenomena, on both the national and local level adversely affected the city of Youngstown, Ohio, its neighborhoods and neighborhood schools. By exploring the phenomena of deindustrialization, suburbanization, and select social and educational policies, this study will attempt to describe how these phenomena played a role in Youngstown’s devolution. This was accomplished by doing a historical analysis of census data, public records, select national policies and secondary source material in an attempt to highlight how urban change and federal policies altered the landscape of the city, its neighborhoods, and neighborhood schools.

According to Carabine (2001), when undertaking historical research, the only sources a researcher can use are those which exist . . . and such sources are likely to be partial, reflecting particular interests (p. 305). Additionally, historical texts may be difficult to interpret or understand because it may be nearly impossible to understand the implications through the lens of the 21st century (Carabine, 2001, p. 306). For example, in this study, I foresee the figures from the census data and the language of the public records, and the national and educational policies to be relatively straightforward. However, a possible problem might occur within the secondary sources, namely the records of the local newspaper, the Vindicator. Although the newspaper is a good source for local happenings and history, because it is written mostly by Youngstown residents, it may be prone to bias. It can be argued that this particular kind of local journalism is
constructed and written by individuals who experience the world, or in this case local events, from their own vantage point (Hatch, 2002, p.15).

Furthermore, Carabine (2001) contended that a possible criticism of this kind of research is that “the analysis is selective drawing on apposite extracts to support the argument” (p. 306). One way of dealing with this is to situate the interpretation within other historical accounts and analysis of the period in an attempt to immerse and counter-textualize the ideas, values, and practices of the time (Carabine, 2001, p. 307).

**Design of the Study**

Designs for conducting qualitative studies vary considerably, but essentially require fashioning answers to three broad questions: (1) what is my research about? (that is, what is the phenomenon to be investigated? what might constitute evidence of that phenomenon? why is this phenomenon worth investigating?) (2) What is the strategy for linking research questions, methods, and evidence? (3) How will the proposed research take account of relevant ethical, political, and moral concerns? (Schwandt, 2007, p. 265).

This study’s design used a sociohistorical analysis of a case study. The study describes the social phenomena that occurred in a historical context. The case being studied is the city of Youngstown, Ohio. The design is set up to look at documents and maps of and about the city to ascertain how these phenomena played out in Youngstown. The maps of the city show where the schools were located in the city’s neighborhoods over the period of the study, 1946 through 1997.

Case study research is a strategy for doing social inquiry, where the case study itself is at center stage. Robert Yin (2003) argued that a case study strategy is preferred
when (a) the inquirer seeks answers to how or why questions, (b) the inquirer has little control over events being studied, (c) when the object of study is a contemporary phenomenon and the context is not clear, and (d) when it is desirable to use multiple sources of evidence (pp. 1-2). The strategic value according to Schram (2006), lies in its ability to draw attention to what can be learned from a single case and facilitating appreciation of the uniqueness, complexity, and contextual embedded-ness of individual events and phenomena (p. 107).

**Qualitative Methods**

Robert Stake (1995) offered an explanation of the distinction between quantitative and qualitative research methods saying it is not directly related to the types of data, but a difference between searching for causes versus searching for happenings. He furthered that “quantitative researchers press for explanation and control whereas qualitative researchers press for understanding the complex interrelationships among all that exists” (p. 37). Schwandt (2007) referred to qualitative inquiry as a blanket designation for all forms of social inquiry that relies primarily on qualitative data, that is, data in the form of words (p.248). Additionally, he posited, “to call a research activity qualitative inquiry may broadly mean that it aims at understanding the meaning of human action” (Schwandt, 2007, p. 248). To Schram (2006), qualitative inquiry is a search for the significance of knowledge through an active process of interpretation. It is his stance that “interpretation is not about proving, predicting, or controlling; instead it demonstrates its worth through how effectively it explains things and whether it impacts or inspires
others” (p. 12). This is my intention as I attempt to interpret the phenomena that occurred in Youngstown in an effort to explain what happened to its neighborhood schools.

**Methodology: Historical Case Study**

The study used qualitative methodology (Bogdan & Biklen, 2003, p. 31), in particular a historical case study, to gather and examine documents concerning the economic and social phenomena that occurred in Youngstown, Ohio. The historical case study will be instrumental in understanding those particular phenomena.

Historical research, as explained by Leedy and Ormond (2005), considers the currents and countercurrents of present and past events, with the hope of discerning patterns that tie them all together. At its core, historical research deals with the meaning of events. Further, the heart of the historical method is not the accumulation of facts, but rather the *interpretation* of the facts. Last, the task of the historical researcher is not merely to describe what events happened, but to present a factually supported rationale to explain why they happened. (p. 161)

Additionally, historical studies Hatch (2002) posited, involves the collection and analysis of data for the purpose of reconstructing (understanding) events or combination of events that happened in the past; in essence, systematically deconstructing history (p. 25). In this sense, then the study aims to draw attention to and flesh out the dynamics behind and around the loss of Youngstown’s neighborhood schools.

Schram (2006) argued that case study is not a methodological choice, per se, but a choice of *what* is to be studied and is defined by an analytical focus on an individual
event, episode, or other specific phenomena, not necessarily by the methods used for investigation (p. 106). Differentiating that explication further, Bogdan and Biklen (2003) wrote that methodology is a more generic term that refers to a general logic and theoretical perspective for a research project, whereas methods is a term that refers to the specific techniques used (p. 31).

Schram (2006) also noted that the term methodology is a theory of how inquiry should proceed and involves analysis of assumptions, principles, and procedures in a particular approach to inquiry that governs the use of particular methods (p. 193). Methodologies, he asserted, explicated, and defined (a) the kinds of problems that are worth investigating, (b) what comprises a researchable problem, (c) how to frame a problem in such a way that it can be investigated using particular designs and procedures, (d) how to understand what constitutes a legit and warranted explanation, (e) how to judge matters of generalizability, (f) how to select or develop appropriate means of generating data, and finally, (g) how to develop the logic linking problem-data generation-analysis-argument (Schram, 2006, p. 193).

Within that context, the study engaged in an active process of interpretation of the phenomena that occurred in Youngstown. This particular method was chosen because its aim is to interpret real events and circumstances through documents; to understand the contextual influences on actions and/or decisions; to understand the processes by which these took place; and to understand the relationship between particular phenomena and their wider social environments (Schram, 2006, p. 37).
Positionality

My interest in education largely stems from two experiences. The first was while I was teaching English Composition at Youngstown State University. Soon after I began teaching, I noticed a glaring difference in students’ capabilities to write. In general, those that hailed from the suburban, or private Catholic schools were better writers; those from rural areas were mostly good writers. It was the students from the city schools, however, that exhibited less mastery of writing skills. And I wondered why that was.

The second experience that led me to think deeper about the state of education was during my M.S. Ed program (2004-2009) at Youngstown State University where most of my fellow classmates were teachers—some in the city of Youngstown, some in the surrounding suburbs, some from Akron and Cleveland, and some from rural schools. And except for the suburban teachers, the rest had primarily one thing in common: their schools and districts were in trouble. Testing students and related issues was a common complaint. But for the city and rural teachers their greatest concern was funding, loss of school programs, and the possibility of job loss. I remembered wondering how had things deteriorated so badly? How long had it been that way? When asked, the teachers responded, for as long as they could remember. I didn’t see the pieces of the puzzle until I began researching the concept of deindustrialization and wondered if there was a connection.

I have only been keen to school closings since 2004. Prior to that, it wasn’t on my radar. I had attended private, Catholic schools and my children attended suburban public schools, so the issue was never on the forefront. However, prior to writing this
proposal, I did some preliminary research at the Mahoning Valley Historical Society and looked at city directories for the number of schools and their locations in the city of Youngstown, in 10-year increments from 1940 through 2010. The results were saddening. Hence, I began to wonder why, how, and when?

I became interested even more in this topic when I began researching deindustrialization and the closing of the steel mills in Youngstown while writing for my Comprehensive Exams in 2012 and learned further of the complexity of the problem and its far-reaching effects on the community and even in the neighborhood where I grew up, where nearly everyone worked in the steel mills in some capacity.

However, it was memories of my childhood that prompted me to think about neighborhood schools. I grew up on a street that abutted Mill Creek Park. The area was dubbed Newport Neighborhood because it was adjacent to Newport Lake. And although we were in the city of Youngstown, we were three blocks from the suburb of Boardman. The area was solidly working class. I attended and walked to a Catholic grade school, passing by a public elementary school every day. The school, Sheridan, was located right in the middle of a neighborhood. Visiting friends’ homes in different parts of the South side over the years, I would see other schools, both Catholic and public, situated in the neighborhoods as well. So as I digested the devastation brought to the community and families by the closing of the mills and the process of deindustrialization, I began to wonder about these neighborhood schools’ survival.

The analytical framework is a guide to research; it serves to situate the research questions and the methods for exploring them within the broader context of existing
knowledge about a topic even as the researcher seeks to generate new knowledge about that topic (Schram, 2006, p. 94). The appropriate and rigorous analytical framework, explains Ravitch and Riggan (2012), should help the researcher to argue convincingly that (a) the research questions are an outgrowth of the argument for significance and relevance to the field or fields; (b) that the data to be collected provide the researcher with the “raw material” necessary to explore and substantively respond to the guiding research questions and topic; and (c) the analytic approach will allow the researcher to effectively respond to the guiding research questions (p. 136).

Since my analytical frameworks rests on the conflict perspective of the Power Elite theory which asserts that people or groups with economic and political power are able to shape and distribute resources, privileges, and opportunities in society for their own benefit, my positionality lies on discovering if that was the case in Youngstown. Therefore, using the analytical framework as a working hypothesis, as I research archival material I will be looking for the potential significance and specific context within those materials.

**Perspective on Methodology**

This study is informed by the literature and theories related to deindustrialization, suburbanization, and educational policy as it might apply to the disappearance of Youngstown, Ohio’s neighborhood schools. By researching through authority’s interpretations of Youngstown’s decline, and through seminal works regarding deindustrialization, suburbanization, urban renewal, and educational policy as a
conceptual frame in order to analyze the aforementioned phenomena and to offer a
systematic, organized picture of a complex historical process.

This particular conceptual frame was chosen because in my preliminary research I
realized that steel mills do not shut themselves down, freeways do not build themselves,
and schools do not close their doors themselves. No, specific decisions were made by
corporate, federal, and local leaders with little regard for the people of whom these
decisions affected the most.

Data Collection

Schwandt (2007) defines data as recorded observations, in textual or numerical
form; they can be structured or unstructured; and can include historical archives such as
records, diaries, manuscripts, newspapers, etc.; and though considered unstructured, it is
understood as the evidence a researcher generates in a study (p. 61). Moreover, archival
data is defined as previously gathered and available from other sources, such as libraries
(Bogdan & Biklen, 2003, p. 2).

My initial idea for this study was to research was two-fold: first, I wanted to find
out if there was any correlation to the American’s education system’s increasing reliance
on state funding after the passage of Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA),
but specifically in Youngstown, to explain the city’s loss of its neighborhood schools due
to loss of local control over school governance. Or secondly, was the loss of
Youngstown’s neighborhood schools a direct or indirect result of the steel mill shutdowns
and the long-term effects of deindustrialization.
The types of data that were collected for this study were census records, published studies concerning Youngstown, city plats and maps, transcripts of oral histories, archived articles from the local paper the *Vindicator*, an archived study from the Mahoning Valley Historical Society, and fortuitously found studies from Youngstown State University’s Center for Urban and Regional Studies. The information provided from these materials gave me insight into the growth and decline of the city’s population, the location and demographics of its neighborhoods, and historical views of some of its residents regarding the building of the Interstate and residential segregation on the north side of the city. On final review of this study, I need to point out that the search for a “smoking gun” to identify individuals or groups of individuals who pulled the trigger on deindustrialization, suburbanization, and federal policy, was harmed by the lack of openly available, primary sources of historical data.

In November 2015 I visited the Mahoning Valley Historical Society to preview what documents might be available in their archives to assist me in finding resources to help answer my tentative research question. I first looked at the city directories in 10-year increments to validate the loss of the sheer number of schools between 1950 and 2000. I also looked at census data to track the decline in population for those same years, again in 10-year increments. At that time I also found a 1952 *Public Schools in Youngstown* study which gave me insight as to what might be on the minds of the Board of Education. And although the archivist informed me that the BOE was not “researcher friendly” I decided to contact them at a later date.
In December 2015, I looked online at the Center for Urban and Regional Studies at YSU to see if they had any documents available, as I knew they had done much research on the city. Their website had a lengthy list of documents available, but they were not available online. So I drove down to campus to retrieve copies of the ones I thought might useful. They had recently relocated their department on campus, and when I asked the personnel about the reports I was looking for, she pointed to three 32-gallon recycling containers and said that I might find something in those containers because they were throwing away old documents and to help myself. After a couple of hours “dumpster-diving,” I found numerous studies concerning neighborhoods, demographics, and public schools which were pertinent to my study, while several were beyond the time frame of my study. The pertinent documents also contained graphic maps detailing the severity of blight and the proliferation of racial and residential segregation. After I read and analyzed the pertinent reports, I began to reflect that maybe control by local elites had less to do with the loss of neighborhood schools, but was instead, an indication of a much broader social phenomenon.

By February I was still trying to make a connection between the loss of neighborhood schools and loss of local control, so I emailed the Assistant Superintendent at Youngstown Board of Education and inquired whether they might have information regarding national education policy and its impact on the Youngstown City School District. He responded and asked me to call him. I did and explained in further detail the correlation I was trying to make and he said submit a Request for Information form, which I did promptly. The next day I received an answer from the Assistant District
Records Officer saying, “we do not have any document that contains this information.” Within the response the officer included a section from the Ohio Revised Code stating R.C. 149.43 . . . If the District does not have the requested information in a document that can be sent to you, it will not be provided. Requests for information and requests that require the Records Custodian to create a new record by searching for and compiling information from existing records is improper.

The officer then suggested I refine my request to a specific item. I did, asking for any information “indicating that the State Education Department made mandates or gave directions for the YCSD to follow between 1965 and 1983? Specifically, regarding how funds were to be spent or directives indicating which schools should remain open or which should close.” Again the response was, “I do not have that information in any records.” Thinking perhaps this type of information would not be in a formal document, I thought maybe interviewing previous board members might glean some clues, so I emailed the Assistant Superintendent and asked if there was a roster of previous members. He never replied.

These responses by the YCSD are interesting because they showed a pattern of lack of openness to the community. It is surprising in light of Ohio’s sunshine laws that the requested records were not available. During my later research at the public library, I came across several newspaper articles that reported local citizens were upset that the Board of Education was not including their input in its school decision-making.
Between March and May of 2016, I made final attempts to seek out information regarding the long-term effects of the 1965 Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) on local education agencies (LEAs). I called the Ohio Department of Education and they responded that their records did not go back that far. Next I looked at Youngstown State’s Maag library government documents using ESEA as a search term and found there was a 1968 document in the catalog of U.S. government publications, but it was for official use only. Not willing to give up, I contacted the librarian at the U.S. Department of Education with a similar query and received no response. Locally, I called the local newspaper’s archive department and left two messages with no response. Finally, I visited the public library and researched folders labeled “schools” which contained mostly random newspaper articles two of which mentioned revenues lost from state funding cutbacks in the early 1980s. Several articles from the late 1970s and 1980s suggest this might have a devastating effect on the schools as the district contemplated closing more schools. Another article from 1983 predicted that as many as 11 more schools were planning to close in the following 10 years due to a declining tax base and student enrollment.

Despite the broad unavailability of specific data that might have shown the unknown hand of the elite groups’ machinations to close neighborhood schools, there was enough data that established the evidentiary patterns I needed to analyze and produce a timeline of the phenomena that had occurred in Youngstown and draw conclusions concerning the loss of its neighborhood schools.
Analyzing the Data

Broadly conceived, analyzing the data is the activity of making sense of, interpreting, and theorizing data (Schwandt, 2007, p. 6). The process of analysis begins with organizing, reducing, and describing the data, and continues through to the activity of drawing conclusions and interpretations from the data and warranting those interpretations (p. 6). Schwandt (2007) explained that to analyze means to break down a whole into its component or constituent parts and then through the re-assembly of those parts, one can come to the integrity of the whole (p. 6). He continued that choosing concepts and developing typologies are types of ways of developing an analytical vocabulary by means of which the inquirer fosters the aim of his or her research to answers such questions as: What happened? What did people do? What did it mean? Why this way and not another? (Schwandt, 2007, p. 7). In addition Leedy and Ormond (2005) proposed data analysis in a case study should typically involve organization of details about the case, the categorization of data, identification of patterns, and interpretation, synthesis, and generalizations. Ultimately, they contend, the researcher must look for a convergence (or triangulation) of the data: those many separate pieces of information must all point to the same conclusion (Leedy & Ormond, 2005, p. 136). However, they cautioned that if some data contradict the patterns proposed, the researcher needs to describe those as well in order to present as complete and unbiased an account of the case as possible (Leedy & Ormond, 2005, p. 136).

Since this study relied on archival sources, that is, documents, Schwandt (2007) clarified what is meant by document analysis: “the term refers broadly to the various
procedures involved in analyzing and interpreting data from the examination of
documents and records relevant to the particular study” (p. 75). This may also include
determining their authenticity. Establishing authenticity mostly consists of asking
questions of the document. As offered by Claus and Marriott (2012), the first set of
questions involves identification of the document and includes such questions as: What
type of document is it? Who produced it? What do you know about the author? When
was it written? And why was it written? A second set of questions involves
understanding the document. For instance, questions might take the form of: What are
the key words and their meaning? What points or arguments are made? What values,
biases or attitudes does the content reflect? How does the content relate to a given
historical situation? How reliable is the source and does it have any limitations? How
does it relate to other sources from the same time period? Does it share the same ideas,
attitudes and arguments? And finally, how would you explain any differences between
these sources? (Claus & Marriott, 2012, p. 367).

The manner in which the data was analyzed was to organize the data in
chronological order, in this case by decades, rather than yearly, because the phenomena
occurred over time as opposed to a singular, specific event. The data then were
categorized, or clustered according the phenomena. For example, the data concerning
suburbanization were grouped by data concerning out-migration, the building of the
interstate and associated data on the long-term impact on neighborhoods and
neighborhood schools. The same procedure was used for deindustrialization and social
and urban policies. The next and final phases of analysis were to identify any patterns or
themes of the data, both within and between the data clusters. Then the data were synthesized, implications drawn, and a “portrait” was constructed of Youngstown and its neighborhood schools.

Looking through observations and historical investigations and unearthing processes and patterns of federal, social, an educational policy and their subsequent effect on Youngstown and its neighborhood schools led me to wonder what did that mean in reference to deindustrialization, suburbanization, the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, school consolidations/closings, and Youngstown? Who made the decisions? How were the decisions made? Was it through consensus (voting), or by proxy? Who were the actors? What were the/their roles, rules, and identities? (Safford, 2009, p. 8)

**Reflexivity**

In a methodological sense, according to Schwandt (2007), reflexivity refers to the process of critical self-reflection of one’s biases, theoretical dispositions, and preferences. He continued, it can also be a means for critically inspecting the entire research process, for examining one’s personal and theoretical commitments and for developing particular interpretations in order to validate all accounts of social phenomena (p. 260). Equally important, in a methodological sense, reflexivity can also signal more than an inspection of potential sources of bias and their control. It can point to the fact the inquirer is part of the setting, context, and social phenomenon he or she seeks to understand (Schwandt, 2007, p. 260). In the same way Hatch (2002) wrote that “reflexivity, the process of personally and academically reflecting on lived experiences in ways to reveal deep
connections between the writer and his or her subject is essential to the integrity of qualitative research (p. 11).

**Trustworthiness in the Study of Archival Materials**

To evaluate the trustworthiness of a qualitative research study Lincoln and Guba (1984) suggested four criteria: credibility, dependability, transferability, and confirmability. Regarding credibility, accuracy and depth in thinking and writing about the archival materials are critical. Is this researchers’ representation of the archival material accurately conveyed in his/her writing? Credibility (parallel to internal validity) answers the questions about accurate representations of archival materials, its various perspectives, and time spent with the archival materials. Also necessary is third party checking for feedback of completeness of the study and its recommendations.

Dependability (parallel to reliability) relates to how the data is collected, analyzed, and interpreted. And although dependability in a qualitative study is difficult, the question remains, can the study be repeated? Can the recommendations be applied to urban policy in the United States?

Typically, transferability involves generalizability of the data to other locales. This researcher prefers Eisner’s (1991) notion of “retrospective generalization, which allows us to understand our past experiences in a new way” (p. 205). In this study, it is more about the particulars of the case of Youngstown and the complexity of deindustrialization, suburbanization, and educational policy. Transferability (parallel to external validity) involves looking at the richness of the descriptions as well as the volume of detail provided regarding the context and how applicable it might be to other
contexts. Each case is described richly, and then the cases are analyzed and interpreted for commonalities within and across other locations.

Lastly, confirmability (parallel to objectivity) relates to the findings. For instance, do the findings emerge from the data and not the researcher’s predispositions? Can the findings be confirmed by others? Has the researcher been non-judgmental? Chapter five discusses the lingering effects of federal policies and the ravages wrought by decades of population loss and lack of economic recovery in Youngstown, Ohio.

**Limitations on Methodology**

Historical case study as methodology can present a number of problems, namely the constructions of internal and external validity and generalizability. Robert Yin (2003) addresses these issues by offering three tactics to offset these problems. The first is the use of *multiple sources of evidence* in a manner encouraging convergent lines of inquiry during data collection; second, to establish a *chain of evidence*; and third, to have the case study peer-reviewed (Yin, 2003, p. 36).

Regarding internal validity, Yin’s (2003) concern is to the broader problem of making inferences. He explains that basically, a case study is an inference every time an event cannot be directly observed, which is especially true for historical research. Thus the researcher will infer that a particular event resulted from some earlier occurrence based on documentary evidence collected as a part of the case study. To avoid erroneous errors and/or bias, Yin (2003) proposed the researcher pose the following questions: Is the inference correct? Have all the rival explanations and possibilities been considered? Is the evidence convergent? By anticipating these questions in the research design, he
continues, the researcher has begun to deal with the overall problem of making inferences and therefore, the specific problem of internal validity (Yin, 2003, p. 36).

The problem of external validity, according to Yin (2003), has been a barrier in doing case studies, with the common complaint that it is difficult to generalize from one case to another (p. 37). Critics, he continues, typically state that case studies offer a poor basis for generalizing, and wrongfully contrast the situation to survey research, which relies on samples and statistical generalizations (Yin, 2003, p. 37). Case studies on the other hand, rely on analytical generalizations, where the researcher is striving to generalize a particular set of results to some broader theory (Yin, 2003, p. 38). Therefore, a researcher should try to generalize findings to theory analogous to the way a scientist generalizes from experimental results to theory (Yin, 2003, p. 38).

Matthew Miles (1979) believed that qualitative data (within the parameters of case study research) have attractive qualities for both their producers and consumers: “they lend themselves to the production of serendipitous findings and adumbration of unforeseen theoretical leaps; they tend to reduce a researcher’s trained incapacity, bias, narrowness, and arrogance; and their results reported in forms ranging from case studies to vignettes have a quality of undeniability” (p. 590), all of which contribute to the uniqueness of using qualitative data.

The nature of case study research, however, has often been misunderstood and oversimplified. Flyvbjerg (2006) summarized some of those misunderstandings beginning with the “power struggle” that theoretical (context-independent) knowledge is more valuable than concrete, practical (context-dependent) knowledge; that one cannot
generalize on the basis of an individual case, and as such the case study cannot contribute to scientific development; and that the case study inherently contains a bias towards verification, that is, a tendency to confirm the researcher’s preconceived notions (p. 221). And like Yin (2003), Flyvbjerg (2006) proposed methods or tactics to guard against such issues, ultimately, despite these misunderstandings, and emphasizes that case-study method, in general, can certainly contribute to the cumulative development of knowledge (Flyvbjerg, 2006, p. 241).

**Limitations of the Study**

My research draws on the paucity of studies of the effects of deindustrialization, suburbanization, and educational policy on neighborhood schools. Looking specifically at these phenomena then, the study sidesteps institutional culture, climate, and curriculum within school walls. For example, it does not focus on the struggles of principals, teachers, or students. Instead, this study is more of a social history analyzing phenomena and their effects to Youngstown, Ohio’s neighborhood schools.

Additionally, this study may be compromised because of the “insider” status of the author who has lived in Youngstown all her life, and has first-hand witnessed the changes that this city has undergone, yet great pains have been taken to fill in the blind spots of the story that an insider reflexively assumes. Still, care was taken to collect, record, analyze, and compare information in an effort to most clearly present a true picture of the topic being researched.

This study implies that the situation prevalent in Youngstown is not unique to this area. These phenomena occurred in many cities of the same size with similar
environments. For this reason, the research is not limited to Youngstown, but does include material that pertains to the phenomena of deindustrialization, suburbanization, and educational policy on both state and national levels.

The focus of this study was limited to deindustrialization, suburbanization, and select federal and local urban and educational policies. It considered the national and local components of these phenomena and explored the causes and resulting problems for Youngstown. Finally, this study was limited to the period of time from 1946-1997. During this time Youngstown went from a thriving, steel-producing city to a city notorious for its crime and desolation. The closing of the steel mills eventually led to decreasing land values, a reduced tax base and related loss in school revenues, loss of population, the disfigurement of its neighborhoods due to the building of the highways, and a massive growth and movement to the surrounding suburbs.

Problems With the Research

A primary problem in the research is the establishment of a link between the phenomena of deindustrialization, suburbanization, and social and educational policy to the loss of neighborhood schools. One way to overcome this is to review other written accounts of said phenomena and the effects such phenomena had on people and economies of that area. This combination of supportive materials will provide evidence that shows a link between the loss of industry and population to the decline in enrollment and revenue to schools.

Another problem of the research is the accurate analysis of all available data. Written accounts of other community’s experiences of facing similar problems is a
necessary part of the study, but concepts of cause and effect may or may not be relevant to the problems experienced in Youngstown, Ohio.
CHAPTER IV

FINDINGS

This study examines how several seemingly unrelated phenomena such as deindustrialization, suburbanization, and urban renewal intersected as urban change contributed to the decline of Youngstown and its neighborhood schools. I originally had anticipated discovering one of two things: that the loss of neighborhood schools might be attributed to the changes in federal funding policies for schools and affected Youngstown’s ability to locally control its own school district, and, after initial research, that closing of the steel mills had an immediate and fatal effect on Youngstown’s neighborhood schools, a common erroneous refrain in Youngstown. After I read and analyzed the pertinent reports however, I began to reflect that maybe control by local elites had less to do with the loss of neighborhood schools, but was instead, an indication of a much broader social phenomenon. Still, although these particular phenomena did in fact affect neighborhood schools, much broader phenomena converged and also contributed to Youngstown’s loss of neighborhood schools. Thus, using socio-historical analysis, this chapter will also discuss how and when these changes evolved and whether there are similarities in other cities.

I arrived at my overarching themes while conducting preliminary research to assess the effects of the closing of the local steel mills on neighborhood schools by looking at city directories for the number of schools in Youngstown in the 1960s, 1970s and 1980s. I also looked at the population loss during that time period. In both instances I had expected to find that the numbers of both would have dropped precipitously
especially between the 1970s and 1980s when the steel mills were closing in large numbers, yet that was not the entire case.

For example, the greatest loss of the number of schools occurred between the years 1980 and 1990, dropping from 54 schools in 1981 to 26 in 1990. More surprisingly, the first major decrease in population occurred between 1960 and 1970 with a 26,900 decline, and a similar 25,000 loss between 1970 and 1980, continuing nearly 20,000 each succeeding decade. Given my earlier premise regarding steel mill closings, my concern was not as much where these residents moved, but why. I began to notice broader social trends taking their toll not just in Youngstown, but also many other de-industrializing cities across the country.

I began to examine these phenomena as an element of historical research in an attempt to understand the currents and countercurrents of both present and past events with the hope of discerning patterns that tie them altogether (Leedy & Ormond, 2005, p. 54). After the realization that the connection between population loss and steel mill closings alone did not cause the deterioration of Youngstown, its neighborhoods, or its neighborhood schools, it was my hope that by drawing attention to and fleshing out the dynamics (Hatch, 2002, p. 25), I could then interpret and explain the decline of Youngstown through the lens of these broader social phenomena.

The chapter is organized chronologically starting with the first population shift, the Second Great Migration, the building of the Interstate, urban renewal, suburbanization, and deindustrialization in order to gain a sense of the larger social context of the study. Next, the discussion moves to the findings regarding the
neighborhoods in Youngstown, and finally moves on to the discussion of the findings of Youngstown neighborhood schools, which shows the dramatic change and loss that the city experienced over time.

Aside from these studies (Safford, 2009; Linkon & Russo, 2002; Bruno, 1999) which documented Youngstown’s economic travails, no academic study was found that examined neighborhood and block level changes in the city and its effect on city schools. Unlike the aforementioned studies concerning Youngstown’s economic decline, my study turned to examine other population trends associated with the spread of blight and neighborhood decay that precipitated urban “renewal” and white flight prior to the closing of the steel mills. My study explored these phenomena to obtain a more accurate picture of the continued demise of this legacy city and its neighborhood schools.

As a result of the preliminary findings, the present study covers the years 1946 to 1997 to find the sources of the decline of Youngstown neighborhoods and schools including but not limited to nearly all of the steel mill shut downs. After 1996 no further research was discoverable on Youngstown’s neighborhood conditions and school closings, either not conducted or not publicly available in a variety of urban planning agencies or the Board of Education of Youngstown.

First, I explore the issue of major demographic shifts in the population of the city, followed by a look at the other mechanics of urban fragmentation. I found that the steel mill closings aggravated an already declining city and contributed to city depopulation, a weakened tax base and eventually school closings. The ongoing fragmentation of the metro area had already severely weakened the city’s residential tax base, home values,
retail business sectors, neighborhoods and further marginalized minority groups prior to the steel mill closings (Posey, 2012, p. 4). The city’s growing suburban areas were hostile and/or indifferent to the city’s mounting problems, refusing to even consider annexation as far back as the 1950s. At the forefront were the issues of neighborhood change, racism, and the lack of city leaders who neither recognized nor facilitated any plan of action.

Nearly 20 years later, however, when the steel mills closed, Youngstown faced an uncertain future which would seemingly seal its fate as it continued in a downward spiral; loss of population, growing poverty, and deteriorating neighborhoods now define the city. The end date of 1997 was chosen for two reasons. First, while this dissertation attempts to explain the loss of Youngstown’s neighborhood schools, over time the urban schooling changed due in part to the proliferation of vouchers and academies on the education scene beginning in the early 1990s. For instance, after reviewing some of my prior research and sources, in 1990 Youngstown had 0 academies and 25 public schools in the city, but by 2000 there were 7 academies and only 21 public schools in the city; a situation that has only worsened.

Second, the last school study in this dissertation Youngstown City School District Neighborhood and Demographic Evaluation (1997) was completed by the Center for Urban and Regional Studies (CURS) at Youngstown State University. The center was approached by the Youngstown Board of Education due to a then fiscal emergency and analyzed school service areas and their neighborhoods in the district between 1980 to1996. After thoroughly conducting further research and contacting various agencies in
Youngstown, including the Board of Education, I have concluded that no further data on Youngstown’s neighborhood conditions and school closings either have not been conducted, or are not publicly available.

**The Second Great Migration and Public Housing**

In the years 1946-1997, Youngstown, like the rest of the country, was enjoying great prosperity after World War II. As a harbinger of even larger changes to come, between 1940 and 1960 nearly 20,000 African Americans migrated to Youngstown (Beverly, 2002, p. 4) causing an overload on already crowded living conditions and fundamentally contributing to White flight and the further dichotomy of its neighborhoods. The African Americans came to capitalize on the jobs at the steel mills, which were running at full capacity in the 1940s because of the demand for steel during World War II, and in the 1950s to take advantage of post-war prosperity.

After their arrival, the migrants often lived with friends or relatives until they secured employment. Once employed, the migrants often settled in the same area as their friends or relatives, as housing was limited for African Americans in the city of Youngstown (Beverly, 2002, p. 46) due to segregation and discriminatory banking practices as White neighborhoods would usually not allow African Americans to purchase a home there. To relieve overcrowding, as part of the U.S. Housing Act of 1937, funds were provided for “slum clearance” and the building of public housing. The first public housing facility built was the Westlake Housing Project in Youngstown (Posey, 2012, p. 20), which was located over the ruins of the Westlake Crossing, a slum area full of row houses, and was destroyed to make way for the project.
Westlake Housing Project was meant to provide temporary housing until people could find permanent housing, most preferably by the purchasing of one’s own home. Although there were sections of the city that housed the majority of African Americans, the east side and some of the lower north side, most acknowledged that overall, the city was somewhat integrated, but Westlake was segregated (Carter, 1985, Oral history).

Youngstown, like the southern United States, was very segregated; theaters, buses and restaurants actively practiced segregation (Moser, 1985, Oral history).

According to Romelia Carter (1985, Oral history), at first Westlake was a great place to live: there were entertainment and crafts at the Lexington Settlement House, residents were required to maintain their small front yards, and the rules were strict. For instance, you could not have a child out of wedlock and remain there. It was viewed as a community, not a public housing complex. Over time however, government policies combined with social circumstances sent public housing into a downward spiral. Increasing numbers of welfare households took up residence in the projects, giving them the reputation of “housing of a last resort” (von Hoffman, 2000, p. 316). Eventually, Westlake, like much other public housing, became synonymous with crime and antisocial elements.

At Westlake, African Americans lived south of Madison Avenue, while Whites lived north of Madison Avenue. By 1965 the entire Westlake housing project was black, reflecting the white flight from that area of the city. Another example of White flight is the Brier Hill area, which had long been a neighborhood of predominately Italian steel workers, but began to empty out in the late 1940s. According to Linkon and Russo
(2002), “as Whites moved outward towards the suburbs, African Americans moved in, reinforced by the two public housing developments that border Brier Hill” (p. 41). The trend would escalate in the 1960s. In 1960, almost 65% of those living in Brier Hill were white, about half of them foreign-born, and most of those from Italy. Ten years later, nearly 3,000 of those residents left and the residents that remained in the neighborhood were now 63% African American and Hispanic (Linkon & Russo, 2002, p. 42).

Nationally, as post-war worries and frugalness dissipated, attitudes were replaced with increasing consumerism and one of its ultimate goals was home ownership. Yet the mobility and possibility of homeownership afforded to Whites in part was due to higher paying jobs in the mills. For African Americans, because of lower paying jobs in the mills and deliberate discriminatory lending practices, residential covenants, and red-lining in housing policy, the possibility of homeownership was severely limited.

**Residential Segregation**

As Linkon and Russo (2002) note, while residents often describe moves from a particular neighborhood or out of the central city altogether as simple choices or merely the expression of a desire for a nicer, newer, and cleaner neighborhood, the fact is larger forces contributed to the shift as well (p. 42). As in other cities, residential segregation in Youngstown was fueled in part by racism, as evidenced by discriminatory housing policy practices. Subsequently, residential segregation changed the urban terrain by demarcating the living spaces between African Americans and Whites.

And not only did such movement redefine the make-up of individual neighborhoods within cities, it also fueled the decline of downtowns and created an
opportunity for developers to “re-imagine community life with their own private projects at its heart” (Linkon & Russo, 2002, p. 44). Youngstown saw a dramatic shift in the 1950s and 1960s as increasing numbers of mostly White residents and businesses moved away from the city center.

Further while white ethnic enclaves broke down, once racially integrated neighborhoods became more segregated. The process was supported by lending and real estate practices which kept Black home buyers from even looking at homes in the new suburbs, much less be approved for a home loan (Carter, 1985, Oral history).

Several factors are responsible for residential segregation. First, since migrants were still relocating to the area, it created a shortage of housing in African American neighborhoods. Thus old stock African American families began slowly buying homes on the lower north and south sides of town. These neighborhoods were referred to as transitional neighborhoods which is a term used to describe the pattern of Blacks moving into neighborhoods that were once predominantly White, while fearful Whites moved out of these same neighborhoods to escape the perceived oncoming encroachment of Blacks (Beverly, 2002, p. 51).

Real estate agents often took advantage of White fears of predominately Black neighborhoods by using a method called blockbusting. Real estate agents had discovered that they could turn a quick profit by showing a small number of poor or minority families homes in middle-class White neighborhoods, inflaming residents’ fears with tales of decreased property values, then selling the same, now vacant houses at inflated prices to minority buyers (Beverly, 2002, p. 52).
Another factor that led to the existence of Black enclaves was that many Blacks lacked the necessary income to buy a home in a middle-class neighborhood, and banks refused to lend them money. The migrants who moved to the city during the 1940s and 1950s were often poorly educated which greatly impacted and limited their job choices. Although some African Americans came to Youngstown specifically for steel mill work, others simply had to settle for those types of jobs since there was little else available for them. Due to employment as unskilled laborers and racism in the mills, Blacks more often worked the dirtiest and most dangerous jobs at a lower wage (Linkon & Russo, 2002, pp. 32, 198). As a result, a lower income meant renting, public housing, or buying a home in low-income neighborhoods.

The disparity in access to mortgages between Whites and African Americans bore cumulative effects. For instance, in the 1950s access to mortgages for Whites led to first generation of wealth in the form of home ownership, and eventually led to the greatest period of growth of a middle class in world history. Conversely, because African Americans were denied access to mortgages, they were forced to remain in the cities and were either kept from owning homes, or owned the old, often run-down housing stock. As a result, they were unable to accumulate wealth. This in turn led further residential segregation, declining neighborhoods and began to set the stage for the declination of city schools.

Finally, Black enclaves were created in the city because the problem of racism and segregated housing also was not addressed; there was no concerted effort on the part of community leaders to address or even challenge segregation and in fact federal and
local housing policies promoted and sanctioned it. To be sure urban renewal sought to maintain these established boundaries.

**Interstate**

The suburban expansion of Youngstown’s landscape was further reinforced by changes in transportation patterns, especially of the interstate beltway, which was part of a larger urban renewal effort. Although the Interstate was considered an asset to the city, its construction had detrimental outcomes for many neighborhoods, including businesses, churches, and schools that stood in its path. The genesis of I-680 dates back to 1946, when engineers told city officials that expressways were needed to relieve traffic congestion on city streets at a time when about 70,000 cars a day converged on downtown Youngstown and in 1952, engineers showed city officials blueprints of a proposed arterial highway system (Milliken, 2016). Its construction was a 16-year project that began with a groundbreaking ceremony in September of 1960, and ended with completion in 1976. The 16.43-mile Interstate 680 forms a rough circle around downtown Youngstown, with spokes connecting to the Ohio turnpike to the south and west of the city (Linkon & Russo, 2002, p. 42). The 90-million dollar project was part of the national interstate highway development program, which ultimately destroyed several old neighborhoods in Youngstown and forced many residents to relocate. Indeed, the construction caused the displacement of more than 800 families in a single area whose homes were demolished and the demolition of three churches in its path (Milliken, 2016).

For some, namely Whites, relocation offered an opportunity to sell homes with declining property values and move to the suburbs, while others preferred to stay and try
to protect their neighborhoods. For Black residents, relocation to the suburbs was forbidden and instead they were forced to remain in the city, in concentrated inner city neighborhoods, mostly on lower south and east sides of town. Eventually, however, as the population shift continued, they were channeled and relegated to old housing stock made available by deceptive real estate practices and realtors into the vacated homes in formally all-white neighborhoods (Beverly, 2002, p. 52).

The highway project also effectively cut downtown Youngstown off from much day-to-day traffic because it offered no direct route into the downtown area only on its periphery, and thus ultimately succeeded in directing both drivers and shoppers to the new strip malls being built in the suburbs which did offer direct routes to them. So much so, that in anticipation of the completion of the Boardman Expressway, township trustees approved plans in 1967 for a large business complex at the interchange between the expressway and U.S. Route 224, which is today a major retail and restaurant center (Milliken, 2016). The result left downtown businesses isolated leaving them with essentially three options: close; wither until one is forced to close; or move to the suburbs. All three of these options eventually transpired over a 20-year time span, with many churches following suit.

And although the building of the Interstate ultimately negatively affected some city neighborhoods and the downtown, some, like the city engineer who greatly promoted the building of the interstate, thought it would offer mobility and provide consumers with choices about “where to live, work, and send their children to school” and would allow
for commercial and residential development- which in fact, never occurred (Linkon & Russo, 2002, p. 43).

**Urban Renewal, Federal Policy and Local Dynamics**

While the premise of urban renewal was surely ambitious, it also contributed to the destruction of communities and neighborhoods throughout the country. Urban renewal was enacted by Congress as part of the Housing Acts of 1949 and 1954 as part of a comprehensive package to fulfill the National Housing Goal, calling for “a decent home and suitable environment for every American family” (Gelfand, 1975, p. 211). A crucial objective of the renewal package was the relocation of families due to highway construction or the demolition of dilapidated housing. However, local agencies saw this particular rule as a burden and a barrier to the possibility of profitable real estate ventures rather than a tool for the implementation of national policy or community viability.

Thus, low income plus residential segregation and discrimination confined African Americans and minorities to the ghettos, placed severe strain on transitional areas, and tipped the shaky racial balance in urban housing. However, urban renewal’s focus on physical deterioration obscured the underlying sources of urban distress: poverty, lack of education, and discrimination (Gelfand, 1975, p. 215).

**National Policy**

During the first decade after World War II, according to Teaford (1990), as cities faced a declining central business district, the loss of middle- and upper-class residents to suburban living, a lowered tax base, and the spread of slums and blight, provoking city
officials to attack the signs of physical deterioration and thereby reverse the trend toward decentralization (p.7).

Prior to the Housing Act of 1949 concerns about blight and housing was a matter of importance for many cities and States. Laws such as Illinois’s 1947 Blighted Area Redevelopment Act, and Michigan’s 1945 Blighted Area Rehabilitation Act served as models for later federal legislation and provided guidelines on how to redevelop blighted areas in cities across the United States, eventually resulting in the Housing Act of 1949. The tremendous impact of the act cannot be underestimated.

The importance of the act can be seen in a 2000 survey commissioned by Fannie Mae Foundation regarding the top ten most important influences on the postwar American metropolis, the Housing Act of 1949 appears twice followed by the Interstate Highway Act. Urban renewal, which included downtown redevelopment ranked fourth. Ironically, the Housing Act is often linked to racial segregation and job discrimination in cities and suburbs. Also, the Housing Act of 1949 represented unprecedented direct federal involvement in shaping cities and now funded and managed city-building projects (Lang & Sohmer, 2000, p. 292).

However, in policy terms, its scope and funding levels demonstrated housing’s growing importance to federal policy because the postwar housing shortage made it a difficult issue to ignore. As shown in the language of the act’s preamble, Congress linked the health of a nation to its housing quality:

The general welfare and security of the Nation and the health and living standards of its people require housing production and related community development
sufficient to remedy the serious housing shortage, [and] the elimination of
substandard and other inadequate housing through the clearance of slums and
blighted areas. (Lang & Sohmer, 2000, p. 293)

Yet housing quantity, not quality became a glaring problem for most of American cities.

By the end of World War II, the situation was dire, as America’s housing stock
was in bad shape. For example, half of the nation’s stock of 37 million houses was rated
as deficient and/or deteriorating, lacking hot water, plumbing, or other facilities.
Approximately 15-20% of the nation’s housing stock fell into the category of
“dilapidated,” a more serious condition. To worsen matters, new home construction was
restricted during the war due to conservation of materials. And the housing shortage for
returning veterans exacerbated the postwar demand for housing. The Housing Act of
1949 was seen as a much needed panacea to provide a decent home for every American
family (Lang & Sohmer, 2000, p. 290).

And even though there was a severe housing shortage after World War II, most
U.S. cities were becoming deeply concerned with their dilapidated and deteriorating
neighborhoods and opted for physical renovation or “urban renewal” as a solution.
Although today the term is commonly understood to mean the government program for
acquiring, demolishing, and replacing buildings deemed slums, its original meaning is
quite different. The policy of slum clearance, along with the authorization for public
housing intended to replace the demolished homes, was the focus of the Housing Act of
1949 and referred to as “urban redevelopment” (von Hoffman, 2008, p. 281).
However, five years later, the Housing Act of 1954 instituted the policy of “urban renewal” which was intended to supplant the earlier law of a comprehensive approach to the problem of blighted and slum neighborhoods. In contrast to urban redevelopment, urban renewal stressed not clearance, but enforcement of building codes and rehabilitation of substandard buildings.

Another important difference between the two housing acts is that one clear requirement for urban redevelopment of the Housing Act of 1949 was the strictly residential redevelopment component. In the 1954 Housing Act, this requirement was amended to allow specific allotments of 10% of redevelopment projects for nonresidential construction (von Hoffman, 2000, p. 313). With each successive housing act then, this component was expanded and it subsequently “gave the urban powers-that-be more opportunities for redevelopment schemes” (von Hoffman, 2008, p. 296). As a result, locales that employed code enforcement and rehabilitation also demolished properties in industrial areas and inner-city ghettos to build highways, civic centers, and commercial developments. Yet despite the hope that the urban renewal approach would preserve existing housing, in the following years, hundreds of thousands of homes were destroyed (von Hoffman, 2008, p. 296; Schwartz, 1993). Further, the proponents of both urban redevelopment and urban renewal said little, much less cared about the inhabitants of the slums and blighted areas or where they would live after their homes were demolished (Gelfand, 1975).

Still, what public housing projects that were built were often built near existing ones, thus concentrating public housing in certain working- and lower-class
neighborhoods of the city. The result of the construction of these new projects’ location often reinforced old racial ghettos (von Hoffman, 2000, p. 315) and maintained the constriction of poor, mostly Black residents to a confined area of the city. In general, redevelopment took place in central business districts, while new low-income housing projects were bottled up in lower-income and racially segregated inner-city neighborhoods. A comparable story unfolded in cities of all sizes across the country: Oakland, California, Lancaster, Pennsylvania, St. Louis, Missouri, Richmond, Virginia, and Birmingham, Alabama to name several and few cities across the country were left unscathed (Heathcott, 2008; Hines, 1982; von Hoffman, 2009, p. 238).

Indeed, the federal Housing Act of 1949 helped millions realize the dream of home ownership, while simultaneously it disrupted the lives of those displaced by the renewal projects it engendered. The act effectively shaped postwar housing and the urban policy landscape (Lang & Sohmer, 2000, p. 291). Concurrently, it afforded local governments to have an input as to the redevelopment of their communities, to the extent that cities were granted the power of eminent domain over large sections of their downtowns in order to remove blight and replace it with comprehensively planned structures (Teaford, 2000, p. 294).

The Housing Act of 1949 was a broad measure and was not focused on cities alone. For instance, Title I financed slum clearance under urban redevelopment programs. Title II increased authorization for Federal Housing Administration (FHA) mortgage insurance. Title III committed the federal government to building 810,000 new public housing units, and Title V allowed the Farmers Home Administration to grant mortgages
to encourage the purchase or repair of rural single-family homes (Lang & Sohmer, 2000, p. 291).

The wording, however, permitted federal subsidies for projects that destroyed residential slums, which allowed them to be replaced with commercial development. Thus there was a loophole that developers of nonresidential properties could exploit. In the Housing Act of 1954, Congress required communities receiving urban renewal funds to prepare a comprehensive community development plan, a provision that served the interests of professional planners who had “long been attempting to foist their expertise on sometimes reluctant city government” (Teaford, 2000, p. 445). It was the 1954 rendition of the act that signaled a greater emphasis on urban redevelopment and rehabilitation and called for urban renewal by name (Teaford, 2000, p. 444). While couched in terms of eliminating urban blight, and in part, intending to do that, the concept of urban renewal which had been present in a minor way in the 1949 Housing Act, was brought to the fore. This meant primarily driving poor people out of their homes, that is, black and minority removal, and building mostly commercial projects on the vacated premises, which are profitable to speculators, and have a higher tax revenue base (Posey, 2012, p. 48). Moreover, the 1959, and 1961 housing acts permitted for an ever-increasing amount of urban renewal funds to be spent for commercial projects and facilitated the urban renewal mechanism to expand colleges, universities, and hospitals in the central city (Teaford, 2000, p. 445).

Furthermore, local civic and political leaders, city planners, and businessmen usually controlled urban redevelopment planning (von Hoffman, 2009, p. 238). In New
York City, for instance, leaders of universities and hospitals worked with Robert Moses to acquire and develop sites for the institutions they represented (Schwartz, 1993; von Hoffman, 2009, p. 238). In Chicago, civic leaders and planners claimed part of the South Side ghetto for a hospital and technical institute by evacuating low-income Blacks and building two market-rate high-rise apartment complexes (Hirsch, 1983; Teaford, 1990, p. 492). A similar fate occurred in Atlanta. There, white political leaders and business men used urban redevelopment and highway plans to replace African American neighborhoods downtown with expressways, a sports stadium, and a civic center (Bayor, 1996; von Hoffman, 2009, p. 238). Yet to those displaced, the overall effects of urban renewal began to appear as a form of class and race warfare. Because of the frequency of government-cleared tracts in largely African American neighborhoods, many critics rebuked urban renewal as “Negro removal” (von Hoffman, 2000, p. 318).

Although African American neighborhoods suffered the brunt of displacement, other ethnic groups were affected by urban renewal as well; von Hoffman (2000) describes one of the most extreme cases in Boston. There, city officials cleared 48 acres and thousands of predominantly Italian-American residents from the city’s West End so that a private developer could build luxury housing (Gans, 1962; Hirsch, 1983; von Hoffman, 2000, p. 318). And in Los Angeles, officials cleared thousands of Mexican Americans from the Bunker Hill neighborhood next to downtown. Also, Chavez Ravine, a 315-acre tract originally planned for public housing, was given to the L.A. Dodgers to build a baseball stadium (Gans, 1962; Hines, 1982; von Hoffman, 2000, p. 318).
In the end, urban renewal was clearly intended to renew the city and provide affordable housing, yet also clear is the slow, but exacting ways in which it moved away from that premise. This was due to changes in policy as well as the debate over what exactly urban renewal meant and to whom. Further, to social welfare reformers, Title I had become a welfare program for the wealthy, a means of enriching private developers and downtown property owners. In their opinion, too often the victims of redevelopment were the poor, because slum clearance meant removing them for the benefit of the rich and powerful (Teaford, 2000, p. 446; Heathcott, 2008, p. 226).

Still, despite what unknowingly lay ahead, in the decade after World War II explains Teaford (1990), “these aging cities optimistically planned for a better future, and assumed that physical renovation of the city could erase the existing flaws in urban life” (p. 7). And although the 1950s and 1960s federal housing laws, redevelopment, and code enforcement were the key weapons in the fight to halt the spread of blight and slums, such physical improvements could do little to counteract such profound economic and social trends as declining industrial employment; racial discrimination; the shortage of mortgage and business credit in low-income neighborhoods; the ongoing departure of middle-class residents to the suburbs; and the consequent rise in urban poverty (Wilson, 1987; von Hoffman, 2008, p. 297).

By the 1960s and 1970s, private housing continued to be constructed, while public housing promises continued to flounder. American housing policy—to provide decent housing for every person—as embodied in the 1949 Housing Act, was being eclipsed. Further, by the early 1970s, the large-scale land clearance projects made
possible by Title I of the Housing Act of 1949 had been rejected. As cities continued to lose population and jobs, urban renewal projects proved unable to stem the spread of blight, the closing of downtown businesses, and the increasing concentration of poverty in inner-city neighborhoods (von Hoffman, 2000, p. 321). To be sure, regardless of the city, race was usually the major impediment to realizing the goals of urban renewal.

**Youngstown**

Youngstown mirrored what was occurring in many cities across the country. And whether it was through ill-planning, or financial or political motivations, urban renewal succeeded in dismantling many of Youngstown’s neighborhoods and neighborhood schools. During the late 1940s and throughout the 1950s, areas, which were considered slum areas, were cleared away to make way for new housing, many of which were low-income housing projects (Beverly, 2002, p. 54). African Americans were unable to fight any decisions about which neighborhoods were cleared away and where low-income housing projects would be built because they lacked the economic and political power to resist decisions made by city leaders. Additionally, because the African American community was desperate for adequate housing, they did not want to jeopardize the building of new housing projects (Bowers, 1998, Oral History).

Still resistance was fierce in attempts to keep White neighborhoods free from African Americans, and African Americans were often met with violence if they attempted to cross the line (Beverly, 2002, p. 57). Despite the threat of violence though, racial succession did occur. Yet as the African Americans slowly began to move into White areas of the city, Whites continued their migration to the suburbs. A combination
of perceived fears of decreased property values, and of African Americans bringing crime and vice with them, contributed to White movement to the growing suburbs (Beverly, 2002, p. 57) and was exacerbated by racism in realtor practices.

The housing shortage was amplified by the urban renewal and freeway projects of the 1950s and 1960s. Before these projects could begin, however, land had to be cleared and often included homes and entire neighborhoods, further increasing the housing shortage, especially for African Americans. This is because African American residential areas often had the oldest housing and the increased likelihood that substandard housing was located in those neighborhoods (Beverly, 2002, p. 58). For example, in Youngstown a neighborhood on the north side of town, nicknamed Monkey’s Nest, and its surrounding neighborhoods were cleared away in the 1950s and 1960s and were replaced with the freeway. Using race as a political strategy, African Americans were targeted by programs that sought to solve social problems with a physical solution by razing blighted neighborhoods. The African American community viewed it a bit differently referring to the razing of neighborhoods as “instant black removal” or “segregation by design” (Carter, 1985, Oral History).

A number of housing projects were built in Youngstown during the 1950s and 1960s in part in response to the ongoing housing shortage and to provide housing to the urban poor. Places like Victory, East Way Terrace, Plazaview, and Kimmel Brook housing projects were constructed and were all located on the east side of town which had been going through racial transition as ethnic whites moved out of the neighborhoods. Brier Hill housing project was built on the north side of town; thus all
low-income housing projects were built either on the north or east sides of the city and all in neighborhoods already undergoing racial transition. Youngstown, like other cities, built its projects through government support and concentrated their African American populations in designated areas (Beverly, 2002, p. 60).

**Residential Segregation and Federal and Local Policy**

Residential segregation, according to Jackman (1994) achieves an unprecedented physical separation of groups, maximizing the spatial distance between groups and radiating over many domains of social life as separate schools, shopping, places of employment, and recreational facilities form the existence of separate neighborhoods (p. 136). This can be seen by the deliberate actions and policies of both local and federal government.

Seemingly race has always been a factor in Youngstown. For example, in 1935 and 1940 the Home Owners Loan Corporation (HOLC), a federal government agency created by the Roosevelt administration, produced maps for cities all over the country that indicated the health of a city in terms of which parts of a city were still viable. In Youngstown the entire north side was deemed “Hazardous” while the upper south side was deemed “Still Desirable,” the lower south side was deemed “Definitely Declining” and contained only one section that was deemed “Hazardous” (Nelson, Winling, Marciano, & Connolly, n.d.). This is crucial for several reasons, first because the HOLC map based their assessments on the number of Blacks that resided in a particular tract and because those same areas also were deemed highly blighted in the 1963 study. For example, the north side was still mostly African American and also was the most heavily
affected by urban renewal. The small section previously mentioned on the city’s south side deemed “Hazardous” in 1940 by the Home Owners Loan Corporation was the Oak Hill area that in the 1963 *Neighborhood Analysis* report was no longer proposed “for use as a residential area.” It would seem then that these determinations were “pre-existing.” I had wondered how the 1963 study came to its conclusions, as some of the designations in the 1963 report seemed arbitrary.

**Suburbanization**

In Youngstown, as elsewhere, the lure of suburbia was powerful and promoted continued out-migration from the central cities. Consider that at the beginning of the 1960s approximately 33% of Americans lived in suburbs; and by 1970, more Americans lived in suburbia than in central cities (Posey, 2012, p. 42). The radical socio-economic transformation wrought large-scale changes in the balance of power between cities and their smaller outlying areas. It also changed the social, ethnic, and racial composition of American cities. So much so, that over time, suburbia in popular imagination became the embodiment of the White American Dream (Posey, 2012, p. 42).

For instance, a 1990 study, *Suburbanization of Ohio Metropolitan Areas, 1980-2000*, examined the extent of suburban residential growth that could occur in the 1990s and the consequent impact on the central Ohio cities of Youngstown, Akron, Cincinnati, Cleveland, Columbus, Dayton, and Toledo.

In the 1980s, new housing and household growth was closely related to employment growth with the weakest growth in Youngstown and Cleveland. Further they found in all metro areas, except Columbus, suburbs grew in population (out-migration),
while central cities lost population and were left with surplus and abandoned housing. Here again, Youngstown and Cleveland led the state in population loss and surplus housing in the 1980s. Suburbanization is supported by the state through road and highway improvements, home mortgage assistance for first-time home buyers, and school funding (Attoh et al., 1990, p. v).

The authors continue that suburbanization and the outward movement of population is a result of city factors that push people out as well as suburban factors that pull them out (Attoh et al., 1990, p. vi). Avoidance of city schools was a push factor in most cities where pushes such as poor schools and concern for safety are strong, central cities cannot expect movement to the suburbs to decrease, nor can they expect demand for new housing built in the city to grow appreciably (Attoh et al., 1990, p. vii). In part this is due to neither state nor federal policy support for the development of new housing in central cities (Attoh et al., 1990, p. 16).

Attoh et al. (1990) developed the concept of housing “filtering” which holds that most new housing gradually “filters” down on the scale of quality and value as it ages and is progressively occupied by people with less and less income. In Youngstown, the only new housing “stock” was public housing although some new housing units were built on the west and east side of the city in the 1950s.

Per the study, the pace at which this process moves during a period of time, and the extent of the impact on the central city depends on four variables: the number of new housing units built in the metro area; the number of housing units removed from the housing supply; the location of the new housing; and the change in the number of
households living in the city (Attoh et al., 1990, p. 2). For central cities, new housing development can be hindered by land availability; while vacant land may be growing due to demolitions, that land is not always easily developed because of its prior use, such as industry, or because it exists in small parcels owned by various parties, making redevelopment difficult.

Surplus housing is the number of vacant housing units above the normal number of vacancies. The surplus change in Youngstown in the 1980s was 3,538, or 8.4%; the housing surplus in the 1990s however, tripled to 9,741 or 25%. This can also be evidenced by the growth of suburban households in 1980 of nearly 7,000, and the loss of 3,000 households in the city. The decade of the 1990s saw an even more drastic city change, with the central city losing 23% of its households and 27% of its population (Attoh et al., 1990, p. 12).

**Effects on School Financing**

With regard to schools and school funding, in its present structure of funding, it favors communities where the real estate tax base grows through new construction including commercial and industrial properties. Further, “since state funding is produced by all tax payers, central city residents and residents of older inner suburbs are subsidizing the expansion of outer suburbs, the outward movement of population—and thereby are undermining their own communities” (Attoh et al., 1990, p. 16).

**Summary**

Clearly, as a result of deteriorating housing stock and subsequent loss of population, tax revenues, and lack of annexation, Youngstown undermined itself. For
Youngstown, as with many American urban centers, suburbanization in the 1960s decisively splintered the city. The changes in the balance of power manifested itself through the continuing shift of the retail base and the ongoing shift in population to surrounding townships and villages aggravated the balkanization of the city, resulting in declining property values and the diminution of the central business district downtown.

Conversely, while the city of Youngstown was losing its White population and businesses, outlying areas such as Boardman, Austintown, Canfield, and Poland gained in White ex-urban population and prosperity. And although the promised residential development from urban renewal and the promised commercial development from the construction of the interstate in the inner city never transpired, the suburbs profited tremendously. According to Gutfreund (2004), this was part of a larger trend of great spatial imbalances in growth and development outward, away from the central cities that occurred in the post-war era and was broadly reflective of national trends (p. 56). Indeed, some projects that were framed as efforts to “revitalize” the city accelerated the flow of people into the suburbs.

In sum, during the 1960s, Youngstown, like many other U.S. cities launched highway construction and urban renewal programs that targeted older residential areas. In a number of cases, the disappearance of aging neighborhoods adversely affected established institutions and businesses, including parochial and public schools (Welsh, 2009, p. 184).
The eventual and longstanding rifts that opened up between the city and the suburbs and the growing inequality between the inner city and outlying areas were heavily influenced and perhaps irrevocably, by rac[ism] (Posey, 2012, p. 59).

**Overarching Effects of Racial and Residential Segregation**

Since American education has historically been structured around neighborhood schools and since schools have traditionally been funded largely by local property taxes, schools and communities are inextricably linked. Just as parents considered schools to be “good” if they were in “good” neighborhoods, they considered neighborhoods to be “good” if they had “good” schools (Johnson, 2006, p. 44). However, as Mary Jackman (1994) notes, residential segregation “achieves an unprecedented physical separation of groups- it maximizes the spatial distance between the groups and it radiates over many domains of social life as separate schools, shopping, places of employment, and recreational facilities effortlessly form the existence of separate neighborhoods. Spatial segregation in neighborhoods thus spills over into all walks of life, creating de facto physical separation of the groups throughout social life” (p. 136). Similarly, spatial segregation played a fundamental role in defining the landscape of Youngstown and the location and demise of its neighborhood schools.

**Deindustrialization**

In *Beyond the Ruins* (2003), Cowie and Heathcott pointed out that, “deindustrialization is not a story of a single emblematic place, such as Flint or Youngstown, or a specific time period, such as the 1980s; it was a much broader, more fundamental historical transformation. What was labeled deindustrialization in the intense
political heat of the late 1970s and early 1980s turned out to be a more socially complicated, historically deep, geographically diverse and politically perplexing phenomenon than previously thought” (p. 2). And the social costs of deindustrialization persist over decades and generations. Jobs lost in the 1970s continue to affect communities and individuals today. Yet on the other hand, factories are still closing and industries are still downsizing, so deindustrialization continues to affect workers and their communities. Further, deindustrialization is largely controlled by corporations and as such, the economic shifts of the past 35 years are the direct result of decisions made by corporate and governmental leaders to pursue economic profit rather than the good of either communities or the environment (Russo & Linkon, 2008, p. 151).

Deindustrialization undermines the social fabric of communities, states, and the nation. The social costs of deindustrialization include loss of jobs, homes, and health care; reduction in the tax base, which in turn leads to cuts in necessary public services like police and fire protection; increases in crime both immediately and long term; decaying local landscapes; decline in nonprofits and cultural resources; and the loss of faith in institutions such as government, business, unions, churches, and traditional political organizations. In addition, dramatic hardships for workers and their families filter directly into communities; communities also lose their source of income: taxes. Cities rely on local sales, property and income taxes to provide various community services. Large-scale plant closings drastically reduce cities’ budgets and this is especially true for smaller cities where a single employer or industry dominates (Russo & Linkon, 2008, p. 155).
The Nation and Steel-Making

The U. S. steel industry did not just collapse in Youngstown. In 1977 alone, 21,940 permanent jobs had been lost and 19 plants closed in 8 states (Bruno, 1999, p. 10). The devastation was so complete that by 1982 monthly national employment in basic steel had dropped by more than 50% from its post World War II high of 571,000 employees. During the recession of 1982-1983 the nation’s steel mills were functioning at only 43.8% of capacity. However, that did not mean that steel companies were doing badly; throughout the 1970s the steel industry earned over $1 billion a year in after-tax profits (Bruno, 1999, p. 10). But because of antiquated equipment and cheaper production and wage costs overseas, the steel industry chose to disinvest in its mills and literally one-by-one, steel mills shut down all over the country.

Youngstown

Deindustrialization not only changed the industrial landscape, but also constrained the city’s tax base, property values, community services and schools. The overall effect of the steel mill closings on the Youngstown landscape was devastating. Whether workers remained unemployed or found new jobs that paid less, which was often the case, the mill closings led to significant declines in personal incomes, and as a result bankruptcies doubled between 1979 and 1980, to nearly 2000 claims (Linkon & Russo, 2002, p. 51). Further, as more and more houses stood empty and the real estate market declined, property values dropped precipitously. Whether because of abandonment or arson, dilapidated houses were torn down leaving city blocks barren and scarcely populated; not surprisingly, most of the abandoned property was in the city, in residential
neighborhoods that had been populated mostly by African Americans. In the long run, this would intensify racial divisions in the Youngstown area, which by the end of the century would be among the most segregated communities in the country (Linkon & Russo, 2002, p. 51).

Although the federal government initially agreed to help, promising large loans and grants once a feasible proposal could be found, federal officials became increasingly appalled by the competition among local factions and proposals. Ultimately, the valley’s inability to unite behind a single realistic approach to redevelopment contributed to the long string of unrealized proposals, most of which would have faced long odds anyway (Buss & Redburn, 1983, p. 29).

In their two-year study, Buss and Redburn (1983) suggest that the steel mill closing did not have the severe, immediate impact many people anticipated (p. 82). For instance, they claim that “few households felt any [immediate] financial hardship during the first year to 18 months since a combination of regular unemployment benefits, supplemental benefits, and added and extended benefits under the Federal Trade Adjustment Act (TAA), kept most workers’ incomes near the previous year’s level. However, they are careful acquiesce that although most workers were somewhat insulated from immediate financial hardship, it was not to minimize the shock of unexpected loss of seemingly secure employment (Buss & Redburn, 1983, p. 33).

The study contends that the two-year period following the shutdowns was very much like that preceding it. The study looked at the pattern of community change before and after 1978 and concluded that the short-run impact of the massive layoffs appeared
slight. Buss and Redburn (1983) attribute much of this as a function of the size of the community as well as of the coincidence that the closing occurred when the state and national economies were on an upswing (p. 82).

They do however acknowledge that the effects of the closing moved outward from those directly affected, to eventually and significantly affect the lives of virtually everyone in the community. As an example, the authors provided the following anonymous letter to the Editor:

The loss to the valley is impossible to define, for this decision will affect almost every aspect of life. Besides the 5000 families whose livelihood is cut off, railroaders, truckers, and others who served [in their mill] will be affected. Youngstown, Campbell, and Struthers, along with their schools, the county, the library and other institutions will lose millions of dollars in tax incomes, even the “bedroom” townships will be affected. (Buss & Redburn, 1983, p. 60)

Like many who have studied the shutdowns and the effects of deindustrialization, Buss and Redburn (1983) also conclude that “massive layoffs plant social and economic time bombs throughout the community which may detonate long afterwards. The effects of economic crisis thus have no obvious peak, but persist far longer in the form of heightened personal and structural vulnerabilities” (p. 86).

Without question, the long-term consequences of the steel mill closings, job loss and subsequent loss of population and therefore taxes, took its toll on Youngstown affecting the city on both micro- and macro-levels. Neighborhoods and homes deteriorated, and schools could not be maintained or were no longer needed to serve in
the same capacity they had when the city was thriving and populous. This can be evidenced in the following sections regarding the neighborhoods and neighborhood schools in Youngstown over a 45-year span.

**Neighborhood Conditions**

The importance of the 1963 *Neighborhood Analysis* report cannot be overstated. It not only defines blight, it locates it within each neighborhood of the city of Youngstown. Consistently the most blighted areas (with the exception of one) are overwhelmingly African American. In a subtly overt way, it gives the reader a sense of the racism that enveloped this highly segregated city, and a glimpse into the mindset of its city planners.

The City Planning Commission (CPC) initiated the study, which was prompted by the Housing Act of 1954, under the Program for Community Improvement as a prerequisite for federal renewal aid. The study’s purpose was to “delineate residential areas by neighborhoods; to determine the location, extent, and intensity of blight in each neighborhood; to analyze the neighborhood by condition and need; and to make recommendations for action to meet neighborhood needs such as code enforcements, public improvements, conservation efforts, reconditioning, clearance, and re-development” (CPC, 1963, p. i). Figure 1 shows the city of Youngstown in 1963 by census tracts and the designated areas for proposed redevelopment.

According to the guidelines of the Act, there were four federally-backed treatments that were possible and ranged from Clearance and Re-development which was designed to restore neighborhoods to long-term, sound condition, to the fourth criteria of Open Land Re-development which occurred mostly on the east side of the city (CPC,
Figure 1. Possible Renewal Treatment, Youngstown, Ohio. City Planning Commission, 1963
1963, pp. vi-vii). Other measures such as Preventative Conservation, which was designed to prevent blight before it occurred, and Strict Code Enforcement were the city’s responsibility. In actuality it seems as if there were few areas that were slated for actual clearance, but alternatively were recommended for Reconditioning, which was designed to “restore areas to a minimum condition of health and safety, rather than long-term renewal” (My emphasis) (CPC, 1963, p. vii). By outward appearances then, it would seem that the city had no real interest in saving those areas for any prolonged length of time.

The 1963 study extensively defines blight and its negative effects. For example, in order to qualify for federal grants and loans, an urban renewal area must have at least 20% of its buildings that exhibit one or more building deficiencies, and the area itself must contain at least two environmental deficiencies. The building deficiencies are defined as: deteriorating condition through lack of normal maintenance; inadequate, outdated, or unsafe plumbing, heating, or electrical facilities; and inadequate original construction or alterations. The environmental deficiencies include: overcrowding of structures on land; excessive dwelling unit density; detrimental land use conditions from nearby industry; and inadequate public utilities contributing to unsatisfactory living conditions (CPC, 1963, pp. 8-12).

According to the study, the primary goal of urban renewal was “to aid cities in redeveloping areas of blight or economic stagnation and to stimulate private investment in becoming an integral part of the redevelopment effort” through the use of land clearance and eminent domain (CPC, 1963, p. 7). However, because land clearance and
cost-write down to acquire pieces of property is always cost-prohibitive, exercising the power of eminent domain “allows the local government to acquire property at fair market price without gouging” (CPC, 1963, p. 7). Finally, the cost of clearing a blighted area, even with the power of eminent domain, may exceed the value of the site to private developers resulting in a loss. “Moreover, if land clearance is to be successful, the land must eventually be resold at whatever price is necessary to make private redevelopment profitable… additionally all or part of that loss might be recovered in the form of higher real estate taxes on the redeveloped property” (CPC, 1963, p. 7). Yet in the areas of the city I am about to describe, little to no redevelopment ever occurred, and thus no real estate taxes were ever collected. The result was ravaged neighborhoods, the loss of homes, and a fragmented sense of community.

**Neighborhood Focus in This Study**

My focus concentrated on the north and south sides of the city where most of the blight and subsequently urban renewal occurred. Located on the north side of the city, the Brier Hill (see Map 2) district consisted of two census tracts with a total population of 8,341 residents. It is located on the northern city limits, and contains the northern half of the Westlake Terrace public housing development (the African American section). The area contained six churches, four parks, and two schools. Both census tracts have average or above average non-white populations totaling 74%. The housing age and housing density overall was average as was the owner-occupancy rate. The study reported that the district was extensively blighted: of 99 blocks, 74 contained 20% that were in
violation of the Housing Ordinance. Of these, eight blocks were eligible for possible clearance (CPC, 1963, p. 25).

The University district on the north side was also greatly affected by urban renewal. The district consists of one full census tract and major parts of two others. The combined population of this district totals 8,603 residents. The area was basically the majority of the downtown and surrounding area including the University campus. There were nineteen churches, one park, and eight elementary schools located in the district. The southern section (White) of Westlake Terrace public housing development was located here. Yet the remainder of the area was nearly completely non-white. And although the housing age was well above average and housing unit densities were extremely high, owner occupancy was below average (CPC, 1963, p. 28). According to the study, much of the area was solidly and severely blighted with nearly 20 blocks that qualified for clearance.

The *Neighborhood Analysis* (1963) continued with its predictions of future possibilities for this area: “[since] it is unlikely that any clearance in this area would do much to alter the present conditions to an extent that it would encourage private investment in family housing . . . It is possible that the expanded University will encourage some new investment in offices, transient or faculty housing along its borders and that the present public housing project could be extended onto adjacent blighted land” (CPC, 1963, p. 29). It is difficult to believe or imagine that the expansion of the University was not premeditated when the city was configuring urban renewal plans for this particular area.
Sadly, similar predictions held true for a different part of the same district. The study wrote that “long-term conservation does not seem possible: this area contains at least nine contiguous blocks that should be cleared, four blocks of which are dilapidated” (p. 29). Further, the nearby industrial region, heavy traffic, and isolation from larger residential areas would discourage new investment in family housing. “On the other hand,” the study continues, “it is well located to the University and Downtown, and might, if possible, through clearance and redevelopment, to completely alter the present character of the neighborhood” (CPC, 1963, p. 29). Indeed that is exactly what occurred.

Parts of the south side of the city shared an almost identical fate. The Oak Hill district consisted of one full census tract and parts of three others, was 99% non-white, and contained two schools and two parks. The area contained above average housing age and housing density and owner occupancy is well below average at 37-53%. The area was heavily blighted and of 76 blocks, two would qualify for clearance and 36 for reconditioning or conservation (CPC, 1963, p. 72). Yet the study furthers that the socio-economic problems of this area outweigh its physical problems and the fact that because “it was isolated by heavy traffic and had a high percentage of internal commercial land use, militate against prolonging its use as a residential area” (CPC, 1963, p. 72).

The other area on the south side that was nearly decimated by the determinations of the study was the Warren district, which is adjacent to the Oak Hill district. The district consisted of three full census tracts and part of one other. Parts of the district were predominantly white, while other parts were moderately non-white. The district boasted
18 churches and seven schools. It was a residential area, but also had heavy commercial
development and traffic along three of its borders. House age and density were above
average, and owner occupancy was slightly above average. Ironically, one has to look at
the figures to glean that information, because the accompanying text downplays
ownership by stating “owner-occupancy is about average in all four census tracts except
one, where only 46% of housing units are occupied by owners” (CPC, 1963, p. 69).
According to the study’s recommendations, one census tract should not be reconditioned,
because of high housing density and age, heavy traffic on its three borders, and extensive
commercial development. Another tract was described as “not yet severely blighted yet
every aid should be given to existing property owners to help them maintain the
neighborhood” (CPC, 1963, p. 69). The last two tracts in the district were recommended
for renewal conservation.

Interestingly, two other neighborhoods on the south side of the city, which are
now heavily blighted, in 1963 were not. For instance, the Shady Run district contained
one full census tract and parts of three others. The area was predominantly residential, but
also had extensive commercial development. The district contained six schools, six parks,
and one church. The area was predominantly White and contained below average housing
age, an average housing density, and the owner occupancy rate was average or above.
However, the northern part of this district was solidly blighted; of 19 blocks, three were
recommended for clearance, and seven for reconditioning (CPC, 1963, p. 56).

The other south side neighborhood was the South Market district. It contained
three full census tracts and was mostly residential, but had extensive commercial
development. The district contained eleven churches and four schools. The area had an all white population, with below average housing age and average housing density. The area contained only one blighted block (CPC, 1963, p. 63). Figure 2 delineates these areas of the city by name.

*Figure 2. Youngstown City Planning Districts, 1963*
The predictions, data and figures from the 1963 *Neighborhood Analysis* only worsened as shown in the subsequent 1985 and 1995 studies for the city of Youngstown. For example, the 1985 *Youngstown Area Demographic Study* examined, among other things, population, housing, and demographic and economic changes in Youngstown, and compared them to state-wide averages. Demographically, the percentage of the African American population rose from 25.2% in 1970 to 33.3% in 1980, nearly all of whom lived in the city of Youngstown (Garchar, 1985, p. 2). And while the housing quality in Youngstown compared favorably with the state housing quality, housing values were substantially lower and vacancy rates nearly doubled between 1970 and 1980. According to the study, the slow pace of growth for Youngstown’s housing stock value “indicated that either Youngstown’s housing stock had deteriorated more rapidly than that of the state as a whole or that the housing market in Youngstown is depressed due to lack of demand” (Garchar, 1985, p. 23). And although Youngstown’s vacancy rate was lower than the state average in 1970, it was higher in 1980 (Garchar, 1985, p. 2.)

Additionally, the percentage of population below poverty increased between 1970 and 1980 with Youngstown’s rate at 18.2% nearly double the state average. Further, the study predicted that the statewide population would increase through to the year 2005, but that of Mahoning County and Youngstown was expected to decline (Garchar, 1985, p. 4). The loss of population in Youngstown between 1970 and 1980 was high: 1970 saw the population at 140,909 while 1980 saw only 115,436, a loss of 18% (Garchar, 1985, p. 5).
The racial composition of the city had also changed. For instance, in 1970 the city contained 74% (113,765) white residents and 25% (35,285) African Americans. By 1980, the city proper contained 64.4% (74,381) whites, while the African American population ratio increased to 38,481 or 33.3% (Garchar, 1985, p. 16). The study goes on to show that in 1970, owner-occupied homes numbered 12,700, but grew to 26,700 in 1980. Yet the number of vacancies and renter-occupied homes doubled from 10,500 in 1970 to 20,300 in 1980 for vacant homes and from 67 in 1970 to 128 in 1980 for renter-occupied homes (Garchar, 1985, p. 25).

Ten years later, the 1995 study Youngstown: State of the City delved into what was seemingly left of Youngstown. It analyzed in detail, the housing, population, poverty, crime and social services trends of the city. And although in 1980 Youngstown was still the largest municipality in Mahoning County with a population of 115,436, by 1990 the population had decreased to 95,732, a 17% loss (Crawford, 1995, p. 12). This study, like the others, agrees that the composition of the city had continued to change resulting in an older, poorer, and less diverse community. Accordingly, the number White city residents declined from 74,381 in 1980 to 56,777 in 1990, while the number of African Americans saw a decrease from 38,481 in 1980, to 36,487 in 1990, but still signified a nearly 5% increase in overall population (Crawford, 1995, p. 13).

Most telling, however, are Figures 3 and 4, which showed the segregated nature of the city. Figure 3 showed the areas where the concentration of African Americans resided: the eastern region of the east side and the lower south side in the Oak Hill and Warren neighborhoods, and the lower north side near the University. Conversely, Figure
4 showed the upper south side and the west side as over 95% White (Crawford, 1995, pp. 15-16).

*Figure 3. White population by Block Group, 1995*
Figure 4. Black population by Block Group, 1995
Using census data from the prior 20 years, the study showed the dramatic changes that occurred to the housing stock in Youngstown. In part, because of the older housing stock and “the lack of new housing construction in the city, any city resident who could afford to move up in housing status, was forced to leave the city; This continued out-migration only exacerbated the cycle of inner-city residential property devaluation” (Crawford, 1995, p. 28). The data showed that the total number of housing units had declined from 45,536 in 1970 to 40,805 in 1990, with a vacancy increase of 1,881 in 1970 to 3,780 in 1990. The study also suggested that in part, this was due to the city’s older housing stock, which lacked modern amenities, and the age of housing units, the majority (44%) of which were built prior to 1939 (Crawford, 1995, p. 29).

Additionally, owner-occupied housing had dropped by 4,172 units and affected both White and African American home ownership, 17.8% and 7.2% respectively. And while the total number of renters had declined from 13,891 in 1980, to 13,098 in 1990, the number of African American renters increased from 5,579 in 1980, to 6,323 in 1990 (Crawford, 1995, p. 32). Figures 5 and 6 (Crawford, 1995, pp. 34, 36) showed the areas in the city with the highest numbers of owner occupancy and renter-occupied neighborhoods. If compared to the previous maps that showed the concentration of races, the lower south side (Oak Hill and Warren) have the highest concentration of African Americans, the lowest percentage of owner occupancy, and the highest renter-occupied properties; while the west side and upper south side, which had the highest concentration of white population also had the highest percentage of owner-occupancy and lowest percentage of renter-occupied properties. Not surprisingly, the housing values city wide
Figure 5. Owner Housing Status by Census Tract, 1995
Figure 6. Renter Housing Status by Census Tract, 1995
show the west and upper south side neighborhoods having higher home values and the lower south side and the east side neighborhoods having lower housing values (Crawford, 1995, p. 40). Finally, an estimated total of 5,045 homes were demolished between 1980 and 1994, most of which occurred in the lower south side neighborhoods of the Oak Hill and Warren districts.

These studies paint a less than rosy picture for the city of Youngstown and depict a city in a continual downward spiral. That its schools would remain unaffected by the turmoil and deterioration would be a fallacy. Indeed, the schools were also caught amid the decline and for many of the same reasons: loss of population in enrollment, aging building stock, lack of financial resources, and residential segregation.

**School Conditions in Youngstown’s Neighborhoods**

Contrary to local belief, the loss of Youngstown’s city schools did not occur as a direct and immediate result of the closing of the steel mills. Seemingly, the phenomenon occurred gradually over time and in tandem with the city’s decline of population and decay of its neighborhoods.

For example, a 1952 study *Public Schools in Youngstown, Report No. 6* by Pace Associates, examined the “present and probable future of the city’s population to forecast the school needs for the next ten years” (p. 2). The variables the study used in measuring future school enrollment included population growth, birth rates, ethnic characteristics, length of attendance, migration, parochial schools, annexation, and the age of the school buildings.
Based on a ten-year outlook, the study estimated the population growth to remain stationary and the post-war birth rate boom was expected to decline. Within the ethnic category the study acknowledged that although the proportion of the “Negro” population had increased in the city, their larger than average families weren’t anticipated to affect school enrollment (Pace, 1952, p. 5).

The greatest dilemma facing city schools in 1952 appeared to be out-migration. According to the report, “the city was losing approximately 2,000 persons per year since 1932, with the majority being young families with school-age children … resulting in an increase of older age population, and causing a decrease in school enrollment” (Pace, 1952, p. 5). Citing the stability of its residential population, a decline in public school enrollment might possibly have indicated an increase in parochial school enrollment, although the study conceded this assumption rested on steady economic prosperity (Pace, 1952, p. 6). The study’s discussion to annex Boardman was moot because Boardman consistently and vehemently opposed annexation and thus it never occurred.

Additionally, the report indicated that the Youngstown city elementary school system had large, unused capacity in many of its schools. For instance, in 1950-1951, the elementary school enrollment amounted to 73% of the Youngstown’s elementary school capacity (Pace, 1952, p. 22), with a total of four schools operating on less than 50% capacity: one on the south side of town and three on the north side of town. The reason for the low enrollment, the report explained, was that because of the changing of residential patterns within the city, pupils were poorly distributed among the schools; schools buildings that once served heavily populated areas were now too large for the
area they were originally built to serve, in part because of out-migration (Pace, 1952, p. 22). Figure 7 delineates the location of the city’s elementary schools in 1952.

Figure 7. Primary School Districts, Youngstown City Schools, 1952
Besides the decline in population and enrollment, the age of a school building entered into play when considering the future of the school system. The report declared that the Youngstown city schools buildings are old: of the 29 schools, nine were 40 or more years old, ten were 30 to 39 years old and only ten were less than 30 years old (Pace, 1952, p. 6). Taking into account, according to the report, the useful life of a school building was 45 years, there were several factors, which must be weighed before deciding if a building should be razed or re-purposed. Included in these factors were the cost of rehabilitating or replacing heating, plumbing and wiring systems; making major architectural alterations or additions, and modernizing the facilities (Pace, 1952, p. 24).

The report offered recommendations for replacing school buildings after age 45 years (Pace, 1952, p. 25) in order: “to appraise the need for repairs or modernization, but also to study shifts in population and changing standards for school buildings and sites” (Pace, 1952, p. 25). In essence, the policy recommendations suggested the replacement schedules.

The recommendations included replacing two elementary schools on the south side of the city; Monroe elementary school in the Idora district because of its dense population and forecast of increased enrollment, and Garfield elementary school in the Oak Hill district. On the north side of the city, in the University/Smoky Hollow district, it was recommended that Madison elementary and McKinley elementary schools, because of their close proximity to each other should be combined into one school. Additionally, the North side elementary schools Tod, Butler, Jefferson, and Thorn Hill “will surely be affected by Urban Redevelopment . . . and definite recommendations
concerning their disposition should be within the scope of any redevelopment plans” (Pace, 1952, p. 35).

Another study, completed 37 years later, showed how the ravages of out-migration, loss of industry and local tax bases took its toll Youngstown’s neighborhood schools. *The Financial Health of Mahoning County’s Schools* (1989) found that the decline of the manufacturing industry drastically reduced assessed property values and reduced school enrollments. The study also found that increases in state revenues helped replace the loss of local revenues, but ultimately also increased dependence on state funding (Porter, 1989, p. 1).

Further, in the 1978-1979 school year the three largest districts, Youngstown, Boardman, and Austintown were responsible for educating 61% of all public school students in the county. In the 1987-1988 school year, 62% of students remained enrolled in these districts; and enrollment in the Youngstown City School District (YCSD) alone accounted for 35-37% of all enrollments in this period (Porter, 1989, p. 2).

For instance, in Youngstown and neighboring Lowellville and Struthers, the decline in real assessed value ranged between 34-40%. The declines in Youngstown, Campbell, and Struthers combined accounted for about 76% of the decline in the county’s property values. Ultimately on average, the decline of the tax base was more severe than the decline of the total number of students’ enrolled (Porter, 1989, p. 3).

Additionally, the change in the composition of the tax base implied that less of the tax burden was being shifted to individuals outside the county. The study explains that when a tax is imposed on businesses, the majority of the burden of the tax is passed on to
consumers (Porter, 1989, p. 4). In the case of the manufacturing industry like steel, most of the output would be sold to consumers outside the county, and as a result, some of the tax burden for local schools was shifted to those consumers. However, the decline in manufacturing meant that more of the tax burden was borne by local residents (Porter, 1989, p. 4).

The study reported that the 1980s saw a substantial increase in the amount of state funding received by the county schools. However, to qualify for state funding, districts must impose levies of at least 2 mills, supplying a formula for the minimum amount of revenue which must be raised locally (Porter, 1989, p. 9). With regard to Mahoning County’s school districts, in the 1987-1988 school year, Boardman received the least amount of funding per pupil at $1,357, while YCSD received the most state funding per student in that year at $2,481 (Porter, 1989, p. 9). Conversely federal revenues made up a fairly small part of total revenues, and they declined in importance over this decade, representing a decrease from $210 per pupil in the 1981-1982 school year to $138 in the 1987-1988 school year (Porter, 1989, p. 10).

The trend in the decline in local revenue and the subsequent increase in state funding increased the county’s dependence on state funding. For example, in the 1981-1982 school year, the districts received about 50% of their general fund from local resources, 44% from the state, and 6% from the federal government. In the 1987-1988 school year, only 36% came from local resources, 60% from the state, and 4% from the federal government (Porter, 1989, p. 10). Tellingly, in 1981, the YCSD received 42% of its general fund revenues from the state, but by 1987 it received 70% of its revenues from
the state (Porter, 1989, p. 10). Figure 8 indicated the changes in local, state, and federal revenue in the 1981-1982 and 1987-1988 school years.

Figure 8. Sources of revenue, 1981-1982
Lastly, the increased dependence on state funding has had lasting implications for Youngstown city schools. Foremost were the changes in the state’s policies toward education that would have a larger impact on local districts than it did at the beginning of the decade. For instance, the study concludes,

slower growth in state funding was likely to lead to more pronounced differences in services provided across districts; while faster growth in state spending would lead to an even greater dependence on state funds, and possible greater state involvement in managing schools. Indeed, it seems likely that reductions in the importance of local revenues would be followed by reductions in local autonomy. (Porter, 1989, p. 19)

Like the 1963 neighborhood study, the 1997 Youngstown City School District Neighborhood and Demographic Evaluation compiled information on the micro-level of each school service area and categorically analyzed qualities of each neighborhood on their condition, housing quality, housing demolitions, number of vacant lots, and owner-occupied housing units to assess a neighborhood’s sustainability (Finnerty, 1997, p. 2). Again, like the previous studies, this study opens with statistics of the grim reality of Youngstown’s population loss noting that in 1980 the city had 118,345 residents but by 1990 that figure decreased to 98,233, a 17% decline. Not surprisingly, the study also noted the increase in the elderly population; the significance of the growing elderly population is noteworthy due to its impact on school district demographics because elderly households were less likely to have school-age children, were more likely to be on fixed incomes, and much less likely to support tax increases (Finnerty, 1997, p. 5).
The neighborhood aspect of the evaluation included a physical survey of the Youngstown City School District (YCSD) at the city-block level and used census data on owner-occupancy housing as an indicator of possible neighborhood trends, while housing demolitions were used as a predictor of future population possibilities (Finnerty, 1997, p. 8). Further, a declining block group was designated for areas with recent demolitions, excessive vacant lots, boarded up homes, as well as extensively burned housing units (Finnerty, 1997, p. 9).

The 1997 study then assessed the socioeconomic conditions of the neighborhoods as an indicator of future trends in the city. “Historically,” the study notes “impoverished, deteriorating neighborhoods continue to decline and decay unless there is an intensive renovation effort, along with financial funding and public support to change and improve the neighborhood” (Finnerty, 1997, p. 12). However, Finnerty (1997) predicted that these neighborhoods would likely to continue to deteriorate, to decrease in population, thereby further eroding the tax base which in turn would decrease school funds, student population, and enrollment (p. 12). It should be noted that although Finnerty (1997) does not explicitly say it, throughout his report he predicts “negative population change”; yet the areas that he makes such predictions were already heavily populated with African Americans and the African American and minority population in those particular areas has increased in the years since his report.

With regard to school analysis, the study found that half of the fourteen elementary schools’ enrollment was lower than expected, e.g., 20% or more students were attending alternate, mostly parochial, schooling options (Finnerty, 1997, p. 20). The
remainder of the study analyzed elementary, junior and senior high schools individually, assessing past and present enrollment, block conditions, and housing stock quality to provide a ten-year future outlook of each area. For the purposes of my study, I have limited my focus to only the north and south side elementary schools because the impact of urban change affected those two sides of the city the hardest. Figure 9 shows the general block condition of the areas of the city the study researched.

To put in perspective, in the 1959-1960 school year the north and south sides of Youngstown had a total of 18 elementary schools; seven elementary schools on the north side and 11 elementary schools on the south side. In this 1997 evaluation, the number of elementary schools located on the north and south sides of the city totaled nine; two on the north side and seven on the south side. The study predicted negative futures for both north side schools, Harding elementary and King elementary. Harding school district, located on the upper part of the north side, had 493 students enrolled in 1980 and 443 in 1996, with a 2006 projected enrollment of 376 students. Parochial school enrollment for this area was 32%, indicating that almost one-third of the children eligible for enrollment in public school chose otherwise. The housing stock quality ranged from beyond repair to mostly maintained. The district also had a high percentage of elderly residents and the area was expected to have negative population change (Finnerty, 1997, p. 24).
Figure 9. City of Youngstown, General Condition of Block Group, 1996
The other remaining elementary school on the north side of the city, the King elementary school district, is located near the University and downtown area. Its 1980 enrollment was 370 and in 1996 it was 443, with the projected 2006 enrollment of 386 students, of which 15% chose parochial schools. Moreover, the housing stock was suffering and was deemed either maintained, sub-standard or beyond repair and multiple, recent demolitions had occurred. Like the Harding district, the area had a high percentage of elderly, and overall, the King district was expected to decline both in population and housing unit conditions (Finnerty, 1997, pp. 25-26).

The south side of Youngstown had both positive and negative future predictions of its elementary school district areas. Those areas that were deemed stable were Bunn, Jackson and Taft elementary schools which were all located on the upper south-southeast side of the city. Although Bunn’s enrollment was the lowest at 179 in 1980, and 244 in 1996, its 2006 projected enrollment was 207. This area also had the highest percentage of parochial school enrollment at 44%. There had been few demolitions and housing stock was rated good or well-maintained and as such the area was predicted to remain stable (Finnerty, 1997, p. 22).

Jackson elementary school area had an enrollment of 403 students in 1980, and in 1996 it had 376, with the projected 2006 enrollment of 319 students, with only 16% enrolled in parochial schools. There had been few demolitions in the district and the area remained stable with housing stock maintained. The study predicted that the area would probably not fluctuate much in total population (Finnerty, 1997, p. 25).
The enrollment for Taft elementary in 1980 was 271 students and in 1996 it was 391 with the projected enrollment for 2006 of 332, of which 27% of the students had chosen parochial schools. Additionally, while some demolitions have occurred, the housing stock was mostly maintained and the population was expected to remain stable (Finnerty, 1997, p. 28).

The other four schools on the south side, all located on the south-southwest side of the city, all projected a negative future according to the study. Oddly, these four schools like their north side counterparts, and unlike their south-southeast side counterparts, had the highest enrollment rates in Youngstown. For example, Bennett elementary had an enrollment of 600 students in 1980 and 518 in 1996, with a projected 2006 student enrollment of 440, and only 13% opted for parochial schools. The area’s housing stock quality ranged from maintained, to substandard to beyond repair and had multiple demolitions. Thus, “decreased housing stock and declining conditions indicated this area could have negative population fluctuations” (Finnerty, 1997, p. 21).

The Cleveland elementary school in the Warren district had an enrollment of 607 students in 1980 and 518 students in 1996 with a projected 2006 student enrollment of 402 with at least 20% of students having chosen parochial schools. Housing stock quality ranged from beyond repair to limited areas of maintained housing units. According to the study, the area had the potential for negative population changes due to declining neighborhood conditions (Finnerty, 1997, p. 23).

The Sheridan elementary school district had a student enrollment of 518 in 1980 and 700 students in 1996 with a projected 2006 enrollment of 594. It also had at least
20% of its students having chosen to attend parochial schools. The housing stock quality was maintained, but ranged from beyond repair to limited areas of good housing stock. It too, had the potential for negative population changes (Finnerty, 1997, p. 28).

The last school on the south-southwest side was Williamson elementary which is located in the Oak Hill area. In 1980 student enrollment was 266 and in 1996 it was 353, with a 2006 projected enrollment of 300; and 22% of the students attended parochial schools. Due to multiple demolitions, the housing stock had decreased in this area and most of the housing stock that had remained was substandard. Not surprisingly, the study predicts that Williamson would be expected to continue to decline in population and housing stock units (Finnerty, 1997, p. 30).

Per this particular study, the school system had two options: remain status quo or make changes. The study concluded with short- and long-term options to lower educational services to state minimum standards, close schools, and reduce spending and the number of employees (Finnerty, 1997, p. 51).

The long-term option utilized the rationale that because of old, inefficient and deteriorating school buildings most of the existing school buildings should be demolished to rebuild modernized ones. The other rationale in the long-term option was that because of demographic changes, decreasing population, increasing poverty, and devalued real estate, the school system would need to combine smaller districts into a few larger ones (Finnerty, 1997, p. 51).

These neighborhood demographic and school studies showed the progressive, negative trajectory of the city of Youngstown over a forty-five year span. One by one, the
studies reported the trends of depopulation, racial changes, and the demographic suffocation and stagnation of the city. That the City Planners never seemed to heed the warning signs of a decaying city is a tragic tale indeed.

**Summary of Overarching Themes Explaining Youngstown’s Neighborhood and Neighborhood School Decline**

Between 1940 and 1960 nearly 20,000 African Americans migrated to Youngstown to capitalize on the expansion of jobs at the steel mills during World War II; and in the 1950s to participate in America’s post-war prosperity. Their arrival, however, increased the already overcrowded living conditions in African American neighborhoods. To relieve urban overcrowding in the nation, Congress had enacted the U.S. Housing Act as early as 1937 to provide funds for slum clearance and the building of public housing. Residential segregation, discriminatory banking practices, housing policy, and public housing policy combined to serve as a perfect storm of a racial barrier to homeownership, mobility, and prosperity for African Americans.

As part of the larger urban renewal effort, Youngstown’s landscape was re-shaped by changes in transportation patterns, particularly due to the building of the interstate beltway. It was a 16-year project, which began in 1960 and completed in 1976, often displacing entire neighborhoods in its path, forcing relocation. For Whites, relocation provided the opportunity to sell homes with declining property values and move to the suburbs. For African Americans however, relocation to the suburbs was prohibited by racism, discriminatory lending practices, and housing policy and they were forced to remain in the older, crowded inner city neighborhoods.
During the first decade after World War II, many U.S. cities were concerned with rundown neighborhoods and opted for federally funded physical projects. Urban renewal, enacted by Congress in the Housing Acts of 1949 and 1954 as part of a comprehensive package, claimed “to provide a decent home and appropriate environment for every family.” A key goal of the package was the relocation of families due to either highway construction or the demolition of dilapidated housing. Yet this goal was hardly realized as local agencies saw this rule as a barrier to the possibility of profitable real estate ventures. This meant driving poor people, most of whom were either African American, or other minorities, out of their homes and using the vacant land to build profitable commercial projects or to expand colleges, universities, and hospitals in the central city. Further, as a political strategy, African Americans were targeted by programs that sought to solve social problems with a physical solution by razing neighborhoods. However, the promise and goals of urban renewal never materialized due to changes in policy and the debate over exactly what urban renewal meant and to whom.

With its newly built homes, schools, shopping malls, and ease of access, the enticement of the suburbs was compelling indeed. The suburbs also boasted a homogenous population, as African Americans were denied entrance. The suburbs not only created a radical socio-economic transformation, it also changed the social, ethnic, and racial composition of American cities. For Youngstown, as with many American urban centers, suburbanization in the 1960s decisively fragmented the city along racial lines.
Changing Demographics, Neighborhoods, and School Closings

To better comprehend how the loss of Youngstown’s schools occurred over time, this section analyzed and combined neighborhood analyses and school reports to produce a clearer understanding of that particular phenomenon.

This section is organized in a loose chronological fashion to show the decline of Youngstown’s neighborhoods and the subsequent effects on neighborhood schools. Additionally, this section, in accordance with the parameters of my study, focuses on the north and south side elementary schools as these two parts of the city were most affected by urban renewal, the building of the Interstate, and demographic, socio-economic and racial changes.

South Side

First, I will consider the difference between two South side districts, Warren and Oak Hill. The differences between these two districts was the racial composition of each area and the rate of owner-occupancy and family income, however, they were similar in that they both had high housing density, higher than average housing age, were both predominately residential, and both were heavily blighted. Both districts have had contentious history’s regarding race and blight dating back to the 1940s when the Home Owners Loan Corporation drew maps of the city and based their assessment on the number of Blacks that resided in a particular tract. HOLC deemed Oak Hill as “Hazardous” and the Warren district as “Definitely Declining” based on their racial composition (Nelson et al., Mapping inequality, n.d.). The HOLC designation of “Hazardous” and the CPC recommendation that the Oak Hill district no longer be used as
a residential area signaled a pre-determined, calculating and overt attempt to rid this particular area of African Americans.

By analyzing the changes that took place in Youngstown over a 45-year span, focusing specifically on its neighborhood schools, it is possible to assess how decline of the city’s tax revenues and housing quality alone negatively affected the neighborhoods and eventually over time, the neighborhood schools.

The first study, the 1952 Public Schools in Youngstown, Report No. 6 indicated that the Youngstown city elementary school system had large, unused capacity in many of the schools due to low student enrollment. For instance in the 1950-1951 school year, elementary enrollment amounted to 73% of Youngstown’s of the total elementary school capacity (Pace, 1952, p. 22). Out 11 elementary schools on this side of the city, two were recommended for replacement: Monroe and Garfield both located in the Oak Hill district (Pace, 1952, p. 31).

The 1952 study’s purpose was mainly to assess the conditions of the school buildings and predict future student enrollments in order to consider if all the school buildings were necessary to accommodate future student enrollment. The next study, produced 10 years later, focuses on neighborhood conditions as a means to assess the city, and also as a means to procure federal funds for urban renewal.

The 1963 Neighborhood Analysis of the south side indicated the Oak Hill district had two elementary schools; its racial composition was 99% non-white; with below average owner-occupancy and below average family income. The area was considered heavily blighted and the report recommended two of its 76 blocks should be cleared. The
analysis also suggested against prolonging continued residential use of the area, citing the area’s socio-economic problems, its isolation because of heavy traffic and the high percentage of internal commercial land use as a primary reason for this assessment (CPC, 1963, p. 69).

In 1963, the Warren district, which was adjacent to Oak Hill, had two elementary schools. However, its racial composition was mostly White; and had average owner-occupancy rates and above average family income. Although this area was extensively blighted, of the four census tracts located within the district, the report recommended one for reconditioning, and two were recommended for renewal conservation (CPC, 1963, p. 72). Reconditioning is defined as restoring an area to minimal health and safety versus long-term renewal. Renewal conservation on the other hand, is restoring an area to long-term sound condition without major clearance (CPC, 1963, p. vii).

Of the remaining south side neighborhoods in the 1963 report, the Shady Run district, which abuts the Warren district to the southeast, and the South Market district, which lies adjacent to Warren district to the south and Shady Run to the east, had a total of six elementary schools between them: three in the Shady Run district and three in the South Market district. Both districts had a predominately White population, and above average owner-occupancy and average family income. In the Shady Run district, the northern part is solidly blighted, with three blocks recommended for clearance while the South Market district contained only one blighted block (CPC, 1963, pp. 56, 63).
Nearly 35 years later, as circumstances in the city worsened, the 1997 Youngstown City School District Neighborhood and Demographic Evaluation sought to document the changes that were occurring in the city’s neighborhoods and their effect on neighborhood schools. On the south side of the city, of the seven remaining elementary schools, the three which were located on the upper south-southeast side Bennett, Paul C. Bunn, and Jackson were predicted to remain stable, based on the evaluation criteria: block group conditions, housing stock quality, housing demolition, excessive vacant lots, median household income, and owner-occupied housing units (Finnerty, 1997, p. 2). The neighborhood conditions of these school districts rated average or above average based on the evaluating criteria. The other four schools located on the south-southwest side of the city however, Cleveland, Sheridan, Taft, and Williamson projected a negative future based on declining neighborhood conditions, yet ironically had the highest enrollment rates in Youngstown. The neighborhoods surrounding these schools “had decreasing house stock, declining conditions and were prone to negative population fluctuations” of poor minorities or African Americans (Finnerty, 1997, p. 21).

These three distinct studies spanning a 45-year period show the declining socio-economic, demographic and neighborhood-level changes of the south and north sides of Youngstown and the subsequent effect on neighborhood schools. For instance, in 1952 the city had a total of 18 elementary schools: nine on the south side and nine on the north side. By 1997 however, there were only six elementary schools on the south side and two on the north side.
North Side

This section will focus on the north side of Youngstown paying particular attention to the Brier Hill and University districts, both of which were greatly impacted by urban renewal, the building of the Interstate and subsequent decline due to socio-economic, demographic and neighborhood-level changes.

The 1952 report indicated that the Youngstown city elementary school system had large, unused capacity in many of the schools due to low student enrollment. For instance in the 1950-1951 school year, elementary enrollment amounted to 73% of Youngstown’s elementary school capacity; three on the north side of the city were operating at 50% capacity (Pace, 1952, p. 22). Of the eight elementary schools on this side of the city, three were recommended for replacement: Madison, Jefferson, and McKinley (Pace, 1952, p. 31).

The 1963 Neighborhood Analysis of the north side indicated the Brier Hill district had two elementary schools. The area contained the northern half of the Westlake Terrace public housing developments (the African American section) with above average non-white populations totaling 74%, average owner-occupancy rates and average family income. The study reported that the district was extensively blighted: of 99 blocks, eight were eligible for clearance (CPC, 1963, p. 25). The study indicated that long-term renewal conservation did not seem feasible due to the areas socio-economic characteristics, but the district would be eligible for federally-aided clearance for the worst blocks (CPC, 1963, p.25).
The University district was adjacent to Brier Hill, and had three elementary schools. The area consisted of the majority of the downtown and the Youngstown State University campus. The southern section (White) of the Westlake Terrace public housing development was located here. Yet the remainder of the area was completely non-white with below average owner-occupancy and family income. According to the study, much of the area was solidly and severely blighted, with nearly 20 blocks that qualified for clearance (CPC, 1963, p. 28). Of particular interest in this district was the area known as Smoky Hollow, which was adjacent to the university. The majority of this area qualified for clearance because more than half of its housing was dilapidated. Further, according to the study, “since the area is well-located to the University and Downtown, both of which have elaborate renewal plans; and because of its relative isolation and small size, it might be possible, through clearance and redevelopment, to completely alter the present character of the neighborhood” (CPC, 1963, p. 29). Indeed, that is exactly what occurred.

The other two districts on the north side were the North Side district and Crab Creek. The North Side district was predominately White and had above average owner-occupancy and family income. This district had three elementary schools and according to the report, was considered one of the city’s best residential areas. The Crab Creek district was sparsely populated due to the close proximity to heavy industry and had no schools. The district was mostly non-white and had below average owner-occupancy and family income. Further, the area was extensively blighted but did not qualify for clearance. The report recommended “that it should not be public policy to prolong its use as a residential area. Strict code enforcement would maintain minimum
housing standards until condemnation and demolition or private renewal was feasible” (CPC, 1963, p. 37).

So it appears that during the urban renewal period in Youngstown, if the conditions were right, that is, if an area was extensively blighted, had below average owner-occupancy rates and below average family income, and more importantly, if a district’s population was majority non-white, the solution was to merely clear the area.

The 1997 Youngstown City School District Neighborhood and Demographic Study found that the population in the city was still declining, and the elderly population was increasing. This evaluation found that half of the 14 elementary schools’ enrollment was lower than expected, with 20% or more students attending alternate, mostly parochial, schooling options (Finnerty, 1997, p. 20). At the time of this study there were two remaining elementary schools located on the north side of the city Harding and King. The study predicted negative futures for both north side schools because of declining enrollment, declining housing stock quality, and overall declining neighborhood conditions. Like its south side counterpart, the study predicted negative population changes of poor minorities or African Americans (Finnerty, 1997, pp. 24-25).

In sum, although the north side and south side of Youngstown were significantly affected by suburbanization, urban renewal, the building of the Interstate, and deindustrialization, those sides of the city also experienced profound changes demographically and socio-economically. Figure 10 delineates the elementary schools’ neighborhood block conditions. Not surprisingly, the neighborhoods that were rated “Very Distressed” or “Distressed” also had a majority of African American populations,
the lowest housing stock quality, and the lowest median income. For instance, by 1997, the north side Harding and King elementary school districts were entirely populated by African Americans, had below average housing stock quality, and the median income for both districts was at or below $10,000 annually (Finnerty, 1997, p. 15). Further, over a 50-year period, the north side of the city lost nine of its elementary schools.

The south side of Youngstown experienced a similar trend. By 1997, the Williamson elementary school district was solidly populated by African Americans, while the Bennett elementary school district was predominately populated by African Americans, both school districts had below average housing stock quality, and the median income for both school districts was at or below $10,000 annually (Finnerty, 1997, p. 16). In that same 50-year period, the south side of the city lost six of its elementary schools.

**Changing Demographics and School Finances**

The next three studies looked at the changing demographics of Youngstown and its effect on school finances. The last study in particular, was the city’s response and assessment to nearly 20 years of population and tax revenue loss due to the steel mill shutdowns as well as the continued effects of the changing demographics and neighborhood-level conditions.

The 1985 *Youngstown Area Demographic Study* reported that the African American population had increased from 25.2% in 1970 to 33.3% in 1980; in 1970 Youngstown’s White population stood at 74% and the African American population stood at 25%. By 1980 the White population decreased to 64%, while the African
American population increased to 33%. Further, in that decade Youngstown had lost 25,000 of its residents. The city also experienced a doubling of vacancy rates, and slow growth of housing stock value (Garchar, p. 25).

In assessing the health of Youngstown’s schools, the 1989 *Financial Health of Mahoning County’s Schools*, the report found that the decline in manufacturing had greatly reduced property values and school enrollments and as such the city increasingly depended on state funding and noted the severity of the city’s declining tax base. For instance, in the 1980-1981 school year, 50% of school funding came from local resources and 44% of funding came from the state; in the 1987-1988 school year, however, only 36% of school funding came from local resources and 60% of funding came from the state.

The 1995 *State of the City* looked at the city’s changing population and demographics. The study reported a loss of nearly 20,000 city residents between 1980 and 1990; the White population declined by nearly 18,000, while the African American population increased by about 5% (Crawford, pp. 12-13). The study also looked at the segregated nature of the city: the concentration of African Americans on the east, the lower south side (Oak Hill and Warren districts), and the lower north side near Youngstown State University. Conversely, the upper south side and west side of the city were 95% White (Crawford, pp. 15-16). Turning to the state of housing within the city, the study found that the total number of housing units had declined from by 5000 between 1970 and 1990, owner-occupancy had decreased by nearly 4000, and housing vacancies doubled. The study continues that the lower south side, specifically the Oak
Hill and Warren districts had the highest concentration of African Americans, the lowest percentage of owner-occupancy and the highest renter properties. Additionally, an estimated 5000 homes were demolished between 1984 and 1990, most of which occurred in these two districts (Crawford, p.40).

Youngstown’s loss of manufacturing jobs and out-migration took its toll on the city’s tax revenues, and the changes brought by declining housing values and housing stock took its toll on the city’s neighborhoods, leaving them blighted and emptied of houses. The deliberate segregated nature of the city in its schools and residential patterns fractured a once thriving and integrated community. And the city’s schools, which were once vibrant, have barely survived the tragedy that has become Youngstown, Ohio.

**Comparison Maps**

In this section, I will describe the decline of Youngstown’s north and south side neighborhoods using socio-economic and demographic data accompanied by representative maps. This section is organized by first assessing the Home Owners Loan Corporation (HOLC) maps of the north and south sides of the city. Then I will turn to the 1963 proposed urban renewal recommendations for the north and south sides of Youngstown. Here I will compare the neighborhood assessments from 1963, the 1930-1940 HOLC appraisals and then show those same areas in 1997, nearly 70 years after the HOLC appraisals.

This analysis will show how, over time, the same areas of the city were consistently targeted by racially motivated urban and federal policies to keep African
Americans confined in particular locations and in what had become the most blighted, segregated, and impoverished areas of the city.

In the 1930s and 1940s, African American constituted only 8% of the city’s population and steadily increased over time. During the Second Great Migration, which occurred between 1940 and 1960, nearly 20,000 African Americans came to Youngstown to work in the steel mills, often settling on the northern and southern edges around the downtown area. Eventually, the African American population spread farther south of the city to the Oak Hill area and north of the city in the Brier Hill area. This pattern became entrenched due to other mitigating factors such as red-lining, discriminatory lending practices, and urban renewal policy.

The HOLC drew maps of most cities across the country to assess home values for lending purposes. HOLC devised a rating system that undervalued neighborhoods that were dense, mixed, or aging and then colored that area red- hence the term red-lining. Once designated as a red area, banks refused to loan money for a home there, which led to the creation of segregated mass suburbia (Jackson, 1985, p. 195).

When HOLC drew maps of Youngstown, their assessment of neighborhood areas was based on the number of Blacks that resided in a particular tract. Figure 10 shows the results of that map on the north and south sides of the city.

According to the accompanying description, the Oak Hill area, on the south side of the city had “small spots of Negroes settling all through the area thereby threatening the entire district” (Nelson et al., n. d., n. p.). This area also had a heavy portion of relief families and below average income and was rated Hazardous. The adjacent Warren
district had a small colored area in the center of the district and predicted that the colored area would spread out in north and easterly directions, and threatening the desirability of the surrounding area (Nelson et al., n. d., n. p.). This area too, had a large portion of relief families and below average income. The “small colored area” was rated as Hazardous. However, the remaining part of this area although the population was entirely White, had no relief families, average incomes, but was deemed Definitely Declining due to the presence of and close proximity to African Americans.

The South Market district, which was directly south of the Warren district, was rated as Still Desirable, was completely White residentially, and the median income was above average. The same held true for the Shady Run district, which was adjacent to both the Warren and South Market districts to the east.

On the north side, the HOLC map described the University district as having an “ever growing influx of Negroes and low class Jewish in the westerly end” (Nelson et al., n. d., n. p.). The area had several relief families and average median income and was rated Hazardous. The Brier Hill district, which was adjacent to the University district to the northwest, was often referred to as Monkey’s Nest, and was considered generally undesirable. At the time, this area had a slum elimination project in progress. The area also had a very large number of relief families and below average income (Nelson et al., n. d, n. p.).

Also on the north side of Youngstown was the North Side district which was adjacent to the Brier Hill district to the east and the University district to the north. In the southern and western parts of the district the population was entirely White, had few
relief families, and average to below average median incomes. According to the accompanying description, the “desirability [of this area] will undoubtedly decline due to the gradual enlargement of the blighted territory on the south and west borders” (Nelson et al., n. d., n. p.). The north and east part, however were experiencing an infiltration of middle class Jewish people. Further, the “westerly area suffers severely by the fact that children matriculate in a school that is attended by 30-40% colored” (Nelson, n. d., n. p.).

South Side

The 1963 urban renewal map (See Figure 11) delineated the areas of the city that were recommended for possible renewal in an effort to combat blighted areas of the city. For the purposes of my study, I focused on the south and north sides of Youngstown only.

The entire Oak Hill district on the south side was eligible for federally funded reconditioning, which is a program designed to restore areas to a condition of minimum health and safety rather than long-term renewal (CPC, 1963, p. vii). In 1930-1940 HOLC had predicted that the “small spots” of Negroes in this area would threaten the entire district. Indeed, by 1963 the district’s population was 99% African American, had below average median income, and had three elementary schools (CPC, 1963, p.72). By 1997, only one elementary school remained in the district and had continued declining enrollment. The area had the highest concentration of African Americans, below average median income, and declining housing stock quality (Finnerty, 1997, p. 24). (See Figures 12 and 13)
The assessment of the Warren district which is adjacent to Oak Hill was less drastic. Slightly over half of the district was recommended for federally-funded renewal conservation which is designed to restore areas to long-term sound condition without major clearance (CPC, 1963, p. vii). In 1930-1940 HOLC had predicted that the African American population in the center of the district would spread out to the north and east and would threaten the desirability of the area. By 1963 however, the district was still predominately White, had average median income, and had three elementary schools (CPC, 1963, p. 69). By 1997, only one elementary school remained in the district and also had continued declining enrollment. The area’s racial composition was predominately African American, had average to below average income, and housing stock quality ranged from beyond repair to limited areas of maintained housing units (Finnerty, 1997, p. 23).

The South Market district on the south side of the city, according to the 1963 study needed no renewal treatment. In 1963 as in 1930 and 1940, this area of Youngstown was a desirable neighborhood to live in (CPC, 1963, p. 63). Its residents were all White and had above average median income and had four elementary schools. By 1997, three elementary schools remained in the district, but the racial composition changed from entirely White to predominately African American, had average to below average median income, and housing stock quality ranged from maintained, to substandard, to beyond repair (Finnerty, 1997, p. 28).
North Side

The 1963 proposed urban renewal plan (See Figure 11) for the Brier Hill district on the north side of the city, recommended a major part of the area was eligible for federally-aided reconditioning (CPC, 1963, p. 25). In 1930-1940 HOLC indicated the area had an ever growing African American population with average to below average median income. By 1963, the area had a majority Black population, average median income, and two elementary schools. By 1997, no schools remained in the district.

According to the 1963 report the University district, whose northwest border abuts Brier Hill, (See Figures 12 and 13) was solidly and severely blighted and most of it qualified for clearance (CPC, 1963, p. 25). In 1930-1940 HOLC indicated the area was undesirable due to the large Black population and slums location here (Nelson et al., n. d., n. p.). By 1963, the district was entirely populated by African Americans, with below average median income, and had three elementary schools. By 1997, only one elementary school remained in the district and also had declining enrollment. The racial composition was entirely African American with below average median income, and housing stock quality was sub-standard, or beyond repair (Finnerty, 1997, p. 26).

The North Side district lies adjacent to the University district on the south, and by the Brier Hill district on the west. The 1963 plan for urban renewal in the North Side district recommended preventative conservation a program designed to prevent extensive blight before it occurs, to several of its blocks (CPC, 1963, p. 33). In 1930-1940 HOLC indicated the area will undoubtedly decline due to the gradual enlargement of blighted territory on the south and west borders. By 1963, had a nearly all White population,
average or above average median income, and had two elementary schools. By 1997, only one elementary school remained in the district, and had steadily declining enrollment. The racial composition was nearly three-quarters African American, with average or below average median income, and the housing stock quality ranged from mostly maintained to beyond repair (Finnerty, 1997, p. 24).

Clearly, the demographic and socio-economic conditions of Youngstown’s neighborhoods, particularly those on the north and south sides have changed dramatically. The patterns of racial and residential segregation were deliberate and exclusionary and perpetuated the decay of the city as evidenced by this analysis. The disappearance of neighborhoods and neighborhood schools was affected by a combination of destabilizing urban, social, political, and economic trends. Yet as Quick (2016) notes, “neighborhoods were, and continue to be, constructed through man-made political and economic decisions designed to propagate racial and social segregation”.

Figure 10. Home Owners Loan Association, 1930-1940
Figure 11. Proposed Urban Renewal Program, City Planning Commission, 1963
Figure 12. City of Youngstown, Percentage of Black Population, 1995
Several trends contributed to the changing urban landscape of Youngstown. Beginning in the late 1940s nearly 20,000 African Americans migrated to Youngstown to work in the steel industry. The migration worsened the already crowded living conditions within the city and created a shortage of housing in African American neighborhoods. The migration ultimately contributed to further residential segregation and White flight. Residential segregation was exacerbated by discriminatory real estate practices and the
disparity in access to mortgages thereby creating an invisible racial dividing line within
the city.

This dividing line was further aggravated by color-coded maps created by the
Home Owners Loan Corporation (HOLC) to assess credit worthiness and risk on
neighborhood and metropolitan areas. HOLC devised a rating system that undervalued
neighborhoods that were dense, mixed, or aging and rather than creating discrimination,
“applied existing notions of ethnic and racial worth to real estate appraising,” thus
blocking African Americans from accessing real estate capital leading to the creation of
segregated mass suburbia (Jackson, 1985, pp. 197-199). In Youngstown, this practice
contributed to pockets of concentrated African American neighborhoods in the inner city
and further residential segregation. Gradually, over time, this practice would help erode
the fabric of the city and would affect many domains of its social life including the
eventual loss of its neighborhood schools.

The building of the Interstate in the 1950s and 1960s also promoted White flight
and residential segregation. Whites could sell their homes and move to the suburbs, while
African Americans were forbidden to relocate in the suburbs and were forced to remain
in the city, usually in concentrated inner city neighborhoods. The 1950s and 1960s also
saw the ill-effects of urban renewal on the city’s neighborhoods. By focusing on physical
deterioration and clearance of the city’s older and mostly Black occupied neighborhoods,
it placed a severe strain on the already tenuous racial balance in urban housing. By the
mid-1960s redevelopment and code enforcement were the key devices in halting the
spread of blight, but by this time there was little that was done to counteract the profound
economic and social trends of declining industrial employment, racial discrimination, White flight, and urban poverty.

Suburbanization in the 1960s decisively splintered Youngstown. The radical socio-economic transformation wrought large-scale changes in the balance of power manifesting itself through the continuing shift of the retail base and the ongoing shift in population to surrounding townships aggravated the balkanization of the city, resulting in declining property values and the diminution of the central business district downtown.

The consequences of deindustrialization and the 1977 steel mill closings not only severely altered the industrial landscape, but also further constrained the city’s tax base, property values, community services and schools. The long-reaching effects filtered down to virtually everyone in the community. The resulting job loss and subsequent loss of population affected the city on every level: tax revenues decreased, neighborhoods and homes deteriorated, and schools could no longer be maintained or were no longer needed to serve in the same capacity.

Deindustrialization, which I initially thought of as a “phase” turned out to be a more socially complicated, historically deep, geographically diverse and politically perplexing phenomenon than previously thought (Cowie & Heathcott, 2003, p. 2). The economic shifts of the past 35 years are the direct result of decisions made by corporate and governmental leaders to pursue economic profit rather than the good of the community. Lastly, the social costs of deindustrialization persist over decades and generations, affecting job loss, homes, and the reduction of a community’s tax base. In
Youngstown, this culminated in significant declines in personal incomes, abandonment of homes, loss of population and deteriorating neighborhoods.

Over a 45-year span, numerous studies were conducted to assess the conditions of Youngstown’s neighborhoods and schools for various reasons. Although each report revealed a city in slow decline (even before the steel mill closings), the city politicians seemingly chose not to heed the warnings offered. Thus, the cumulative effects of their disregard left the neighborhoods fractured and a once thriving school district nearly in ruins.

Unfortunately, Youngstown’s decline has continued. Between the 1980s and 2000s, the city lost nearly 60,000 residents, its tax base dropped precipitously, its housing vacancy rate was one of the highest in the state, its school system nearly in shambles and the number of school buildings dwindled to a handful. By the mid-1990s, Youngstown’s African American community had become the poorest, hyper-concentrated Black population in the nation residing in the most blighted and segregated parts of the city.
CHAPTER V
DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

This chapter presents a summary of this study and important conclusions derived from the data presented in Chapter 4. It also provides a discussion of the implications of urban renewal. The purpose of this study was to describe how the changes that occurred in the city of Youngstown in the process of deindustrialization, suburbanization, and subject to federal, social, and educational policy efforts in order to identify specific phenomena that had an impact on the decline of the city’s neighborhood schools. From a historical perspective, this study explored how post-war social, political, demographic, and economic factors exacerbated the city’s problems within its neighborhoods and eventually the schools located within them.

Applying a socio-historical analysis, my overarching question was what specific phenomena, over time, influenced the dismantling of Youngstown’s neighborhood schools? In the 1950s for example, the city boasted 60 schools to serve its nearly 170,000 residents, yet by 2000 the city had only 21 schools for its 80,000 residents. Clearly something had transpired to elicit such loss. In a historical context then I looked for answers to the following questions: How did these changes evolve? When did these changes take place? Are there similarities to other processes in other cities? What are the future implications for prospective deindustrialized cities and their schools?

This study analyzed broad socio-historical phenomena and their effects on Youngstown, Ohio’s neighborhood schools by considering the current and countercurrents of present and past events, with the hope of discerning patterns that tie
them all together. At its core, historical research deals with the meaning and interpretation of events (Leedy & Ormrod, 2005). This study engaged in an active process of interpretation of the phenomena in the case of Youngstown. This particular method was chosen because it aimed to interpret real events and circumstances through documents; to understand the contextual influences on actions and/or decisions; to understand the processes by which these took place; and to understand the relationship between particular phenomena and their wider social environments (Schram, 2006, p. 37).

**Discussion: Major Findings in the Context of Relevant Literature**

The organization of this section reflects a loose, yet intertwined timeline of the phenomena that occurred in Youngstown between the years 1946 and 1997. And although some of the phenomena intersected in their timing, in this section they are treated as distinct and separate phenomena. First I will discuss the findings concerning the Second Great Migration then move to discuss the finding regarding the building of the Interstate, urban renewal, suburbanization, deindustrialization, and finally discussing the findings on neighborhoods and neighborhood school conditions in Youngstown.

**Second Great Migration**

Wilson (2012) and Beverly (2002) while including highways and corporate flight in their explanation of suburbanization simultaneously extended it to include the Second Great Migration of African Americans from the South to the North and Midwest as a factor of suburbanization. The Second Great Migration (in-migration) lasted from 1940 through 1970 and had a profound impact on central cities in the North (Wilson, 2012, p.
As the Black population grew in these cities, it created a greater demand for housing and mounted pressures in White communities to keep Blacks out. Ultimately Whites moved farther out to the periphery; whereas, because of discriminatory housing and banking policies, African Americans were forced to remain in the declining central city.

The Second Great Migration of African Americans greatly affected the spatial schematics of Youngstown. In the 1940s and 1950s nearly 20,000 African Americans migrated to the city and worsened the post-war housing shortage, as housing was already limited for African Americans. Segregation practices and discriminatory housing policy severely limited their purchasing power and their movement to certain areas of the city. The same FHA policies also played a key role in fueling the White exodus from the city (Welsh, 2009, p. 335).

The Interstate

And although Bluestone and Harrison (1982) and Cowie and Heathcott (2003) discussed the impact the automobile had on the steel-making industry, it was Jackson (1985), Beauregard (2006), Mohl (2002), and Mieszkowski and Mills (1993) that deliberated on the automobile’s immense effects on transportation patterns in cities, the building of the Interstate, as causal factors of suburbanization. And while the building of the Interstate connected central cities to the suburbs and increased the size of the urban area, it also caused a decrease in cities’ residential density while increasing the density in suburban locations (Mieszkowski & Mills, 1993, p. 136). Last, the majority of authors and researchers cite the building of the Interstate system as one of the most significant
factors in the changing of America’s city landscape and either claim or allude to the fact that the building of the highway system was a maligned attempt at urban renewal and was often used as a method of displacing primarily African Americans (Gelfand, 1975; Gutfreund, 2004; Hayden, 2003; Mohl, 2002; Rose, 1979).

Part of the national interstate highway development program, Youngstown’s 16-year interstate construction project was completed in 1976. The project destroyed several old neighborhoods, mostly African American, on the north and south sides of the city, took several churches and schools as well, and forced many families to relocate. For Whites, this offered an opportunity to sell homes, often with declining property values, and move closer to or directly to the suburbs. Yet for African American residents, relocation to the suburbs was prohibited, and instead they were forced to remain in the central city, in concentrated inner city neighborhoods, mostly on the lower north, south, and east sides of Youngstown.

Urban Renewal

Nationally, after World War II, American central cities were facing a myriad of problems, one of which was the housing shortage. A large percentage of available housing stock was rated as deficient and/or deteriorating and 15-20% was rated as dilapidated. The Housing Act of 1949 stressed urban redevelopment through slum clearance and residential redevelopment. The Act was described as a remedy to provide a decent home to every American family (Lang & Sohmer, 2000, p. 290).

The Housing Act of 1954 however, initiated the policy of “urban renewal” rather than redevelopment, and subsequently stressed enforcement of building codes and
rehabilitation of substandard housing rather than clearance. And unlike its predecessor, the 1954 Act permitted 10% of redevelopment projects for non-residential construction. This particular element expanded with each successive housing act, thus allowing for redevelopment schemes in demolishing properties in industrial areas and inner-city ghettos to build highways, civic centers, and commercial developments, with little to no thought given to the lives or homes of those dislocated by such projects. Furthermore, local White elites usually controlled urban redevelopment planning. In cities such as New York and Atlanta (von Hoffman, 2009, p.238), Chicago (Teaford, 1990, p. 492), Boston and Los Angeles (von Hoffman, 2000, p. 318), where slums and African American neighborhoods were cleared for universities, hospital, expensive high-rise apartment complexes, expressways, sports stadiums, and civic centers were built in their stead. In Youngstown those developments included expansion of the Southside Hospital on the south side of the city; and Youngstown State University campus and St. Elizabeth Hospital on the north side of the city.

In the end, urban renewal was clearly intended to renew the central city and provide affordable housing, but legislative loopholes in federal policy changed its original premise of addressing the problem of slums and blighted neighborhoods through residential redevelopment. These federal loopholes permitted 10% of redevelopment projects for nonresidential construction. As a result, properties were demolished in industrial areas and inner-city ghettos to build highways, civic centers and commercial developments (von Hoffman, 2000, p. 313). Changes in policy, and differing ideas and skepticism on the intention behind urban renewal unleashed a plethora of criticism,
especially from social welfare reformers who saw it as a get-rich scheme for private developers. The reformers accused the private developers of being hapless in their attitude toward those it most affected, namely the poor and minorities (von Hoffman, 2008).

Yet despite the efforts of urban redevelopment and renewal to stem the spread of blight and slums, such physical improvements did little to mitigate the profound economic and social trends such as declining industrial employment, racial discrimination, discriminatory lending practices, the continued movement of the middle-class to the suburbs, and the subsequent rise of urban poverty.

According to Massey (2015) and Wilson (1996) the 1968 Fair Housing Act expressly banned many of the public actions and private practices that had evolved over the years to deny Black access to housing. Despite the passage of the 1968 Act the housing market did not magically open up to African Americans as the structures and processes that created the Black ghetto were well institutionalized in private practice and public policy Massey, 2015; Denton, 1995). Hence, the rapid expansion of Black neighborhoods in the late 1960s and throughout the 1970s inevitably threatened districts where the White elites held place-bound investments and who for self-protection turned to urban renewal and public housing programs to block the expansion of black settlement toward imperiled zones. This was achieved by razing Black neighborhoods for redevelopment under the guise of urban renewal; by constructing public housing, a federally funded institution, in other Black neighborhoods, thereby dramatically increasing the concentration of Black poverty; and by building interstates and
expressways that further destroyed (mostly Black) neighborhoods and separating them from traditionally White neighborhoods (Massey, 2015; Wilson, 1996; Glaeser & Vigdor, 2012).

Youngstown, like many other cities across the nation, reflected these national trends. During the 1940s and 1950s slums were cleared and low-income housing projects were built mostly for left-behind African Americans who were virtually powerless to resist the city leaders’ decisions, hence confining them to select areas within the city, while Whites continued to migrate out of the city.

The housing shortage that was precipitated by urban redevelopment and slum clearance worsened in the 1950s and 1960s due to urban renewal and land clearance for freeway projects. The areas of the city most affected by these projects often housed the poor and African Americans who were confined to live in areas with the oldest or more substandard housing and who had no voice in city government. As such, in Youngstown, razing blighted neighborhoods was used as a political strategy to solve social problems of race and poverty.

And while the underlying premise of urban renewal “to provide a decent home for every American family” was an ambitious and lofty goal, it also contributed to the dispersal and decline of Youngstown’s neighborhoods and schools through ill-planning and execution, and financial and political motivations. Furthermore, urban renewal’s strict focus on physical deterioration and clearance obscured the underlying sources of urban distress: poverty, lack of education, and discrimination (Gelfand, 1975, p. 215).
Racial and Residential Segregation and Urban Renewal

Racial segregation was the result of deliberate actions taken by Whites in the late 19th and early 20th century to isolate African Americans spatially and thus marginalize them socially, economically, and politically (Massey, 2015). Beginning in the 1930’s, federal regulations disfavored the extension of mortgage credit to homeowners in mixed-race neighborhoods and utilized methods to ensure African American immobility such as restrictive covenants, which prohibited integration in specific areas (Glaeser & Vigdor, 2012). Similar to the previous mechanics of segregation, racially-based mass suburbanization in the post World War II period was intended to insulate movement of African Americans to the suburbs and was substantially promoted by federal policies.

Through loan programs first by the Federal Housing Administration and then the Veterans Administration, home ownership became affordable for White Americans (Massey, 2015; Jackson, 1985). Yet loans were not extended to African Americans, thus ensuring their stagnation to the central city. Using a system of map coding referred to as red-lining, neighborhoods were categorized according to their creditworthiness. Neighborhoods that were Black or perceived to be in danger of becoming Black were automatically colored red and cut off for credit (Massey, 2015; Jackson, 1985). This practice continued into the late 1960s until the passing of the 1968 Fair Housing Act which expressly banned many of the public actions and private practices that through the years had become institutionalized to deny Black’s access to housing (Massey, 2015; Wilson, 1996).
Fortified by federal, economic, and social policy, African American’s suppression of movement manifested in segregated neighborhoods (Quick, 2016). Further, urban renewal policy and the subsequent building of the Interstate under that policy were designed to promote White flight to the suburbs and further racial segregation in the central city (Coates, 2014; Rothstein, 2015). In Youngstown, racial gerrymandering of neighborhoods and schools left the city systematically segregated (Alexander v Youngstown Bd. of Ed., 1978).

Youngstown mirrored what was occurring in many cities across the country. Whether it was through ill-planning, or financial or political manipulations, urban renewal succeeded in dismantling many of Youngstown’s neighborhoods and neighborhood schools.

The housing shortage in Youngstown too was amplified by the urban renewal and freeway projects of the 1950s and 1960s. Before these projects could begin, however, land had to be cleared and often included homes and entire neighborhoods, further increasing the housing shortage, especially for African Americans. This same phenomenon played out in cities across the country. It occurred in Atlanta (Bayor, 1996; von Hoffman, 2009, p. 238), in Oakland, California, St. Louis, Missouri, Richmond, Virginia, and Birmingham, Alabama (von Hoffman, 2009, p. 238; Heathcott, 2008). Few cities across the country were left unscathed. The building of the Interstate influenced not only the demise of the centrality of the downtown, but it disrupted communities, and fragmented neighborhoods and the schools located in them.
In Youngstown during the 1950s and 1960s a number of housing projects were built in part in response to the ongoing housing shortage and to provide housing to the urban poor on the east and north sides of the city both of which were undergoing racial transition.

In sum, during the 1960s, Youngstown, like many other U.S. cities launched highway construction and urban renewal programs that targeted older residential areas, and effectively contributed to the disappearance of old, and primarily Black neighborhoods. African Americans were targeted by programs that sought to solve social problems with a physical solution by razing blighted neighborhoods.

**Suburbanization**

The most basic definition of suburbanization is the growth of areas on the fringes of cities (Jackson, 1995). The consequences of suburbanization usually result in the depopulation of central cities, urban decay, and a concentration of lower-income residents in the inner city (Jackson, 1995; Beauregard, 2006).

The growth of the suburbs was a part of a larger national trend in growth and development outward away from the central cities that occurred in the post-World War II era (Gutfreund, 2004). Many factors contributed to the draw of the suburbs: the opportunity to have more land, to escape the crowded city, to escape the perceived danger of the city, the opportunity for better schools, and the ability to dodge the growing minority population of the central city. However, the building of the Interstate, combined with central city problems such as high taxes, low quality public schools and government services, racial tensions, crime, and traffic congestion led affluent central city residents to
migrate to the suburbs, which led to the further deterioration of the quality of life and fiscal situations of the central city and further induced out-migration to the suburbs (Mieszkowski & Mills, 1993, p. 137).

In Youngstown, residential flight took an exacting toll on the city; the loss of population, subsequent loss of tax revenue, and the city’s failed annexation attempts ultimately splintered the city. As residents fled to the suburbs, eventually businesses and churches followed. Suburbanization then, left the city with a population of growing poverty, a disproportionate representation of African Americans and declining property values in high-density sections of the city. Further, discriminatory housing policy ensured that African Americans could not move to the suburbs, leaving that opportunity to Whites only. This illustrates the continuous power struggle between the two groups and the ability of Whites to capitalize on their economic and political power.

**Deindustrialization**

Economists Bluestone and Harrison (1982) wrote their seminal work in an effort to explain the phenomenon that was occurring country-wide, but particularly in the industrial Midwest. In essence, deindustrialization is the widespread disinvestment in basic industry, such as manufacturing. The most dramatic method of disinvestment is for management to completely shut down a site and its operations (p. 7). This method has the severest consequences, especially if a shut down occurs in a small community where few, if any other jobs or industries exist. The multiplier effects of deindustrialization go beyond the obvious job and income loss and can affect all aspects of a community and in some cases those effects can become permanent (p. 67).
For the purposes of this study, deindustrialization focuses on the loss of employment due to downsizing or the closing of a facility or industry. But as Cowie and Heathcott (2003) posit, it was a much broader, more fundamental historical transformation (p.2). The social costs persist over decades and generations and undermine the social fabric of communities. The social costs of deindustrialization include loss of jobs, homes, health care, and ultimately the reduction of the tax base which in turn leads to cuts in public services, like police, fire protection, and education. In its wake, deindustrialization often leaves a decaying physical landscape as well.

The steel mill shutdowns in Youngstown are widely documented and can be found in most of the deindustrialization literature. It has been noted that when the Lykes Corporation purchased Youngstown Sheet and Tube, it did so to expand its non-steel operations. Essentially by not investing capital needed to renovate the steel mills, it pursued a strategy of planned disinvestment (Bluestone & Harrison, 1982; Buss & Redburn, 1983). Thus, the CEOs and financiers of the Lykes Corporation bought the Youngstown Sheet and Tube steel mills to control the resources it gained from the acquisition for their own profit.

The steel industry did not collapse solely in Youngstown. For instance, in one year alone, nearly 22,000 permanent jobs were lost and 19 plants closed in eight separate states across the country. By 1992, monthly national employment in basic steel had dropped by more than 50%; by the following year, the nation’s steel mills were functioning at only 43.8% of their capacity.
The steel mill shutdowns ravaged Youngstown’s industrial landscape, and led to significant losses of jobs and incomes and eventually affected property values, tax revenues and nearly every business and individual. In the aftermath Youngstown was left a shadow of its former self and a highly vulnerable city.

Neighborhoods

The combined, long-term effects of the Second Great migration, suburbanization, urban renewal, the building of the Interstate, and deindustrialization had profound effects on the city of Youngstown. The resultant changing socio-economic and residential and racial patterns altered the landscape of Youngstown’s neighborhoods and neighborhood schools.

The rise of the steel industry in Youngstown in the early 1900s brought an influx of immigrants to work at the steel mills. At that time there were 45,000 residents in the city. By the 1930s, the population had burgeoned to 170,000. Due to limited modes of transportation, steel workers lived in neighborhoods close to the mills. Immigrants from the same country of origin often settled near each other in a neighborhood because they shared a common language and customs. As those immigrants obtained stable incomes, they would often move to newer neighborhoods. As a result, the ethnic mix of the neighborhoods, along with the names and boundaries, were altered over time (Blue et al., 1995, p. 37).

The Second Great Migration began in the 1940s bringing nearly 20,000 African Americans to Youngstown, further dichotomizing the city’s neighborhoods and contributed to White flight. As a consequence, Youngstown’s population dropped while
the metropolitan area continued to grow. And as Whites moved out, African Americans moved in. The population shift was reinforced by the development of two public housing developments bordering Brier Hill on the north side of the city. As Youngstown’s African American population grew, and as Puerto Ricans began to arrive in the 1950s, White families fled to the new suburbs, revising some patterns of ethnic neighborhoods (Linkon & Russo, 2002, p. 42). Yet while neighborhoods became more ethnically mixed, White working-class enclaves broke down and once racially integrated neighborhoods became more segregated (Bruno, 1999, p. 34).

Urban renewal, however, further changed the landscape and neighborhoods, just as it had done in other cities across the country. Similar to Youngstown, civic leaders and planners, political leaders and businessmen in cities such as New York, Chicago, Atlanta, and Boston controlled urban redevelopment planning to transform their central business districts to build hospitals, expand universities, sports stadiums, and expressways. These projects were completed by evacuating African American neighborhoods in inner-city ghettos and essentially constricted African Americans to a confined area of the city (von Hoffman, 2009). These projects not only destroyed the homes in neighborhoods, but also churches, community centers, and schools located within them.

Deindustrialization also affected Youngstown’s neighborhoods. The loss of steel manufacturing, its primary industry, also meant a loss of jobs, which in turn led to a loss of local tax revenues and declining housing stock value which proved detrimental to the city’s neighborhoods and eventually its neighborhood schools. Deindustrialization also produced similar outcomes in many cities across the U.S., but primarily affected the
industrial Midwest. Thus, it is logical to theorize that in similar cities too, neighborhoods and neighborhood schools were negatively impacted.

**Loss of Neighborhood Schools**

Contrary to local belief, the loss of Youngstown’s neighborhood schools did not occur as a direct and immediate loss of the steel industry. Seemingly, the phenomenon occurred gradually over time and in tandem with the city’s population decline and the decay of its neighborhoods.

In the 1950s although the Youngstown schools were experiencing lower enrollment, the residential population was stable and the steel industry was booming. In all the city had a total of 32 neighborhood elementary schools, 12 of which were located on the south side of the city, and seven were located on the north side of the city.

But by the mid-1960s, early effects of suburbanization, urban renewal and the building of the Interstate had begun to alter the residential and racial patterns of the city and its neighborhoods and neighborhood schools. Many of the school buildings had become nearly antiquated and were considered for demolition or reclamation for other uses. Further, pockets of blighted neighborhood blocks had become a concern for the city. In this decade, although there was a continuous stream of population loss to the suburbs, Youngstown’s population was still deemed stable, as was the steel industry. At that time the city had 29 neighborhood elementary schools, 12 on the south side of the city and five on the north side of the city. The two schools on the north side were demolished due to the building of the Interstate.
By 1985, seven years after the steel mill shutdowns, circumstances worsened as the local economy faltered and the city experienced a population loss of nearly 26,000 residents its housing values dropped and vacancy rates nearly doubled. Demographically the city was changing and saw a significant rise of the African American population within the city. These socio-economic and demographic changes had negative consequences on Youngstown’s neighborhood schools. At that time, the city had 23 neighborhood elementary schools, nine on the south side of the city, and 4 on the north side of the city.

Twelve years later, in 1997, Youngstown had lost yet another 20,000 residents. The city’s housing values had continued to fall the number of owner-occupied housing had decreased while the number of demolitions had increased and neighborhoods continued to deteriorate. The effects on the city’s neighborhood schools nearly obliterated a once thriving school system. In 1997 the city of Youngstown had 14 neighborhood elementary schools, six on the south side of the city, and two on the north side of the city.

The loss of Youngstown’s neighborhood schools was a result of the combined effects of socio-economic and demographic changes associated with the Second Great migration, suburbanization, urban renewal, and deindustrialization as well as racial and residential discrimination, racial segregation and the concentration of poverty.

**Unexpected Findings and Perspectives**

I have lived in Youngstown my entire life, and it was not until I began this study that I realized the changes in the city were deeply affected by federal and social policy and not solely by local decision-making. For instance, groups and individuals with
economic and political power, such as the federal government, city planners, and real estate developers were able to re-shape the city via urban renewal, suburbanization, and the building of the Interstate. Although my family was not directly affected by the steel mill closures, the changes that were occurring were not in my conscious mind, yet I vaguely recall the adults around me discussing it. However, while researching for this study, I realized not only the initial impact the closings had on the city, but more so the monumental, disastrous long-term effects.

With regard to local decision-making, although city officials did have economic and political power, they appeared rather ineffective and short-sighted as to the projected growth of the city in the 1950s and 1960s, but even into the 1980s after the mill closings. As a possible explanation for their ineptness, for example, immediately after the shutdowns, officials from the federal government did come to town to offer assistance but left soon after their arrival because they “became increasingly appalled by the competition among local factions, proposals, individual interests and ambitions. And although the economic need was great and the potential for massive federal support hung in the balance, city officials were unable to overcome an institutionalized fragmentation of government capacity” (Buss & Redburn, 1983, p. 29).

The city council, city planning commission, and the mayor were concerned with loss of population due to out-migration as early as 1952 as evidenced in Pace Associates Public Schools in Youngstown, Report No. 6. The report was compiled to assess the 10-year future enrollment of the city’s schools and one index it used to predict future enrollment was migration from the city. In 1952, Youngstown was already experiencing a
population loss of 2,000 per year and had been for the previous 20 years (p. 5). And substantial population losses continued in the 1960s and on, prior to the mill closings. To illustrate, between 1960 and 1970, Youngstown lost nearly 27,000 of its residents; similarly between 1960 and 1990, Youngstown had lost close to 75,000 residents. And although Youngstown’s neighborhood schools did not disappear overnight, over time the continuing loss of population and subsequent tax revenues impacted their survival. Yet despite numerous school and neighborhood studies that predicted continued population loss and neighborhood deterioration and its subsequent effect on neighborhood schools, the school board and city officials failed to heed the warning signs or take appropriate action. Perhaps, as the following study notes, these same school and city officials were in denial of the reality they were facing. And although these city leaders had the power to act on those predictions and warnings, one explanation as to why they did not might be found in the results of a 2001 (Mayer & Greenberg) study *Coming Back from Economic Despair: Case Studies of Small- and Medium-size American Cities*, of which Youngstown was a part. The study’s found there was a general lack of an early response by most cities to the loss of important industries. More specifically, the authors conclude:

In most instances, no local government or community leader stepped forward to form a coalition or to develop a viable economic plan until the passage of from 10 to as many as 30 years after the city had experienced its first significant loss of jobs and population. The reasons given for the inaction of local government and community leaders were twofold. First, was an apparent denial that the city faced any long-term economic problems, because the industries had always brought
prosperity, and most community leaders found the idea that it could come to such an abrupt end difficult to accept. Second, many local leaders were personally removed from the direct effects of the unemployment and dislocation. (p. 207)

Granted, though no Youngstown officials were directly quoted in the study, the delayed responses of Youngstown’s leaders corroborates with other cities’ responses to the loss of industry and lack of action regarding the city’s mounting economic problems.

While I had originally thought there would be a strong correlation between State Education Agencies (SEAs), decreased local control and loss of neighborhood schools, I found that it was not the case. SEAs did increase in size after the passage of the Elementary Secondary Education Act (1965) and functioned as channels for federal money ear-marked for education. In Youngstown, especially after the steel mill closings, though the school district’s reliance on state and federal funds increased, there was no evidence of state control over local school matters. In part, this was because the State of Ohio had deemed it unlawful for SEAs to take control of local school boards. However, between the late 1970s and early 1990s, before the proliferation of vouchers and charter schools, and the subsequent opportunity for corporations and/or individuals to take control of the public school’s resources and because the economic powerhouses were absent and had taken their financial resources with them, the remaining local school and city officials were facing extreme fiscal losses and scrambling to maintain a viable school system.
Conclusions

Although there have been numerous studies written about deindustrialization, especially after its initial occurrence in the 1970s and 1980s; it has only been more recently that newer studies have emerged to re-evaluate the long-term consequences on cities, communities and the effect on schools and impoverished neighborhoods. I discovered that as I began my research, the initial studies focused more on the economic aspect, that is, job loss and persistent unemployment and the problems associated with those specifics. Yet what I have seen in my hometown challenged that myopic view.

Other previous studies have dealt with specific phenomena such as suburbanization and urban renewal, but those studies have mostly been written as separate phenomena and not as overlapping themes. None of the studies in my review of the literature considered education in its findings, which makes this study important. A common thread however across my and most prior studies has been the role of federal policies in promoting the demise of the inner city. My study uncovered the patterns that led to the loss of Youngstown’s neighborhood schools, which is a combined effect of demographic changes associated with the Second Great migration, deindustrialization, suburbanization, and urban renewal as well as racial and residential discrimination, racial segregation, and concentration of poverty.

In Youngstown I found deindustrialization, suburbanization, and urban renewal occurred in patterns very similar to larger cities albeit on a smaller scale. Thus, it is logical to theorize that in larger cities too, neighborhood schools were negatively
impacted. Today, Youngstown is no longer considered even a medium-size city due to the population loss.

My findings do not so much clarify any contradictions in the literature, but instead by viewing the social changes brought by the specific phenomena of deindustrialization, suburbanization, the building of the interstate, and urban renewal as linked developments which adversely affected Youngstown, discerned the patterns that over time merged in the dismantling of Youngstown’s neighborhood schools. My study confirms the findings of prior studies in that it documents the increasing problems of concentration of poverty, racial segregation, population loss, and housing deterioration within the city that predated the steel mill shutdowns by 20 years and hence shows the much greater depth and severity of long-term job loss in Youngstown than previously acknowledged.

This study has investigated the debilitating effects of federal, social, and local policy enactments, and fumbling, and inaction on the city of Youngstown, its neighborhoods, and neighborhood schools. The study showed that the confluence of deliberate acts to harden racial segregation and discrimination and the relationship between the White powerful bureaucrats, White middle classes, and powerless African Americans shaped the city’s neighborhoods and neighborhood schools demise.

In Youngstown, the local bureaucratic arm of the city government, city planners, and mayor, in their failure to develop a viable economic plan after the steel mill shutdowns, and in their failure to heed the warning signs of population loss over a 40-year period left a power vacuum that decimated neighborhoods schools. Further, the their lack of resistance to federal highway policy and discriminatory housing policy left
the city and its neighborhoods, through racial gerrymandering, systematically segregated which undoubtedly had a hand in the loss of Youngstown’s neighborhood schools.

In the immediate post-war period, African Americans were already concentrated together in neighborhoods, mostly in the inner city near the industrial core. In the 1950s and 1960s, the destruction of outlying Black neighborhoods due to urban renewal and the building of the Interstate caused even more African Americans to be pushed into the inner city. One cannot underestimate the importance of the racial divide in Youngstown and the profound effect it had on how Whites came to view the city, especially the inner city, as it changed demographically. The already strained relationship between Youngstown and the outlying areas grew worse as Whites fled the city in the wake of what they perceived as an encroaching African American population.

The outcomes were a deliberate confluence of federal and social policy, not a natural tendency of social classes and races to gravitate toward their own. Rather, as Quick (2016) concluded, Youngstown “neighborhoods were, and continue to be, constructed through man-made political and economic decisions and processes—ones too often designed to propagate racial and social segregation” (p. 2). For instance, Economic Policy Institute research associate Richard Rothstein (2014) asserts that the “historical record demonstrates residential segregation is “de jure,” resulting from racially motivated and explicit public policy pursued at all levels of government, whose effects endure to the present” (p. 21), and Quick (2016) adds neighborhood concentrated poverty and racial segregation are direct results of past and present policy choices by the real estate industry and federal government (p. 3). The housing policy of Home Owners Loan Corporation
and the FHA and their use of redlining and restrictive covenants, and the building of the Interstate under the policy of urban renewal, were designed to promote White flight to the suburbs and racial segregation in the central city (Coates, 2014; Rothstein, 2014), thus nullifying the myth that ghettos or segregated neighborhoods were de facto (Rothstein, 2015). This calculated process of exclusion and racial segregation created and perpetuated America’s segregated neighborhoods and in consequence, its schools (Hannah-Jones (2014; Rothstein, 2014).

In Youngstown, racial and residential gerrymandering prevented Blacks from attending the West side schools, which was considered the better school district and had better teachers. As Viviano (2014) asserts, “segregation along school district lines had its roots in housing discrimination . . . [with] Black parents being unable to buy homes outside the city limits” (n.p.). And additional evidence of racial and residential gerrymandering is found in 1978 when the NAACP unsuccessfully challenged the Youngstown Board of Education over allegedly using policy and practice to create racial isolation among pupils in the district. Plaintiffs asserted that the school board had “engaged in incorporating into the school system private residential, racial discrimination . . . for the purpose and effect of perpetuating a segregated school system . . . through rezoning school boundaries to channel the expansion of Black residential growth away from primarily Whites districts” (Alexander v Youngstown Bd. of Ed., 1978). And while the Court acknowledged the presence and practice of residential and school segregation in the city, the Court found no intentional segregation policies were used by the school
board or its officials. As such, it can be heavily implied that racial, residential, and school segregation in Youngstown was in fact “de jure”.

This study and its findings confirm the existing knowledge of scholars concerning the effects of federal and social policy, deindustrialization, and suburbanization and finds similar patterns in other cities, especially the Northeast, of the resultant effects of central city demise, racial and residential segregation, increasing concentration of poverty, and subsequent loss of neighborhood schools. Unquestionably, Youngstown’s loss of neighborhoods and neighborhood schools was the result of a “perfect storm” scenario, one involving a formidable combination of social, political, and economic trends.

The studies on deindustrialization and suburbanization in cities facing similar circumstances that I reviewed focused on the economic repercussions of those phenomena, whereas my study thread together not just the economic ramifications, but also the social arrangements of racial and residential segregation and the roles these phenomena played in the demise of neighborhood schools.

Throughout history cities have been the arena of opportunity and upward mobility. In America, the “city” has been redefined since WWII. In particular, the transformation of Rust Belt cities affected by deindustrialization experienced a proliferation of rusting factories, declining home prices, population losses, and high unemployment. The Census Bureau (2010) defines “urbanized areas” as the urbanized core of metropolitan areas: the central city and its contiguous, built up suburbs (Rusk, 2013, p. 10). Redeeming inner cities and the urban underclass requires reintegration of city and suburbs (Rusk, 2013, p. 134). Further, federal, state, local public and urban
policy has ignored the development of middle-class housing in cities, the maintenance of middle-class neighborhoods, and the redevelopment of inner-city neighborhoods with deleterious outcomes (Howe et al., 1998, p. 731).

However, since the 1950s with the rise of suburbanization, many of America’s cities have become “inelastic.” An inelastic city limits where no further annexation can occur (p. 2). Further, a core city’s relative elasticity or inelasticity has a profound impact on its population growth, its racial and ethnic composition, city dwellers income, and poverty level (p. 2). It is within those inelastic cities that social and economic inequities are most severe.

For Youngstown, identified by Howe et al.’s 1998 study as an inelastic city, the implications can be seen in the intense racial segregation and the heavily concentrated areas of poverty and economic and social needs of the city as compared to the outlying areas. As an illustration, the ability of the local government to raise revenues for local services is distributed unevenly; places with the greatest need also show the lowest local tax capacity (Orfield, 2001, p. 3). The result Orfield (2001) posited is a “regional mosaic of social and economic polarization and sprawling development that ultimately harms everyone by exacting costs in terms of waste of human resources and deterioration of neighborhoods and inner suburbs” (p. 4).

Orfield (2001) continued that it is a misnomer that the effects of poverty and other social needs of a region can be confined to a few small neighborhoods, as seen by the concentration of poverty in Youngstown’s city core; by the mid-1990s Youngstown’s
African American community had become the poorest concentrated population in the nation.

Accordingly, a sign of disinvestment and social and economic decline is often foreshadowed by trends in public schools. Schools, Orfield (2001) contended, are a powerful prophecy for communities; often deepening poverty and other socio-economic changes show up in schools, in particular elementary schools before neighborhoods (p. 5). Thus, elementary school enrollment patterns “sound an early warning” of impending flight by the middle class, the first group to leave a neighborhood when schools begin to show signs of “failure” (p. 5).

Therefore, when the perceived quality of a school and its neighborhood or surrounding neighborhoods declines, it can set in motion a “potentially vicious cycle that ultimately affects the entire community” (Orfield, 2001, p. 5). For example, Orfield (2001) explained, perceived school quality, which is often an euphemism for non-White racial diversity, is a key factor in attracting and retaining middle-class residents and businesses that cater to them and thus in maintaining property values and income, which in turn funds schools and government (p. 5).

It is a vicious cycle indeed. As a result of suburbanization, deindustrialization and population loss, the dramatic decrease in the city’s real estate value has harmed the Youngstown City School District, so much so that a 1993 survey showed that 65% of homeowners who moved from the city cited their dissatisfaction with the Youngstown schools (Howe et al., 1998, p. 731).
As such, this study offers a substantive and significant contribution to the existing knowledge about central urban demise and the subsequent loss of neighborhood schools. Because economic downturns and federal, social and local policy and practices continually shape our lives, and often without consideration to a community or its schools, this study presents an explanatory hindsight for a broad range of people, issues for communities in transition.

Post-Script on 21st Century Urban Renewal

In 2002, the city of Youngstown, in an attempt to redress the lingering effects of federal policies, the ravages wrought by decades of population loss and lack of economic recovery, and perhaps finally realizing the city would never return to its former glory, instead focused on the reality at hand: a shrinking city. The city developed the Youngstown 2010 Plan proposing the re-zoning of some areas for light industry, turning some largely abandoned residential areas into green spaces, and discontinuing city services in some areas as a means of dealing proactively with the issue of shrinkage and facilitate economic development (Russo & Linkon, 2008, p. 169). Another one of the plan’s goals was to target investment and even sought to relocate residents from areas of the city with a high number of vacancies to more viable neighborhoods (Posey, 2013).

The plan received national attention as a unique attempt at “smart shrinkage” and was hailed as a blue print for re-building post-industrial cities. Yet the plan proved to be illusory; the city did not follow through with the outreach needed for relocating citizens in low occupancy areas. The city also failed to carry out a targeted demolition plan, further reinforcing Youngstown’s negative image (Posey, 2013). Youngstown’s effort to
rebuild and re-imagine its shattered city is certainly commendable. But the problem lies in its continued fragmentation of local government and planning, and the lack of suburban cooperation. The continued failure of the city to attract industry and increase its tax revenues means it is unable to support its neighborhood schools, or what is left of them.

As a possible panacea, trio of studies published between the late 1990s and mid-2000s directed the focus of revitalization towards a regional solution. In *The Shrinking Central City Amidst Growing Suburbs: Case Studies of Ohio’s Inelastic Cities* (1998), Howe et al. (1998) looked at four Ohio cities: Cincinnati, Cleveland, Dayton, and Youngstown.

The problem, according to Howe et al. (1998) is that redevelopment depends on city initiatives, which are not supported by the region as a whole, or by the state (p. 731). And although Youngstown has remained solvent because of a 2% income tax levied on all city residents and non-residents who are employed by the city, it is barely enough. However, tax collections have been aided by the city’s successful industrial-park program, many of which are located on abandoned industrial sites via “brownfield” site legislation. Through the redevelopment of old industrial land, the city has made extensive use of 10-year 100% property tax abatements to attract companies to the new sites. The abatements have aided city finances because of the city’s reliance on the income tax (p. 731).

Yet in light of the potential for a quasi-rebirth, redevelopment efforts are not effective in the face of continued suburban development. And while these internal
policies are working to some degree Howe et al. (1998) claimed that it is an external policy that will increase the possibility of redevelopment in the central city (p. 733). This external strategy entails cooperative arrangements with other units of government and regional agreements to promote profit sharing (p. 733).

In a similar vein, Orfield (2001) suggested creating a cooperative framework for land use planning that encourages regions to plan together for their common future and to consider the regional consequences of local decisions (p. 14). This can be achieved by directly electing a regional governing body to coordinate strategies to address regional challenges (p. 14).

In Cities Without Suburbs (2013) Rusk offered a more precise strategy for “stretching cities.” In addition to regional cooperation, and land use planning, Rusk includes implementing regional inclusionary zoning and other mixed-income housing strategies, growth management strategies to control suburban sprawl, as a means to diminish racial and economic segregation (p. 123). Rusk also suggested implementing regional tax base sharing to reduce fiscal imbalances that result from unequal growth. Like racial and economic segregation, suburban sprawl is the result of an interlocking complex set of federal, state, and local policies that lay the framework for private investment, which needs to be channeled to inelastic central cities.

The suggestion Rusk (2013) and Howe et al. (1998) put forth for regional collaboration is certainly viable, but the real problem in how to motivate the surrounding suburbs to agree to such action. In the 1940s and 1950s Youngstown for example, heavily campaigned in an attempt to annex the neighboring suburb of Boardman, to no avail. Yet
the urban crises that the city has faced since then would render the possibility of a regional collaboration with the outlying suburbs surrounding Youngstown highly unlikely in the near future.
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