Socio-spatial polarization in St. Petersburg, Florida: A critical evaluation of the vision 2020 plan

Jacqueline Salmond
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Socio-Spatial Polarization in St. Petersburg, Florida: 
A Critical Evaluation of the Vision 2020 Plan

By

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A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts
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Urban Inequity, Racial Segregation, Marginalization

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Dedication

This work is dedicated to my mother who spent her life struggling to raise our family in less than perfect conditions. She made sacrifices throughout her life in order to give us all a good life and continually denied herself for her family.

And to all the men and women throughout the world who struggle against adversity to raise their families and live a peaceful life.
Acknowledgements

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Thanks also go to the men and women of St. Petersburg who have provided information, comments and assistance during the course of this research. Many people gave freely of their time and opinions and allowed me in some instances to invade their lives. For this I am eternally grateful, I feel these insights have provided a vital human element to this study.

And lastly, special thanks go to Mike for his unwavering support and understanding, even in the face of extreme frustration, provocation and lack of dinner. I could not have completed without him.
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Jacqueline Salmond

ABSTRACT

Those who are given access to develop and plan our urban areas are in possession of great power and potential. With the vast sums of both private and governmental money associated with the creation and organization of urban areas, the motivations of those constructing plans and deciding developmental strategies need to be considered. When a city has a dual identity and is socially and spatially conflicted, then the task of planning equitably for all residents becomes even more complex. The extent to which planners address the needs of their community, and the divisions which may exist, reveals the intentions of the city regarding which residents are to be included within city life.

This study examines these factors as they appertain to the city of St Petersburg, Florida which contains a population that is polarized racially, socially and spatially. St. Petersburg promotes itself as a city of consumption, with a focus upon the tourist trade and its related support services. There exists an excluded ‘underclass’ which is incongruous alongside this promotion of the city as a tourist destination, but essential to the maintenance of the services needed. Faced with these conflicting city identities, the Developmental Services Department is under pressure to address resident contentions and to provide equitably for the city.
Vision 2020 is a recent development which seeks to address some of the residents’ concerns, and plan for the future development of the city. The document makes claims to citizen participation and asserts that it has addressed the concerns of residents. However, methods employed to illicit citizen participation failed to actively encourage participation from all social groups within the city and potentially alienated low-income residents. Equally, the document does not specifically address the socio-spatial polarization within the city and the vast inequities which are evident city wide. A plan which claims to be written ‘by the people and for the people’, which fails to incorporate concerns from all sectors of the community, sends a specific message of exclusion to those not represented.
Chapter One

Introduction

St Petersburg is a vibrant, cosmopolitan community in which to live, play, learn and work. All of its citizens, neighborhoods and businesses collaborate in its development. St. Petersburg maintains its unique sense of place and economic viability while preserving its history, diversity, and lush natural beauty. St. Petersburg provides a safe, clean sustainable environment with a spectacular waterfront to be enjoyed by all of its residents and visitors.

Vision 2020 Mission Statement

The city of St. Petersburg has taken a bold step in addressing the future planning needs of its citizens. After developing for several years without a definitive plan, the city felt that a new planning ideology was needed. Vision 2020 was devised in order to address the needs of residents and plan for the livable city of the future. The very terminology of Vision 2020 reveals the forward-looking motivations of the planners and their commitment to a long term city goal. It is this very notion of future planning which needs to be examined. Hence, what are the motivations for this future city, and for whom does it provide? Is the plan adequately addressing the needs of the city as it exists today, or planning for some mythical future city without addressing the existing social concerns? If Vision 2020 fails to address existing social issues, then whose future is it planning for? Which residents are excluded from the future image of the city, and what message does this send?
The St. Petersburg Study Area

St. Petersburg was founded as a city in 1903 and is located in West-Central Florida, occupying the southern point of the Pinellas county peninsula. The city extends to the Gulf of Mexico to the West and Tampa Bay to the East, covering an area of 60.9 square miles with 234 miles of shoreline. It is connected to the city of Tampa via two bridges which cross Tampa Bay and is further connected to Manatee county and Sarasota by a third bridge. Two of the connecting bridges are Interstate bridges, providing easy access to large numbers of people.

Figure 1: Location of St. Petersburg, Florida
The city’s population, as of 2004, is 248,232, making it the 4th largest city in Florida. The Census Bureau 2000 report divides the city of St. Petersburg into 66 Tracts, which are further sub-divided into 205 Block Groups. The city is home to the *St. Petersburg Times*, one of a few independent newspapers left in the country, and hosts a number of high-profile performing arts events at the Mahaffey Theater. The city is also home to the baseball stadium, Tropicana Field, for the Tampa Bay Devil Rays.

The racial geography of St. Petersburg has changed very little since the days of segregation with enclaves of minorities concentrated in the older inner-city neighborhoods. The city has an overall Minority percentage of 28.6%, which includes 22.4% African American and 4.6% Hispanic or Latino (see Table 1). The distribution of races across the city is not uniform; many areas have acute racial concentrations measured at 100% Minority or White, with very little integration. As well as being racially polarized, the city is also socio-economically polarized demonstrating extremes of wealth and poverty.

<table>
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<th></th>
<th>Raw Counts</th>
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<tr>
<td>Total Population</td>
<td>248,232</td>
<td>100.0</td>
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<tr>
<td>Population White Only</td>
<td>177,133</td>
<td>71.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black or African American Only</td>
<td>55,502</td>
<td>22.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>American Indian and Alaska Native</td>
<td>769</td>
<td>0.3</td>
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<tr>
<td>Asian</td>
<td>6,640</td>
<td>2.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander</td>
<td>130</td>
<td>0.1</td>
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<tr>
<td>Two or More Races</td>
<td>5,397</td>
<td>2.2</td>
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The location of the city on a peninsula adjacent to the Gulf of Mexico establishes it as a desirable location for second residences and the high dollar tourist market. The juxtaposition between expensive high dollar residences and extremely low-income public housing has created tensions which are made worse by racial differences, creating what Mollenkopf and Castells (1991) refer to as a dual city. St. Petersburg’s dual nature has exacerbated existing tensions between citizen residents and has led to the city’s transformation in a similar way to cities which have emerged from post-industrial decline. Throughout the city’s history there have been regular racial and civil conflicts, both violent and peaceful. The most recent outbreak of violent protest was during May of 2004 and there is currently a weekly ongoing peaceful protest at the city’s new, flagship shopping center, BayWalk. Despite these racial and social tensions, little has been achieved by the city’s Developmental Services Department, which is charged with addressing the needs of all residents and improving equity throughout the city.

The historical development of the city has focused primarily on the tourist market and the promotion of the city as a tropical paradise. Recently, there has been a number of high profile entertainment and retail developments within St. Petersburg which have focused upon attracting upscale consumers from outside the city. The exclusive nature of these developments has effectively excluded many of the city’s mostly poor members, exacerbating existing social polarities. If the developmental focus of the city is not directed towards the residents, then what are the implications of the current plan? In other words, for whom does the Vision 2020 plan actually provide?
If the Vision 2020 plan is truly providing for all residents, one would expect, at a minimum, the residents of the city to at least be aware of the plan. If residents are not aware of the plans which are being developed for their city, one could deduce that the city is failing to actively involve some of its citizens. If there is a particular sector of the community which remains unaware or uninvolved, this exposes a possible socio-spatial bias which may exist. When the city then claims that the documents which have been produced were created through a process of dialogue, this suggests even graver implications about which residents are really deemed to have a voice.

With the racial tensions that have erupted in the city in the past, and with the increasing gap between the rich and the poor globally, nationally and locally, it becomes increasingly important to address issues of social and spatial inequity. A city such as St. Petersburg which has historically developed on the basis of racial and social inequities should address such concerns in its plans for the future. If these issues are not explicitly addressed, then the City of St. Petersburg sends a clear message to those who are being excluded; that their “rights to the city” (Lefebvre, 1996 [1968]; Mitchell, 2003) are marginal to the future development of St. Petersburg. It is this agenda which must be examined and made more apparent. However, before this can be done, it is necessary to first detail the specific aims of this research and provide a brief overview of the theoretical framework for the study.
Problem Statement

There exists within St. Petersburg great disparity between the low-income, often Minority, communities and those who live at the other extreme, the wealthy, predominantly White communities. This disparity creates a city of dual identities, bringing with it a challenge for city officials and developers; how to plan for a city with such divergent needs. In *American Apartheid*, (1991, p. 220), Massey and Denton note the role of the state in the perpetuation of poverty and polarization: “Public policies must address both race and class issues if they are to be successful; race-conscious steps need to be taken to dismantle the institutional apparatus of segregation, and class specific policies must be implemented to improve the socio-economic status of minorities”. City leaders have a responsibility to provide amenities and services for all city residents, but when these services are unequally distributed those who are marginalized are excluded from full participation in their own city.

The purpose of this study is to examine the socio-spatial distribution within the city and answer several key questions.

1. Does socio-spatial polarization exist in the city, if so, how are communities polarized?
2. Are these polarized communities excluded from full participation in city life?
3. What is the institutional role, specifically that of the Vision 2020 plan, in creating or perpetuating the conditions of socio-spatial polarization?
4. Does the Vision 2020 specifically address the socio-economic conditions within the city and provide for all residents?

Although there are a number of factors which govern residential patterns, this study will focus on the role of city planning, and specifically the Vision 2020 plan, in the creation and maintenance of polarized urban spaces.
Research Motivations

There are several motivations for conducting this research, not least of which is the potential for improving the living conditions for poor and minority residents of St. Petersburg. The significant racial tensions which have haunted the city’s history are testament to the lack of social justice and urban equality city-wide. The uneven development of different parts of the city is grossly negligent of the communities that exist within the city and calls into question the motivations of city officials, both past and present. The relationship between segregation and poverty is clarified by Massey and Denton (1993, p. 181), “Racial segregation is the institutional nexus that enables the transmission of poverty from person to person and generation to generation, and is therefore a primary structural factor behind the perpetuation of the urban underclass.” Failure to address these institutional inequalities ensures the maintenance of White, upper middle class privilege in the city of St. Petersburg, and the perpetuation of poverty among excluded groups.

The primary reason for selecting the Vision 2020 plan for review is the rhetoric of egalitarian and cooperative development which surrounds the document. The city is promoting the plan as a document created in cooperation with city residents, and thus claiming it addresses the concerns of city residents. This study examines the claims of citizens’ participation and the extent to which the city has attempted to engage all residents in a dialogue about St. Petersburg’s future. As the plan is the flagship for future development of the city, it reveals the goals and intentions of city planners. Evaluating the sub-text of the Vision 2020 plan, couched in the geographical-historical context of the
city and the current socio-spatial polarizations, exposes the real aims of the city planners and reveals for whom the plan is really being developed.

A second motivation for the study is the significant gap in the extant literature which addresses issues of polarization, both at the broader level and specifically related to St. Petersburg. Most case studies examining polarization are related to Northeastern post-industrial cities. There are few studies examining the dynamics of Southern cities which have evolved along alternative paths. The divergent pathway of St Petersburg is detailed by Arsenault (1996, p. 79): “During the past century, very few American communities have become cities without first creating an industrial base. Significantly, St. Petersburg stands out as one of the few exceptions. Blessed with an abundance of sun and sea, the city’s major product has always been itself. …St. Petersburg was consumption-oriented from its very beginning.” Accordingly, examining the issue of socio-spatial polarization in St. Petersburg will add to our understanding of the dynamics of polarization and city development in the South.

Although St. Petersburg’s growth was not the result of industrialization, the city does exhibit post-industrial like dynamics within its built environment. O’Loughlin and Friedrichs (1996) posit a causal connection between the incidence of riots in urban areas and socio-spatially segregated communities. They argue that concentration of high unemployment and lack of amenities serves to exacerbate the conditions of spatial exclusion experienced by socially polarized communities. Unlike post-industrial cities which have undergone economic restructuring, St. Petersburg has witnessed socio-spatial polarization since its incorporation as a city. Thus, the city’s failure to address these
conditions is indicative of the long term exclusion of a particular sector of the community.

A third motivation for the study is the gap in the research literature which addresses St. Petersburg specifically. Although there is a wealth of empirical historical literature examining the development of St. Petersburg and West-Central Florida as a whole, most notably by the Arsenault (1996), most of this literature fails to critique the motivations of developers or examine the city from a critical planning perspective. One study which does examine St. Petersburg in terms of city planning is *Visions of Eden: Environmentalism, Urban Planning and City Building in St. Petersburg, Florida, 1900-1995*, by Bruce Stephenson (1997). This study provides a useful chronology of the city’s development plans, highlighting the similarities and differences throughout the city’s history and detailing the planners involved. Stephenson focuses primarily on environmental problems created by city development, and does not address the socio-spatial polarization within the city. It is specifically this gap in the research literature that this study will address.

The final motivation for this study is the history of oppression and exclusion of the African American population from exercising their formal rights to the city of St. Petersburg. The systematic mistreatment of African Americans provides an historical basis for the contemporary socio-racial polarization within the city. Tracing this history is an extremely difficult task due mainly to a lack of representation of the African American community within the official city history of St. Petersburg. In his Masters thesis, *The Power of the Past in Community Development: Coordination of a Community History*
Project in St. Petersburg, Florida, Eric Chrisp (2000) examines the dominant representation of African Americans in the history of St. Petersburg. Chrisp identifies key points in the city’s history where prominent African American figures were excluded from the official historical records. He also details the manner in which the African American population has historically been marginalized and misrepresented in St Petersburg.

The research conducted by Chrisp on St. Petersburg’s African American community was linked to a community history project which was facilitated through the Neighborhood Family Center (NFC). This history was collected by using a personal narrative methodology and the NFC intends to keep the method alive. Chrisp raised the issue of including the experiences of African Americans into the official historical accounts of the city. If the history of the mistreatment of African Americans is not accurately recorded, then it allows for this mistreatment of the community to continue. Equally, the lack of positive African American role models within the city’s history paints an inaccurate picture of their contributions to the city and fails to provide the impetus for their current involvement. It is, therefore, not surprising that in the case of the Vision 2020 redevelopment project, several key representatives from the African American community have thus far failed to participate in the planning process.

Theoretical Framework

There are many historical and geographical factors which contribute to the organization of our urban spaces. Robert Beauregard (2003) examines the dynamics of
urban development and decline since deindustrialization and the creation of an inner-city underclass in *Voices of Decline: The Postwar Fate of U. S. Cities*. Beauregard provides a history of the development of U.S. cities after the Second World War by focusing upon deindustrialization, suburbanization and the creation of edge cities. The study illustrates the dynamics of suburbanization as it relates to the creation of unemployment and spatial isolation. As the inner cities declined, the residents who were more affluent and could afford to relocate moved into the suburbs. This relocation exacerbated the existing inequalities within the city and aided in the construction of an inner-city underclass.

Although Beauregard’s (2003) study focuses upon post-industrial cities, the same conditions witnessed in declining post-industrial cities are evident elsewhere where there has been significant economic restructuring. In cities which have an economic base centered around service industries, physical location becomes less important, thus employment becomes separated from workers. In other words, the problems facing city developers in smaller, highly segregated urban areas remain the same, namely, how to revitalize inner cities in the context of a dwindling urban tax base and achieve parity of public amenities across the city.

The contemporary response to declining inner-city neighborhoods is to privatize public space and/or public housing. (Beauregard, 2003; O’Loughlin and Friedrichs, 1996; Mitchell, 2003) St. Petersburg has experienced extensive privatization of space in the last decade, as witnessed in the downtown shopping area, Baywalk, as well as the privatization of public housing, for example, Jordan Park. The resulting loss of public space effectively places leisure and residential spaces under the control of unelected
private developers and limits the access of poor individuals to many of the basic amenities of urban life. For instance, Baywalk has established numerous rules limiting the access of certain individuals to its amenities which is arguably aimed at African American residents. In other words, urban space and ‘public’ services are increasingly provided to entice outsiders, or to provide leisure facilities for suburban residents with disposable income. The low-income residents who reside within the inner cities are relegated to the status of outsiders and are alienated from their own city.

Figure 2: Baywalk Code of Conduct
The policies of privatization and suburbanization are a consequence of the politics of neo-liberalism which began in the 1980s. The general effects of this kind of politics are spelled out by Beauregard (2003, p. 229): “National politics embraced the suburbs over the cities, the middle class over the underclass, and the individual initiative over group advancement. Each of these choices exacerbated racial divisions.” In other words, the hegemonic ideology of suburban development and middle class possessive individualism and conspicuous consumption are responsible for compounding racial divisions in urban areas and for treating social polarization and spatial exclusion as problems to be avoided, not solved.

In St. Petersburg, African American and other Minority residents are excluded and marginalized from participation in many aspects of city life. However, the exclusion of these residents may not just be a racial issue, but one more closely related to conditions of poverty. Wilson (1987, [1999]) argues that those who lived in poverty face limitations upon their ability to succeed in life and participate fully in civil society. These conditions of poverty create an urban underclass that are excluded from regular society and spatially polarized in terms of both race and class. More importantly, Wilson notes that these limitations stem not just from growing up in poor families, but from the dynamics of living in poor neighborhoods. The spatial concentration of poverty increases the likelihood for new generations to repeat the cycle of poverty and limits the ability to escape these conditions. If St. Petersburg fails to address the spatial polarization of its poor and its racial and ethnic minorities, it is limiting their ability to succeed and condemning them to a future of continued poverty and exclusion.
These conditions of poverty experienced in low-income neighborhoods are perpetuated through unequal institutional investments and employment opportunities organized by those in positions of power. The history of residential segregation in the United States along with the racial bias which exists has aided the residential isolation of minorities seen in our urban areas today. However, the spatial distributions which exist need to be considered in terms of class as well as race. As Wilson suggests, viewing social inequalities in terms of just race fails to paint an accurate picture of the conditions affecting the creation and perpetuation of an underclass. Instead, race needs to be considered alongside class and the factors which perpetuate conditions of exclusion.

Wilson notes the role of spatial polarization on employment dynamics: “Many central-city job applicants are physically isolated from places of employment and socially isolated from the informal job networks that have become a major source of job placement” (1999, p.62). Lack of local employment opportunities which provide a living wage and long-term career prospects serve to concentrate the conditions of poverty in a single area. This concentration of poverty ensures that positive role models will be rare with widespread unemployment or employment in low wage, low status jobs being the norm.

Conversely, negative role models are widespread, with crime a daily occurrence and with the seemingly positive aspects of crime highly visible. The lack of significant White presence in these neighborhoods further enforces the psychological barriers between the races; minorities are only able to identify with others in the same social grouping. As Massey and Denton (1993, p.141) affirm: “Poor black children growing up
in a segregated city, therefore, are more likely to be exposed to adult role models of dependency and single parenthood than are White children. If children learn by imitation, segregation means that poor blacks are much more likely to end up in these states themselves."

The residential concentration of the underclass is also closely correlated with high crime rates (Massey and Denton, 1989, [1993]). These correlations should not be misunderstood in racial terms, but rather need to be understood as a function of polarization, exclusion and the perpetuation of the underclass. Urban dynamics tend to group those in the lower economic brackets, either through deliberate public housing policy, or through market forces and the concentration of low rent housing. With existing racial prejudice in education and employment, there follows a relationship between race and poverty which becomes concentrated in spatially polarized communities. As Massey (2001, p. 322) notes: “Since crime and violence are strongly correlated with income deprivation, any social process that concentrates poverty also concentrates crime and violence to create an ecological niche characterized by a high risk of physical injury, violent death, and criminal victimization.”

This relationship is evidenced in the Midtown neighborhood in St. Petersburg, which has the highest poverty rates within the city and is home to the greatest concentration of Minority residents. It also has the highest crime rates in the city which, despite a slight decrease in recent years, remain higher than elsewhere in the city (St. Petersburg Police Department, 2004). The Midtown neighborhood was the site of several violent protests in recent years (discussed more fully in Chapter Two) and residents
frequently complain of police harassment. Although this seemingly affects only the low-income, Minority population in Midtown, the recent violent protests illustrate how community problems can impact all members of the city. If St. Petersburg truly wishes to develop a ‘seamless city’ and maintain its image as a desirable tourist destination, it must specifically address the existence of these inequalities within its planning documentation.

The vastly different conditions of the built environment illustrate the extremes of the social conditions within St. Petersburg. Midtown, for example, does not have a major grocery store (as yet), or banking facilities, within easy reach of the community. The residents rely on small grocery stores which often have higher prices and limited selections. The local store pictured below, which is located in the heart of Midtown, has bars on the windows and concrete bollards at the front of the store to prevent ‘ram-raiders’ (breaking into a retail store by driving a vehicle into it). This is in stark contrast to the new up-market Baywalk development which is located less than a mile away in St. Petersburg’s revitalized downtown. Baywalk is a new, open plan shopping, entertainment and recreation complex and contains upscale restaurants and retail stores which sell lifestyle goods, rather than living necessities.
Figure 3: Dual Identities: 22nd Avenue Grocery Store

Figure 4: Dual Identities: Baywalk Shopertainment Complex
What is Socio-Spatial Polarization?

In order to proceed with a socio-spatial examination, it is first necessary to define the terminology used. Polarization as a concept has numerous interpretations and applications which are defined by the field of study. Within social studies, the term social polarization is used to refer to populations which exhibit opposing characteristics. Social polarization can describe the increasing gap between extremes of living and working conditions, including the growing wealth and income gap between the rich and the poor, or the existence of racial or ethnic groups who exist in isolation from other members of society. As well as a measure of social difference, social polarization can also be manifested spatially. When these two conditions are examined in combination, the terminology of socio-spatial polarization is more appropriate to capture all manner of racial and economic stratifications in the urban context. In Dual City, Mollenkopf and Castells describe the characteristics of polarized urban space thus: “... an urban system socially and spatially polarized between high value-making groups and functions on the one hand and devalued social groups and downgraded spaces on the other hand.” (1991, p. 27). If these conditions of socio-spatial polarization are evidenced in St. Petersburg, then the term dual city would seem appropriate to describe the urban landscape.

In order to study the extent or existence of socio-spatial polarization, a number of issues need to be examined in both racial and economic terms. Firstly, the extent of the social polarization as it exists within an area; the percentages in each group and whether or not these percentages are shrinking or growing. Secondly, the spatial distribution of the groups; does socio-spatial polarization exist, and if so, to what extent. Lastly, the
context of the emergence or concentration of these socio-spatially polarized communities and the factors which contribute to their continued isolation. Although some residents choose to voluntarily isolate themselves, there are many more for whom the isolation remains involuntary and controlled by other factors.

In order to measure social polarization in economic terms, a common methodological approach is to examine the economic status of residents within an area and to examine the degree of difference. Sassen (1994) proposes that the changes to the labor structure within global cities and city regions will lead to an increase in the gap between the top and the bottom occupational groups. She writes: “When we speak of polarization in the use of land, in the organization of labor markets, in the housing market, and in the consumption structure, we do not necessarily mean that the middle class is disappearing. We are rather referring to a dynamic whereby growth contributes to inequality rather than to expansion of the middle class.” (1994, p. 117) As the middle level groups diminish in number, the society becomes increasingly polarized with greater extremes at either end. Although the examination of occupational groups implies a certain income bracket, it is important to explicitly consider polarization in terms of economic standing. The addition of those who are living below the poverty line, unemployed or receiving social support provides a more complete picture of polarization than consideration of occupational categories alone.

Within this framework, it is also important to be aware of the extremes. Socio-economic polarization is manifest not just in the numbers of the population within the categories, but in the size of the gap between the income extremes of the categories. Put
simply, the rich are very rich and the poor are extremely poor. This is clearly a greater concern as the higher extreme categories become increasingly distanced and unattainable for those in the lower categories. The high-income groups are increasingly disjointed both socially and spatially from the low-income groups and the means for understanding and communicating between the two groups is diminished. For the practical provision of policy, the urban environment which houses such extremes of social and spatial conditions is the place for which it is increasingly difficult to adequately plan. Thus, polarization research should include an exploration of both the make-up of social groups and geographic areas, as well as the numbers of members within these groups and areas.

As well as examining polarization in socio-economic terms, researchers also have examined the racial polarization within urban areas. These often incorporate measures of segregation and draw connections between the segregation of races and the perpetuation of poverty (Wilson, 1987). As Feagin (1996, p. 159) notes: “Residential segregation makes possible, or strongly reinforces, numerous other types of racial exclusion, discrimination, and subordination. When residential segregation is extensive, job segregation tends to follow.” Segregated populations are placed in a disadvantaged position relative to other residents in an urban area, creating an underclass (Wilson, 1987, [1999]). When this segregation is either produced or encouraged by development practices, it carries grave ethical implications.

The planning focus of our urban areas is underpinned by a structural institutional framework which controls development and growth to fit with an established ideal. These institutional factors may be established globally, nationally or locally and range from
zoning laws and transportation networks, to the situation of schools, public housing and business parks. Clearly some processes are more influential than others, but they all affect residential patterns to some extent. As such, the ‘choice’ of residential location is merely a choice between the offered options established by those who organize our urban spaces. Peter Marcuse (1996) argues that spatial segregation of races or income groups is not merely the organization of societies governed by preferences and lifestyle differences: “To the contrary, they manifest and reinforce positions in a hierarchy of wealth in which some decide and others are decided for” (Marcuse, 1996, p. 197). In this way, socio-spatial polarization can be directly related to city development and any inequity which may exist is indirectly endorsed by the city developmental focus.

Moreover, failure to address these issues leads directly to the planned exclusion of an urban underclass.

The key contributing factor in the creation or perpetuation of an urban underclass as identified by Marcuse (1996) is the uneven distribution of power. Within the modernizing or global city, there are four interlinked changes which have shifted the centers of power within urban development. These changes are: technological advances, internationalization, concentration of control, and the centralization of control. When they are not distributed evenly among the populous, this exacerbates the conditions of poverty and the creation of the underclass. If this underclass is segregated into a separate community, the chances for improvement are diminished and the conditions of poverty are again intensified. As Marcuse comments: “The ultimate point is arrived at when victimized and segregated become identical.” (1996, p. 208) The socio-spatial
segregation of the underclass creates the political conditions for representing this group as the ‘other’, be it in terms of race or class. This, in turn, allows for the dismissal or marginalization of this group by those in power. Thus, any measures to alleviate the conditions of poverty are easily denied as the group can be classified as different (upper middle-class Whites no more identify with low-income Whites than with African Americans of any class).

Following from the importance of the institutional framework as identified by Marcuse, this case study will specifically focus on the role of the city and urban planning in response to the existence of socio-spatial polarization. It should be noted that considering the institutional role, though important, does not tell the entire story of socio-spatial polarization. The role of the Vision 2020 plan will only tell a partial story and is limited in its ability to detail the factors which govern residential patterns. As such, there exists the potential for future research which examines additional factors which affect the residential patterns within the city.

**Issues of Language**

When considering the racial divisions within the city, the language used within this thesis to describe the communities under discussion needs to be clarified. There are numerous racial and ethnic variations within St. Petersburg, but for the purposes of clarity, the categorizations will be simplified. Firstly, when referring to the White population, the definition of inclusion is those who identify themselves as White only. When speaking in historical terms, there are no definitions separating the races into the
categories we are aware of today, therefore, where historically pertinent, the terminology ‘black’ will be used. More often, the terminology used will be African American to refer to all who identify themselves as black or African American. Lastly, the terminology ‘Minority’ will be used at times to apply to all of the population who identify themselves as ‘non-White.’

It should be noted that any categorization of a community will involve generalization and as such all community categorizations are limited. Communities are not homogenous and these categorizations are not indicative of any assumption of similarity. That being said, for the purposes of this study, simplification was necessary in order to present the results in an organized manner. Although the dualities of these communities are not represented, it should be remembered that they exist.

When considering socio-economic differences evident in the city, measurements of income will be used as a proxy for class differences. The term ‘class’ when used refers to a combination of economic standing and social status and does not relate to any pre-established categorizations.

As a final consideration, the term ‘polarization’ as discussed above will be used throughout the document to refer to the social stratifications which exist. However, there are times when the term ‘segregation’ will be used as relevant to the discussion. These two terms have different meanings within different fields of social science and they therefore should not be applied interchangeably. When used within this study, segregation refers specifically to measurements of polarization which are manifested spatially. The term is also used when discussing the measurements used to evaluate the
extent of social polarization as the terminology is relevant to the measurements used.
Lastly, segregation will be used historically when discussing the limitations placed upon
African American freedoms within the United States.

**Conclusion**

By examining the spatial distribution of race and class in an urban area, we can
reveal any social and spatial polarizations that may exist. The existence of a societal
underclass which has been consistently under-represented in planning issues reveals the
motivations and commitments of city developers. The continuing segregation of this
underclass into enclaves of homogenous communities further exacerbates poverty and the
uneven spatial relations of power within the city. A city with major socio-spatial
polarizations creates a paradox for planning officials who are charged with distributing
amenities and services across public space. The extent to which the city officials
acknowledge and address urban collective consumption problems discloses their
underlying intentions with regards to achieving social justice in the city (Harvey, 1973).
Chapter Two will briefly examine the recent history of St. Petersburg in the context of
planning and the emerging residential patterns.
Chapter Two

A Brief History of St. Petersburg

Florida prior to 1842 was sparsely populated, home to native Seminole Indians and a few White settlers. By the late 1830s, the contestation over Indian lands and the two Seminole wars had prepared the region for White settlement and established a racial hierarchy across the State. The State was promoted for settlement and in 1842, the extension of the Homesteader Act to Florida established the region for growth and development. The swampy conditions of the state ensured that early frontier settlement was slow and the poor transportation networks kept the Southern Pinellas Peninsula particularly inaccessible.

In the drive to settle Florida the railroad featured heavily. Among those involved in the organization of rail infrastructure was Peter Demens, a native of St. Petersburg Russia, who took over the charter for the Orange Belt Railway. Despite numerous funding problems he fought for the extension of the railroad to the Southern Pinellas Peninsula to end at the junction of Ninth Street and First Avenue South. The first train arrived at the Ninth Street terminus on June 8th 1888, officially establishing the settlement as a town. The building of the railroad had a dramatic impact on the entire area and particularly on the town containing the terminus. The original name of the town had
been Wardsville, but the railroad extension ensured the city assume the honorary name from the home town of the railroad’s biggest advocate.

St. Petersburg’s new connection ensured the town a slow but steady growth. From these early years the development of the town was structured to fit a particular ideology. Town officials encouraged settlement north and east of the terminus to disassociate the town of St. Petersburg from the collection of shacks (predominantly African American) surrounding the train station (Arsenault, 1996). This development pattern created a town of dual identities and firmly imposed a socio-spatial hierarchy on its nascent community. Arsenault explicates the role of the railroad; “The opening of the Orange Belt did more than transform the local economy; it also introduced sharp distinctions of class and culture into a frontier community that had rarely experienced such distinctions” (1996, p.63). The railroad also brought a new wave of African American immigrants into the town intensifying the social stratification along racial as well as socio-economic lines.

Settlers coming to the region found work in the fishing and citrus industries, among others, but none of these early industries were particularly lucrative for St. Petersburg. The town officials sought a way to bring investment and trade into the town, and focused upon promoting the natural beauty of the area to tourists. In this, St. Petersburg found the lure which was to be its catalyst for long term development. It was the tourist trade which was to have the most dramatic impact upon the town and encourage development and settlement on a grand scale. Following on from this early spurt of growth, the town became officially incorporated as a city in June, 1903.
St. Petersburg became the fastest growing city in Florida, but the speed of development and the social stratification within the city caused contention. Early development was concentrated around a downtown area, but the city was conscious of separating certain areas to retain the natural beauty the tourists sought. Encouraging development into the suburban areas, the city established a trolley line linking remote housing areas and pushed for the development of road networks. Unlike neighboring Tampa, little affected by the First World War, St. Petersburg entered the 1920’s with a determination to secure the city as a major tourist destination.

The development of the city continued at a voracious pace with the building of bridges connecting St. Petersburg with adjoining barrier islands and the city of Tampa. The impressive Gandy Bridge spanning Tampa Bay, made the peninsula more accessible to trade and tourism and generated a boom in real estate prices. Accompanying all this development was the dredging and landfill of the waterfront along Tampa Bay. In order to create the maximum amount of waterfront property, artificial jetties and islands were created along with the organization of the waterfront into a manageable and desirable tourist and entertainment commodity. This boom period also saw major construction of hotels and tourist attractions to firmly establish the city as a tourist destination.

Although the depression of the early 1930s stalled the city’s growth somewhat, the effects were not as harsh in St. Petersburg as elsewhere in the country. However, the city did suffer an economic downturn which had discernable consequences for many of its residents. Like most of St. Petersburg’s history, these consequences were unevenly distributed and felt much harder by low-income residents. As Arsenault (1996, p. 262)
notes: “The ambiance in St. Petersburg during the mid- and late- 1930’s was a curious mixture of decadence and despair, dominated by the stark contrast between men and women who divided their time between the golf course and the veranda and the destitute who had nothing to divide”.

The outbreak of World War Two had a major impact on St. Petersburg. The city had no factories or industry that could be turned over to munitions assembly, but it did have available land and empty buildings. Hotels were transformed into barracks and open areas were converted to campsites. The military presence helped to provide economic opportunities and ensured the city would survive during the war. At the cessation of the conflict, the city experienced a major growth period and its greatest residential expansion prompted by a major influx of new residents swelling the city’s population.

This new prosperity allowed the city to invest in civic projects and residential developments, but once again this investment remained unequally distributed across the city. The new developments focused on the new suburban rich, and on major new investments which would encourage tourism, including the approval of a bridge to connect the city to Manatee County in the south. At the same time, the trolley lines on the Gandy Bridge were paved over, firmly establishing the intentions of the city to promote automobile traffic over public transport. This development favored the automobile as the primary connection to the tourist industry. As a confirmation of this, the city’s trolley service was decommissioned in 1948, ushering in an era of private growth and expansion focused upon the automobile.
Throughout the 1950’s, the planning focus was on economic development and organizing the city to provide the ideal conditions for consumer consumption and tourist recreation. There were major beach and tourist facility improvements, and the city approved construction of new shopping complexes, such as the Central Plaza shopping center. The aim of this rapid growth and development was to firmly establish St. Petersburg as a bona fide modern city. In April 1955, the City Planning Board published a study entitled “Population Profile Until Employment” which concluded that most of the city population were employed in services catering to tourists and their related needs. Despite the success of the tourist trade the city wanted to secure additional investment through industry. The study was the impetus for a new push towards encouraging industrial relocations which were to gain greatest momentum in the later 1950’s (Baker, 2000, p. 212).

The result of the earlier construction boom was a city that had lost large areas of natural beauty and which was developing instead a new homogenized character. The end of the 1950’s saw the start of the dredging of Boca Ciega Bay, a controversial decision and an indication of the lack of power or interest of city officials to control and limit commercial development. The increasing use of the automobile also affected the spatial organization of the city, with the emergence of strip malls and parking lots close to new housing developments. With the advent of air-conditioning, there was a rise in the numbers of elderly people relocating to St. Petersburg, providing the city with an additional community for which to provide. Notably at this time there was little
investment in the built environment of the city for the maintenance and improvement of
the older, primarily African American neighborhoods.

The 1960’s saw the continuation of the dredging and the ultimate environmental
destruction of the bay. The incident, though negative, sparked a wave of concern within
the city for establishing limits on development and protection for natural areas. Housing
development continued however, with the development of even more major shopping and
entertainment facilities in the city. The advent of the civil rights movement and the
subsequent desegregation of public facilities raised new challenges for the city, including
how to accommodate new federal anti-discrimination mandates into a highly segregated
and polarized urban area. In 1960 the Howard Franklin Bridge opened, connecting St.
Petersburg to Tampa, improving the city’s accessibility to day-tourists and thereby
potentially increasing the city’s revenue base.

The city had achieved great success marketing itself to the elderly population, so
much so that it had a national reputation as a retirement town. In 1961, the city responded
to what was perceived as a negative image and launched “Project 61” which aimed to
promote the city as a young destination and to minimize the city’s connection with the
elderly. The main, if symbolic, focus of Project 61 was to repaint the city’s infamous
green benches that had become an icon of the city’s relationship with its elderly residents.
In May of the same year, the city agreed a $185,000 budget to the Chamber of Commerce
for advertising, with the caveat that the money was to be used to promote the youthfulness
of the city to potential tourists. The marketing, however, had little success and the
elderly continued to arrive and shape the spatial and social character of the city.
The construction boom continued into the 1970s although the effects of its rapid and unplanned development were becoming apparent. As the available land for development became scarce, residents began to call for restrictions on any further building construction. The city was also now well established as a retirement destination, with the 1970 Census revealing that 29% of the population was over sixty-five. Thus, the city was firmly established with a large residential population and major national standing, but remained socially and spatially polarized. The extent to which the African American community was considered lesser members of the city was evidenced in 1975 with the construction of Interstate 275. This massive transportation project led to the relocation of a large and vibrant African American neighborhood which was in the path of the project. There were extensive protests, but the plans were not adjusted and the community was divided by the highway. Ten years later, in 1985, the community was subjected to further marginalization and devastation with the development of Tropicana Field.

During the 1980s, St. Petersburg experienced a slow down in development as the effects of the building restrictions began to take effect. There was a renewed commitment to conserving areas of natural interest and beauty and a push towards maintaining the attractiveness of the city. Residents were concerned that this piece of paradise they had relocated to was beginning to lose its character and charm. In 1984, the passenger rail link which had established St. Petersburg as a town ended, marking the hegemony of the automobile in the transportation battle for access to the city. This development was particularly significant because despite an alleged commitment to environmental
preservation, 1987 saw the completion of the new Sunshine Skyway Bridge and the completion of the Interstate 275 link from Tampa, through St. Petersburg to Sarasota.

In 1989, several of the local affluent neighborhoods, including Yacht Club, North Causeway and South Causeway, submitted a petition to cede from the city of St. Petersburg. The primary motivation for the request was what these communities saw as increasing tax hikes which did not directly benefit their communities. Although they did not ultimately succeed, this incident served to illustrate the vast differences which had developed within the city and the contest over public resources they generated.

Today St. Petersburg is still struggling between its commitment to the tourist industry and fiduciary responsibilities towards its citizens. While population growth has slowed, socio-spatial polarization has grown both deeper and wider across the city. It is against this backdrop that the city has recently embarked on several high profile developments to maintain a positive global city image. In May 2004, Mayor Rick Baker reaffirmed his commitment to the development of a seamless city, professing a desire for prosperity and progress for all. The level of this commitment remains to be seen.

African Americans in St. Petersburg

Prior to 1889, St. Petersburg was home to a single African American family who had lived in the city since 1868. The first major influx of African Americans to the city came from workers on the construction of the Orange Belt Railway, who remained in St. Petersburg after the completion of the railroad in 1889. These workers settled in South St. Petersburg, around Fourth Avenue South, creating the community known as Pepper
Town. This early residential pattern was guided primarily by the need to be close to employment opportunities, many of which were in the nearby dockyard.

As the city grew, local labor agents recruited African Americans from Georgia and Alabama to work as service personal in local hotels. A local White merchant, Leon Cooper established a number of cheap shacks along Ninth Street South and rented them to African Americans, creating what was known as “Coopers Quarters”. This availability of cheap housing, proximity to employment and potential for societal support established these two communities south of the railroad tracks as the African American neighborhood. By the beginning of the 20th century, the residential pattern of segregation was firmly established. The map below illustrates the location of these neighborhoods as they relate to the city today.

Figure 5: Early African American Residential Location

Base Map courtesy of St. Petersburg Developmental Services Department
The presence of an African American population was essential for the growth of the local economy and the maintenance of the standard of living for the wealthy White residents. Nevertheless, this growing community was a cause for concern for the White residents of St. Petersburg, and a solution was sought through the adoption of the Jim Crow segregationist system. This system, established throughout many Southern States, restricted the social and spatial freedoms of African American residents. It limited the extent to which they were allowed to mingle with the White community and controlled where they could live. Thus, racial separation was institutionalized, with separate schools, churches, beaches and bars. African Americans and Whites did not mix socially, and although the groups may have worked together, social delineations outside the workplace were firmly established and tightly regulated by the city authorities.

This segregation of the races exacerbated extant social and spatial differences and ensured that the African American population remained socio-economically inferior to Whites. The public provisions for the needs of African American residents were grossly inadequate with respect to funding for schools, housing and health care. As Arsenault states 1996, p. 125): “In everything from education to unemployment, blacks occupied the proverbial bottom rail of St. Petersburg society.” Thus, the city was not just racially segregated, it was also segregated in terms of economic well-being and access to material wealth and resources. Distribution of services was unequal across the communities, with African American residents living in sub-standard housing, but prevented from moving elsewhere by the Jim Crow restrictions.
Table 2: Census Bureau Population Results 1910-2000

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Black</th>
<th>Percent Black</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1910</td>
<td>4,127</td>
<td>1,098</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1920</td>
<td>14,237</td>
<td>2,444</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1930</td>
<td>40,425</td>
<td>7,416</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1940</td>
<td>60,812</td>
<td>11,892</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1950</td>
<td>96,738</td>
<td>13,977</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1960</td>
<td>181,298</td>
<td>24,080</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1970</td>
<td>216,232</td>
<td>31,911</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1980</td>
<td>238,647</td>
<td>40,903</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1990</td>
<td>238,629</td>
<td>46,726</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2000</td>
<td>248,232</td>
<td>55,502</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The boom years of the 1920’s saw St. Petersburg’s African American population grow from 2,444 to 7,416, as recruiting companies brought workers from Georgia and Alabama. The growth of the city’s Minority population caused concern for many White residents, who felt that the existing Jim Crow system was not strict enough. The 1920’s saw a rise in membership of the Ku Klux Klan throughout the Southern States and locally in St. Petersburg. With Klan members in positions of power within the city, the African American and other Minority populations had little chance of fair distribution of services or justice.

The 1930’s brought the depression to St. Petersburg ensuring that the African American community would be considered as necessary but unwanted residents. St. Petersburg’s prescription to avoid the depression problems experienced elsewhere rested on the ability to provide tourists with an affordable destination. Hence, the need for cheap black labor, but also with a pleasant sanitized image, therefore, non-visible Blacks. City development was focused towards the provision of services for White tourists, and so
ignored the onerous task of updating public facilities for its African American underclass population. The residential segregation rules were strengthened, and as the depression continued, its unequal effects became increasingly apparent. As Arsenault notes (1996. p. 269): “In a city known for stylish homes and beautiful subdivisions, the unpaved streets and unpainted shacks of Methodist Town and other black neighborhoods were inescapable reminders of racial separation and inequality.”

At the end of the 1930s, living conditions within the African American neighborhoods were dire. The 1940 Census Report indicated that 59.2 % of the city’s African American households had no electricity, compared to 2% for Whites, and 17.6 % had no running water, compared to less than 0.5 for Whites (Arsenault, 1996 p. 270). Funded by a grant for slum clearance and urban renewal from the United States Housing Authority (USHA), the city began the construction of a public housing complex for African Americans. Most of the land was donated by a St. Petersburg African American, Mr. Jordan, on a site adjacent to an existing African American neighborhood. Jordan Park opened in 1940 with 242 units, 204 more were added in 1941. The Jordan Park housing complex remained in this incarnation for 58 years and became a symbol of extreme urban poverty, crime and drugs.

The role of the African American population in the Second World War signaled a minor change in attitudes amongst some of the city’s White residents. The African American population began to be allowed small improvements in their civil liberties and their voice in civic affairs was given a little more credibility. In 1949, the city hired its first African American police officers, marginally improving the chance for social justice
for all. At this time, the population was still residentially segregated and the city had extensive deed restrictions in place which closed off certain residential areas to African Americans. In May 1948, these racial community deed restrictions were federally banned, but the city did not enforce the regulation. The Map below illustrates the location of African American neighborhoods at the end of 1949 as they relate to the city today.

Figure 6: Location of African American Neighborhoods circa 1949

The city publicly declared its opinion about the African American community in 1955 when faced with the forced integration of leisure facilities. Several African American residents had filed a lawsuit against the city in 1955 demanding access to the municipal Spa Beach and Pool. Although the ruling was in favor of the residents, the city filed appeals in the Tampa Federal Court, Fifth Circuit of Appeals and the Supreme Court.
in an attempt to prevent access. When all appeals failed in 1958, rather than open up to mixed bathing, the city closed its municipal Spa Beach and Pool. Local businesses experienced a downturn in tourism, and eight months later the pool was quietly reopened to all races. With this incident, the city had sent a firm message to the African American community regarding its place as members of the city.

During the civil rights protests in the 1960s, the African American community in St. Petersburg was active in various protests and demonstrations, particularly the sit-ins at lunch counters which had refused to serve African American patrons. The city was again divided between its image as a peaceful tourist destination free of pesky racial ‘problems’ and the imperatives of equality and social justice for all its citizens. In response to the continuing racial tensions, the city established the St. Petersburg Council on Human Relations in order to improve the city’s race relations. In May 1969, the city Charter of St. Petersburg was amended to eliminate the division of the city on racial lines.

In 1971, the school district began the busing of schoolchildren to dismantle segregation which sparked protest from both the African American and White communities. In this same year, the city appointed its first African American judge. However, this seminal event in the city’s history was quickly overtaken by events which once again illustrated the unequal consideration of the African-American community in city politics. In 1975, the city began relocating African American residents from 22nd Avenue, which had developed into a vibrant community, in preparation for the construction of Interstate 275. Almost 1,000 families were relocated to disparate areas of the city, severing community and family bonds which has been painstakingly developed.
In the process, a previously thriving business district was also negatively impacted by the
construction of the highway, but the business owners were never compensated for their
losses.

The next blow to the community came in 1982 when the city developed the
“Intown Redevelopment Plan” which targeted the downtown area for redevelopment and
“revitalization”. The plan called for the relocation of many homes, businesses and
churches from an area of the city known as Gas Plant, the original African American
neighborhood, promising to improve employment opportunities in the area. As part of
this redevelopment, the city obtained the Laurel Park public housing community from the
Housing Authority, which was demolished in 1990 with plans to use the location for a
new baseball stadium parking lot. Residents from Laurel Park were promised help to
relocate to privately rented facilities under the Section 8 scheme, but many did not
receive the support they needed (St. Petersburg Times, 1999, 3b) Notably, the displaced
residents were not consulted about the developmental issues and had little input into the
planning of new facilities.

As well as the Laurel Park housing complex, the city also obtained several
additional houses from the local area, although a few residents held out and refused to
sell. Residents cited lack of faith in the city’s plans to provide for local residents and a
strong historical connection to the area. There was also some contention about the fair
market value offered for the homes, which was not enough to afford comparable property
elsewhere in the city. The cost of demolishing the neighborhood, $11.3 million, came
from a government redevelopment grant which was awarded in order to help improve the community. (Olive B McLin community project; St. Petersburg Times, March 29th 1998)

Following the contentious development of the baseball stadium (then called the Florida Sun Coast Dome, now called Tropicana Field), the city announced in 1999 it would open a business park bordering 22nd Avenue South, Fifth Ave South and I-275. In what was becoming a familiar refrain, the announcement promised employment for the surrounding African American community (although what sort was not specified) and an overall improvement of the area. However, as of 2004, the promised park is only partially developed and remains mostly empty. In 1997, a $27 million grant from Housing and Urban Development (HUD) was secured to improve Jordan Park. Redevelopment was sorely needed, because the complex had received very little structural improvements over the years and was in dire need of repair. The complex was demolished leaving a large empty lot and reducing neighborhood population by 52% and relocating 1,146 people. Those relocated were scattered throughout the city, severing community relationships and breaking historical connections with the area. The relocation of such a large community impacted the businesses on the neighboring 22nd Avenue and sealed the fate of many of the struggling businesses.

**New Urbanism in Jordan Park**

The redeveloped Jordan Park reopened in 2002 with its capacity reduced to 230 units. The redevelopment was undertaken by Landex Corp. of Baltimore which has redeveloped a number of housing developments, both public and private. The motivation
for the development was to create communities, as Judith Siegel, Landex company
president notes: “…we should not be building stand-alone housing projects, but instead
should be creating neighborhoods.” (National Real Estate Investor, March 1, 2003, p. 6).
The neighborhood designs were created by Urban Design Associates who are at the
forefront of creating urban communities, with such projects as Celebration in Orlando
and the Waterfront district in Baltimore.

This movement in urban design is known as ‘new urbanism’ which seeks to
integrate mixed use design, including shopping and leisure facilities, within
neighborhoods that have a mix of properties for different income groups. During the
organizational stages of the Jordan Park redevelopment, the residents indicated that they
were unhappy with the idea of mixed use housing and did not want some properties to be
available to buy. In acknowledgement of this, the organization of the community was
altered to exclude the option to own property, but the differences in sizes and styles
remain.

It is also important to note that new urbanism is usually applied to suburban
development or empty, downtown areas which call for urban infill projects. This means
the pre-existing residential plans are modified to include much denser organization of
housing. However, when applied to a public housing complex the results, as in the case of
Jordan Park, were to reduce the existing density and separate the communities which
previously existed. As the area was renowned for high crime rates and drug problems, it
is possible that some of the motivations for the style and methodology of the
redevelopment were related to a desire to decrease crime by reducing density and
fragmenting existing connections. The new community would be built in order to foster community spirit and would be organized along accepted lines. As Harvey (2000, p. 170) states: “The spirit of community has long been held as an antidote to threats of class war and revolutionary violence.”

The concept of trying to create neighborhoods through urban design bears similarities to the concept of “environmental determinism,” namely, that where you live determines your character or behavior (Peet, 1998). This philosophy which is associated with the rise of colonialism and imperialism was first applied to declining public housing complexes in Britain in the 1980s (Knox and Pinch, 2000). The argument was that giving low-income residents pleasant surroundings would minimize crime and vandalism. Needless to say, the experiment was completely unsuccessful. City officials failed to make the connection that providing jobs for people and eliminating poverty would be a better route towards crime prevention and sustainable community formation. The same basic theoretical model seems to have been applied to the Jordan Park housing complex, with the same lack of insight.

As well as the motivations listed above, the city also wished to reduce crime. The project organizers contracted an architectural design firm to consult on the redesign for Jordan Park. Working closely with the local police department, they established a design which followed the concept of Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) which helped to organize the design of the neighborhood to make it more accessible for police officers. The new design established a grid system which would make it easier for police officers to respond to calls. Clearly one of the motivations for
the redevelopment was crime reduction and not direct community improvement. The firm’s literature confirms this incentive: “The final design recommendations were praised by local police because it would help them respond to calls more effectively.” (MXD, http://www.mxd-manis.com/ftp/pub/cepjordan.htm, 2004).

As the new development was funded by a Hope IV grant, stringent rules governed who would be allowed to rent (e.g., no criminal convictions, credit check, etc.). There have been numerous complaints from residents about the quality of the homes and the workmanship, as well as issues with the style of the homes. Many feel the new development does not match the style of the local African American neighborhood and is instead a design which is desirable to the White city officials. When questioned about the design, St. Petersburg Housing Authority Commissioner Rev. Major Mason Walker said: "I have a concern about placing Colonial Revival architecture in the middle of an African-American community, I didn't want round columns. That represents slavery." (St. Petersburg Times, May 20, 2001, p. 1). Although residential cooperation was sought in elements of the design of Jordan Park, the ultimate decision over design characteristics remained with the city. How much of the redesign was for the benefit of the community, and how much was to fit in with an established ideal for the city?
Walking around Jordan Park, it feels strangely like a dead community with no vibrancy and very little activity on the streets. This compares to the previous neighborhood in which the residents interacted and were highly visible in and around their homes. Talking of community in Jordan Park, Tee Lassiter, interviewed by the St. Petersburg Times said: "In the 'hood, African Americans tend to sit out on their porch and they talk and sometimes we have cookouts. It's nothing planned. We just sit out and chill and listen to music and watch the kids play. You feel that closeness more." (St. Petersburg Times, April 1, 2001, p.7) The feelings of community loss from local residents contrast with the reaction from those supportive of the redevelopment, Governor Jeb Bush said: “It doesn't take any vision at all to see the difference between what Jordan Park was and what it is now," (St. Petersburg Times, February 2, 2002, p. 3b). The resign on Jordan Park claimed to be driven by the desire to create communities,
but the method and style of redevelopment drastically altered the community that had been present in the area for sixty years. The ‘communities’ being created are those which conform to an accepted ideal held by city elites which does not necessarily match that of the existing population.

In addition to the loss of community, the severing of social ties affects residents’ access to services and support. Within low-income neighborhoods, community and familial ties provide important networks of aid. Family members and friends provide childcare and babysitting services, as well as transportation support. Likewise, the ability to provide short term loans in the form of money or food is often an essential support supplied by community interaction. Local neighborhood shops will provide food advances when money is low, and offer the opportunity to pay for goods and services on a weekly basis. When communities become dislocated, all of these support services are also severed, leaving the low-income resident in a worse state then before and exacerbating the cycle of poverty.

The key here is not that communities do not need improvement, but that they do not necessarily want forced relocation or the organization of their communities to fit an established outside ideal. Continuously considering a group as transitory and regarding their neighborhoods as malleable creates community tensions and aggravates the existing poverty. The methods used to plan and organize the communities of the African American and Minority residents are indicative of the uneven power distribution within American cities generally. Residents are not asked in advance what improvements would benefit their communities, but instead are presented a choice of designs which have
already been selected by those planners given the task of reorganizing urban space. The reorganization of Jordan Park to complement the city’s promotion of new urbanism is an example of the attempt to organize Minority communities to fit White ideals of what a community space should be.

**History of Civil and Racial Violence**

The history of African Americans in St. Petersburg would be incomplete without reference to the violence and conflict the city has experienced. The polarization of the city was institutionalized in the judicial system. For instance, law enforcement was White, judges and juries were also White. As Arsenault notes, “In St Petersburg, as in most Southern cities, the entire legal system was biased against blacks.” (1996, p. 128)

As the dual societies of the city became more isolated, the potential for racial tension increased. There were numerous accounts of African American residents receiving harsher judgments than their White counterparts, but the existence of these frequent but minor racial injustices was often surpassed by other more major incidents. The first was the alleged killing of city police chief, James J. Mitchell by an African American man, John Thomas in 1905. The incident sparked vigilante justice, with White community members breaking into Thomas’s prison cell, shooting him and then kicking and mutilating his dead body. No prosecutions were bought against the vigilantes and there was limited reporting of the incident in the press.

The second such incident was in 1914 when an African American male was accused of murdering a local White business man and raping and assaulting his wife.
Hundreds of black men were detained and two suspects were identified, Ebenezer Tobin and John Evans. Despite failed attempts to obtain confessions from either man and repeated failed identifications by the victim, the men remained in jail. A mob gathered at the jail and broke into Evans’ cell. He was taken to Ninth Street and Second Avenue South, the heart of the African American neighborhood, and hanged from an electric light pole. The mob continued to fire weapons into the body and it was several hours before Evan’s corpse was taken down by city police. The following year, Tobin was tried and convicted of the murder and achieved the undesirable notoriety of being St. Petersburg’s first legal execution.

What is particularly troubling about the 1914 incident was the involvement of high level city officials in the vigilante process. When the incident was investigated, the local press, justice officials and city developers were quick to condone the vigilante justice ‘in principal’ and it was suggested to investigators that Evans was secretly tried and convicted by a panel of respected St. Petersburg residents prior to the hanging. Thus, it was not mob justice, just a regular execution by the people. (Arsenault 1996, p.130-133)

Racial tensions continued in St. Petersburg throughout the ensuing years. There have been numerous small scale conflicts between blacks and Whites and a continued bias against the African American community as a whole. In 1937, the black community had organized and intended to vote in an up-coming election for an independent police chief. The Ku Klux Klan organized a march, 200 people strong, to threaten and intimidate the black community and prevent attendance at the vote. Despite winning the
vote, the police chief Noel was removed from office and replaced with a known White supremacist, Doc. Vaughan. During his first month of office mob violence threatened again in protest against the killing of a young black man, ‘Honeybaby’ Moses, who was involved in a shootout with police. Two officers were killed before Moses was shot dead, and to assuage the threat of mob violence, Doc. Vaughan chose to publicly display Moses’ dead body.

The willingness of the black population to fight in the Second World War, and the similarity between the racist ideology of Jim Crow and Hitler’s anti-Semitic attitudes gave the African American calls for equal treatment a little more credence. Despite the change in attitudes of some, the St. Petersburg police department continued to target the black community through racial profiling. The chief of police, Doc. Vaughan, established a ‘work or jail’ ethic whereby residents who were not working in the war effort were sent to jail. This policy effectively acted as a forced recruitment strategy for the war effort. The department violently targeted pool halls and bars which were the haunts of the black community, but did not extend the same effort to the White community. (Arsenault, 1996, p. 305)

During the 1960s, the civil rights movement saw the African American community begin to exercise its collective voice and to protest against inequities. The city’s sanitation services underwent re-organization in 1968, sparking concern over job losses. In order to appease workers, the city promised employees a share of any profits the re-organization may create. However, by May 6, the promised remuneration had not occurred, and the city’s predominantly African American sanitation workers went on
strike. The city responded by firing 211 of the 235 employees sparking incensed protests in which 43 protesters were arrested. There was major community support for the striking workers and several White community members joined the protests. In August, the strike reached a head as workers were increasingly frustrated with the lack of response from the city officials. The frustrations spurned a related riot on August 17 which lasted for three days and saw violence, gunshot and arson across all of South St. Petersburg. The strike was subsequently resolved with the employees being reinstated, but without a pay-raise.

Throughout the 1970’s and 1980’s there were reports of minor neighborhood protests against police brutality and the targeting of African Americans. Most of these incidents never reached major news sources and were perceived to be the natural results of poor crime-ridden neighborhoods. There were protests throughout these years (against road building, police brutality, racial profiling, etc.) which were peaceful demonstrations, but they receive little media attention and consequently no action from city officials. Under these circumstances, it seems hardly surprising when a community protest ends up destroying property and becoming violent. On August 20 1978, a night of rioting and violence erupted in response to the shooting of an African American youth, Willie James, by a White policeman. The disturbance left sixteen people seriously injured and extensive damage to several homes, business and automobiles in the Midtown area. When the incident was investigated, the judicial system decided that the killing was justified. As with the recent incidents in 2004, the African American community felt it had not received proper justice, and felt the local police force had utilized excessive force.
In a similar incident, a violent civil disturbance erupted on October 26 1996 when TyRon Lewis was shot dead by policemen in South St. Petersburg after being pulled over for a routine traffic stop. At the scene of the shooting a crowd gathered to protest the police brutality and call for justice. Arguments broke out between protesters and police, and the crowd began to throw bricks and stones. As well as direct conflicts with the police, there were twenty-eight arsons set that evening and several incidents of looting. The crowd was advised to disperse, tear gas was deployed, and police issued a warning that those who did not disperse within three minutes would be automatically arrested. A second incident occurred four weeks later on November 13 when the police deputy who shot Lewis was acquitted. The community felt its concerns had not been addressed at all and called for the police deputy involved in the shooting to be reprimanded. The community lashed out and protested with gunshots, street protests and ten arson fires. During both incidents, several people were injured and there was extensive damage to property. (Chrisp, 2000 p. 307-309; St. Petersburg Times, 1996, p. 1)

In reaction to these events, the city redoubled its efforts to address crime problems in South St. Petersburg, sparking additional protests and frustration within the black community. The community was targeted for ‘clean sweeps’ with arrest rates doubling and subsequent new claims of police brutality. Amid questions of the racial profiling by the city’s police force, the city appointed its first African American police chief on June 11 1997. However, the racial bias in the city police force remains, with young black males being targeted by police. The problem is so common that a local city councilor
publicly acknowledged the continued existence of racial profiling within the city police force. (Press Conference, May 15 2004).

The most recent disturbance occurred on May 2 2004, when a White police officer shot a black youth, Marquell McCullough, after stopping him for a suspected drug offence. It is claimed that McCullough drove his vehicle towards a police cruiser with the intent to kill. Again, like the two previous occasions, there were many questions about police actions. In response to incidents of police brutality nation-wide, (Rodney King and so on) police cruisers in metropolitan areas are now equipped with video cameras to monitor the behavior of the arresting officers and the community. On this occasion one police cruiser had a broken video recorder, and the other was out of video tape. The community was once again frustrated by what it saw as an unnecessary shooting, feeling that the officer’s life was never at risk. Following on from this disturbance, there were a few peaceful protests, which received no media attention at all.

Less than two weeks later on May 12 2004, the city once again experienced violent protest. A memorial march had been organized for Marquell McCullough and Tyron Lewis, coinciding with the start of a civil lawsuit brought against the city of St. Petersburg by the family of Tyron Lewis. This violent protest saw windows smashed, buildings and cars burned, stones and bricks thrown, and gunshot directed at police officers. Although the events were less extreme than those of 1996, the city still drafted over one hundred police officers to calm the area. There were twenty arrests, 40% of whom were youths. As with previous incidents, the protests were centered around the Midtown district, the area with the highest concentration of Minority residents and the
highest crime and poverty rates in the city. Table 3 below details the dramatically different conditions within Midtown compared to the rest of the city.

Table 3: Comparison of Midtown and City Characteristics, 2000

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Midtown</th>
<th>City</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Percentage African American</td>
<td>86.4</td>
<td>22.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unemployment</td>
<td>6.9%</td>
<td>2.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Median Household Income</td>
<td>$19,277</td>
<td>$36,701</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average Household Income</td>
<td>$27,280</td>
<td>$56,911</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Per Capita Income</td>
<td>$10,599</td>
<td>$22,637</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Riot or Protest?

There have been several discussions in the local media and in academic literature about what to call these kinds of disturbances. Some have argued that the label ‘riot’ paints a negative picture of the African American community and vastly over-exaggerates the extents of the disturbances. However, it can also be argued that referring to them as civil unrest is a way for the city’s public relations people to diminish the significance of the events and to retain a more positive image of St. Petersburg. Sanitizing the nature of these protests by calling them ‘disturbances’ equates them with minor scuffles at sports events and doesn’t acknowledge the political and activist-based nature of the events. The organization of the urban environment into socially polarized communities effectively limits the options for societal frustrations to be heard. As Harvey (2000, p. 243) notes: “The uneven conditions of geographical development that now prevail in Baltimore do not allow the personal to be political in anything other than
restrictive ways.” Thus, the conditions within the created urban environment increase the likelihood for protest to be manifested violently.

Several community members within Midtown have referred to the events as protests, as shown in the mural on the community center wall pictured below (Figure 8). Following from this, the term ‘violent protest’ seems to better fit what has occurred; an outpouring of the pent-up frustrations of a community which has been given little attention and consideration and who are, therefore, drawn towards protest in order to be heard. Clearly, the destructive or violent lashing-out which accompanies some of these disturbances is unwelcome by most members of the community, but the underlying motivation is to protest and to be heard. Those who attempt to diminish the extent of these violent protests are attempting to silence the voices of a community struggling to be heard and find a voice in a media filtered by corporate and racial agendas.

Figure 9: Enoch Davies Community Center Mural
Reactions to the Protests

There are two distinct responses within the African American community to these protests and a third reaction from the White community. The local branch of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored people (NAACP) would prefer that the incidents are downplayed in order to maintain calm and prevent further frustrations between the African American and White communities. Although they acknowledge the anger and frustrations of the community, it is felt that violence and destruction are counter-productive to both the image of the city and the African American community of St. Petersburg. In contrast, the local branch of the International People’s Democratic Uhuru Movement (InPDUM), want to see the incidents gain the recognition they deserve as the social protests of an oppressed people. Failing to acknowledge the frustrations of the community and accepting promises that are never fulfilled serves to further frustrate the community and maintain the city as a space of disparity.

In contrast to the opinions of the African American community representatives is the reaction to the violence from White city officials. This vastly different attitude was evidence in the two press conferences held by the city in response to the violent protest of May 12 2004 and the result of the TyRon Lewis civil trial. The first press conference was conducted by Mayor Baker and Police Chief Harman and focused on the efforts of the police department to control the violence the previous evening. The rhetoric criticized the criminality of the activities and the intentions of the police department to ensure citizen safety. There was an indication from Mayor Baker that he was aware of the promotional leaflets distributed by the Uhuru group which were calling for city justice, but that he had
not specifically spoken to the group. When he was asked if he thought he should have, Mayor Baker replied “No”. The city was obviously aware of the feelings of unrest within the community relating to the civil trial, but chose not to directly address these issues until a violent protest had occurred.

The second press conference was directly after the city court had ruled against the family of TyRon Lewis in the civil trial on May 14 2004. Fearing another night of violent protest, Mayor Baker’s address was followed by several key members of the African American community, many of whom live in the Midtown area. The tone of this conference was very placatory and focused less upon the role of the police officers and more upon acknowledging the concerns of Midtown residents. The chosen African American speakers eloquently discussed their opinions of Midtown development with a strong focus upon the positive elements which had been achieved. There was recognition of community frustrations, but an appeal for residents to be patient and commit to the long-term development of the community.

There was a marked difference between techniques of the two racial groups. Mayor Baker again focused upon the positive achievements of development within Midtown and failed to acknowledge any short comings of the revitalization process. He restated his commitment to equity: “We will redouble our efforts to ensure our city is seamless”, but also commented that criminal activity will be punished. This failure to acknowledge the protesters as political, and continually framing them as criminal serves to reduce the significance of their arguments and silence their civic voice.

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In contrast to Mayor Baker, the African American representatives acknowledged the shortcomings of revitalization and efforts towards equity within the city. Although the concentration was on appeals for calm and the continuing push towards community development, the lack of progress was identified. Frank Peterman, city Council representative was forthright in his disagreement with the verdict received, but concentrated on encouraging peace and said: “…violence is not the way to correct any wrongs”. Ken Walsh, Pinellas County Commissioner commented that: “There are constructive ways to deal with these issues…violence of this nature feeds the stereotypes of the African American community… (violence is) destructive to economic development and social justice.” It seems that the African American representatives, many of whom live in Midtown, recognized the problems with development more so than the White representatives, reinforcing the concept of the city as one with dual identities.

As the press conference concluded, Mayor Baker appealed for calm and reiterated his desire to create what he called a “seamless city”, claiming he wanted a city in which “there are no vacant lots and no divisions within the city”. Given the city’s history, the idea of a city with no class or race boundaries is incongruous with the city’s image as a destination for tourists, high-dollar spenders and second residences. Is it possible to create a “seamless city” with million dollar condominiums and marinas a mile away from areas where 79% of the community survive on less than $8,900 per year? Moreover, Mayor Baker’s complete ignorance of the dire material conditions within the African American community was revealed by his appeal to members of the community to email
him to offer their help and indicate if they were in support of future redevelopment projects in the troublesome Midtown area.

**Conclusion**

St. Petersburg has relied on tourism and its related industries since the city’s founding and as such, the city’s development has centered on providing services and amenities which encourage tourism and day-trippers. The recent focus has been firmly placed upon the development of a consumption city which encourages the recruitment of upper-income residents and portrays the image of St. Petersburg as a city of play and enjoyment. However, the darker side of the city’s history has been the systematic organization of the city and its services to exclude minorities, specifically African Americans and to exacerbate the conditions of poverty. The stark polarization within the city has caused community tensions which threaten to overshadow the image of the city as an ideal place to live. As such, the voices of the African American and other Minority communities have been silenced, and the city has focused on developments which promote the most positive city image. Chapter Three will detail the methodology which will be used to examine socio-spatial polarization as it exists in the city today.
Chapter Three

Methodology

The methodological approach for this study was adapted from two main sources. The first was *Researching Social Life*, by Nigel Gilbert, (1993) which provides an overview for prospective researchers within the social sciences. The study details each step of the research process from establishing a research goal to organizing results. Within social research, it is important to maintain an open approach to research methodology. Often, it is inappropriate to identify expected findings from qualitative research, as the very process of this identification can limit the researchers ability to explore the gamut of related elements which contribute to a given phenomena. Gilbert (1993, p. 33) suggests a research methodology which is broadly structured and allows the researcher to learn from her subjects, “…since research involves the continual interaction of ideas and data, you should always be on the look-out for serendipitous or unexpected findings.” With this in mind, the study methodology was structured to be as broad and reflexive as possible.

The second influence was from the methodologies utilized by Jan Nijman in *Ethnicity, Class and the Economic Internationalization of Miami*, in *Social Polarization in Post-Industrial Metropolises*, (O’Loughlin and Friedrichs, 1996). This case study
examines the socio-spatial polarization in Miami, Florida, and identifies numerous factors which have contributed to the spatial polarization seen in the city today. The methodology employs both qualitative and quantitative analyses in order to address the existence of socio-spatial polarization and the factors which have contributed to the spatial distribution within the city. Miami has similar characteristics to St. Petersburg in that it is also a city without a major industrial history. Like St. Petersburg, the rise of the service sector employment base has less to do with a declining industry base, and more to do with the internationalization of the city (see employment characteristics in table 4 below) The resulting polarization within Miami bears closer relation to institutional organization than with a declining economic base. Due to the similarities between the study areas, the methodology utilized by Nijman would be applicable to the study of St. Petersburg. Therefore, elements of the data analysis and the post-modern deconstruction of the motivations of city officials were incorporated into this study methodology.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Employment:</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Management, Professional</td>
<td>34.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Service Occupations</td>
<td>16.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sales, Office Occupations</td>
<td>28.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Farming, Fishing</td>
<td>0.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Construction, Maintenance, Extraction</td>
<td>8.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Production, Transportation</td>
<td>12.7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Although the study by Nijman provides a useful framework which can be couched in the broad structuring suggested by Gilbert (1993), it did not interview any residents directly. As one of the aims of this study is to potentially improve the living conditions and political voice of St. Petersburg residents, it would seem wholly appropriate to discuss concerns with them. As such, this research broadly followed the methodologies utilized in the study as discussed, but incorporated the additional element of direct interviews with city residents. In order to ensure a balanced voice was heard, and to incorporate different views of the city, this case study also included interviews with those directly involved in the planning and developmental process.

**Citizen Voices**

Following from Gilbert’s (1993) suggestions, the organization of the interview portion of this study was as reflexive as possible. The interviewees were asked a series of open-ended questions related to their awareness of city planning issues and their opinions on city development. As noted by Gilbert, a reflexive approach allows for unexpected elements to emerge, and as such the interviews were conducted as informally as possible. With a more structured interview process, the discourse is steered towards pre-conceived notions which can prevent supplemental information from emerging. Conducting interviews as conversations allows for a clearer picture of the true feelings of interviewees to emerge. It also helps to break the barriers between researcher and subject, allowing for the interviewee to steer the conversation to the topics which are of most interest to them.
An issue of importance to all researchers conducting personal interviews is that of the researcher/subject relationship. Structured interviews establish a hierarchy between the researcher and interviewee which can influence and restrict the responses given. For this reason interviews should be as unstructured as possible giving the interviewee more freedom and greater status within the research interview. By minimizing the potential for psychological gaps in status between interviewee and researcher, the process can be more dialectical in nature and lead to more open responses (Narayan, 1993).

Related to the hierarchical relationship which may exist, there are also concerns for researchers involved in studies evaluating racial or social groups of which they themselves are not members. Traditional ethnographic work has established the insider/outsider debate, suggesting that group outsiders will not receive accurate statements from interviewees as they are not seen as members of the group. Despite the popularity of this viewpoint, there are numerous studies which challenge this concept and suggest the very opposite is true (Rose, 2001; Acker, 2000). Several studies have raised alternative perspectives on the outsider debate. Damaris Rose, for instance, suggests that the identity and status of a researcher is a fluid social construction and as such the relationship between interviewee and researcher can be affected during the interview process through language and discussion style. A more unstructured, conversational style allows for greater equality between researcher and interviewee to be established and would help assuage any hierarchical barriers.

An interesting concept emerging from these investigations is the idea that those who are considered as outsiders may actually have an advantage over researchers from
within the group. As Rose (2001, p.7) notes: “By not belonging to a group under study, one is perceived as neutral and may be given certain information not given to an insider”. This is arguably an even stronger case when the researcher is from a different country. As a non-American, it would be harder to place me in a social or cultural grouping as the cultural signifiers of status (such as language and dress), are different for an outsider. Likewise, my position as an outsider may have aided with my interview process as the interviewees have the opportunity to describe their social and cultural conditions to an outsider with less obvious political standing.

Despite this discussion of the concepts of insider and outsider, we need to address the issue with caution. The very notion of outsider and insider is problematic as it reduces the complexities of social and racial groups to distinct definable stereotypes. The assumption that merely being a member of a social or racial group provides greater insight or allows for automatic rapport is simplistic and naive. Reinforcing these ideas within academic research is a continuation of the segregation and separation of people based on race, gender or socio-economic standing. Although the issues of equality and parity within research are important concerns, the automatic assumption of difference between groups makes major assumptions about interviewees prior to the interview process and can prevent the researcher from conducting balanced interviews. The very assumption of any difference should be acknowledged within research methodology to prevent the researcher from reinforcing these social and racial generalizations.
Organization of Interviews

The interview process was separated into two main areas; the interviews with developers, planners and advocates (group one) and interviews with city residents (group two). Both groups were interviewed following a loosely structured interview guide as outlined above. Each group was asked a set of key open-ended questions designed to follow an anthropological, ethnographic approach allowing for multiple responses. If there was an area of particular interest to an interviewee, they were encouraged to continue speaking on this topic. Responses from group one were tape recorded in order to maintain accuracy for lengthier responses, group two responses were recoded manually.

Group one was asked the same questions as group two, but with the addition of one question addressing their specific involvement in the planning process. The members in group one were selected based on personal interest, involvement or exclusion from the planning process. The members included citizen advocates, business interests, newspaper journalists, planners, developers and city officials. The interview process was limited by availability of interview subjects, and their willingness to participate in the study.

Group two residents were selected by utilizing a cluster sampling technique, whereby a geographic unit, in this case a Census Block, is selected and all of the members of that unit are surveyed. In order to compare the opinions of residents from the different social groups and to illustrate the extremes of social-polarization in St. Petersburg, two resident samples were selected. The first was chosen from a low-income high Minority area and the second from a high-income low-Minority area. The characteristics were evaluated at the Block Group level in order to include economic data.
Once the sample Block Group had been identified, the smaller areal unit of Census Block was selected from within this group, chosen based on similarity of size.

Figure 9: Location of Selected Study Areas

The first sample area (A) contains a 100% Minority population, 99.6% of whom are African Americans, and a poverty level of 49.7%. The Block level data shows there are 22 residences in the Block containing 36 people. The second sample area (B) contains
a 2.4% Minority with no African American residents and a 0.48% poverty level. The Block chosen has the same population as the other selection, with 22 residences containing 53 people. The similarity in size between the two sample areas allows for easier comparison of variables.

The purpose of these interviews was to evaluate the level of interest and awareness of residents regarding planning and developmental issues. The interviews were conducted over a two week period and residents were approached at three different time periods. This enabled the maximum number of residents to be available and prevented the skewing of responses via unequal resident representation. It should be noted that the timing of the interviews was directly after the violent protests which erupted following the civil trial in the case of the death of Tyron Lewis. These protests occurred in the Midtown neighborhood which was the location of one of the selected sample areas.

**Data Analysis Methodologies**

The statistical data analyzed for this study was obtained from the Census Bureau, utilizing the 2000 data report. Comparisons of the change in racial composition of St. Petersburg were obtained from the Census Bureau for the years 1910 to 2000. As with any research conducted utilizing spatial units, the scale of the areal unit chosen to conduct the analysis can alter the results obtained. As seen in table 1, aggregating data into larger spatial units can mask the existence of dissimilarity (the Modifiable Areal Unit Problem or MAUP). When measured at the tract level, the greatest concentration of minorities is 96% whereas when measured at the Block Group or Block level, there are
several units which are identified as 100% Minority. Therefore, data for this study was examined at the smallest areal unit available for all elements of interest. Although racial information is available at the Census Block level, for reasons of privacy, no economic information is available. In order to ensure parity between the statistical comparisons, all analysis was conducted at the Block Group level.

The data regarding race is organized into White and Minority following the criteria discussed in chapter one. Although the largest Minority group in St. Petersburg is African Americans, there is a growing presence of other Minority groups who are often neglected in studies. As racial segregation tends to organize itself more along delineations of difference than similarity, it was important to consider all minorities and aggregate them as a group. As Feagin (1996, p.132) notes: “Whites are systematically segregated not only from Blacks but also from most other Americans of color. Residential segregation is a basic part of the social process whereby systematic racism is reproduced from one generation to the next”. These Minorities are as equally polarized into particular neighborhoods and face the same segregation from the White community as African Americans. There have been a number of studies which have examined the polarization of all races in American cities (Massey and Denton, 1993, [2001]) indicating that the issue is one requiring equal consideration alongside specific African American segregation. For this reason, all those who did not identify themselves as White were aggregated into the single group labeled Minorities. Certain aspects of the study necessitated examining African Americans as a separate group, in these cases the results are noted as such.
The economic factors considered examined the percentage of the population who were considered to be living below the poverty level. The Census Bureau defined the poverty level in 2000 as $8,794 per annum for a single person and $17,463 for a family of two adults and two children. It should be noted that this level is not geographically adjusted, however, it still provides a useful measure of poverty distribution within the city. As issues of economic polarization are evidenced with extremes of incomes, the per capita income and median household income was examined for both racial categories.

**Measures of Segregation**

There are several methodologies that can be used to measure the extent of racial polarization within communities, including ethnographic studies, statistical regression techniques and exposure rates. As these studies are usually identified as ‘segregation’ studies, this term will be applied to these measurements and used as a method to evaluate racial polarization. One of the first and most common methods developed for such research is the dissimilarity index or D, introduced by Duncan and Duncan, 1955. The index is a measurement of the degree of evenness of the residential distribution of race, with an uneven distribution indicating the presence of segregation. The index is calculated on a 1-100 scale, with 0 meaning there is no segregation and 100 meaning there is total segregation. The method is applied to an area of study (such as a city or MSA) that is divided into measurable sub-units (such as Census Tracts or Block Groups) for which racial information are available. The dissimilarity index is calculated by comparing the existing distribution of races within the areal sub-unit to the average for
the entire area. This ensures that the actual distribution is compared to the distribution that would be expected if there were even racial distribution.

The number calculated indicates the amount of a given population that would have to relocate in order to achieve even distribution, so a dissimilarity index of 75 indicates that 75% of minorities would have to move to achieve uniform distribution. As the index is organized around spatial units, the effects of scale need to be considered; using a larger aggregated unit would provide a lower score and potentially mask dissimilarity. Therefore, as noted above, the data was examined at the Block Group level which allows for the effects of areal unit to be minimized.

As well as examining racial distribution, the dissimilarity index can also be applied to measure the extent of spatial polarization due to other factors. In order to examine the extent of residential polarization based upon poverty levels, the dissimilarity index will be calculated for poverty distribution. In this context, the number obtained would indicate the percentage of people who would have to relocate in order to achieve the expected spatial distribution of poverty. If the index calculated differs from the city expected distribution, then this would indicate that there is uneven distribution of wealth within the city.

There are limitations associated with the use of the dissimilarity index which need to be noted. The first is the limited applicability to multi-ethnic communities; the measure compares two groups and researchers must simplify racial groups into two groups or compare groups independently against one another. The second issue involves the assumption of homogeneity across a spatial unit, which may not represent the actual
distribution which exists. The final limitation of the dissimilarity index which is most applicable to this study is the lack of spatial representation within the calculation. Although the index examines the evenness of distribution within an area, it does not directly illustrate the spatial distribution of phenomena. For this reason, the dissimilarity index for geographical studies is best suited to research which combines the index with other measures.

Another method used to calculate segregation is the P* exposure index, which measures the likelihood of a resident having a neighbor of a different race and it is calculated for each group separately. Although the P* adds an element of explanation to segregation studies, it is effected by the relative size of the communities concerned; the chance for a Minority to have contact with a majority is far greater then the majority to have contact with the Minority due to the relative size of each group. However, it does provide a useful comparison of the extent of exposure between racial groups.

In addition to the above measures, there are several other methodologies which aim to better explain the extent of community segregation. Massey and Denton (1989) identify five dimensions of segregation which are often, although not always, present for hypersegregated groups. These five dimensions are: evenness, exposure, clustering, centralization and concentration. Like the dissimilarity index and the P* measure, there are statistical measures which can be calculated to measure the extent of clustering, centralization and concentration. However, for the purposes of this study, these measured were illustrated with maps which visually represent the extent of these measures. There
remains the potential for further research examining these measures statistically in order to enhance the claim of socio-spatial polarization within the city.

Conclusion

The methodologies chosen provide a rounded picture of the spatial polarization as it exists in St. Petersburg. Although much of the segregation and polarization within the city can be visually observed through stark differences in neighborhoods, the inclusion of statistical analyses gives the study more authority and confirms the existence of spatially polarized communities. A critical analysis of the Vision 2020 plan and other city development strategies reveals the underlying motivations of the city and their planning agenda. The extent to which the city addresses the institutional mechanisms which create and/or reinforce polarization exposes their level of commitment to achieving city-wide parity. Coupling this analysis in its geographical and historical context adds to the picture of exclusion and polarization of certain city residents. Chapter Four continues this examination by detailing the history of planning in St. Petersburg and the motivations behind city development.
Examining the history of the settlement of St. Petersburg reveals the planning and developmental motivations which have shaped the spatial distributions that exist today. The aims of the city since its incorporation have been to promote St. Petersburg as a destination for tourism and relocation. It did not encourage migration with the specific promise of employment, but rather with the promise of a good life. The focus has always been on the image of the city and the maintenance of this image, often at the expense of the needs or concerns of its residents. This desire to protect the image of the city and to ensure the visitation of the high-dollar tourists has been partly responsible for the spatial distribution, and likewise the social distribution, we see in the city today.

Like many new settlements, St Petersburg’s early development was conducted without a formalized city plan. The drive to settle the area and encourage development saw the city push for construction and investment without consideration of the city’s organization. Although elaborate city structure was not so necessary with a small population, the foundations which were established at this time have influenced the organization of the city as it is today. A more subtle remnant of early settlement is the social hierarchy within the city. Promotion of tourism ensures a dual city will emerge
with a contentious but symbiotic relationship between those who provide services and those who consume them.

The promotion of St. Petersburg as a pleasant city for relocation and tourism was the primary goal of the city’s most prominent early advocate, William Straub. His official connection to the city was as editor of the St. Petersburg Times, but he was heavily involved in the promotion of the city and established an early version of the Chamber of Commerce. He promoted the development of the tourist trade for the city and was an advocate for the preservation of the natural beauty which was considered to be the city’s main draw. His primary objective was to develop the waterfront area of the city, calling for the removal of industry and facilities from the area and suggesting instead, that the city purchase the area. The city accepted his suggestion and embarked upon a series of improvements to create ‘The City Beautiful’ and to establish the waterfront area as the city’s focal point.

Following from Straub’s lead, the promotion of tourism became the focus of the city’s development. As suggested by Stephenson (1997, p. 37): “The leaders understood that the city’s vitality did not depend on producing goods, but on the promotion and creation of a fabricated environment where visitors could pursue their fantasies.” The city was firmly committed to promoting its image and securing the tourist market, spending $502,000 on advertising between 1921 and 1926. (Stephenson, 1997, p.38) However, as Arsenault (1996, p. 124) asserts, these expenditures on tourism promotion were at the expense of certain city residents: “In 1910, blacks accounted for 26.6 percent of St. Petersburg’s 4,127 inhabitants. Predictably, this striking figure was never included in the
city’s promotional leaflets. ‘St. Petersburg does not have a particularly large colored population,’ city planner Nolen insisted in the 1920’s, ‘but like all southern cities it has its colored section’”. Clearly from this early stage, there were some residents within the city who were considered less than full citizens.

When John Nolen was hired in 1922 he was known for his theories of urban design that involved preserving the natural environment and incorporating natural features into city design. This made him a perfect candidate for St. Petersburg planning and the promotion of ‘The City Beautiful’. In his comprehensive plan, called St. Petersburg Today, St Petersburg Tomorrow, Nolen proposed restricting development and commercial growth to certain areas, theorizing that the concentration of economic activities encourages growth. This separation of commercial and residential activities would help to maintain the natural environment as a pleasant surrounding for residential areas and would ensure the protection of the tourism revenue upon which St. Petersburg depended. One of the key elements to secure the uniqueness of the area to tourists was the suggestion of establishing the barrier islands as natural preserves.

The urban areas were also to be preserved, with the plan calling for an extensive system of city parks. Nolan proposed a system of streets with major thoroughfares separated by areas of green to maintain an attractive setting, and smaller streets that followed natural contours of the land. Neighborhoods were to be organized around civic activities and the preservation of the individual character of each community. When the plan was published in the St. Petersburg Times, there was a single criticism from an influential builder, C. M. Roser, who highlighted the failure to specifically address the
needs of the African American community. Roser suggested the city supervise the building of an updated African American neighborhood with churches, schools and transportation access. However these ideas were not incorporated into the comprehensive plan.

The creation of such a plan was revolutionary at the time, not just for the content, but for the concept of planning a city and limiting development. The beauty and uniqueness of St. Petersburg ensured it was popular with real estate developers, but the zoning and land use restrictions Nolen suggested would limit the extensive expansion of the city. With developers holding great power and influence in the city, it was inevitable that the plan would be unpopular. Critics claimed it was an erasing of rights and freedom, placing planning in the hands of governmental officials being tantamount to agreeing to despotic control. In order to enact Nolen’s plan, the city needed to establish a Planning Law which would have given the city certain rights to control development on private property. This was the point of contention with real estate developers and residents leading to the eventual rejection of the Planning Law in 1923.

Despite the reticence of the St. Petersburg boosters, other cities in Florida were more accepting of planning. The Florida City Planning Association was formed and in 1925, a state-wide planning directive was passed by the legislature. This provided the legal framework needed to apply comprehensive city plans. Nolen was approached by St. Petersburg to update his earlier plan for the city. However, with a boom in city planning, Nolen was busy elsewhere and instead suggested a junior planner from his firm, Justin Hartzog, could complete the task in his stead.
Hartzog began with this intention, but the idea of such an extensive plan remained unpopular. Hartzog was asked to create a new, less ambitious plan which would focus on planning errors and be less ideological. Even the modified plan presented by Hartzog was too restrictive for city developers, who refused to accept any zoning ordinances. The plan which was finally presented was altered to such a great degree that it became almost unrecognizable from the original. When it was finally accepted in 1929, it came without the necessary zoning regulations required to administer the plan. When the zoning ordinance was finally approved in 1933, it had been heavily modified to appease business interests and developers and contained extensive commercial areas.

The New Deal saw many of Hartzog’s recommendations adopted, but the zoning regulations remained a point of contention. In keeping with the city’s interest in economic development, the city employed a known practical planner, Harland Bartholomew, in 1940. Bartholomew advocated efficient planning which focused little on utopian ideology or aesthetic considerations. The role of planning was to encourage development and provide the best conditions for commercial investment; organized planning could spur economic success. Bartholomew assessed the city’s population growth and suggested the city should develop an inner core which centralized amenities and services. However, the population figures were vastly inaccurate and there were sections which contained impractical and inaccurate land-use suggestions. Despite the lack of credibility, the plan was adopted in 1944 as a basis for much needed improvements, which included the re-structuring of city transportation with a renewed focus on the automobile.
The shortcomings of the Bartholomew plan became particularly apparent in the following years as the population swelled and a wave of residential construction created environmental and structural problems. The city had too many cars, congested roadways, poorly planned commercial and industrial areas, and neighborhoods with an increasing loss of any individual character. The growing development problems led the city to appoint its first full-time city planner, John Harvey, in 1955. Like his predecessors, Harvey suggested the limiting of commercial and industrial zoning and the organization of development around established guidelines. Despite many attempts, the planners could not persuade city developers to limit the amount of commercial land and the level was set at 8% which was twice the national average. This illustrates the city’s focus on development, as Stephenson suggests: “…this discrepancy between St. Petersburg’s land classification scheme and national planning standards reflected the degree to which commercial realtors dictated public policy.” (1997, p. 123).

This developmental focus ensured the problems associated with unplanned construction continued to haunt St. Petersburg. The natural environment which was the lifeblood of the city’s tourist industry was being destroyed. The dredge and fill of Boca Ciega Bay led to the ultimate environmental collapse of the bay and similar such events occurred throughout the city. The increasing air and water pollution led to a public outcry as ‘The City Beautiful’ began to be shrouded in ugly development and a sprawling urban landscape. Residents began to call for increased restrictions on development in an attempt to protect the environment and ensure a pleasant, more livable city.
In response to the public outcry, the city established the Citizen’s Goals Committee in an attempt to establish workable growth management goals. The committee was made up of citizen advocates, realtors, investors and environmentalists amongst others. One of the primary goals identified by the committee was the redevelopment of the downtown area, along with the restoration of natural habitats and beautification of city parks. The participation was incorporated into Harvey’s Conceptual Plan which focused largely on a “Man-made environment in harmony with nature”. The plan presented contained many elements which bore similarities to the plan presented by Nolen, but unlike the first plan, Harvey’s plan was adopted by the city in 1974.

The practical application of the plan was carried out by Bruce Hahl and involved extensive public hearings and citizen workshops which assessed the practicality of the plan. Like the plans that had preceded this one, the sticking points were the restrictions placed upon land-use. The plan focused on limiting land zoned for commercial use, arguing that there was too much within the city boundaries. Arguments over this aspect continued through to 1977 when a heavily modified version of the plan, which adjusted the commercial usage restrictions, was finally accepted.

St. Petersburg’s current plan is a heavily modified version of Harvey’s 1974 plan. Large sections of the plan have been altered to accommodate the interests of the business and development community and the restrictions on commercial property have been largely ignored. The accompanying zoning regulations have been created with little formal organization and individual requirements have been approved on a case-by-case basis. The requirements for green spaces have been applied in certain residential areas,
and ignored in others. This has left the current city with a spatial mismatch and uneven development which arguably focuses on the interests of businesses rather than the citizens. The provision of services is not equally applied across the city with the disparities between neighborhoods being strikingly evident (Stephenson, 1997).

The plans developed by the city have been co-opted by business and developer interests to promote the intensive development of the city. Where the planners have achieved success has been in the provision of amenities and the organization of city elements which appeal to tourists and which promote the city as a resort city. The city focus has been on development and money making and has not addressed the uneven development seen city-wide. No comprehensive plan has focused upon the stratification within the city or on the needs of the low-income or Minority communities within the city. The practices of the city developers in swaying the planning of the city has largely ensured the needs of business are met before the needs of residents.

In the 1980’s there was a renewed focus on the redevelopment of the downtown area and a renewed interest in the promotion of tourism. In order to raise the image of the city, funds were allocated to improve the Municipal Pier, the Bayfront Center and to build a sports stadium. The city entered into a partnership with private developers, Bay Plaza, who would manage and market the three main attractions. At the same time, the city was to focus on the redevelopment of the downtown area, including the construction of an upscale retail mall. The plans were ambitious and were seen as the best way to promote the city into the future and ensure an identity as an upscale resort city.
However, there were numerous critics of the proposed downtown development. City residents and citizen groups felt that the venture would never succeed in St. Petersburg as it was a ‘blue collar’ tourist destination. Another concern was the lack of citizen involvement in the planning process which it was felt would ensure the project’s failure. The city went ahead with the development, only to see it fail miserably in 1991 after $40 million in city investment. St. Petersburg had attempted to reestablish the image of the city as an upscale resort town, as Stephenson (1997, p. 186) claims: “While the 1920’s real estate boom is long forgotten, boosterism and speculation still drive communal decision-making throughout Florida.” Despite this failure, the city was firmly committed to its future as a city in which to play and relax, and its dream of an upscale retail location was to come to fruition in 2002 with the opening of Baywalk.

After the violent protests of 1996 drew media attention to the poor living conditions in Midtown, the city was forced to address the concerns of residents. In response, the then Mayor, David Fischer initiated what was called the ‘Challenge’ which targeted the predominantly African American, low-income neighborhood of Midtown for economic development and community improvements. The primary goal of the ‘Challenge’ was to address the high crime rates of the neighborhood and to improve the residents’ standard of living. As part of this redevelopment, the Jordan Park housing complex, and several smaller housing areas were demolished along with the clearing of individual private housing which was in disrepair. Partly as a function of the housing redevelopment and the crack-down on crime, the area saw its population fall by 16.3% between 1990 and 2001.
Despite this commitment to the ‘Challenge’ area, the Midtown district in 2004 remains the site of the largest spatial concentration of Minorities and those living below the poverty line in the city. The area has a higher unemployment rate than the rest of the city and the greatest concentration of those receiving public assistance. The average per capita income for those in employment is less than half that of the rest of the city. The ‘Challenge’ seems to have achieved little for the residents of Midtown in the eight years it has been in force except for the diffusion of communities and the destruction of neighborhoods.

A New Comprehensive Plan

The city’s developmental focus had left many residents within the city unhappy with the progress. The city was still highly spatially polarized both racially and socio-economically, with uneven spatial development occurring at an extreme scale. The low-income African American and other Minority communities were unhappy with the escalating crime and decay in their own neighborhoods and with the amount of city revenues spent on high profile developments. In contrast, city elites wanted increased investment in facilities which would ensure that the upscale global image of the city was maintained and that the city remained exclusive.

The planning department was faced with a city with two identities, one as the location of upscale exclusive residences, and the other of low-income, working-class homes. In reaction to this contested identity, the Developmental Services Department promoted the construction of a new, comprehensive city plan which was to establish the
guidelines for city development through to the future. The plan is ambitiously called Vision 2020 and seeks to plan for St. Petersburg “Today, tomorrow and for the future.”

Vision 2020 seeks to create an ideology of the perfect city and plan accordingly to incorporate this image. In this way, the plan takes a cue from Nolan: “In a word, we should frame a concept, an ideal of what we wish the city to be, and then we should make it one of the controlling purposes in the development of a city plan” (Quoted in Stephenson, 1997, p. 41). The relationship between ideology and planning ensures that a city develops according to the needs and wants of its residents. In order to do this, the city has to incorporate resident voices within their planning strategy, something which has previously been little considered.

Lack of representation within the planning process had led to residents who were unhappy with their city. In response to the residents’ frustrations, a key element of the planning process was to be citizen participation, organized around the needs and desires of city residents. The plan makes the claim: “Vision 2020 was designed to be a true dialogue exploring the nature of the community today and expectations for the future.”(Vision 2020, 2001, p. 23). The city promoted the development of the plan as a communicative process which included participation from residents, planners and developers in order to create a city which meets the needs of all.

Planning Process

City planners felt that the city had been developing for too long without a cohesive plan, therefore Vision 2020 was given a short timeline for completion. A steering
committee was established consisting of eight members: a city planner, a museum director, a university Dean, two council members (district 4 and 7), the deputy mayor, and two representatives from the Council of Neighborhood Association, (CONA). Within this group of representatives, four members are also involved with issues relating to historic preservation, and two are specifically involved in citizen advocacy for low-income neighborhoods.

The first phase of the plan involved a series of lectures followed by community discussion which were held at the University of South Florida’s St. Petersburg campus. The intention of the lectures was to inform citizens of the history and development of the city and to provide information regarding possible options for development. Recognized experts were invited to discuss the issues facing St. Petersburg and to provide expert opinions to the participants. The community discussion portion was to identify key themes and concerns of city residents and to obtain suggestions for development. The lectures were advertised throughout the city in City Council publications, in the local press, and via direct contact with citizen groups. The lectures were also recorded and broadcast on public television and made available through the public library system.

The second phase of the process was called the Charrette, a term which refers to an intensive planning method used by a French architectural school. Held during the month of June 2001, the Charrette involved a review of the main themes and a refinement of the focus for the vision process. There followed several workshops which involved a brainstorming session to create a vision statement for the development process and the identification of key issues of importance to residents. These issues were then organized
into order of importance and prioritized for the planning process. Delegates were separated into groups and given key themes on which to focus. Their goal was to identify what would constitute success in each of the areas and to suggest methods to achieve this.

A preliminary summary of the findings was presented to delegates, and they were asked to vote on the success of the preliminary plan. There followed a discussion in which the key issues that had not been addressed by the process were identified. Attention was given to the concerns raised, the most common was related to the full implementation of the plan. Delegates felt concerned that the exercise would not reach application despite the good intentions of the committee members. Involved in this stage of the process were city planning officials, the 2020 steering committee, Mayor Baker and invited community delegates.

The third stage saw the presentation of the draft summary of the plan to the community at the Maheffey Theatre on June 27. The aim was for the community to assess the success of the pre-planning process and identify any key elements which had not been addressed. Residents were then asked to complete a 17-page survey assessing the success of the plan. During the following weeks, the areas identified by the returned surveys were incorporated into the plan and a draft was prepared. Once completed, the draft was made available to residents in the local city libraries along with the video tapes of the Charette process.

In order to apply the plan to the city, the land-use regulations had to be adjusted. Meetings were established to discuss the adjustments in the specific areas of the city concerned, with invitations extended to developers, local businesses and citizens groups.
Unlike the original meetings and lectures, these meetings were held in smaller, neighborhood locations. It should be noted that at this stage, there was no direct citizen participation in the meetings. The land development regulation meetings were completed in April 2004 and the final draft of the revised regulations were presented in May 2004.

The Developmental Services Department claims this structural stage has gone extremely well, with little resistance to land-use changes. This is strikingly different to the city’s history of zoning issues, where each attempt to rezone areas was met with contestation. When questioned about the reason why there were no disputes, the city planner replied: “…because everyone was so involved in the process, there were not many changes to be made, no surprises for anyone.” This seems contrary to the history of city planning, implying either a complete change in attitude from the business and development community, or that the plan is not as revolutionary as its title suggests.

St. Petersburg Midtown Strategic Planning Initiative

In addition to the Vision 2020 plan, the city also has a specific plan which is aimed at improvements in the low-income, predominantly minority community of Midtown. The planning initiative was developed as part of the city ‘Challenge’ initiated by Mayor Fischer following the 1996 violent protests. The Midtown area has higher unemployment and crime levels than elsewhere in the city (see Table 3, p. 48) and had been the site of several development projects which had fragmented the community. The identified need to consider Midtown development as a separate concern from the rest of the city illustrates the extent of socio-spatial polarization within the city. Largely as a
result of relocation efforts associated with these developmental projects, the Midtown area has experienced a major change in population dynamics, with the population falling by 10,381 people between 1980 and 2000. This declining population has exacerbated the conditions within the area and has left many vacant lots and distressed, unused housing.

In response to resident concerns, several development incentives and community improvement projects were established in the area. However, many of these projects failed to deliver the desired improvements and several were arguably inappropriate for the area. In response to this, the city utilized a grant received in late 2000 from the Urban Infill and Redevelopment Assistance Planning Grant to develop the Midtown Strategic Planning Initiative. The initiatives goals were to inventory, analyze and streamline existing plans into a community-wide initiative and to present suggestions to the community for development. After the plans had been inventoried and analyzed, focus groups were established consisting of faith-based organizations, community leaders and non-profit organizations.

The suggestions from community advocates were primarily concerned with economic development and the provision of employment for Midtown residents. There were also concerns about the uneven allocation of resources and development projects to the Midtown district. The Initiative draws attention to the ‘Challenge’ established by Mayor Fischer in 1997 and details the grants and developmental projects which have been initiated. The area identified for urban infill and development is detailed in figure 10 below. The rhetoric of the document appears to relate to the concerns identified in Vision 2020 (p. 40) regarding the negative media image and public perception of Southside. The
Initiative takes great pains to detail the investments which have been made in the area and the successes which have been achieved, raising questions about the motivations of the document. Is the primary goal to improve conditions for residents, or to act as a public relations exercise to draw attention to the attempts to improve Midtown?

Figure 10: Designated Urban Infill Area

Along with the positivist rhetoric, the Initiative also places great importance on the education of the community regarding the plans which have been initiated and the investments which have been made. Identified in the opening comments are the lack of awareness of community residents regarding such investments and the perceived lack of city involvement. In an interview with the plan developer, the issue of community awareness was mentioned as a major concern. She commented: “You see most of them
could not make the connection between structural improvements and economic developments. They couldn’t see that establishing good lighting and underground improvements were essential to attracting business investment to the area”. She identified that the major focus of the Initiative was to educate the public about the achievements in Midtown.

This raises several problematic issues. Firstly, if the plans are successful, then the community should be readily able to see the benefits within their neighborhood and should not need ‘educating’. Secondly, many of these plans were supposed to have consulted residents regarding developmental objectives, if there is lack of community awareness, this implies that involvement has not occurred. Thirdly, the document’s implication is that the problem with Midtown is not lack of investment, but lack of awareness, effectively passing the locus of blame onto Midtown residents and away from the city. Lastly, the emphasis placed upon educating residents raises questions of parity when we compare it to the Vision 2020 document, which was prepared for the city as a whole but contains no reference to a need to educate the public. The Midtown Initiative was prepared in the same timeframe, but relating to a low-income, majority African American neighborhood, mentions the issue of public education several times.

The document contains a section which details the concerns which were raised during community discussions. One of the primary issues raised by the low-income Minority residents of Midtown was the perceived inequity which divides the city into the north and south. Many residents indicated that they felt the city devotes more resources
and attention to the north of the city and does not extend this level of interest to the south side. The section in the document details these concerns in the following paragraph:

“During the course of the public involvement process, it became clear that an element of skepticism exists in some members of the community. The majority of the residents acknowledged or were surprised by, the level of public investment that has occurred since 1997. However, there was some disagreement as to whether or not the more than $100 million in investment constitutes substantial progress. The following data contradicts this perception.”

The tone of the paragraph is confrontational and condescending suggesting the intentions of the document bear little relation to fostering an understanding on the part of the community and more towards the promotion of the city’s achievements.

The direction of the Initiative appears to focus more on the promotion of the city and less on advising residents of available community options. There are several instances where figures are provided which are potentially misleading. For example, the crime figures show an average annual decrease in Midtown crime of 5.0%, but it does not detail how these figures were obtained. Statistics from the St. Petersburg Police department indicate that crime figures are extrapolated from raw number of arrests therefore, it is likely that the 16% population decrease in Midtown is responsible for this drop. The figures do not necessarily indicate that the area is experiencing lower crime percentage, just that there are fewer people to arrest.

It should also be noted that much of the investment in the midtown district (at least 47%) comes from grants and funds obtained for specifically blighted areas, i.e.: if the areas were not in a state of disrepair, then no investment would be required. Many of the projects listed as developmental projects are those which are directly related to the
reduction of crime, which is a separate issue, not necessarily related to economic development. When just funds from the city are considered, the document claims that between 1997 and 2001, 76% of the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) budget was spent in Midtown specifically. However, the document does not provide any long-term statistics for investment in Midtown in order to compare the historical investment in the neighborhood. As the Midtown area was in need of major improvement, potentially due to historical neglect, it is appropriate that a larger proportion of city investment is subsequently channeled into improving the area.

Advocates for Midtown acknowledge that some progress is being made, but question whether this progress is significant enough to indicate a real commitment on behalf of the city. Although $100 million within five years is a considerable investment, this pales when compared to the $200 million dollars of tax payers money spent on the construction of Tropicana Field (St. Petersburg Times, October 11 1997. 1a). There have been numerous other upscale investments elsewhere in the city (Downtown, Bayfront Center, etc.) which have arguably focused upon promoting the city image and promoting tourism. Although these projects have been undertaken in conjunction with private investors, they have also utilized major city funds and grants. To discuss the city’s investment in Midtown and compare only CDBG funds does not give an accurate picture of city-wide development investment. Utilizing these supporting statistics in the Midtown document seems to promote the position of the city with misleading information.

The document details some of the impediments to economic development in Midtown. The greatest limitation is identified as the declining population, which
indicates to investors a low consumer demand. The history of the Midtown area shows numerous major projects initiated or approved by the city which have contributed to the declining population of the area. It could be argued that the city policies established to improve Midtown have exacerbated the conditions of poverty and reduced the likelihood for improvement.

The planning initiative promotes rebuilding the population base with infill housing and the construction of housing developments. When this proposition is considered alongside the city-wide aim of developing mixed-income housing, it seems likely that these new developments will target higher income residents. As noted by Massey and Anderson (2001) the spatial concentration of races and poverty limits the likelihood of social improvement, implying that reducing spatial concentration will have a positive impact on poverty. However, in the case of St. Petersburg, the African American community has an historical attachment to the Midtown area, as well as a long history of forced segregation and relocation. To initiate a developmental plan that potentially affects the social framework of the community through the relocation of residents or the deliberate incorporation of other social groups seems shortsighted. Whilst reducing the concentration of poverty is a commendable intention, the process would be better achieved through reducing the conditions of poverty, rather than merely redistributing poverty.

Another impediment to economic development cited by the document is the lack of consumer demand, which is related to population size and to poverty levels. Although this can be an impediment to investors, it is the responsibility of the city to provide
encouragements to development. These have been established in Midtown and the surrounding area with employment, property tax credit and building and equipment refunds. There are also small business incentives to encourage investment on a smaller scale, specifically utilizing smaller lots. Although all of these incentives potentially encourage investment from outside of the city, there has been little success with these promotions thus far and the area remains largely underdeveloped.

The document details the lack of large-size lots upon which to develop as an additional hindrance to economic development, implying that the focus of development should be large consolidated lots. This follows the development focus established for suburban development, with strip malls and block development, rather than the claims of development as listed in Vision 2020 which encourages mixed use development with smaller, incorporated businesses. Although the Midtown strategic Planning Initiative claims to encourage small business investment, there seems to be more attention given to larger investments and the establishment of bigger lots. This different focus for development between the city-wide plan, and the Midtown Initiative will ensure the city will retain its dual identity and stark inequities.

As a final consideration, the very the motivations of the city in improving the area need to be evaluated. Clearly, the continued violence in the area presents a negative image of the city and potentially impacts investment and tourism in the city. The individual proposals which are discussed were only undertaken after periods of unrest and the continued commitment to these projects, as spelled out by Mayor Baker, are reaffirmed after periods of violence. Although there are many ongoing projects in and
around the Midtown area, the progress is slow. When this sluggish progress in compared to speedy progress achieved on other higher-profile city projects, the true commitment to Midtown development and a seamless society comes into question.

**Vision 2020 Findings**

The results of the planning process have been organized into a draft plan available for citizens to peruse, either in the Developmental Services building, or in the city’s main library. The city Developmental Services Department encourages ongoing citizen participation and continues to welcome comments from residents up until the plan’s adoption. The plan has been organized into three main sections: citizen based themes, city framework and implementation, which will be discussed in turn.

The plan identified fifteen citizen based themes which would provide the framework for the plan’s organization. These themes were the elements which were identified by citizens as important aspects of a pleasant city with desirable living conditions. Of these fifteen themes, seven were not directly obtained from resident participation and were instead developed by plan’s steering committee. The plan does not identify which of the themes were obtained from residents and which were included by the steering committee. Each citizen based theme was organized to contain an identified problem within the city, resident ‘likes and dislikes’ and a mission statement which detailed the goal of development within the theme. The mission statements outlined what actions would constitute ‘success’ within each area and how these aims could be achieved. The fifteen citizen-based themes are listed below.
Throughout the citizen based themes, the concept of beautification and aesthetic improvements was common. Many of the themes which related to social issues or infrastructure requirements also contained suggestions for aesthetic improvements. The repetition of the importance of beautification ensures that the underlying message of this section of the plan is one of aesthetic improvements to the city. It is unclear whether this desire for beautification is a goal identified by the citizens or by the city planners.

The plan’s second element is the city framework which consists of neighborhoods, centers and corridors. The framework is established in order to organize and identify where ‘second generation growth’ may occur. The underlying message of the framework is the identification that the city has been ‘built out’ and that new growth must take the form of revitalization and redevelopment. Framing these efforts within the areas of neighborhoods, corridors and centers gives the city the opportunity to apply different methods of development as needed to each area individually. Each of these sub-elements is considered separately within the plan.
The neighborhoods are identified as either traditional or suburban and each had its own set of related themes identified for development. Among others, these themes included the preservation of the unique character of neighborhoods, the incorporation of civic facilities within the neighborhoods (shops, schools, libraries, public buildings etc.) and the creation of sidewalks to give pedestrians prominence.

The centers section detailed the areas of the city which are considered to be the “areas of great potential” and those that provide the spaces best suited to bringing citizens together. These areas of the city are fairly traditional; downtown, the 1960’s suburban center; Tyrone and the 1990’s suburban center; and Carillon-Gateway. The focus for development for all of the centers is structured around new urbanism, calling for mixed use areas, mixed and denser housing, and the minimization of large parking expanses. There is a focus on a variety of transportation options, pedestrian-friendly streets as well as incorporated civic uses.

The centers section also recognizes the potential for a fourth center to be developed in the south-side of the city. The specifics of the location or nature of this are not given, but the potential is acknowledged. The section does not specifically identify the south-side as an area for development due to conditions in the area, but as an area on the city which contains usable land. The inclusion of this suggests a link with the proposals laid out in the Midtown Strategic Planning Initiative as detailed in the previous section, although the separate plan is not specifically mentioned in Vision 2020.

The corridors of the city were identified by the residents as the city’s worst asset and as such the need to redevelop the corridors is high on the planning agenda. The
corridors are separated into residential, industrial, commercial and environmental. Recommendations include beautification, buffering between residential uses and commercial uses, pedestrian focus and restoration of environmental buffers. Following a structure very similar to that laid out by Nolen in 1920, the plan calls for buffers and beautification as well as the establishment of sidewalks separated from the road.

The last section of the draft plan includes details regarding the practical implementation of the plan. It establishes the structural frameworks needed to ensure the Vision 2020 plan can be applied city-wide and provides a broad timeline of events for the various phases of the plan. As a number of participants had registered concerns over the implementation of the plan, the inclusion of this section was vital to signal the city’s commitment to the project.

**Critique of Vision 2020**

The Vision 2020 plan is promoted as the future vision for the city, with the claim that it was constructed according to the desires and needs of city residents. Although the claims contained within the document are intended as future guidelines for the development of the city and are not intended to reflect existing behavior, the statements are worthless unless some level of existing commitment suggests that they might be viable in the future. As such, the document can be critiqued for making grandiose claims and establishing an ideological base for city development which is unrelated to the conditions and experiences within the city today.
As a primary example, the very document itself claims to have been constructed utilizing input from all city residents. When these claims are evaluated, it appears that there was minimal input from low-income and Minority residents. Although the city cannot force residents to participate, they are responsible for ensuring there are equal opportunities for all residents to become involved. If these steps are not taken, then there exists a bias in the involvement of citizens which is institutionally sanctioned. Examining the methods used to illicit citizen participation gives an insight into the level of commitment from the city to ensure all voices are heard.

At the early stage of plan development, it was important to garner public interest and support for the process and to gain input from the entire community. These early involvements were the opportunity for residents to have their voice heard, beyond this initial stage, the council and neighborhood associations would provide feedback as resident representatives. The decision to locate these lectures at the University of South Florida may potentially have excluded certain members from attending. To low-income and Minority residents, universities are often not familiar or comfortable territory. The percentage of African Americans within the city which have a Bachelors degree or above is 10.3% and when educational attainment is correlated with poverty, there is a negative correlation indicating that those who have low-incomes also have the lowest educational attainment. This would imply that the decision to present the lectures at the university excluded certain citizens from participation right from the start.

Likewise, the methodology used to promote the process potentially excluded certain members from becoming aware of the project. The primary method of advertising
was in city documentation which is available at city offices and directly distributed to
citizens involved in developmental issues. Those already involved in the planning process
are likely to be those for whom planning is already providing. The low-income and
Minority groups are underrepresented in city ventures and should be directly attracted to
participate. A second advertising strategy in the *St. Petersburg Times* is also unlikely to
reach Minority and low-income residents with the readership of the newspaper being
predominantly White and middle to upper-income. (*St. Petersburg Times* press release,
2001) A third method involved advertising on utility bills, but this fails to reach many
residents from the lowest income bracket without a personal responsibility for utilities.
This would include those who rent single rooms in houses, have short term temporary
accommodation, or rent apartments with utilities included. This practice is common in the
lowest rent neighborhoods, and as such, advertisements on utility bills will certainly fail
to reach this sector of the community.

Using representatives from community organizations can be an effective method
to gain access to resident’s opinions, and for this, the Developmental Services
Department is to be commended. However, although participation was sought from a
number of special interest groups and citizen advocacy organizations, some were
unwilling to participate. The Uhuru group was asked to participate, but they were
unconvinced of the city’s commitment to equity and felt that their involvement would
give credence to a potentially non-equitable document. The NAACP did not participate in
an official capacity, claiming there were more specific projects related to the African
American community that they were involved in. There was concern that previous
planning programs had failed to provide for low-income and Minority residents and therefore any involvement would fall to the same fate. It should also be noted that the involvement from neighborhood associations was organized through the council of neighborhood associations (CONA), specific neighborhood associations were not actively approached for participation.

The final phase of plan development saw the draft plan presented to citizens at the Mahaffey Theater. This event was advertised to citizens in the same manner as the previous events, with the same potential for bias and exclusion. Much like the lectures held at the University of South Florida, the Mahaffey Theater may have alienated certain city residents and created a barrier to citizen involvement. When questioned about the choice of locations for these initial stages, the Developmental Services Department commented that the locations were chosen in order to accommodate the numbers of attendees expected. When asked if alternative locations located within neighborhoods had been considered, the response was that the size of location needed was not available locally in neighborhoods. This illustrates that the city was aware that the choice of location might potentially exclude certain residents, but they saw no alternative. If the events had been held at smaller venues and located in centers within communities, there would have been a greater potential for reaching all residents.

The failure to actively encourage community involvement from throughout the city raises problems with the credibility of the claims within the document. The results of the entire process were concentrated into the centerpiece mission statement claiming that all of St. Petersburg’s citizens collaborate in its development. As detailed above, the
process did not involve participation from all social and racial groups in the city, hence the claim misrepresents the true nature of the dialogue. The city failed to extend the necessary efforts to involve all members of the community and specifically encourage participation from the low-income and Minority residents. Even though there was very active participation from several key African American community representatives, there was not the same level of citizen representation within the public forums.

Although citizen participation is a voluntary exercise, the city is responsible for making the process equally available to all. If these efforts do not achieve a response, the document should not be described as ‘by the people, for the people’. Describing Vision 2020 as the aspirations of all residents is grossly misleading and fails to acknowledge the uneven involvement of low-income and Minority residents. Claiming the plan speaks for all residents suggests that the voices not included are considered lesser members of the city. This further establishes the opinions of those not included as voices which do not speak for the community as a whole and which are in conflict with the aims of city development.

In a similar contradiction, the mission statement for the theme of governance includes the sentence: “They (governance structures) facilitate maximum political access, empowerment to its citizens and seek to include the voices of those who are not easily heard.” Despite the encouraging claims within this statement, the actions of the city in organizing and preparing this document have failed to encourage the participation of those “not easily heard”. Likewise, the unfavorable opinions of the Uhuru group regarding uneven city development are not given consideration and are directly
challenged as ‘inaccurate’ in the city’s Midtown Strategic planning Initiative. The
commitment of the city towards empowering residents “not easily heard” did not appear
to extend to the preparation of the Vision 2020 plan.

In a similar mission statement for social equity, the statement makes the claim
that “…all residents shall have an equal opportunity to enjoy the physical, social and
economic benefits of St. Petersburg…” Likewise, this claim seems to have little substance
when considered in context of the historical development of the city and the existing
social polarization between communities. In 2000, Baywalk, an upscale retail
establishment in downtown St. Petersburg opened whilst residents in the midtown district
did not even have a major local grocery store. Although there are currently plans to
develop a retail center in the midtown district, these have been instigated by individual
members of the African American midtown community and not directly by the city.

The city also contains numerous developments along the waterfront area which
limit access to these areas. Likewise, the city’s commitment to up-scale economic
development has resulted in the exclusion of certain residents, either directly in the
provision of codes of conduct, or indirectly, through the focus on exclusive experiences
which are specifically aimed at high-dollar participants. The economic benefits of the city
are unevenly distributed with residents in low-income neighborhoods restricted from
economic opportunities by their physical distance.

One of the elements of concern identified in Vision 2020 is the “negative media
regarding Southside successes” with the suggestion that a more positive media image
needs to be fostered focusing on the beneficial developments in South St. Petersburg.
This concern with a positive focus seems to benefit those in power more so than the residents of the communities. If the neighborhood improvements are successful, the ‘positive’ aspects would be clearly visible to residents. As identified by the Midtown Strategic Planning Initiative, there are a number of developments within the midtown area which have not been completed or which need updating. It is unsurprising that there is a lack of positively when considering Southside. The desire for positive media attention is also a potential ploy to placate residents and silence the voice of dissatisfaction. The censoring or directing of the media to focus upon positive elements in Southside and to minimize the severity of the protests contradicts the claim of encouraging “those not easily heard” as detailed above and would further serve to exacerbate the frustrations of the community.

In the neighborhood section, the plan identifies the need for mixed-income housing, acknowledging that the low-income residents deserve access to safe neighborhoods. This mixed-income housing focus is one of the theories of new urbanism and seeks to distribute low-income housing throughout urban areas. However, the same section identifies that neighborhoods should be protected from “unimproved or dilapidated properties” a practice which is common in deed restricted and exclusive communities. If housing from different income brackets is mixed together, this leaves the low-income residents with the financial obligation to maintain their properties to the standards of the community, something which they may not be able to readily afford. Likewise, these standards are often established by those in positions of power within the communities and are unlikely to represent the opinions of those with low-status.
Conclusion

The history of planning in St. Petersburg illustrates the extent to which city development has focused on attracting tourists and promoting the image of the city. This has led to projects which have failed to provide for residents and negatively impacted African American’s within the city. Planning measures have consistently failed to adequately provide for the city’s low-income and Minority residents exacerbating the conditions of poverty and exclusion. The spatial patterns within the city reflect this duality of development and exemplify St. Petersburg as a dual city.

The most recent planning effort, Vision 2020 claims to address the inequities within the city and to provide a framework for the city of the future. There are a number of contradictions within the plan and the statements made are not supported by the process of planning the document. As the plan is a guideline for future behavior, if the planning process could not extend the necessary efforts to ensure citywide participation, what hope is there for future success?

The following chapter will present the data evidence collected which supports the claim of socio-spatial polarization in St. Petersburg, concluding with an analysis of the interviews conducted with residents and officials.
Chapter Five

Results and Interviews

In order to examine the extent of polarization within the city, selected characteristics for the population were first summarized. The first part of this chapter will detail the results of the statistical analysis conducted to examine the existence and extent of polarization in the city. The results will be organized by race, economic status and then race and economic status combined. The intent is to establish the existence of spatially polarized communities and to examine the criteria which contribute to community polarization. The dissimilarity index and the P* index will be used to evaluate the extent of social polarization and the spatial distribution of this polarization will be illustrated with thematic maps and numerical comparisons.

The second part of the chapter will discuss the interviews conducted with the two contrasting resident samples in order to illustrate the differences between the communities and to determine the extent of community awareness relating to planning issues. The interviews with officials will then be discussed and responses compared. The chapter concludes with a comparison of the results obtained from the two resident samples and those acting in an official capacity.
Racial Polarization

Massey and Denton (1989) have calculated the dissimilarity index for the Tampa-St. Petersburg area combined, but the aggregation of the data for Tampa and St. Petersburg masks the significance of racial or economic disparities which exist. It was, therefore, important to calculate the figures for St. Petersburg alone. As a basis for comparison, score of above 60 is considered to be indicative of a segregated community. The dissimilarity index was calculated thus:

\[ D = \frac{\sum x_i |(m_i - M)|}{2TM(1-M)} \]

Where:

- \( m_i \) = Minority proportion in Block Group
- \( M \) = Minority proportion in city
- \( T \) = Total population in city
- \( x_i \) = Total population in Block Group

For St. Petersburg, the calculated dissimilarity index or \( D = 76.56 \), indicating that 76.56% of the Minority population would have to move in order to achieve zero segregation. When calculated for African Americans alone, the index is still extremely high at \( D = 70.34 \), reinforcing the claim of spatial segregation for African American and other Minority communities.

Along with the dissimilarity index, another useful method of comparison is the P* exposure method, which measure the level of isolation of a particular group compared to another. The extent of exposure between Minority and White populations was calculated using the following formula:
\[ P^* = \Sigma \left[ \frac{m_i}{M} \right] \left[ \frac{m_i}{x_i} \right] \]

Where:

- \( m_i \) = Minority population in Block Group
- \( M \) = Minority proportion in city
- \( x_i \) = Total population in Block Group

For St. Petersburg, the calculated isolation index or \( P^* = 61.54 \), indicating that there is low to moderate exposure between Minorities and Whites. This implies that racial Minorities are less likely to be exposed to White community members and are more likely to interact with other Minorities.

In addition to the \( P^* \) and dissimilarity index, the spatial distribution of races also needs to be considered. In addition to the measures of evenness and exposure detailed above, Massey and Denton (1989) identify three additional measures of hypersegregation which are more spatial in nature: centralization, clustering and concentration. One way to examine these factors numerically is to consider the percentage of the Minorities living in areal units which contain a high percentage of Minorities and examine the distribution of these areal units. When examined at the Block Group level, 29% of Minorities live in areas which contain 90% or more Minority residents and 40% of Minorities live in areas that are 80% or above Minority. This indicates that races are highly spatially concentrated with a few Block Groups containing the majority of the Minority population. This decreases the chance for cross racial interaction and perpetuates the racial divide both spatially and psychologically.
In addition, examined spatially, these Block Groups are located close to one another, indicating racial clustering, and concentrated around the inner-city area, indicating the presence of centralization. Minority populations are spatially centralized in the inner city, with many of the suburban areas registering 100% White populations. This increases the spatial polarization of inner city communities in relation to suburban facilities, amenities, and employment. Thus, clustering and centralization increases the likelihood that polarized groups will exhibit conditions of poverty and be excluded from full participation in the city. The spatial extent of these racial measures is illustrated by Figure 11 below.

The map of Minority distribution is a useful graphical illustration of these three additional measures: clustering, concentration and centralization. It also illustrates the amount of physical space utilized by Minority populations in the city. The inner-city neighborhoods are often more densely populated than the suburbs meaning that minorities who are concentrated into the inner city areas will occupy a smaller physical area than other groups. This is useful, not just as a measure of socio-spatial polarization, but as a physical illustration of city inequity. The spatial concentration of Minorities ensures that their physical presence within the city is minimized and that their representation within the city as a whole is minimized. It is also an illustration of the spatial manifestations of class and the uneven allocation of space to those with low-incomes. When racial polarization is also correlated with poverty as discussed below, the urban landscape becomes the spatial manifestation of social inequity across boundaries of class and race.
Economic Polarization

As well as residential segregation based upon race, St. Petersburg is highly segregated along economic lines. An increasing proportion of the city’s population live
below the poverty line, while at the same time, the city contains a number of residents who are in the extremely high-income bracket. The Census Bureau defined the poverty level in 2000 as $8,794 per annum for a single person and $17,463 for a family of two adults and two children. Those living below the poverty level are detailed in table 5 below.

Table 5: City-Wide Poverty Status, 2000

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Percent Below Poverty Level</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Individuals</td>
<td>13.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White</td>
<td>9.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minority</td>
<td>25.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Families</td>
<td>9.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>With related children under 18 years</td>
<td>14.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>With related children under 5 years</td>
<td>18.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female Householder Families (no husband present)</td>
<td>23.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>With related children under 18 years</td>
<td>29.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>With related children under 5 years</td>
<td>39.7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

When poverty is examined spatially, we find some Block Groups containing no poverty and some which have poverty levels of 79%. City-wide, 35.78% of the population lives in Block Groups which indicate levels of poverty greater than the city average of 13.3%. Similarly, extreme poverty is often measured as spatial units in which 40% or more of the population lives at or below the poverty level (Wilson, 1993 [1987]). When examined following this criteria, 3% of city population live in Block Groups with greater than 40% poverty.
In order to compare the spatial distribution of poverty across the city, the
dissimilarity index was calculated for the population in poverty. The method of
calculation utilized the formula below:

\[ D = \frac{\sum x_i |(p_i - P)|}{2TP(1-P)} \]

Where:

- \( p_i \) = Proportion of population below poverty in Block Group
- \( P \) = City wide proportion of population in poverty
- \( T \) = Total population in city
- \( x_i \) = Total population in Block Group

The dissimilarity index for those living below poverty in St. Petersburg was
57.56, indicating a fairly high spatial concentration of poverty. This indicates that 57.56%
of the population would need to relocate to achieve an even distribution of poverty as
expected based on the city wide average of 13.3%. Although not as extreme as the
measures for racial segregation, these figures still indicate high levels of economic
segregation. The spatial concentration of poverty is detailed in figure 12 below. When
compared with the map of racial distribution (figure 11, above) there are spatial
similarities between the areas which contain high percentages of Minorities and the areas
which contain high poverty levels. Examining the distribution graphically would suggest
a connection between racial polarization and the distribution of poverty.
Alongside measurements of poverty, there is also a large percentage of the city, 49.4% to be precise, which lives below the median household income level of $34,597. However, there are also a number of residents with incomes at the upper extreme, with
over 15.3% of the city earning $75,000 or above. Similarly, the average per capita income of the city is $19,484 with Block group data indicating a maximum average of $63,608 and a minimum average of $5,460. The higher income Block Groups are spatially concentrated into a few key communities which illustrate the extreme affluence of the city.

These data conform to the income distribution which is often described as a ‘bowling pin’ distribution (Marcuse, 1996) which is an evolution of the ‘hourglass’ concept model. Rather than polarization into two relatively large economic groups, the city sees an increasingly larger sector of the population in the low-income bracket and a smaller percentage who earn extremely high-incomes. If the city chooses to provide for high-income residents and less for low-income residents, this illustrates the aims of planners and their intentions for the future identity of the city.

**Economic Polarization and Race**

Extremes of income are usually correlated with race within U.S. cities. As with the measures for racial and economic polarization, the dissimilarity index was calculated for African Americans in poverty to evaluate whether there is a relationship between polarized groups, racially and economically. The same formula was used, but only for African Americans rather than the entire population in poverty. The result was 67.05, indicating a higher level of segregation for African Americans in poverty compared to the city wide poverty segregation of 57.56. When this is further compared to the segregation
measure of White poverty, calculated as 55.32, there seems to be a case for city polarization based on race and class.

This claim can be further reinforced by examining the extent of poverty across the racial groups. When examined by race, 63.5% of minorities live in Block Groups which contain poverty levels below city average, and 71.6% of African American’s live in Block Groups with poverty levels below city average. There is a higher proportion of the Minority population living below the poverty level, or with low incomes as detailed in table 6 and figure 9 below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Household Income</th>
<th>Whites</th>
<th>Minorities</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Less than $10,000</td>
<td>9.3%</td>
<td>18.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$10,000 - $19,999</td>
<td>14.5%</td>
<td>20.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$20,000 - $29,999</td>
<td>16.0%</td>
<td>18.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$30,000 - $39,999</td>
<td>14.0%</td>
<td>13.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$40,000 - $49,999</td>
<td>10.8%</td>
<td>8.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$50,000 - $59,999</td>
<td>8.1%</td>
<td>7.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$60,000 - $74,999</td>
<td>9.1%</td>
<td>5.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$75,000 - $99,999</td>
<td>8.3%</td>
<td>4.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$100,000 - $124,999</td>
<td>3.8%</td>
<td>1.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$125,000 - $199,999</td>
<td>3.5%</td>
<td>0.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$200,000 and above</td>
<td>2.1%</td>
<td>0.7%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
As table 4 shows, St. Petersburg is characterized by an uneven distribution of low-incomes amongst Minority residents, with 42.67% of those living in poverty being African American. When we consider conditions of extreme poverty as defined as 40% or greater of the areal unit living below poverty, the data shows that 8.8% of Minorities and 11% of African Americans are living in areas of extreme poverty. All of the Block Groups which measure extreme poverty citywide contain Minority percentages above the city average, and all but one measures Minority percentages at 80% or above.

When examined individually, there were four Block Groups in which 100% of the African American populations were living below poverty. There were also forty Block Groups in which the African American populations were living in extreme poverty. When these levels are compared to the White population in poverty, there are some interesting results. Firstly, there were also four Block Groups in which 100% of the
White populations were living in poverty. When extreme poverty is examined, there were considerably less, fourteen Block Groups in which the White populations were living in extreme poverty.

An interesting spatial pattern emerged from these evaluations. The Block Groups which measured 100% poverty for Whites or African Americans were not the same. The White populations living in extreme poverty are spatially concentrated near Midtown and are located in Block Groups which measure poverty levels for the African American population at 35% or more. Whereas the Block Groups which measure 100% of African Americans in poverty have low White poverty rates (2% or 3%). A possible explanation for this is the relocation of residents from public housing complexes under the Section 8 scheme. This was suggested as a possible explanation by the St. Petersburg Housing Authority, and although they could not specifically confirm the areas residents had relocated to, they did confirm that one of the aims of Section 8 is to redistribute poverty.

Outside of these relocation anomalies, when poverty is considered spatially, it becomes evident that poverty is not just concentrated among the African American and other Minority communities, but spatially within the Midtown district. These findings are consistent with previous research (Massey and Denton, 1989, 1993; Massey and Anderson, 2001; Wilson, 1987, 1996) which has established a connection between spatial segregation and the existence of poverty. Accordingly, the failure of the city to adequately address the spatial concentration of minorities and poverty has exacerbated the conditions experienced within these neighborhoods and ensured the maintenance of the conditions of poverty.
When examining other income characteristics, we find similar racial disparities. The average household income for the entire city is $34,597, with 25% of Whites having a median household income at or below $34,999 whereas 64.87% of African Americans live below this level. The average per capita income for the city as a whole is $19,484, but when considered by race, the White per capita average is $20,713 which compares to $13,154 for African Americans. At the other income extreme, using a little over twice the average as the baseline, 17.82% of Whites have a median household income of $75,000 or above, compared to 7.38% for African American residents.

When these statistics, which were obtained from the 2000 Census, are compared with figures from 1990, the gap in incomes between White and African American residents seems to be closing. In 1990, average per capita income for Whites was $14,503 and for African American was $7,916 which compares to the levels for 2000, at $20,713 for White and $13,154 for African Americans. Although these levels indicate a slight narrowing of the gap between the races, there still exists a marked racial difference within the city. When the racial and economic extremes within the city are considered together, they support the claim of a dual city as described by Mollenkopf and Castells (1991).

The drastically different city identities were plainly apparent throughout the city and the different responses obtained from interviewees provided support for the idea of St. Petersburg as a dual city. These responses are detailed in the following sections.
Results of Interviews

The interviews yielded a variety of results and the process in itself was very enlightening. The process and results for group one (city officials) and group two (city residents) were different, and will, therefore, be discussed separately in the sections which follow. Prior to conducting any structured interviews, several informal discussions were conducted randomly with city residents to act as a focus group and these will be discussed first. These discussions were not organized interviews and consisted of casual discussions with people who were at leisure and willing to talk. The purpose of these discussions was to gauge what issues residents were concerned about, and to ascertain if there were particular planning projects which residents were aware of. These discussions were not statistically random, nevertheless, they provided an brief insight into residents’ views of their city.

The first discussion was conducted with four African American residents seated in a local park near downtown St. Petersburg. These residents were very willing to speak to me in this informal situation and when asked, they expressed concern about a number of city development issues. They felt the city did not provide for African American residents and said they did not like the new retail mall, that is, Baywalk. They were interested in my background and I spent some time explaining the conditions of public housing in Great Britain. This led them to discuss the redevelopment of Jordan Park and how the area is now ‘like a ghost town’. They acknowledged that the previous Jordan Park was a high crime neighborhood, dilapidated and ugly, but there was the overriding feeling that community spirit had been lost. They then discussed the 22nd Avenue
business district and reminisced about how it used to be a vibrant center of the African American community and how it was now mostly empty.

The second discussion was with an African American truck driver who discussed at length how the city has changed and how he barely recognizes downtown anymore. He was coming to see the Baywalk development for the first time since it had opened more than two years ago. His first impressions were very positive, because he though it looked nice and was clean and new. However, he chose not to stay at Baywalk, but instead went to a park bench to read his newspaper.

The last of these informal discussions was with a White resident whom I approached inside the Baywalk development. She commented that it had nice shops, but she was not from St. Petersburg but from Sarasota. She had been aware of the development in the local press and said that there had been a number of articles about the development in her local media, which was why she came to see it. She felt it was a positive thing for St. Petersburg and would “raise the profile of the entire area”.

Although these discussions were very informal and no demographic or economic information was recorded, they do illustrate an interest in development from parties which have been traditionally excluded. African Americans were not deliberately targeted for these discussions; it just happened that they were the residents who were relaxing in public areas and were most easily approachable. A number of other individuals were approached who were too busy to talk at the time, or were tourists. The experiences from these early discussions reinforced my commitment towards interviews as part of the research process.
Interviews with Officials

The interviews with city officials were conducted primarily in person, although due to the violent protest that occurred close to the interview time, two interviews were conducted by telephone. There was a definite change in attitude after the violent protests, because several individuals who had agreed to be interviewed prior to the incident subsequently retracted their offers. This could be either due to an increased workload after the protest (a number of individuals are directly involved in issues related to the protests and were frequently interviewed by the local media), or it could be a reluctance to go on the public record at such a sensitive time. Whatever the motivations for the change in attitude, it serves as a useful illustration of the effects of these protests on the city as a whole.

As discussed in Chapter Three, the criteria selecting officials to interview were quite broad, focusing on those who had a specific involvement, or a personal interest, in the city’s development. The Developmental Services Department provided several interviews which offered important insights into the finer details of the planning process and the policy motivations of the department. I also received input from eleven additional sources: the developmental company involved with Baywalk, the Midtown Business Development Office, the Midtown Development coordinator for the Mayor’s office, the St. Petersburg Housing Authority, the Uhuru group, neighborhood associations and citizens’ advocates as well as several independent business owners. It should of course be acknowledged that each of these groups and several of these individuals have their own personal and political agendas which should be considered when evaluating their
responses. Likewise, individuals who claim to speak for a community can never fully represent the diversity of opinion and motivations within a community and can at best only provide a sample viewpoint. No community is homogenous and any generalizations about community opinions or thoughts will necessarily simplify the diversity of opinions.

Interviewees in this section were asked the same set of broad questions as those in the resident sample, but interviews also included questions which were specific to the area of expertise of the individual. In order to create some semblance of order among the interview responses, and to prevent the repetition of views, the reporting of interviews will be limited to those responses which directly relate to equitable planning of the city. Some of the key questions asked of all interviewees will be addressed towards the end of the section and the responses will then be compared. The first formal interview was with a representative from the Developmental Services Department, so it would seem appropriate to begin there.

The representative was interviewed several times between August of 2003 and May of 2004. He provided vital information about the inner workings of the planning process and the organization of the citizen participation. His rhetoric was understandably positive and focused upon the future potential of the 2020 plan. He commented that the city needed a new plan as the existing plan had been modified to such an extent that it no longer looked like a plan. He also noted that: “The plan contains some major utopian ideals which are unworkable and impossible to attach to an already developed city”. This comment raises questions about the extent of the ideology contained within the Vision 2020 document. If it is felt that previous plans are too ideological, this would either
indicate that the new plan is not as innovative as the city rhetoric would suggest, or that the principles in this plan are likely to be similarly unworkable.

He identified some problems with the planning process and specifically planning which includes citizen participation: “I don’t think people realize how difficult it is to organize citizen participation. It’s not as easy as you think and it takes up a considerable amount of time”. He also stressed the importance of ensuring that the process of participation is strictly controlled in order to prevent narrow focus interest groups from monopolizing the process. This view is captured by the following excerpt:

“If we don’t control it in some way, it becomes a free-for-all and can get out of hand. We encouraged individual citizens to participate, but the decision process was always going to be limited to the steering committee.”(Why was that?) “For purely practical reasons, in order to ensure that consensus was actually reached and to prevent the unworkable ideas of the citizens from stalling the planning process. Sometimes they have ideas that are totally unworkable, that’s what the education portion was all about.”

These comments appear sharply at odds with the rhetoric of citizen participation contained within the Vision 2020 document, and raises serious questions about the true extent of citizens’ participation in the formulation of the development plan for St. Petersburg. It seems that the City Developmental Services Department intended to shape the process to fit an already established ideology. Consequently, the true degree to which citizen voices were incorporated into the plan is seriously questionable.

When asked about participation from the African American and other Minority residents, the official detailed the key community members who had been involved in the process. Most of these individuals were in fact council members and city officials. To be sure, the invitation for community representation was also advertised in the Weekly
Challenger, a local African American newspaper. The official also commented that attempts were made to specifically involve the Uhuru group, but they refused to participate: “They are just not interested and they don’t want anything to do with us”. He was asked if he knew why, but he said he was not aware of any reason.

When asked to comment on polarization in the city, the existence of polarization was acknowledged, but it was felt that the city was approaching the issue with new developmental strategies and as such, the future would bring improvements. He believed that as these strategies had been developed with participation from residents, they would provide the best solution for perceived inequities. The historical neglect of the Midtown area was attributed to the high crime rates in the neighborhood and the inability to develop without first solving the crime issue. “We can try all the economic development incentives we can think of, but without solving the crime problem, they will ultimately fail.” The overall focus of all the interviews was very positive and there seemed to be a genuine interest in developing an ideology for the future development of the city. However, the overall impression gleaned from this interview raises serious doubts about the commitment of the city to an ideology which includes the future development of its low-income community.

Likewise, the interview conducted with a representative from the Business Development Center followed the claims of a city-wide commitment to improve the conditions in the low-income neighborhoods. As detailed on page 81 of this study, she commented on the need to educate citizens about what economic development was. She claimed that most citizens were unaware of the improvements that had occurred in the
area: “they just said, ‘so you put up lights, so what’, but once we explained the
connection between infrastructure and economic development they were, ‘oh we didn’t
see that’”. Although the provision of basic infrastructure is necessary to encourage
economic development, the type of infrastructure raises questions about the nature and
benefits of this investment for the city as a whole. The Business Development Center
claims to focus upon supporting small businesses, but the infrastructural investments
arguably provide more of an incentive for larger developments from outside of the city.

A strong element which ran throughout most of the interviews concerned the need
for Minority communities to acknowledge the positive aspects of recent developments.
Echoing the Midtown Strategic Planning Initiative, the Vision 2020 document and the
rhetoric from Mayor Baker’s office, the city officials interviewed all felt that there was a
negative media image of Southside which was damaging the potential benefits from
advancement. This view was echoed by the representative of a developmental company
involved in Midtown development: “…the media attention on the bad aspects doesn’t do
justice to all the efforts from a number of men and women to improve the community”.
The development representative continued to say that the negative image further
exacerbates racial divisions and “makes it hard for us (presumably the developers) to feel
motivated about what we do”.

The city officials and those involved in Midtown development projects
commented that residents need to be patient and that social changes take time to
administer and organize. However, some community members (business owners and
residents) indicated that they felt the slow process was a symptom of the city’s lack of
commitment and that progress should be faster. This argument is reinforced by Wilson (1993, p. 11): “But the history of social change in the United States has not always reflected a slow incremental process. …the major reforms of the New Deal, the comprehensive legislation of the Civil Rights movement, and the broad-based policies of the Great Society programs were all achieved within a short period of time.” If a true commitment to improving low-income and Minority communities existed in the city of St. Petersburg, it is likely that eight years would have achieved more than is evidenced today.

The city representatives claimed that members of the Uhuru group were asked to participate in plan preparations, but they had refused. In order to address this claim, an interview was conducted with a representative of the group. At the same time, comments were also received from the leader of the organization and an additional member. When specifically asked why they did not participate in planning the Vision 2020 the representative replied:

“We are not interested in being involved in anything that’s gonna just result in deals for us or is gonna come at the expense of our community, unlike some other forces that they choose to work with, so the business plan, in our estimation was not something that was gonna result in economic development for the entire community. It would be seriously problematic for us to be involved in such a program when our commitment is to the African working class and poor people in our community not to the agenda in city hall. We work for the people not the city”.

The Uhuru representative detail a specific example of alternative economic development which was organized and established by the Uhuru group and that had resulted in the establishment of eight local businesses. However, the group admits that the small steps
they have achieved in furthering the development of Midtown pale in comparison to the big investment projects the city has undertaken to improve its image.

Likewise, the improvements cited by the city, such as the new supermarket under construction in Midtown, are considered by Uhuru to be methods for those in power to make money at the expense of the community. The Uhuru representative argued that the jobs created by these types of developments are all low-wage, no benefit jobs. Instead of economic development, economic benefits are extracted from the community by large corporations: “The issue is about a policy that they have that’s designed to funnel resources away from this community into another community to continue this historical relationship that has existed here; it’s like a colony if you will”. Clearly, the perception is that the city does not serve the interests of the low-income African American community and a radical re-adjustment of power relations in the city is necessary in order to address community inequalities.

Although the interviews with officials focused primarily on their respective roles in various planning initiatives, the interviews also included the same questions which were posed to the resident samples. The responses from these questions will be grouped together for ease of comparison. When asked if they felt there was racial or economic segregation in the city, most respondents replied ‘yes,’ that segregation existed to a certain extent. Notably, respondents who worked for the city were quick to comment that great strides were being made within the African American communities. Several respondents offered interesting elaborations on the conditions of within the African American communities of St. Petersburg. For instance, one White respondent commented
that: “…ethnic groups like to live together. We can’t tell them where to live … that’s what civil rights was about”. Contrast the above view with that of an African American local business owner in the Thirteenth Avenue business district who commented:

“Communities are segregated, but that is because there is no affordable housing elsewhere. Blacks are forced to live in the bad neighborhoods ‘cos they can’t afford anything else”. However, another African American respondent indicated that there is an historical connection to the Midtown area for African Americans and that is why they want to live there.

The responses from the city officials indicate a greater awareness of the spatial polarization within the city and the variety of responses illustrates the complex motivations which govern the choice of residential location. As noted by Marcuse (1996), the question of residential polarization should not be confused with perceived individual choice. The institutional framework established by the city limits the available choices, be it through location of public housing, transportation infrastructure or economic development. Therefore, the selection of residential location is indirectly restricted by these institutional forces, leaving residents with limited choice. It is this constraint on choice and the resulting patterns of exclusion and polarization which need to be recognized.

Interviewees were also asked if they thought the city provided adequate services and amenities for all of its residents. The responses were similarly positive, qualified by an acknowledgement that there is an historical context to inequity, followed with an assertion that this situation has now been addressed. City representatives echoed claims
contained within the Midtown Initiative and Vision 2020 with respect to the development
grants and monies which have been spent on improving Midtown. Local business owners
also felt that there had been an increase in funds allocated towards Midtown
development, but felt that the achievements were going too slowly. One respondent
offered possible corruption as a reason for slow progress in Midtown: “…the money
doesn’t go to the community itself, it goes outside the community or to other projects or
efforts, though they call it economic development what it really results in is
gentrification.” Although there exists some contention from African Americans not
employed by the city, those acting in an official capacity, both White and African
American, echoed the positive rhetoric of the city.

Understandably, many of the interviewees were actively involved in city
development and improvements issues, which helps to explain the marked optimism
about the future of the city’s African American/minority communities. Thus, whenever
concerns about inequity or uneven development were acknowledged, they were quickly
qualified by assertions of positive plans for the future. However, the underlying rhetoric
enforces the opinion of the city regarding Midtown and city-wide development. The
focus is upon shaping development to a pre-determined citywide ideal and establishing
economic development based on a particular pattern and not necessarily acknowledging
the needs and desires of residents.


**Interviews with Residents**

The residents’ interviews achieved varying levels of success in terms of responses, but the interview process was invaluable for the insight it provided about spatial polarizations within the city. By physically walking the streets of the city, the stark contrasts between the low-income and high-income neighborhoods became painfully apparent. My feelings are best summed up by Harvey’s (2000, p. 257) experience in Baltimore: “…the inequalities are so striking, so blatantly unnecessary, so against any kind of reason, and so accepted as part of the natural order of things, that I can scarcely contain my outrage and frustration.” The two areas selected for the resident study were a short drive apart, but vastly different in character and exhibited the extremes of wealth, poverty and racial concentration found within the city. The spatial differences between neighborhoods could be experienced within a forty-five minute walk from South St. Petersburg’s “redeveloping” area to the downtown “redeveloped” area. Given the city’s claim about investing in the revitalization of Midtown, one would expect to notice less variation; however, the revitalization efforts within the two areas are dramatically different.

It is also worth sharing my personal reactions to the different urban spaces and how the social dynamics affected my impressions. Within the largely African American neighborhood surrounding my study area, the social dynamics of the built environment appeared to be more open and comfortable with significantly more street activity. In contrast, the dynamics of the upper-income White neighborhood were those of isolation, exclusion and separation, with long driveways and physical barriers. There were no
sidewalks and no centers of activity, making the neighborhood appear very unfriendly and exclusionary.

It was also interesting to note the cautionary comments from friends and colleagues to the prospect of conducting field research in the low-income, African American neighborhood. The media attention given to South St. Petersburg creates the impression that the neighborhood is uniformly dangerous, so despite never having been to these neighborhoods themselves, friends and colleagues assumed that these areas were unsafe. In actuality, the neighborhood appeared to be a regular neighborhood, except that it is extremely poor and lacking in public services and facilities.

There was a dramatic difference between the responses from the two study areas which is detailed in Table 7 below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Study Area A</th>
<th>Study Area B</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Conducted Interview</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Refused to Participate</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vacant or Vacation Home</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not home, no survey returned</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not home, survey returned</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Contacted</td>
<td>23%</td>
<td>78%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The White, upper-income neighborhood contained 22 homes, one of which was vacant for sale, one of which was vacant in a dilapidated state with a city disrepair notice, one was confirmed by a maid as a vacation home and two others appeared to be vacation
homes. I conducted thirteen interviews and found seven homes with residents who were not home (including the two potential vacation homes). Three attempts were made to reach residents and if there was no reply on the third attempt, the survey was left along with details of the study, in a stamped self-addressed envelope requesting completion by the resident. All members of sample B who were home, when approached, were willing to be interviewed.

With the low-income, African American and Minority neighborhood (sample A) there were considerably more homes in the Block than registered according to Census 2000. Although the Block was registered for 22 homes, this would have been prior to the completion of the Jordan Park housing complex, the actual figure was 54 homes. In order to maintain parity with the other sample group, and in light of the lack of success with interviews, I decided to interview the first 22 homes on one side of the Block. There was one home vacant in this sample group and five residents who were not home. I received eleven refusals to participate in the study, and managed to conduct five interviews. Most residents were immediately unwillingness to participate. Notably, some refused to participate as soon as I explained my affiliation to the university and the details of my study. The very dynamics of the interview process were also vastly different between the two racial groups, with the residents in sample A opening their doors only a little, or calling though a closed door. This contrasted with residents in sample B who opened their doors fully and were willing to participate in the study.

There are several possible reasons for the lack of involvement on the part of sample A. The first is the obvious issue of race. I am a White researcher in an African
American neighborhood which is highly racially and socially segregated. Hence, I am unfamiliar in the neighborhood and considered as different. Although my position as an outsider has the potential to place me in a neutral position as suggested in Chapter Three, this relationship can only be fostered when an interview actually occurs. In pre-arranged interviews, the outsider as a neutral outsider has the potential to benefit research; however, given the fieldwork method of this case study, it appears in hindsight to have greatly hindered the process of gathering information.

A second potential barrier to fieldwork was the recent violent protest which occurred in the area and which led to considerable negative media attention. Many of the news articles portrayed the African American neighborhood of Midtown in an unfavorable light and this may have influenced the reactions of residents to an outsider. Additional barriers which might help to explain the low response rate from the African American community is the requirement by the university’s Institutional Review Board (IRB) for signatures from participants. Similarly, affiliation with an official body, such as a university, automatically creates a hierarchy between researcher and subject which may affect the participation rates of the low-income, minority communities in research projects.

The final potential obstacle of note is the dynamic of door to door survey techniques. This interview process is often not the most conducive to obtaining unsolicited input and can be intrusive, creating barriers to dialogue. A process which involved fostering a relationship with members of the community prior to interview might have provided more willingness to participate. However, that may have potentially
altered the responses of residents and for the purposes of the study, this was not
appropriate. Nevertheless, there always remains the potential for incorporating such an
ethnographic approach into future research.

It was suggested that I might return to study area A with a black or African
American companion in order to gain additional access to the residents. I felt that if the
sex, race or class of an interviewer is adjusted to fit those being interviewed, then the
research process would become biased. As the purpose of the interviews was to gauge the
level of awareness of and interest in planning issues, any refusal to participate becomes
part of the research in itself. For this reason I chose to record the results obtained as they
were.

The role of race in studies of this nature is potentially an additional avenue of
research which might add to the explanation process. Whilst race may encourage
participation in some circumstances, it may also temper or alter responses given in
another. Assessing the different results obtained would be a research project in itself and
would raise additional questions beyond the scope of this document. If residents
responded to a person from their own racial group, this would indicate that race was the
barrier to the research; if the residents did not respond, this might imply that it was the
official nature of the study which was the barrier. Likewise, the results obtained from
researchers of the same racial group could be compared with results obtained from those
outside the racial group to examine the extent of social ease with members of a different
race. As suggested, this in itself would be an interesting study, but one which is more
anthropological in nature and separate from the intent of this research.
Nevertheless, the entire interview process, irrespective of the responses from residents, reinforced the claim of socio-spatial polarization in St. Petersburg. The interviews, as they were conducted, allowed the study to specifically compare the reactions and level of interest of residents from the two socio-spatial extremes of St. Petersburg. The vastly different response from the two sample areas is indicative of the power asymmetries across the city with respect to planning issues. The residents in sample B were encouraged and reassured by the supporting paperwork and the mention of a university affiliation. However, residents in sample A seemed to find the official aspect of the interviews a deterrent.

A possible explanation for this difference relates to perceived or actual community voice. It is feasible that sample B residents are more used to having their opinion asked and having their voice heard, whereas sample A residents are unused to being asked for an opinion. The historical and institutional silencing of low-income and minority residents throughout St. Petersburg’s history has potentially fostered a culture of distrust of those perceived to be acting in an official capacity. This culture of distrust can also create conditions whereby members of the African American community do not bother to speak as they expect their voices to be silenced. Indeed, this much was confirmed by the representative from the Uhuru group. In comparison, the willingness of the high-income residents to speak indicates an accepted level of influence which exists for those who have historically been in positions of power in St. Petersburg. The middle and upper classes are familiar with having a voice and having their opinions solicited and reported, hence they are more likely to be willing to speak when questioned.
Analysis of Resident Responses

Admittedly, the resident sample size is not significantly large to conduct any major statistical analysis, but the limited responses gained help to outline the extent of the differences between the African American and White communities of St. Petersburg and the level of planning awareness city-wide, particularly with respect to Vision 2020. The differing responses of White and African American residents to each of the research question yields some very interesting results. Each group was asked what they consider to be St. Petersburg’s defining characteristic. Most residents, irrespective of their race or class, cited the waterfront area or downtown as the city’s defining characteristic. One resident mentioned that the city is a great place to live. These responses reflect the developmental focus of the city and the promotion of the downtown and waterfront area as the focal point of the city.

Residents were then asked what developmental projects they were aware of in St. Petersburg. Once again, in both communities, the development of the downtown and waterfront area was the most often cited project. Although this was not surprising given the large amount of publicity surrounding the downtown development, it is quite significant that the African Americans residents in Midtown did not mention the revitalization efforts within their neighborhood.

There are several potential reasons for this, not least of which is the lack of success of the revitalization of Midtown. It could also be a reflection of the extensive publicity which the city has utilized to promote downtown development and the lack of publicity for the Midtown district. With its major focus on downtown revitalization, the
city sends the message of prosperity and exuberance to potential visitors. The revitalization of inner city residential neighborhoods does not receive the same publicity unless the efforts are in the form of gentrification (Harvey, 1996; Smith, 1996).

When asked about their awareness of the Vision 2020 project, the vast majority of the residents interviewed were neither aware of the plan nor had they participated in any capacity. One resident indicated that he had gone to one of the meetings as part of his employment, but he did not know anything about it. This complete lack of awareness of Vision 2020 brings into serious question the extent of the city’s encouragement of citizen participation in the formulation of the Vision 2020 project. Although city officials claim that they have made all reasonable efforts to solicit public participation, there appears to be a vast gap in the awareness of city residents about the plan from both extremes of the city.

Residents were asked if they felt the city provided them with the public services and amenities they needed. Sample A mostly commented that the city did not provide them with the services they needed, although one resident did indicate that he was provided for “fairly well”. The residents in sample B all responded that the city adequately provides them with services and amenities. One resident commented very forcefully: “Yes, the city does an excellent job.”

The next question asked residents if they felt the city provides equally for all members of the city. The sample A residents all responded no, that the city does not provide equal amenities for all. The sample B residents provided a mixed reaction with about 50% responding yes and 50% responding no. One resident commented that it was
unfortunate, but he felt the city probably did not provide for all residents equally (the same resident acknowledged polarization).

When asked if they thought there was any segregation within the city, all but one in sample B indicated that they did not think there was segregation. One resident offered a typical response: “Of course there is no segregation any more, people are allowed to live wherever they want. We don’t care if any black people live round here.” Another resident in sample B offered the following remark: “No, it’s all blown out of proportion, the media focuses on it, here look (he points to the front page report of racial inequality within the school system in Florida) they focus on the differences rather than focusing on the similarities”. Another resident even went so far as to suggest that racial segregation in St. Petersburg does not exist in reality and is all media-hype. Only one resident in sample B admitted that there was probably racial polarization within the city, while the majority feels that St. Petersburg is not racially or socio-economically polarized.

These findings are in stark contrast to residents from sample A where the majority believes community segregation exists. When they were then asked why they thought it existed, there were two key responses. One resident said: “The poor black folks have to live here, we have no where else to go.” Another indicated that “I dunno, this is where the housing is” (meaning public housing). Although there are often a myriad social, racial, economic, familial and historical reasons for the selection of residential location, it is possible that the historical and institutional conditions of St. Petersburg have played a major role in the shaping the views of African Americans regarding segregation in the city.
These limited results from resident interviews offer additional qualitative support to the concept of polarization within the city. Residents from sample A exhibit markedly different opinions regarding the allocation of services and amenities than residents in sample B. It could be a function of the increased need for amenities of low-income residents leading to an increased awareness of a shortfall in provisions, or it could indicate a genuine disparity in the provision of services. Thus, in light of this analysis and given that only one resident indicated an awareness of the Vision 2020 plan, the results of this study raises serious doubts about the city’s commitment to participatory planning and equitable development for all the citizens of St. Petersburg.

Comparison of Responses

The responses obtained from the two resident groups illustrate the dual nature of the city. The two resident groups clearly inhabit vastly different urban spaces and have a different image of their city. These resident responses can be compared with the responses obtained from officials. Likewise there appears to be a difference between the views of the city obtained from officials and those obtained from residents. The responses obtained from the two resident samples and officials for the yes/no questions are summarized in table 8 below.
Table 8: Summary of Responses to Yes/No Questions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Resident Sample A</th>
<th>Resident Sample B</th>
<th>Officials</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Are you aware of Vision 2020?</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Did you participate in the planning?</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Does the city provide for all residents?</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do you believe there is racial or economic segregation in the city?</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The responses obtained from officials indicate an awareness of the socio-spatial polarization which exists in the city which contrasts with the awareness of residents. There is also a disparity between the city wide awareness of the Vision 2020 plan and the claimed promotion of the document to citizens. Officials appear to be ignorant of the lack of resident awareness of city developments and planning issues. The Vision 2020 plan and the Midtown Strategic Planning Initiative were supposed to address this lack of awareness, but the results obtained would indicate that these intentions have failed. It appears that the city is divided along socio-economic and racial lines within the residential population and along organizational lines between those in power and those who are served. As such, the Vision 2020 document cannot claim to speak for the residents of the city or to representative of resident opinions.

**Conclusion**

This study reveals systematic signs of socio-spatial polarization at several different levels within the city of St. Petersburg. Moreover, the extent of racial
polarization inside the city, specifically with respect to Midtown, is a *prima facie* case of *hypersegregation* as defined by Massey and Denton (1993). The extent of the economic polarization in the city contradicts the lofty rhetoric of urban equality in the 2020 Vision plan and instead exposes the city’s continuing obsession with attracting high-dollar residents while ignoring the increasing conditions of extreme poverty for the vast majority of its residents. The spatial concentration of extremes of wealth and poverty inside St. Petersburg reinforces the dual nature of the city and represents a significant challenge to the advocates of the Vision 2020 project.

The interviews of both residents and officials underscore the vast differences of opinions throughout the city with respect to who has “the right to the city,” including issues such as “urban social justice and the fight for public space” (Mitchell, 2003). The vastly different material conditions and opinions between African Americans and Whites with respect to the segregation in the city represent a major obstacle to any development plans for the future of St. Petersburg. This challenge is made worse by the widespread lack of awareness of the Vision 2020 plan and raises serious doubts about the city’s capacity to involve all its citizens in the planning of their city. And, to make matters even worse, the fact that some of the city’s high-income residents claim ignorance of social segregation is an example of their exclusion and isolation, or what Robert Putnam (2000) refers to as “civic disengagement” from the everyday realities of the vast majority of the city’s residents.

The interviews with officials regarding the city’s developmental projects and its planning ideology to promote the city, points to an equally bleak future for the city’s
most deprived citizens. While city officials indicate an awareness of inequality within the
city, their responses thus far are wholly inadequate to address these inequalities. It is
ultimately against this backdrop that the optimistic rhetoric of Vision 2020 about the
future development of St. Petersburg has to be judged. From this perspective, Vision
2020 is clearly no match for the developmental challenges facing the city of St.
Petersburg. The final chapter will pull together the themes and claims of the previous
chapters as they relate to the socio-spatial polarization of St. Petersburg.
Chapter Six

Conclusions

This case study has demonstrated the conditions and extent of socio-spatial polarization as it exists in St. Petersburg. As a southern city, St. Petersburg strictly enforced residential racial segregation under the Jim Crow system. The resulting racial patterns since desegregation remain little changed to this day. The city is highly spatially polarized with certain areas exhibiting conditions of hypersegregation (Massey and Denton (1999, [2000]). This spatial concentration of race and/or poverty has created a dualized city which is reinforced by the institutional practices of the city’s planning practices. A consequence of this spatial polarization is that minority communities feel alienated and political disengaged and distrustful of the city’s efforts to develop plans on their behalf. This condition has exacerbated the cultural and psychological barriers between African American and White residents of St. Petersburg.

St. Petersburg’s racial concentration is correlated with high poverty and unemployment rates. This concentration of extreme poverty into a single area has led to additional problems, such as high crime, lack of opportunity and physical separation from the rest of the city. The end result of these conditions has been the creation of an urban ‘underclass’ which is physically and socially separated from the rest of the city (Wilson,
African Americans’ participation in city life is limited and the community has become the ‘other’. This effectively neutralizes any citizens’ voice or public protest and encourages the continued representation of the community as different from the rest of the city.

The representation of the community as the ‘other’ allows city officials to absolve themselves of blame for the poor conditions within the African American community in the Midtown area. The infrastructure of the built environment is organized both directly and indirectly through the actions and policies of city planners and developers. In the case of St. Petersburg, the planning process has (Arsenault, 1996) and continues to contribute directly to the racial and social polarization in the city today. Thus, social and spatial patterns within the city must be considered in light of the goals and aims city developers and their desires to create and maintain a certain city image.

St. Petersburg planners have historically promoted the city as a destination for leisure and tourism. Although these goals are not necessarily at odds with the equitable provision of amenities to city residents, the focus within the planning has thus far overstressed the construction of up-scale, high profile developments. It is this singular focus on prioritizing the construction and maintenance of an identity for St. Petersburg which has placed limited importance on providing amenities and services to all the city’s residents. The maintenance of the city’s upscale image has exacerbated the social exclusion of certain residents, particularly the African Americans community whose voice has been effectively muffled and its physical presence played down.
The built environment of St. Petersburg has been manipulated to further the motivations of elites and to uphold and reinforce the city’s image as a tropical paradise. The communities which are problematic to the maintenance of this image have been systematically excluded through relocation, dislocation and the creation of physical barriers. In this regard, the design for Tropicana Field is particularly instructive. The design of this monumental sports stadium involved physical barriers in the form of grass medians between the low-income minority neighborhood and the stadium. Supposedly this was to give organization to traffic flows towards the interstate, but it also served to create a physical barrier between the African American resident community and the mostly White visiting sports fans. Similarly, African American communities have been targeted for development that has involved the forced relocation of residents and the dispersal of the community.

The official response to growing inequalities within the city has been to support development projects in a manner which fails to consider the individual historical character of the community as it has evolved over time. Thus proposals for mixed-income housing is unlikely to succeed and will only lead to more gentrification of African American neighborhoods and the resulting relocation of the poor. The development of the area to fit the ideals of new urbanism fails to address the desires of the community and does not solve the conditions of extreme poverty in the area. Even if the proposed improvements were desirable individually, the true commitment to improving the lot of the African American community of St. Petersburg must be questioned in light of the city’s goal for overall development.
The Vision 2020 plan was ostensibly created to address the concerns of residents and provide a workable plan for future development. Many of the claims contained within the plan are honorable and potentially uplifting for several residents. However, the manner in which the document was prepared contradicts the claims of equitable development and the city’s commitment to a ‘seamless city’. The citizens’ participation element of the plan, which was promoted as one of the primary goals, did not extend the necessary efforts to ensure even participation from all sectors of the community. Given that the document claims to represent the voices of all citizens, it can be assumed that the residents whose voices are not featured in the plan are considered lesser members of the city.

As the Vision 2020 plan is a document which is preparing for the future of the city, the exclusion of some residents from involvement with the preparation of the plan sends a message to these residents about their future role in the city. As the plan fails to specifically address the existing inequalities within the city or detail aims for improving living conditions for low-income, minority residents, it can be assumed that these residents have no place in the future of St. Petersburg. In a city with such drastically different identities, city planners and urban developers are faced with deep-seated social obstacles, not least of which is the providing of public services to a dual city with paradoxical motivations. The extent to which development officials directly address the polarized nature of the city ultimately reveals their commitment to improving the lot of all of its citizens, including the African American community.
Problems and Limitations of the Study

As with any study, this project has encountered several problems. The first major problem was controlling the size of the project. There are numerous factors which affect community choices, and many tempting avenues of inquiry exist. However, the purpose of the project was to examine the role of city planning, specifically the Vision 2020 plan, in light of highly spatially polarized communities. As such, it is recognized that this case study cannot tell the complete story of socio-spatial polarization in St. Petersburg, but instead addresses one of the crucial elements which affect the residential patterns within the community, namely the role of the institutional framework.

A second problem encountered was ensuring the focus did not exclusively examine polarization in terms of race. Although the city’s polarization of race and class is closely correlated, the conditions of poverty are more of a defining factor in the exclusion of residents from public amenities. The exclusion of African Americans from full participation in the city made it difficult not to focus upon this element of polarization alone. The contextualization of power relations, the exclusion of residents who fall into the ‘underclass’ and St. Petersburg’s historic exclusion of African American’s based on race, is a story that needs to be told in the context of power and powerlessness.

The final problem was the timing of the interviews. This was ultimately beneficial in one aspect and a hindrance in another. The timing ensured there were numerous editorials, news conferences and media stories related to St. Petersburg which provided information specifically related to this research project from more participants than I
could ever have hoped to interview personally. The negative media attention also ensured many interviewees were very vocal about the issue of race and exclusion.

On the negative side, the violent protests doubtless altered some of the responses given by community leaders, with many recording very rehearsed and tempered opinions. Likewise, the refusal of some officials and residents to participate may have been directly related to the timing of the research, potentially limiting the extent of the interview process. As such, the context of the timing of the interviews needs to be considered when the responses are analyzed.

Although every effort was made to address issues within this study, there are inevitably some inadequacies. As indicated in the introduction, this research is limited in that it only examines the institutional role, and specifically one document, in influencing residential patterns. This study aimed to consider just one element of residential distribution and therefore the role of other factors is not known. The study also simplifies the racial diversity which exists and assumes a unity within racial categories which in actuality may not exist. It is therefore limited in its explanatory potential with this simplification.

There are also limitations within the empirical data which was evaluated. There are numerous methodologies which can be applied to examination of residential polarization and additional statistical calculations which could potentially improve the validity of the data presented. Additional spatial statistical studies could be conducted as well as statistical regression to evaluate the significance of results obtained. There are also additional quantitative calculations which can be applied to measures of spatial
polarization which could potentially improve the explanatory ability of the study. This study chose to divide the research between qualitative and quantitative and therefore limitations were placed upon the processes within each category. Both the quantitative and qualitative analyses exhibit these limitations which need to be acknowledged.

**Future Research**

Many of the inadequacies of this study could be addressed with future research in order to augment the description of city conditions. As such, this case study is certainly an on-going project. As with any research examining the dynamics of an urban area, the study is never completed as the dynamics of the built environment continue to change. Specifically with regard to St. Petersburg, the extent to which the community in Midtown is changed with the adoption of the Vision 2020 plan will illustrate the extent of the city’s commitment to the project. As the development in the midtown area increases, it will be important to measure the success of these ventures alongside other developments in the city. As such, there is the potential for ongoing research which examines the dynamics of the city and how they change. Revisiting the study area after a period of time, for example another 5 years, would potentially provide interesting results.

There also exists the potential for future research examining additional factors which affect the residential patterns within the city. Although this study considers the institutional role to be the most influential in guiding residential ‘choice’, there remains the potential for examining the numerous other factors which steer residential patterns.
The role of these other factors could be considered alongside the institutional role to construct a fuller picture of elements governing residential spatial patterns.

Further research to augment the study could potentially involve collaborative work with an anthropologist, as discussed in Chapter Five, in order to more specifically evaluate the role of race within this research. There is also potential for a more empirical analysis of spatial dynamics in order to add to the justification of socio-spatial polarization. A more in-depth analysis of economic factors and the fiscal constraints of the city and the region as a whole might provide greater explanation for the economic development of the city.

The examination of the institutional framework could be extended to the regional, state and national levels to examine how the developmental aims at these scales affect local residential patterns. This extension of the scale of the research could potentially extend to a global investigation of the conditions of polarization and exclusion and the creation of dual identities globally. This case study was originally chosen as a local example of the global conditions of poverty and exploitation and the factors which affect the creation of a ‘global underclass’. As such, the study will hopefully provide me with a useful framework and basis for further research at different scales and different locations.
Bibliography


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Appendices
Appendix A: Interview Questions

What are the defining characteristics of St. Petersburg?

Which development projects within the city of St. Petersburg are you aware of?

What planning projects are you aware of within the city?

What planning projects have you been involved in?

Are you aware of Vision 2020?

Did you participate in the planning?

To what extent do you believe the city has provided you with adequate services and amenities?

Does the city provide services and amenities equally for all residents?

Do you believe there is racial or economic segregation in the city?

Why do you think this exists?

Do you have any comments about the recent civil unrest?
Appendix B: Map of Downtown St. Petersburg