

SPEAK EASY



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What is your neighborhood's experience with income inequality?

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"NewsWorks Tonight" host Dave Heller recently spoke with one of the authors of a study that identifies Philadelphia as the city with the most rapid growth in income segregation between 1970 and 2007. Rich and poor are increasingly separating themselves into different neighborhoods.

Do you see evidence of this income inequality in the city? Has it been a burden to you, your family, or your friends—or have you been able to overcome it somehow?

Stanford University Education and Sociology Professor Sean Reardon told Dave that he thinks a combination of housing market dynamics and rising income inequality are two of the main factors for this change.

As the middle class shrank over the course of the 38-year study, he explains, neighborhoods become more concentrated as relatively high- or low-income pocket of the city. When the housing market booms, middle-class families are priced out of certain neighborhoods, and more affluent people buy up the property. Conversely, as those middle-class families move into less expensive neighborhoods, those parts of town tend to become relatively poor.

Over time, with fewer mixed-income neighborhoods and less interaction across the wealth divide, public trust is eroded and political polarization sets in.

Have you seen this bear out in your lifetime? What is your neighborhood like?