

Consequences of Segregation for Children's Opportunity and Well-being

Nancy McArdle
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With funding from the W.K. Kellogg Foundation and the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation



JOINT CENTER FOR HOUSING STUDIES OF HARVARD UNIVERSITY

First, a true story . . .

“If you assume that nobody black lives in your town, this is what’s going to happen, and it happens every year,”

(Jean McGuire, Metco executive director)

Segregation is not only a demographic and spatial reality, it fosters powerful perceptions of who belongs where and who deserves “access”

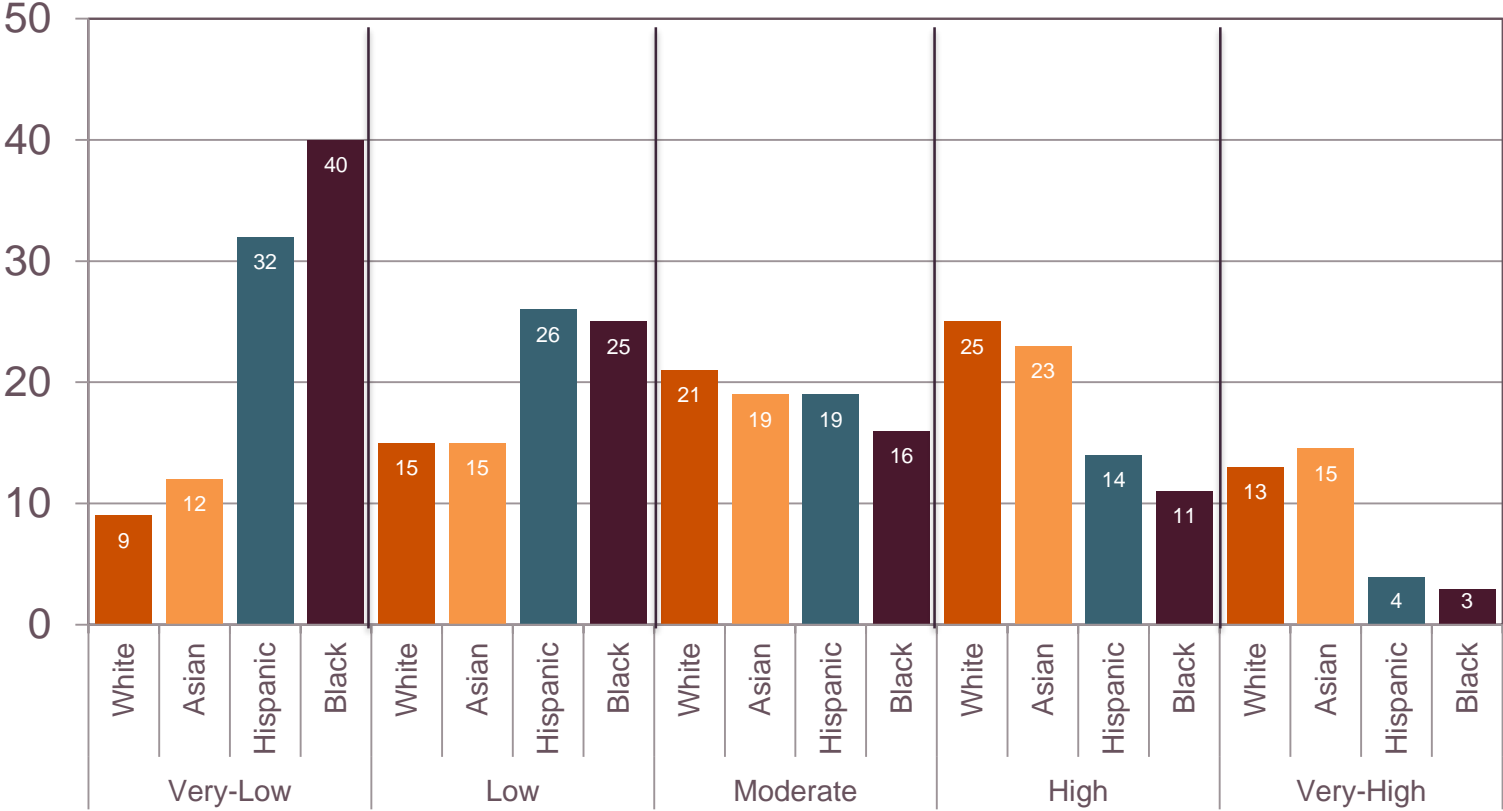
Segregation of children occurs during a critical developmental period when neighborhood and school resources affect their well-being and life chances and when racial attitudes are being formed

Residential segregation of children: The Basics

- Children are more segregated than are adults
- Rising income segregation has occurred predominantly among families with children
- Racial/ethnic segregation goes beyond what can be explained by income differences
- Segregation is associated with vastly different child environments, both in terms of concentrated poverty and a host of other important neighborhood traits
- Neighborhood disparities between minority and white children are greater in more racially/ethnically segregated metro areas

Relative to Whites, Black/Hispanic Children Disproportionately Concentrated in Very-Low Opportunity Neighborhoods

Percent of Children in Each Neighborhood Opportunity Category, 100 Largest Metros



Notes: Racial groups exclude Hispanics. Hispanics may be of any race. Asian group includes Pacific Islanders.
 Source: diversitydatakids.org/Kirwan Institute Child Opportunity Index and U.S. Census Bureau, 2010 Decennial Census, Summary File 1.

Different Neighborhoods → Different Outcomes

- Well-documented connections between neighborhood socio-economic characteristics and child outcomes such as:
 - Health
 - Behavior problems
 - Juvenile delinquency
 - Academic achievement
- Other neighborhood conditions such as . . .
 - Public safety/crime
 - Trust among neighbors
 - Available safe, recreation spaces
 - Access to healthy, affordable food

. . . also shown to affect child well-being.

Rigorous studies isolate neighborhood effects

- Verbal abilities of black children in severely disadvantaged neighborhoods reduced by magnitude of 1+ years schooling (Sampson, et. al., 2008)
- Moving to a lower-poverty neighborhood before age 13 increases college attendance and earnings and reduces single parenthood rates (Chetty, et. al., analysis of MTO data, 2016)
- Neighborhood characteristics strongly predict outcomes such as exposure to violence, risky behaviors, physical and behavioral health, education, marriage and childbearing, and youth labor market outcomes for low-income Latino and African-American children (Santiago, et. al., Denver Child Study, 2016)

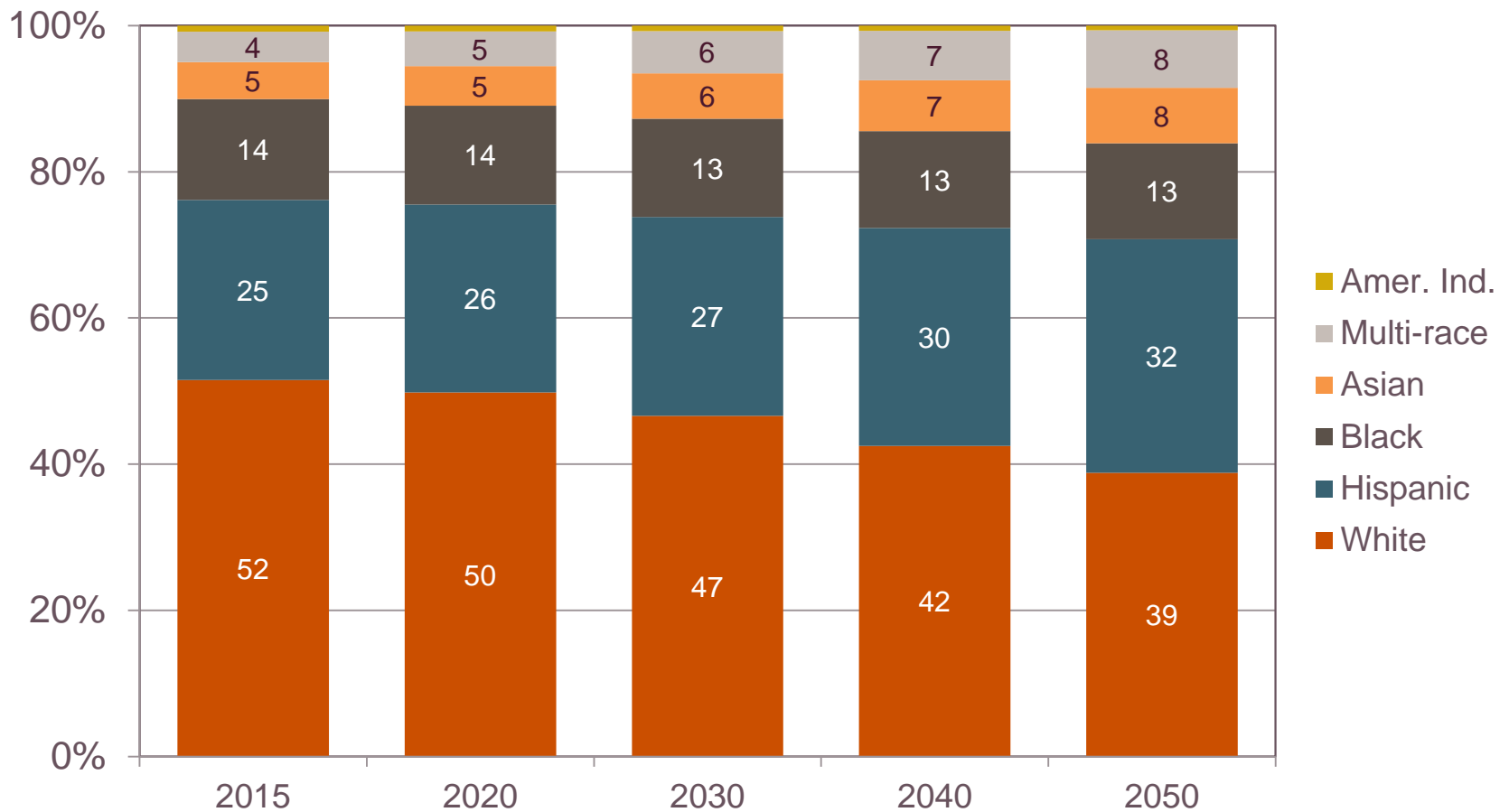
Segregated Neighborhoods → Segregated Schools

(For the most part)

- High levels of segregation occur at critical preschool age
 - Black/Latino Pre-K children have less adequate resources/teachers
 - Squanders opportunity for intergroup contact
- Black and Latino children disproportionately isolated in concentrated-poverty, disadvantaged K-12 schools
- Detrimental effects of attending segregated, high-poverty schools on academic achievement and drop-out rates
- Benefits of integration extend beyond achievement and arguably accrue to economy and civil society as well

Child Population Becoming Increasingly Diverse

Racial/Ethnic Composition of the Child Population (Percent)



Notes: Racial groups exclude Hispanics. Hispanics may be of any race. Asian group includes Pacific Islanders.
Source: U.S. Census Bureau National Population Estimates (2015 Vintage) and Projections (Release Dec. 2014.)

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Extra Slides

Children are more racially and economically segregated than adults

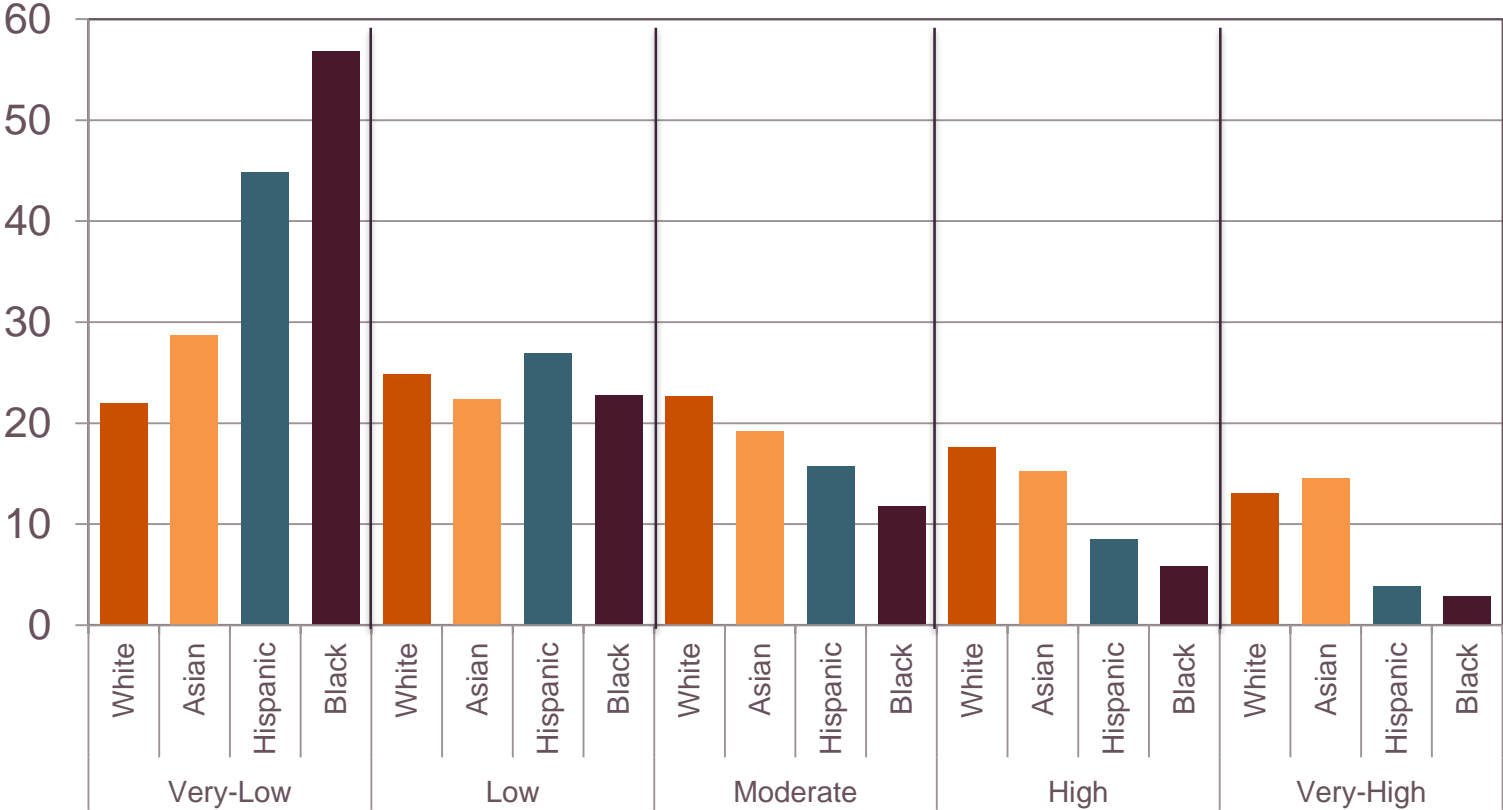
Segregation (Dissimilarity) by race/ethnicity and poverty status: adults and children

	<u>Black</u>	<u>Hispanic</u>	<u>Asian</u>
Adults	0.59	0.48	0.46
Children	0.67	0.56	0.56
Poor Adults	0.63	0.57	0.61
Poor Children	0.77	0.69	0.83
Segregation between Poor and Non-Poor			
Adults	0.32		
Children	0.44		

Notes: Dissimilarity indices, population weighted over 382 metropolitan areas. Racial/ethnic indices weighted by the total population of the specified minority group. Racial groups exclude Hispanic members. Hispanics may be of any race. Asian group includes Pacific Islanders. Source: diversitydatakids.org calculation of U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 2015, 5-year estimates.

Relative to Poor Whites, Poor Black/Hispanic Children Disproportionately Concentrated in Very-Low Opportunity Neighborhoods

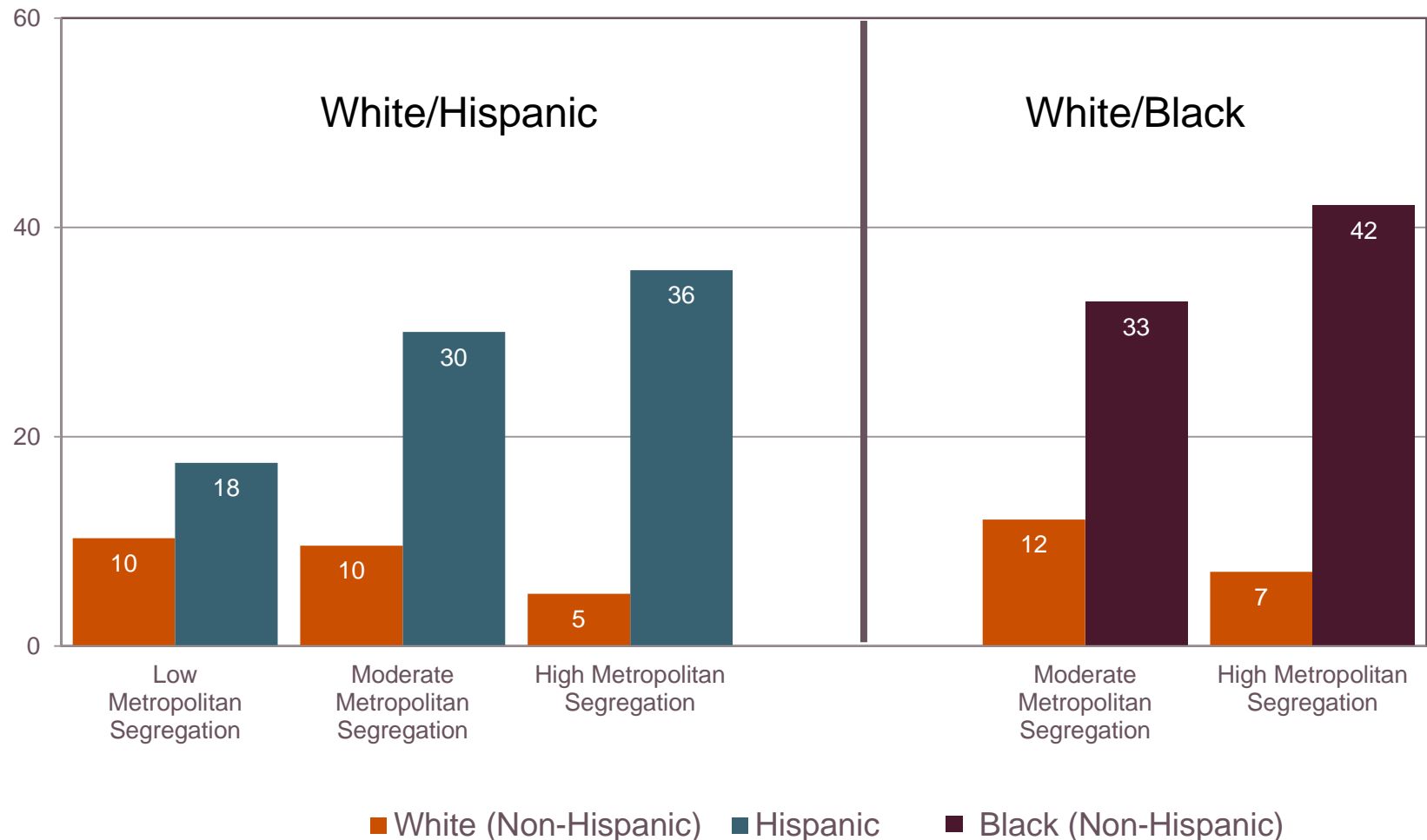
Percent of Poor Children in Each Neighborhood Opportunity Category



Notes: Racial groups exclude Hispanics. Hispanics may be of any race. Asian group includes Pacific Islanders.
 Source: diversitydatakids.org/Kirwan Institute Child Opportunity Index and U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 2011, 5-year estimates

Disparity in Racial/Ethnic Residence in Opportunity Neighborhoods Increases with Metro Area Segregation

Percent of Children in Very-Low Opportunity Neighborhoods, by Metro Area Segregation Level



Notes: Metro segregation levels based on Dissimilarity index (D). Low segregation defined as $D < 0.3$; Moderate segregation defined as D between 0.3 and 0.6; High segregation defined as D over 0.6

Source: diversitydatakids.org/Kirwan Institute Child Opportunity Index and 2010 Decennial Census, Summary File 1.