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

Nancy McArdle
April 19, 2017

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

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.
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.
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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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Black</th>
<th>Hispanic</th>
<th>Asian</th>
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<tr>
<td>Adults</td>
<td>0.59</td>
<td>0.48</td>
<td>0.46</td>
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<tr>
<td>Children</td>
<td>0.67</td>
<td>0.56</td>
<td>0.56</td>
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<tr>
<td>Poor Adults</td>
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<td>0.57</td>
<td>0.61</td>
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<tr>
<td>Poor Children</td>
<td>0.77</td>
<td>0.69</td>
<td>0.83</td>
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**Segregation between Poor and Non-Poor**

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Adults</td>
<td>0.32</td>
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<tr>
<td>Children</td>
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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