Addressing the Patterns of Resegregation in Urban-Suburban Contexts: Stabilizing Integrated Schools Amid Metro Migrations

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We argue that what is missing in the literature is a nuanced understanding of the process by which segregation is reproduced time and time again.
Three main factors that should foster more racial/ethnic integration in housing and public schools

- Demographic Changes
- Attitudinal Changes
- Metro Migration Patterns
AMERICA’S CHANGING DEMOGRAPHICS

By 2050, the U.S. population will be:

- **Younger** – only 1 in 5 Americans projected to be 65 yrs and older” Millennials now outnumber Baby Boomers

- **More racially and ethnically diverse** - less than half of all Americans are projected to White, non-Hispanic

- **Increasingly foreign-born** - nearly 1 in 5 of the total population”
The Changing Demographics of the Total U.S. Population

Source: Pew Research Center
Changing Demographics of the School-Age Population

• In 2013, for the first time there were more babies of color born in the US than White, non-Hispanic Babies.

• In September 2014, for the first time the white, non-Hispanic public school population in the US dropped below 50%
Changes in Public School Enrollment

PBS Frontline
Source: Civil Rights Project at UCLA
Millennial Parents:
America’s most diverse generation

- Ages ranging from 20 to 35
- Diverse in terms of
  - Race/Ethnicity and Country of Origin
  - Religion
- Similar in terms of
  - More likely to be politically independent
  - More liberal on social issues
  - More open to Interracial marriages and living in diverse communities

Source: Pew Research Center (March, 2014)
“Some 65% of Americans say they would rather live in a community composed of a mix of racial and ethnic groups.”
- Pew Research Center
Metro Migrations: People are Moving

1. More Blacks, Latinos and Asians moving to the Suburbs

2. More Whites are moving into the cities their grandparents fled after WWII = “Gentrification”
Late 20th - Early 21st Century: GENTRIFICATION AND THE SUBURBANIZATION OF POVERTY

**WHITES & AFFLUENT GENTRIFIERS RETURN TO CITIES**

**NEW URBAN DEVELOPMENT DISPLACES BLACK, LATINO & ASIAN CITY RESIDENTS**

Rising property values and rents follow the new interest in urban life, lead to affluent enclaves where Blacks and recent immigrants once lived in more affordable low-cost housing.

Student assignment policies lead to the “educational displacement” of low-income students of color from “good” city schools in gentrifying neighborhoods.

**CITY LIFE BECOMES CHIC & HIP FOR WHITES & AFFLUENT GENTRIFIERS**

Disenchantment with “boring” suburbs and suburban sprawl and an increasing interest in diverse communities and schools.

Urban “revitalization” and high-end development.

**AFRICAN-AMERICANS, LATINOS AND ASIANS FINALLY GAIN ACCESS TO (SOME) SUBURBS**

**THE PROMISE OF THE SUBURBAN HOME FOR BLACKS, LATINOS AND ASIANS AT LAST**

Policies to promote home ownership for “all” and the displacement of low-income tenants from gentrifying city neighborhoods.

Age-old appeal of suburbs includes “better” and “safer” schools.

**SEPARATE AND UNEQUAL SUBURBS**

Local zoning policies and real estate practices maintain inequality across suburban boundary lines.

Small fragmented suburban school districts maintain separate and unequal reputations across boundary lines according to race.
...as a result:

- There are more racially mixed urban and suburban neighborhoods proportionately than any time since the 1920s
- But these communities are also incredibly unstable and fragile
- Patterns of re-segregation are starting to appear as low-income families of color are being displaced from gentrifying urban communities and the pattern of white flight is reoccurring in suburbs with growing numbers of families of color
- Micro-segregation occurs within “diverse” spaces
The Plan

WHITES LIVE IN CITIES.

THE CROWNING GLORY
OF CIVILIZATION.

MINORITIES MOVE
INTO CITIES.

HELLO

GOODBYE

WHITES FLEE CITIES
TO SUBURBS.

AH, THIS IS BETTER.

WHITES MOVE INTO
SECOND-RING SUBURBS.

CITIES ARE DEAD. THIS IS BETTER
STILL.

MINORITIES MOVE INTO
FIRST-RING SUBURBS.

THIS IS BETTER. I GUESS.

WHITES MOVE BACK
INTO CITIES.

IT WORKED.

THE VAST WHITE RING
CONSPIRACY.
Understanding the *fragility* of diversity in urban and suburban contexts within the housing-school nexus: the process of resegregation
To fully understand the process of resegregation, we must understand how housing and school choices are made in these racially changing contexts, how tangible (material, measurable) and intangible (reputational) factors change, and how this process may be reversed.
Two Studies on Opposite Sides of the Urban-Suburban Boundary Line

  
  Quantitative Analysis of Property Characteristics and Prices
  
  Survey of 5,000 Home Buyers
  
  400 interviews with school district officials, educators, real estate agents, recent home buyers, and other parents (not recent home buyers)

- **Case Studies of Urban Public Schools in Gentrifying area of NYC (2015-present)**
  
  Three Schools: 2 elementary and 1 middle-high school
  
  130 in-depth interviews and approx. 40 observations
Sociology of Reputation:

- The “reputation” of a given institution (e.g. a school) or a place (e.g. a neighborhood) relates fundamentally to the social status of the people associated with it. In other words, neighborhood and school reputations vary dramatically depending on WHO lives there and WHICH students enroll =

- Implicit Bias of Neighborhoods and Schools
What we learned in the suburbs:

the racial makeup of school districts matters a great deal in the construction of their reputations, even when tangible factors – e.g. material resources, academic outcomes and the quality of the housing – are similar. These differential reputations, however, in turn affect property values and eventually the tangible factors across school district boundaries = this self-fulfilling prophecy of the process racial re-segregation while it was happening.
The Color of Property Values

Quantitative data on property values: “almost $50,000 in price would separate two otherwise similar homes, one located in a district that is 30 percent black/Hispanic, and other located in a district with 70 percent black/Hispanic enrollments (given Nassau County’s 2010 median home price of $415,000)”
The **PROCESS** of community and school segregation repeats itself through the relationship between district reputation and **WHO** lives where and the long-term implications of this for:

**Housing-School Nexus: The Process of Resegregation**

- Intangible differences: Different perceptions based on implicit bias
- Racial segregation: Concentrated poverty result from housing/district choice/displacement changing cost of housing
- Changing demographics in school districts as people with housing choices flee and property values decline
- Tangible differences in resources across district boundaries and property tax revenues
- Accountability measures of “good” schools correlate with race and SES
Superintendent of one of the most reputable, predominantly White and Asian school districts in Nassau County:

“You move to [this district] for one reason. Very frankly you’re not moving here because the house that you’re paying $800,000 for is particularly pretty… it’s not a particularly big house or pretty house. You’re moving here to send your kids here to school… My guess is I would show you an $800,000 house that you would be unimpressed with. You’d say, ‘My God for $800,000 I’m not buying that.’”
When the Reputation of Place Precedes It

My husband grew up in the next town over, and I think he always felt like this was better. I don’t know why. I just think its reputation precedes it. I think that many people believe that, and I think historically they look to what they’ve heard more so than anything else. I don’t know how much research is actually out there that says this is so much better than that. I think it was really the… I like the location.”

A stay-at-home mother of four school-age children has a background in science, and her critiques of the school system, especially the science curriculum, were scattered throughout the interview in bits and pieces amid her understanding that people go to great lengths and pay a lot of money to live here.
The New Jim Crow of Public Education:
The Current Method of Evaluating Public Schools and Students
“One father, dressed in a suit and tie, shouted angrily that this “new zone” elementary school was a “disaster.” When asked how he knew this, he said the “metrics” – e.g. the standardized test scores for English Language Arts and Math in grades 3-5 – are “abysmal.” When asked if he had ever visited the school or attended one of the parent tours the school offers, he said “no,” adding that the data tell him everything; test scores are the only measure of “good” schools.”
To Break the Cycle…

- Policymakers should capitalize on changing racial attitudes in the U.S., particularly among the younger generations, to promote and stabilize diverse communities and public schools. **Emphasize educational benefits of diversity**

- Policymakers must consider how current accountability policies in the field of education exacerbate segregation and inequality.

- Addressing **implicit bias and sociology of reputation** as it relates to neighborhood and school reputations: promote diversity as places forward-thinking people want to “be” not “flee” in both suburban and urban contexts.
Strong Inter-disciplinary Evidence, especially from Higher Education, of Educational Benefits to Diverse Schools and Classrooms

Enhanced Learning Outcomes: Improved Cognitive Skills, including critical thinking and problem solving

Increased Intercultural and Cross-Racial Knowledge, Understanding and Empathy Decreased Implicit Bias

Better Preparation for Employment

Increased Democratic Outcomes, including Engagement in Political Issues and Participation in Democratic Processes
The Public Good: A Public School Support Organization (PSSO)

1. Community Engagement Resulting in a Strategic Communications Plan to Foster Local Political Support.

2. Professional Development for Public Schools to Allow them to Provide Pedagogy that Highlights the Educational Benefits of Diversity.

3. Legal Advocacy for diverse schools and inclusive communities.
Reimagining Education: Teaching and Learning in Racially Diverse Schools

Summer Institute July 17-20, 2017

https://youtu.be/0aUP0tQBS1s
‘In diversity there is beauty and there is strength.”

Maya Angelou