

Modern Day School Segregation: Policy Brief

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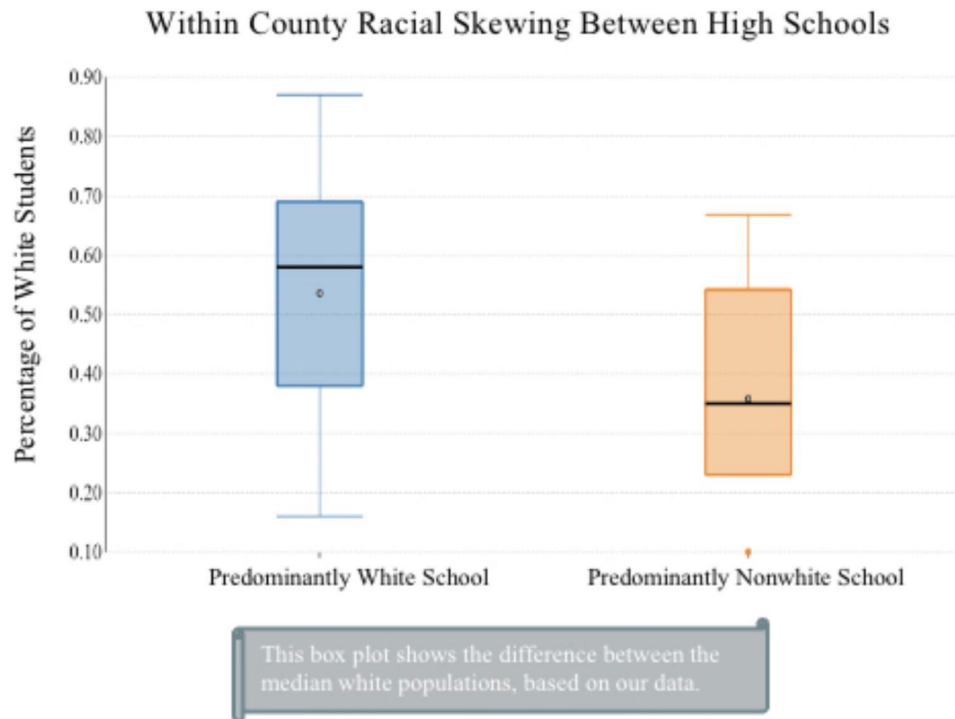
Modern day racial segregation comes in much more hidden layers than its earlier predecessors. Although the Supreme Court has previously ruled that no student body can lawfully be racially segregated, there is substantial evidence that schools are still racially skewed within the same districts. The first legally recognized case of a racially skewed school district in 50 years emerged in California in August 2019 between Bayside Martin Luther King Jr. Academy and Willow Creek Academy. The case begs the question of how schools within the same counties across California may also be racially skewed and how such racially skewed schools come to be. Both the data and literature review from the following research suggest that these disproportionate racial demographics between schools are not only more frequent than legally recognized, but most damaging to communities of color as a whole.

Bayside MLK, a school serving predominantly minority students, was reaped of resources and programs that were being transferred to a predominantly white charter school, Willow Creek Academy. These two schools exist within the same county, and the demographic skew of nonwhite students at Bayside MLK translated in practice to hidden policies of resource inequality by the neglect of the school board (Schafran, 2018). Faculty was moved, after-school programs were cut, and funding was taken from this school. According to feminist theory, school resource disparity in particular forces families of color in racially skewed schools to take up greater responsibility for the care of their students to compensate (Duffy 2007; Menchaca, 2015). Social reproductive labor is what we call this type of invisibilized, unwaged/low-waged labor necessary for raising children, supporting the elderly, the sick, students and more (Duffy 2007). Increasing this pressure of social reproductive labor as a result of resource disparity and program cuts can also increase emotional and financial stress, which potentially impacts entire families of color. Particularly, childcare and after-school-program cuts through the school force families to either seek privatized options or stop work days early to take care of students (Owens 2016).

Research Question: How are racial demographics segregated between schools within the same zip codes across California and how does this impact both students and families in polarized schools?

With the newfound idea that racially skewed schools may place social reproductive and financial stresses on communities of color, we compared the racial demographics of California high schools within the same counties of similar size to determine if racially skewed schools are more common than we think. After sampling 29 counties and 58 high schools, we compared the differences in the percentage of white students within same-county high schools. Our null hypothesis was that there was no disproportionality; the two percentages should be roughly

equal. Using a one sample t-test, we found an average difference of 18.8% between these schools at a p-value of 0.00000117. This suggests that on average, in the counties sampled, there is a predominantly white school and a predominantly nonwhite school; many counties in California are racially skewed.



The current theories for how schools become racially skewed or segregated often relate to the process of urbanization, particularly methods of gentrification that push communities of color into certain neighborhoods, thus creating racially skewed schools (Schafran 2018; Frankenberg 2013). Policy that mitigates gentrification may be an effective way to prevent racially skewed counties. Aggressively building affordable housing in tandem with the community, prohibiting massive luxury development, and reducing property taxes for long-time residents are tangible policies that combat gentrification. Many scholars have also been adamantly clear that addressing gentrification alone is not enough. Some argue that schools should not allow within-district transfers to white families whose children go to majority non white schools, while most of these transfer families claim such they are acting in the interest of better opportunities for their children (Prins 2007; Frankenberg 2013). Others claim the solution requires the ending of test-driven funding to keep students with greater immigrant populations and ELD students from receiving less funds (Ryabov 2007).

Nonetheless, it has been incredibly clear that this disproportionality in demographics and resources is the new age of school segregation. Ultimately, the first step in desegregating schools is recognizing the issue and acknowledging the working theories of how to mend the damage caused to our communities. Naming the issue quantitatively has led us to the next step- drafting policy that will prevent future students from the modern reality of this racial disparity. Should communities band together to pass policies against gentrification, within-district transfers and test-driven funding, the schools of tomorrow may have an incredibly bright and diverse future.

Bibliography

Source #1 Description:

This paper delves into the question of how school income segregation has changed over recent decades. Particularly, they examined this issue both between districts and between schools from 1990 to 2010 and 1991 to 2012 respectively. The key variables examined were “within-metropolitan area income segregation between school districts, within-metropolitan area income segregation between schools, and within-district income segregation between schools”. These were measured by examining both family income as described in Census data as well as counts of students dependent on Free and Reduced Lunch programs. Using longitudinal regression models to predict this income in full, the full distribution of their data across locations depicted an increase in income segregation both between schools and between districts over the last decade. The authors ascribe this increasing income segregation to be perhaps a result of racialized income inequality, indicative of concurrent institutionalized injustices that are also connected to the issue of school segregation.

Ann Owens, Sean F. Reardon, Christopher Jencks. 2016. *Income Segregation Between Schools and School Districts*.

Source #2 Description:

This research article poses the question of how housing segregation is related to school segregation. The author hypothesizes a reciprocal relationship between patterns of housing segregation and school segregation, based off of data from the U.S. Census and National Center for Education Statistics. Residential segregation acted as the independent variable and school segregation acted as the dependent variable. Indices examining both types of segregation were examined over time from the largest metropolitan areas since 2000. The author used dissimilarity comparisons to measure the difference between indices of school segregation and housing segregation. Ultimately, this researcher found a “strong link” between the two types of

segregation across the board, seeming to insinuate the desegregation of housing districts may be the key to desegregating school systems.

Erica Frankenberg. 2013. *The Role of Residential Segregation in Contemporary School Segregation*.

Source #3 Description:

This source examined the effects of race and class demographics on academic performance of Latinx students, as well as the variability of generational status in such compositional impacts. Race and class demographics acted as the independent variable, and academic performance acted as the dependent variable, measured by grade point average and add health picture vocabulary test scores from the National Longitudinal Study of Adolescent Health. They were analyzed using hierarchical linear models and supplemented quantitative data with qualitative data. The results of the study determined that school racial composition have almost negligible effects on academic success of Latinx students, rather the socioeconomic composition of the school does, particularly in accordance with their AHPVT scores. These results showcase the achievement gaps of Latinx students are not as much to do with the racial makeup of the school and more so the socioeconomic makeup of the school. The author implies these findings combat a common argument used against desegregating schools; “that students perform better when they are in similar-demographic schools”.

Ignor Ryabov, Jennifer Van Hook. June 2007. *School Segregation and Academic Achievement Among Hispanic Children*

Source #4 Description:

This research paper is an analysis of how the historical conception of social reproductive labor changed throughout the twentieth century. They examined changes in the delegation of cooking and cleaning based jobs both in the household and then in the paid labor market as potentially influencing a shift in the demographics of workers working in these fields, based on historical census data. Counts of workers participating in these tasks domestically and for wages were compared between demographics over time, as reported in the census. Comparative bar graphs and linear models were analyzed to find that there is a stark transition for white women participating mostly in the waged work force as opposed to reproductive labor in the household just as women of color, particularly undocumented women, take up this work. There is a clear interpretation of this data in regards to the occupational segregation of the twentieth century-progress has been made for white women, who then passed the labor chain further down the racialized socioeconomic hierarchy onto women of color. In the context of school segregation,

this typically low-waged work makes climbing the socioeconomic ladder much more difficult for families, which in previously discussed studies could be an indication of academic disparity as well.

Mignon Duffy. 2007. *Doing the Dirty Work; Gender, Race, and Reproductive Labor in Historical Perspective*. Sociologists for Women in Society.

Source #5 Description:

This article discusses the connection between race, area of origin and college admission profiles. It studies the racial and economic inequalities of the University of California system's 1999 freshman admissions and compared them to the other admissions from each student's high school of origin. Key independent variables discussed were student demographics (race and high school of origin) and the dependent variable was their admission to the UC system. A hypothesis test was used to discuss their findings, which suggest a connection between schools with certain racial demographics and inequity surrounding their admission to the UC system, as well as clear variation between racial groups. For example, according to the study, high schools with predominantly Latinx students tended to have lower admission rates due to fewer applications while predominantly African American schools had lower rates because fewer applicants are admitted than in predominantly white schools. The central interpretation of this research was the idea that the college admissions process does not entirely account for barriers these high schools face. Across the board, despite academic performance and otherwise, these students were not admitted as commonly.

Isaac Martin, Jerome Karabel, Sean W. Jacquez. May 2005. *High School Segregation and Access to the University of California*.

Source #6 Description:

This paper was centered around the issue of white student Interdistrict transfer from majority-Latinx schools to majority-White schools. It argues that white parents' decisions to transfer their children from these schools and the district's allowances of such transfers, constitutes institutional racism and "further [segregate] Latino/a children and families". Using phone interviews from 9 of the 13 white families who had left a predominantly Latinx school, the researchers revealed qualitative data that suggested prejudice toward the Latinx community from their previous school. Further phone interviews from the currently enrolled families suggested feelings of separation from those families. The key variables discussed were somewhat flexible in definition for this study, as it related both to how intolerance of Latinx culture and discrimination led to white families transferring schools, as well as how this

transferring left Latinx families feeling left behind, unwanted, and separate from white communities. The author interprets these results to suggest that the somewhat common occurrence of white families “fleeing” majority-Latinx schools does in fact constitute as a form of institutionalized racism as the decisions are backed by districts regardless of reasoning. This may give some further insight into how schools in diverse neighborhoods can become so segregated in the first place.

Esther Prins. Dec 2007. *Interdistrict Transfers, Latino/White School Segregation, and Institutional Racism in a Small California Town*.

Source #7 Description:

This paper argues that the origin of school segregation between Latinx students and white students in California may be crafted by foundational racist ideologies of Anglo-Saxon superiority and the institutionalized policies that stemmed from them. The paper shows the relationship between these ideologies and the widespread segregation of schools in California over time, representing the independent and dependent variables respectively. To analyze this, the authors used an ethnographic case study of Santa Paula, California during the 1920s and connected their influx of segregation to the early segregative policies of the 1900s. By comparing these two things in their case study, the author determined a clear relationship between the “normalized” segregative policies outside the domain of school and the influx of school segregation in the area, suggesting a connection between historical, normalized notions of racial groups and segregation. The implication of this work is that the education segregation of Latinx students was a single piece of the puzzle to their ultimate segregation and social oppression.

Martha Menchaca, Richard R. Valencia. *Anglo-Saxon Ideologies in the 1920s-1930s: Their Impact on the Segregation of Mexican Students in California*. University of Texas at Austin

Source #8 Description:

This paper works off of the premise that quality and stability of teachers is distributed unevenly among schools typically hitting the hardest upon minority students from low-income areas. It discusses the potential for raises in salaries and perhaps differential salaries to overcome that pattern, based on data from North Carolina illustrating teacher mobility over time. The independent variable in this instance was the salary of the teacher, which was intended to influence how stationary the teacher remained at a given school. Data was analyzed using percentage-based hypothesis tests (percentage of teachers who moved schools) to determine if

changing their salaries was effective. Their results determined that this change in the construction of teachers' salaries was incredibly ineffective compared to other methods, and large salaries would be required to create equitable income for segregated schools.

Charles T. Clotfelter, Helen F. Ladd, and Jacob L. Vigdor. July 2011. *Teacher Mobility, School Segregation, and Pay-Based Policies to Level the Playing Field*

Source #9 Description:

This book is an articulation of the theory of urbanization and gentrification as a means of racially skewing schools. It also touches on the transportation systems and other infrastructural issues that continue to separate neighborhoods, further yielding disproportionately white and nonwhite schools. The emphasis of this book is in Northern California, particularly the Bay Area, and it touches on the very issue the original case sought to remedy.

Alex Schafran. July 2018. *The Road to Resegregation*.