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A Dividing City and Limited Education: An Analysis of School Segregation in Chicago, Illinois and Seattle, Washington

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A Dividing City and Limited Education:

**An Analysis of School Segregation in Chicago, Illinois and
Seattle, Washington**

**By
Ricardo Millhouse**

May the efforts of Martin Luther King, Jr., Whitney M. Young, Vivian J. Malone and several other civil rights activists inform our scholarship and civic engagement commitments. If we remember how far we have come, acknowledge the importance of plurality, and remember how far we have to go, we can get to the mountaintop together.

Ricardo "Ricky" Millhouse

PREFACE

Throughout the development of this project, racial and economic isolation is argued as *the* national problem in the contemporary moment. This is particularly interesting because as a black, southern male, operating in the progressive American North, issues pertaining to social equity, particularly educational equity questioned the extent of its progressivity. Until social isolation is recognized as the effect of public and private institutional action, the relationship between institutions and their communities is uncertain and the human-geography relationality and collective communion is discouraging. This is primarily due to the desire of public and private institutions to categorize and separate individuals by intellectual and economic capacity. This project ultimately encourages transformative political action by acknowledging social tensions, educational ideals, and constitutional rights.

In order to understand the vision and value of American democratic culture, an analysis of historical and contemporary social isolation should be referenced. This two-year project seeks to push scholars, policymakers, and communities to engage public and private institutions to understand the importance of democratic citizenship. Using skills mismatch theory, Myron Orfield's *American Metropolitics*, legal cases, and other critical urban studies works the politics of locality is used throughout this scholarship. More specifically, the politics of locality summarizes the historical and current social isolation, which is influenced by institutional actions and inaction.

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

From my academic career at Macalester College, I have been shaped by dozens of personalities, politics, and cultures from all walks of life. As an American Studies major, I have become aware of the complexities and injustices that are embedded in our society. Dr. Duchess Harris, I cannot thank you enough for believing in me and informing my academic trajectory. Sedric McClure, you have fed me with your wisdom, insight, and intelligence. To my unparalleled defense committee, Duchess Harris, Ruthanne Kurth-Schai, and Karin San Juan Aguilar, I thank you for your scholarship, energy, and academic curiosity. I would also like to thank God and my forefathers for laying a foundation so that I may continue to build the house called freedom.

INTRODUCTION

[Poem removed for copyright reasons]

Hughes, Langston. "Bound No'th Blues." *Up South: Stories, Studies, and Letters of This Century's Black Migrations*. New York: New, 1993. Print.

Imagine yourself being socialized in a culturally, racially, and economically exclusive area. When you are not moving through the space that has been pre-destined for you, according to your socioeconomic status, you are either questioned or at the extreme, slighted for the interruption that you have caused in the residential landscape. Though this hypothetical phenomenon may be an unspoken reality, it is one that is common in the contemporary American landscape. The social division that is explicit in some cities and subtle in others, propelled by race and ethnicity, as well as economic and housing status, should be highlighted if we are to have faith in America's future.

On January 21, 2013, Myrtle Evers-Williams delivered the invocation at Barack Obama's second inauguration. Evers-Williams engaged notions of hope, progress, and unity in her prayer that bore witness to the nation's forerunners. Linda Brown of the groundbreaking *Brown v. Board of Education* case and Benjamin Roberts of the *Roberts v. The City of Boston* underscored the social division that continues to exist in America. Specifically, the philosophy of America has been considered one of equality, progress, and morality. Their courageous efforts, in addition to other figureheads surely questioned the aforementioned American philosophy. As Myrtle Evers-Williams stood in front of millions of Americans on January 21, 2013, she asserted, "The capital's golden dome

reflects the unity and democracy of one nation, indivisible, with liberty, and justice for all. “ Considering this statement, dozens of litigation cases have been sites to suggest that the physical existence of America’s marker of liberty and justice are in fact divergent with the reality of America that is so often overlooked.

The reality of contemporary America is one that echoes the nation’s unsung heroes, such as Homer Plessy, James Hood, Elizabeth Eckford, and several other courageous, strategic essentialists. Historically, Plessy, Hood, and Eckford operated in time periods and geographic locations that were plagued by racial hostility and segregation. Their geographic location, the American south, questioned place, citizenship, and the notion of belonging. In this regard, I argue that the politics of locality tends to catalyze white flight, economic consolidation, the skills mismatch theory, school segregation, and residential patterns constructed by racial identity. The politics of locality, as I have conflated and appropriated it, is the way in which individuals choose to separate themselves to protect their property, or the way in which individuals are geographically situated, due to discriminatory housing policies and real estate practices. For example, the residential segregation that is still apparent in Detroit, Michigan is caused by deindustrialization and white flight. Thus, communities of color are located in certain areas throughout the city. In this respect, the

fundamental causation of the housing segregation in Detroit as well as many cities throughout the United States is caused by the politics of locality.

Additionally, the politics of locality, as I have re-defined it, emerged during wartime America, when the exodus of African Americans to the North inadvertently constructed the reclusive contours of northern cities. For example, in Chicago, Illinois, the majority of the African Americans remain in the South Side and West Side of the city, which is a pattern that can be traced back to the early 1900s. However, in Seattle, Washington, African Americans are concentrated in the Central District. Even though the African American community infallibly migrated to the North to escape immoral persecution, they were met with a dubious reality. In Up South, Charles S. Johnson (1893-1956) asserts:

In the State of Alabama, Jefferson County, with ten lynchings, increased from 90,617 in 1910 to 130, 211 in 1920—the largest recorded increase in any county; Dallas County, with the largest number of lynching (19), lost only 1,246. Negroes, while Sumter, with no lynching's at all, lost 3,491...In spite of a considerable progress by Negroes, the great bulk of this population is in an almost hopeless struggle against feudalism¹

Considering Johnson's statement, African Americans during the early 20th century were attracted to the perceived and imagined gaze of financial

¹ Adero, Malaika. *Up South: Stories, Studies, and Letters of This Century's Black Migrations*. New York: New, 1993. Print.

security, homeownership/citizenship, and safety. In other words, African Americans believed the north was a safe haven and the politics of locality subtly substantiated their justification.

Nevertheless, the road to the “promised land” was surely exhilarating for many African American families, considering the perceived space of the north—invulnerable, work opportunities, and guaranteed citizenship. C. Otis of Ithaca, New York writes to the New York Tribune:

He [African Americans] fought for his country. He was carried with his pack and gun into a foreign country; he came into contact with dark-skinned brethren, citizens of foreign countries, especially France, who told him of their rights as citizens...even the French populace were surprised to learn of the southern Negro's treatment in this country and lauded him as being extremely loyal under such conditions.... Here is why he leaves the South: Unjust treatment, failure to secure a square deal in the courts, taxation without representation, denial of the right to vote thru the subterfuge of the white primary, no representation in any form of government, poor schools, unjust pay for and division of crops, insulting of women without any redress, and public torture. The Negro longs for free air, happiness and all that goes to make for a full and free citizenship—and that brings him North²

Such sentiment indicates that the South was repulsive, while the North was the land of opportunities and a space that was equated to fosterage. However, the North was just the opposite. The North had many problems throughout history, yet and still it is thought of as the “promised land.” Throughout this project, I will highlight the shortcomings of the North and

² Ibid.

suggest commonalities of the South and the North, using qualitative analysis. Specifically, in Chapter 2 and Chapter 3, I use an interview, map analyses, housing, and educational policies to highlight contemporary racial segregation and educational dualism in Chicago, Illinois. In this regard, the unvoiced truths of many individuals and communities that have been plagued by the politics of locality will be brought to the fore. I suggest cities such as: Chicago, Illinois and Seattle, Washington has had, and to this day, some problematic and remotely elusive situations pertaining to their residential patterns. Furthermore, the connection between stratified and segregated residential patterns based on race, class, and ethnicity to their respective public schools is inescapable.

In the 21st century, a narrative within a narrative is created when we apply the notion of the politics of locality to Chicago and Seattle, respectively. Arguably, there is an interesting relationship between one's residential location and educational opportunities available to residents. Particularly, the social division that is characteristic in the United States is yielded by housing and economic status. Rivetingly, this separation phenomenon is not economically viable for residents and students alike seeing that certain communities are allocated more resources, strengthening their community schools. For example, in Chicago, Illinois,

residential segregation during the Great Migration was catalyzed by deindustrialization, torment, restrictive covenants, and protection of intellectual property, such as whiteness. According to Cheryl Harris:

Race and property were conflated by establishing a form of property contingent on race; only blacks were subjugated as slaves and treated as property...only white possession and occupation of land was validated and therefore privileged as a basis for property rights...each contributed in varying ways to the construction of whiteness as property³

Hence, the politics of locality. Taking these factors into consideration, a concentration of poverty was characteristic to Chicago's urban landscape in the 20th century and arguably in the 21st century. In this case, most people of color and low-income individuals were conscious of the racial consolidation that ensued, forcing them to perform in a way that did not threaten the property of certain people and in a manner that did not deem them as *other*. The *Hansberry v. Lee* case of 1940, which restricted African Americans from purchasing or renting homes in designated white neighborhoods is a case and point.

As opposed to the reliance of economic dependence of the automobile industry, Boeing and tourism, on the other hand, fueled the economy of the Pacific Northwest. Also, it was not deindustrialization and

³ Harris, Cheryl. 1995. Whiteness as Property. In K. Crenshaw, N. Gotanda, G. Peller, and K. Thomas (eds.), Critical Race Theory: The Key Writings That Formed the Movement, pp. 276-291. New York: The New Press.

gentrification from eminent domain that caused racial consolidation in western coast cities, such as Seattle, Washington. It was the clearance of public housing and the self-professed need of social distance that racially segregated the city. For example, Rainier Valley saw a racial shift as more Latino, Black, and Asian individuals flocked to the jobs available in the community. As a result, the need for public housing and more diverse community schools increased significantly.

Personally, in elementary school, I was faced with the challenge of falsely completing a transfer request form in order to attend a school that was not in my district. My elementary school had a high percentage of white students in the mid-1990s, with only a few African American students in relation to white students. Interestingly, the elementary school, which I was required to attend, was located miles away from my home. Due to the demographic of my elementary school, I had a completely different experience than my neighbors. However, I had many resources available to me, such as a computer lab, a library assistant position, a safety guard position, and a recess that incorporated critical thinking skills. In retrospect, I had a completely different school experience from my neighbors and other youth in my racially homogeneous community. So, was the transfer process worth it after all? Given the context of double ideals, duality, and 'double consciousness,' why is the conversation

around inclusive, residential patterns and intrinsic public school segregation not being had on a grand scale? This project attempts to answer these questions, while simultaneously analyzing residential patterns, economic opportunities, and parental concerns. In addition, this project attempts to place a spotlight on the shortcomings of America, using Chicago and Seattle as case studies, respectively. Besides, if scholars and policymakers do not address the problem, who actually wins?

ABSTRACT

The contemporary, American landscape and public education system is becoming increasingly similar to the landscape navigated by our nation's unsung heroes, such as Homer Plessy, James Hood, and Elizabeth Eckford. These strategic essentialists operated in time periods and navigated geographic locations plagued by racial hostility and segregation. With respect to their geographic location (the American south), their educational liberties, placemaking, and citizenship were challenged. Considering the contemporary, residential segregation in Chicago and Seattle, public schools are becoming re-segregated. I argue the politics of locality tends to catalyze white flight, increase racial and economic isolation, and explicate a skills mismatch phenomenon. By definition, the politics of locality is the way in which individuals choose to separate themselves to protect their property or the way in which individuals are forcibly situated geographically. Furthermore, given the context of double ideals, educational dualism, libertarian paternalism, and 'double consciousness,' why is the conversation around inclusive, residential patterns and intrinsic, public school segregation not a national priority? This project examines these questions, while analyzing the residential patterns, economic opportunities, and educational policies in

Chicago and Seattle, respectively. Effectually, this project advances our understanding of race, class, and democratic citizenship.

CHAPTER 1: CHICAGO, ILLINOIS

[Poem removed for copyright reasons]

Hughes, Langston. "A Dream Deferred." *A Raisin in the Sun*. New York: Random House, 1994. Print.

Chicago is one of the most segregated cities in the United States. The “Second City” is particularly segregated by race, class, and inconceivably by education. The extreme racial isolation that is apparent in Chicago today has a historical influence through a series of self-conscious actions and purposeful institutional arrangements that continue to separate individuals. We call this process social stratification and its present emergence as the root of residential and school segregation. Social stratification, economic inequality, and choice work in conjunction with one another to catalyze public school segregation. Thus, the cycle of racial consolidation, housing and school segregation, and libertarian paternalism, as it relates to choice, continues. This paper attempts to critique and dismantle such a controversial education system in the interest of the upcoming generation’s attempt at racial inclusiveness, educational equity, school choice, and democratic citizenship in Chicago.

Constructing Neighborhood Contours

The start of residential segregation for African Americans in particular can be traced back to 1915, when African American citizens migrated into what was then called the “Black Belt.” For reference, the “Black Belt” was a “narrow strip of land on the south side of the city from 18th Street to 39th street and bounded by State Street on the east and the Rock Island Railroad tracks and LaSalle Street on the west.”⁴ As the “Black Belt” expanded, African American citizens had the recourse of moving within an already constrained racialized space to one low-maintained and cramped apartment to the next. Despite the housing segregation, racial and political consciousness emerged as a response. Blacks, as well as other minorities, quickly realized that the Fourteenth Amendment to the United States Constitution did not support their status on the social hierarchy, which is influenced by race. In this regard, the “Black Belt” became a political battleground, as well as a micro-economy, in response to the underpinning that assisted in the social mobility of *some* citizens and the deprivation of political rights of other citizens. In this light,

⁴ Baldwin, Davarian L. "Mapping the Black Metropolis: A Cultural Geography of the Stroll." *Chicago's New Negroes: Modernity, the Great Migration, & Black Urban Life*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina, 2007. 23. Print.

the Amendment to make civil rights a human right for *all* citizens is a slanted underpinning.

The political battleground of Chicago's "Black Belt," also referred to as "The Stroll" is characterized by racial respectability and leisure-based labor. The "Stroll" is a label that was given to the commercial district of Chicago's "Black Belt" to mark the Black-owned institutions and businesses that emerged.⁵ These businesses and institutions demonstrated community recognition, Black enterprise, and spatial transformation. Essentially, the "Stroll" was a strategic effort of the Black community on the Southside to instill racial pride in community members. Simultaneously, demanding respect, inclusiveness, and a light on race and class conflicts in the conceptual and physical racialized spaces in Chicago's built environment were motivating forces for the political battleground. Needless to say, the "Stroll" complicated the notion of being an antithesis of the productivity of the Progressive Era as suggested by the greater Chicago community.

Ironically, the University of Chicago was a huge financial supporter to make Chicago's "Black Belt" a non-elastic and racially monolithic region. This was done by funding a project to stop the 'Green Line' of the El Train System from reaching too far into the predominately Black south side.

⁵ Ibid.

The claim is that The University of Chicago, tavern owners, landlords, and the director of Jackson Park Hospital operated within a political and legal framework maintained and enforced by representatives who were responsible to representatives that Woodlawn residents helped placed in office. In other words, the political system and those who operated within it maintained a significant level of discriminatory ideologies, which were informed by race. Simultaneously, public institutions considered their operating and financial status to be contingent on Chicago's political arm. Unfortunately, not only were Black-businesses restricted to 18th to 39th Street, but the homes of Black Chicagoans were situated solely on the Southside of Chicago as well. Here is where residential segregation in Chicago manifested.

Historically, the adjacent Hyde Park, Kenwood, and Woodlawn neighborhoods were all white enclaves in the early 1900s. To keep these areas "pure," the Hyde Park and Kenwood Property Owners' Association shamelessly called potential employers to African Americans to deny them jobs when they had the aspiration or obligation to move into Hyde Park, Kenwood, or Woodlawn.⁶ The problematic argument for this action was to protect property values, which could lower due to the "contamination" that a home could receive if it was under the tenancy of a person of color.

⁶ Ibid.

Cynically, the University of Chicago, whose goal is to enrich human life, funded the protection of property values by establishing a housing protection fund. To no surprise, the housing available to new, urban Blacks was dilapidated and hardly maintained.

More specifically, for the economically disenfranchised population, the housing available for rent or purchase were spaces with cramped rooms, a kitchenette with a hot plate for cooking, and at times in a state of disrepair. On top of that, landlords can force high rent without notice for the worse housing in the city. This was allowed due to restrictive covenants based on race throughout the 1900s, until it was ruled unconstitutional in 1948 vis-à-vis *Shelley v. Kraemer*. Despite the court ruling some housing deeds contain restrictive language based on race and there are contemporary and varied forms of restrictive covenants and redlining practices, such as insurance accessibility or even “steering” that is practiced today. To highlight the Black housing boundaries and leisure mobility in Chicago, racial violence, home bombings, and the patrolling of neighborhoods by young white “athletic clubs” were in place to serve as a control factor,⁷ as well as a power mechanism to project a self-identified inherent superiority onto migrants. By no means was spatial consolidation, which limited education choices to your neighborhood, an excuse for one’s

⁷ Ibid.

politics of respectability. Besides, white Chicago's new neighbors were citizens and had the right to homeownership and a quality education, regardless of race, class, or location.

Economic segregation and inequality are not issues that are favored by current city government policies at the self-defined "Allocation Banquets." The continually marginalized and silenced are served second after the racially privileged and wealthy are generously served, as suggested by Derrick Bell in *Faces at the Bottom of the Well*. So, we should re-visit the prevalent issue of economic inequality and segregation of different groups in Chicago from a historical lens. First, we should reflect on Derrick Bell's suggestion at a so-called Racial Preference Licensing Act. In respect to this postulation, housing inequality would be customary to ensure that low-income and minority families are to be offered dilapidated housing that is removed from social networks. At the same time, the racially privileged will be exposed to architecturally sound housing in close proximity to social networks for a guaranteed opportunity at economic mobility. For African Americans, housing was and still is concentrated in the South and West Side of Chicago, which are areas that receive little, positive attention and are gradually gentrifying. In translation, the current gentrification in Hyde Park, which is on the south side of Chicago, by the University of Chicago and corporations in Humboldt Park,

on the west Side, is a manifestation of racial and economic consolidation, similar to housing restrictions during the Great Migration. In this light, traditional public school students suffer, while selective school students benefit from the gentrification. In accordance with Dr. Mary Patillo's Black Picket Fences:

Grandparents, grandchildren, cousins, neighbors, classmates—this density of relationships in the neighborhoods, forged through high levels of homeownership and long-term residence, has created an intricate system of socialization that produces top-level city politicians as well as high-ranking gang leaders.

To say the least, neighborhood networks cultivate students across difference neighborhoods in significant and distinctive ways. In Groveland, a predominate black and middle-class neighborhood on the south side of Chicago, “parents possess financial, social, and human capital that greatly facilitate parenting, a crucial distinction between them and poor families. But this one area on the south side, youth have certain resources working for them, while some ill-mannered, but readily available resources work against them in other areas, like Englewood. This intra-group segregation is a difference between some students’ capacity to attend private schools, pay for prom, and an occasional trip. Simultaneously, other African American students have never been to downtown Chicago. When school

choice is in question, what does school access look like? What does the demographic of a traditional neighborhood school look like?

Perceptively, between 1970 and 1980 economic inequality increased tremendously. More recently, there has not been a dramatic decrease in economic inequality as suggested by Susan E. Mayer of Harris Graduate School of Public Policy. The economic inequality issue is very much due to the legacy of job inaccessibility for minorities and low-income Chicagoans (now at 59%), which is a consequence of housing segregation. More specifically, deindustrialization, the suburbanization of jobs, and occupational bifurcation contributed to economic segregation and immobility for minorities and low-income individuals between 1970 and 1980 and surely in recent years.⁸ Thus, economic inequality is highlighted and plagues most Chicago neighborhoods, like West Humboldt Park. This is made possible by a disinvestment in subsidizing a certain amount of housing and creating jobs in minority-populated areas. The lack of investment also does not address the fact that some parental strategies in disadvantaged areas, shielding youth from enticing “outs,” poor city services, and navigating understaffed and underfunded schools. In respect to this reality, economic inequality undoubtedly fuels economic

⁸ Mayer, Susan E. *Income Inequality, Economic Segregation and Children's Educational Attainment*. Thesis. University of Chicago, 2005. Print.

segregation in Chicago, which narrows Chicago student's choices for high school.

There are precisely three circumstances that increase economic segregation. First, the rich believe that affluent neighbors are a net benefit.⁹ Economically speaking, if there is a concentration of wealth in one area, property taxes increase, which will incontrovertibly bar most minorities and low-income individuals from threatening the wealth of privileged individuals and their neighborhood schools. Second, the quality of housing units in any given neighborhood changes less rapidly than the distribution of income.¹⁰ In this light, property values increase or remain at an exceptionally high value, thus the question of equal access among *all* citizens is a continuous and at times a frustrating, one-sided discussion. Third, income has a nonlinear effect on demand for costly neighborhood amenities.¹¹ Considering these three circumstances, the trend is to protect wealth and socially stratify to protect privilege and narrow school choice for *some* public school students. In other words, economic segregation is a trend in Chicago, as well as other cities throughout the United States, but the ideology of protecting privilege and separating classes should be dismantled to arrive at a socially integrated society, where race is

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ Ibid.

recognized, not edited. A society where poverty is recognized, not justified. A society where a social hierarchy is recognized not a staunch reference point. Moderately speaking, the deconstruction of this ideology will effectively address class and racial segregation in Chicago, allowing school choice to become a reality for Chicago youth.

To say the least, there has been a high intensity of backlash to the issue of economic inequality in Chicago. Unfortunately, the target of action is continuously directed and rarely supported by institutions and agencies that have a great deal of privilege and power who do not recognize it as a valuable property. The possession of privilege is in fact a factor in the social stratification phenomenon in Chicago. Considering the institutions stated earlier, residents who have agency and privilege seldom fail to understand their influence on communities who are granted fewer resources for social mobility than their peers. The primary question that is not being asked is: Who is dependent on elected officials in Chicago that are in office and why?

As demonstrated in Appendix A, south Chicago has a disproportionate low-income level compared to the north side of Chicago. The reason for this reality can be analyzed with historical factors, such as restrictive covenants, deindustrialization, and the politics of housing *choice* at the forefront. In reference to the Great Cities Institute at the University

of Illinois at Chicago, the percentage of families living in poverty or identify as low-income steadily increase each year. In *American Apartheid*, Professors of Sociology, Nancy Denton and Douglass Massey, declare, “Not only are blacks more segregated than other groups on any single dimension of segregation, but they are also more segregated on all dimensions simultaneously.”¹² For demonstrative purposes, Appendix A demonstrates the income disparities in Chicago, highlights the percentage of residents that are African American, and illustrates the community areas that are recognized and funded for revitalization since 1999.

Revitalization Efforts

Despite the revitalization efforts of the City of Chicago, whether it is city development, real estate development, or increased investment by raising property values, the efforts turn a blind eye to residential and economic segregation, while resources are not allocated to neighborhoods that need it most. Resources given to these revitalization areas also support a Chicago student’s ability to enter an affluent school and continue to improve affluent public schools, while poor school continue to

¹² Massey, Douglas S., and Nancy A. Denton. *American Apartheid: Segregation and the Making of the Underclass*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard UP, 1993. 74. Print.

decline. To say the least, “The Stroll” is currently a characteristic among affluent areas and it is used as a marker of economic privilege. The reason is that when certain areas are “revitalized,” they remain racially and economically rigid or there is a disincentive for low-income residents to remain in the community area.

Chicago and School Choice

Each housing *choice* is contingent on the number of homes that are subsidized or created for the low-income population. In light of the housing *choices*, I suggest that the number of subsidized and public housing be proportionate to the number of low-income residents in Chicago, which should essentially be proportionate across Chicago’s 77 neighborhoods. In this respect, residential and economic segregation is addressed and reversed, while Chicago public schools will gradually become economically and racially integrated. To add, public school students will have access to resources needed to make an actual school choice. In spite of that, housing and school *choice* are influenced by each other, so we must analyze the current demographics and entrance process of Chicago’s public schools. School choice should not dependent on economic capacity, acceptance, or location, but on the individual

preference and academic interests of the student. In this way, school and neighborhood/housing choice will be correctly recognized as a human right. Also, receiving an inferior education will not be a lived experience for low-income and minority students 180 days a year in Chicago.

Furthermore, as citizens, there is a well-defined entitlement to an equal level of education, as ruled in the United States Supreme Court's groundbreaking *Brown v. Board* case of 1954. In Chicago, low-income and minority students continue to strive for inclusiveness in a broken education system and use the limited available resources to produce results comparable to their affluent and privileged peers. For perspective, in the neighborhood of Englewood, Paul Robeson High School is predominately Black and low-income and students are dissuaded to join extracurricular activities because of violence that waits on each of the four sides of the building at 3:00pm. Yet, less than five miles away is Lindblom High School, which has police surveillance and driver services available to students after school. Not to mention the multi-million dollar school revitalization project that Robeson High did not see coming. So, not only is race and place not recognized, but the quality of public schools are not acknowledged. Inevitably, the echoes from the economic and housing segregation at the peak of the Great Migration, consistently segregates *public* schools in Chicago today by race and class. In this regard, there is

more inequality in children's outcomes, such as educational attainment, which perpetuates economic segregation."¹³ Ergo, Chicago has found itself in a 1954 courtroom once again, on the basis of school inequality and racial segregation.

Specifically, there are several options for high school students in Chicago, such as: career academies, military academies, charter, contract¹⁴, magnet, selective enrollment, small, neighborhood, and special education schools. Out of 404,157 Chicago Public School students, 87% of them are low-income. In the motto of Chicago Public Schools, "every child is unique with different education needs and interests. That's why Chicago Public Schools offers a variety of choices for high schools students."¹⁵ The keyword in the statement is "choice." A school system that is plagued by "a lack of funding, overcrowding, selectivity, lack of diversity, inequality of services and resources"¹⁶ places a restriction on the formal definition of "choice." For further understanding, I will demonstrate

¹³ Mayer, Susan E. *Income Inequality, Economic Segregation and Children's Educational Attainment*. Thesis. University of Chicago, 2005. Print.

¹⁴ Contract schools are operated by private entities under contract with CPS.

¹⁵ Chicago Board of Education. "Chicago Public Schools : Home." *Chicago Public Schools : Home*. Chicago Public Schools, 1 Jan. 2012. Web. 12 May 2012.

¹⁶ Scott-Boria, Mary. "Education." Core Course. ACM Office, Chicago. 12 Apr. 2012. Lecture.

the process of entering high school from a particular identity, while staying in the context of school choice.

Imagine that you are an Asian American student in the eighth grade with a stanine score¹⁷ of seven, you live in a tier two area¹⁸, such as Uptown. Like most CPS students, you would like to attend a selective enrollment high school, since you are striving to become a chemical engineer. If you have a stanine score of five or higher you are eligible to sit for the selective enrollment exam.¹⁹ You are required to choose six selective enrollment high schools out of the following: Brooks College Prep, Jones College Prep, King College Prep, Lane Tech, Lindblom Math and Science Academy, Northside College Prep, Payton College Prep, Westinghouse, and Young Magnet. For perspective on the quality of the education at these institutions, refer to Appendix A. However, after you submit your choices your seventh grade scores and socioeconomic data for the selection process is placed under scrutiny. Since, you live in

¹⁷A stanine score determines whether you are eligible to take the selective enrollment high school examination.

¹⁸ The Chicago Board of Education adopted the Tier system, as a way to socioeconomically diversify selective enrollment schools. Each Tier is determined by an area's income level.

¹⁹ A selective enrollment exam is used in accordance with the tier system to determine acceptance into a selective enrollment school.

Uptown, your family income level averages \$39,446 a year.²⁰

Unfortunately the likelihood of you being accepted into a selective enrollment school that has an intentional population capacity is improbable.

The reason is that you are competing against students with a family income of \$100,000 (Tier four) or more and private school students.

Hypothetically speaking, your next option is a Military Academy.

Subsequently, you have the *choice* of choosing four Military Academies to choose from out of the following: Air Force Academy, Carver Military Academy, Chicago Military Academy, Marine Military Academy, Phoenix Military Academy, and Rickover Naval Academy. For perspective on the quality of the education at these institutions, refer to Appendix A. Assuming that you received a combined score of ten after adding your math and reading scores, you will be invited to an interview. Putatively, you would not be admitted due to amount of days you were absent from your middle school, which could possibly be ten days. Now your final option is your neighborhood high school.

According to the Chicago Public School (CPS) website:

Every child residing in Chicago has a CPS neighborhood school. Families who explore their choices may find that their neighborhood

²⁰ Eder, Derek. "About - Chicago Public School Tiers." *About - Chicago Public School Tiers*. Open City, 4 Mar. 2011. Web. 13 May 2012. <<http://cpstiers.opencityapps.org/about.html>>.

school is the best choice—or that another neighborhood school has an interesting program open to students citywide.

Appendix A illustrates the inequalities among neighborhood schools in Chicago, which is influenced by the economic base of the neighborhood. The overarching theme that is subtly demonstrated in the tables is choice, as it pertains to a quality public education. In theory, the idea of choice is inherently a counterintuitive human right. The reason is that, there are certain factors that work against the social mobility of *certain* students, such as a broken household, poverty, a disconnect to social networks, and a lack of resources for academic enrichment in some communities. In this aspect, *choice* is an option for those who have the social capital and wealth to consider all of the public education options that are available in Chicago.

Professors of Government and Educational Policy, Jennifer Hochschild and Nathan Scovronick believe, “poor, urban students may have more family and community problems than other children, but their schools have also failed them.”²¹ Taking this further, poor urban students are removed from social networks and are granted little to no quality resources, even if the current expenditures per student are comparable to a different neighborhood school. Their community schools lack effective

²¹ Hochschild, Jennifer L., and Nathan B. Scovronick. *The American Dream and the Public Schools*. New York: Oxford UP, 2003. 80. Print.

teachers, have limited resources, and have deteriorating infrastructures, in most cases. Particularly, one Bronzeville parent of three and community activist observed that a local selective enrollment school was awarded millions of dollars for renovation and strengthening the curriculum in early 2000. But Dunbar Vocational Career Academy, where her son attends high school and 6.9% of the students are eligible for a selective four-year college received no funds at all. Additionally, the Chicago High School for the Arts dropped into Bronzeville and has not accepted a substantial amount of students from the neighborhood,” Mrs. Norwood specified. Predictably, ‘Chi Arts’ received millions of dollars, while the existing neighborhood high schools in Bronzeville did not receive the same resources. The parent was staggered to find out that ‘Chi Arts’ was not staying in the neighborhood, but will be moving to another location in the next few years. Equally problematic is the process of closing a school due to performance, even though funding is unequal between poor and affluent schools. This process only covertly displaces low-income Chicagoans, as the University of Chicago displaced minorities in the mid-1900s, because students tend to attend a nearby neighborhood school. Where is the school choice and quality education that Chicago students are entitled to?

Contradictions of Chicago Public Schools

Considering Chicago's educational politics, the school system is designed to help *some* and interdicting *others* from social mobilization. In the case of the Bronzeville resident, neighborhood schools have been failing her children, since she has realized over time that living in Bronzeville her family is segregated and are stuck because the system offers resources outside of the community, which she is not intended to benefit from. Her first epiphany started in 2004 when Arne Duncan and Mayor Daley proposed school choice and started closing elementary schools. This was a part of gentrification because they tore down several public housing buildings, including the Ida B. Wells Homes into the community, where she lived. The reasoning behind this was to bring single-family homes, which started at \$50,000. To her, surprise, schools started to close and families started to leave, while simultaneously, "people with money came in." To clarify this phenomenon, low-performing schools closed, new school boundaries were implemented, while students from public housing were shifted to inferior schools and the newly selective schools erupted in the neighborhoods that she and other parents alike were forced out of.

Generally speaking, the Chicago Public School System has failed students. According to a parent, “their policies are not transparent for getting into a quality school and neither is their reasoning behind school closings as a solution.” The reason is that closing schools and forcing families out of neighborhoods only heightens housing and economic segregation in Chicago. In 2012, the strategy proposed by Daley and Duncan in 2004 is still in place, disallowing the legacy of racial and economic segregation that followed the Great Migration to cease.

Moreover, in March of 2012, the Illinois State House of Representatives approved a tax cap for suburban homeowners, which will block suburban governments from raising property taxes when the gross property values in respective areas decline. The bill is sponsored by Illinois Representative Jack Franks, who believes that the bill will protect the middle-class. Supposedly, Chicago is not affected by tax caps, due to home-rule authority, according to Franks. Although, Chicago’s home-rule unit is not obligated to deter tax caps, considering the Home Rule statute, the bill is directly correlated to the dysfunction of the Chicago Public School System. Superintendent Jim Riordan of South Cook County’s District 228, argues “this district has the lowest assessed property tax

valuation of any high school district.”²² The district also lacks shopping centers, industry, and railroads, which contributes to the property tax base of districts. This means that the funding for resources, like technology is dire in District 228. For hyper-segregated Chicago, as property taxes are capped in certain neighborhoods, their public school funding will be as well. Keep in mind that traditional neighborhood high schools and military academies spend \$7,946 per pupil, while selective enrollment schools spend \$9,666 per pupil. In this light, when property taxes are capped, poor schools will continue to decline, due to the low property tax base in certain areas. This phenomenon also prevents traditional public high schools from offering quality resources, essentially segregating traditional neighborhood high schools, due to the economic segregation of Chicago neighborhoods.

To end, the school choice strategy that Rahm Emanuel and his administration are following is a legacy of Arne Duncan and Richard Daley. Undoubtedly, educational opportunities are not equal across different communities or school choice would not be proposed. Frankly, the correct terminology for the school choice strategy is libertarian paternalism. For clarity, individual schools are not the target of critique, but it is the system that implements policies that does not recognize economic and housing

²² Lewis, James H. *Preserving Privilege*. Publication. October ed. Chicago: Chicago Urban League, 1995. Print.

disparities in Chicago. As a consequence, disparities consistently segregate schools and renders public schools *selective*. In light of this, Ernesto Cortés, Jr. argues:

The fear of uncertainty drives us to teach our students to live in intellectual cultural, and political silos that leave no room for ambiguity, relationality, or engagement, which seem intent on transmitting the existing culture, and consequently forgets their role in cultivating human potential and preparing students for lives in a society of constant change.²³

Considering this statement, the lack of engagement and questions surrounding educational and housing policies suggest uncertainty. To start, housing subsidies proportionate to the number of low-income Chicagoans should be equal across the 77 neighborhoods of Chicago. In this regard, economic inequality and residential segregation are consciously addressed, while simultaneously social networks and resources are made more accessible to minority and low-income Chicagoans. Conceivably, Chicago students can be experience their human and constitutional right of school choice and quality education, regardless of their family income or neighborhood.

²³ Cortés, Ernesto. "Quality Education." *Quality Education as a Constitutional Right: Creating a Grassroots Movement to Transform Public Schools*. Boston: Beacon, 2010. 93-104. Print.

CHAPTER 2: SEATTLE, WASHINGTON

Citizenship is more than an individual exchange of freedoms for rights; it is also membership in a body politic, a nation, and a community. To be deemed fair, a system must offer its citizens equal opportunities for public recognition, and groups cannot systematically suffer from misrecognition in the form of stereotype and stigma

-Melissa Harris-Perry

Beginning in the 1940s, the Pacific Northwest, witnessed a change in its political, racial, and residential landscape. The expansion of the African American, Latino, and Asian community influenced anti-discrimination legislation, added an important perspective to mainstream politics, and established civil rights groups, such as the Christian Friends for Racial Equality (CFRE).²⁴ Despite the efforts of CFRE and other civil rights groups, communities of color experienced racial tensions, became inhabitants of decrepit housing units, and operated under *socially progressive* policies most city council members consciously design and coax others to endorse, such as affordable housing policies. As a result of the social tensions in Seattle, students of color and low-income students are limited to their neighborhood schools. This phenomenon influences the racial and economic homogeneity of Seattle Public Schools. For that reason, Seattle's socially isolated city landscape, questions Seattle's social progressivity claim and the notion of citizenship. In this chapter, I will explain the development of Seattle's racially exclusive neighborhoods, specifically from the African American and Asian American vantage points and how this phenomenon inherently deems school choice and educational civil rights mere illusions.

²⁴ Black and white women to address racial discrimination and encourage communication and reconciliation between racial groups in Seattle founded Christian Friends for Racial Equality (CFRE) in 1943.

The Exodus of African Americans to Seattle

Manuel Lopes was Seattle's first black resident in 1860 and ten years later, thirteen African American males, landed in Seattle.²⁵ Their migration from the American South was motivated by their self-assurance that the land in the Pacific Northwest was virtuous and free from of racial discrimination, which plagued the American South. W.E.B. Du Bois, in particular, interpreted Seattle to be "a site of political freedom in the midst of the national wave of segregationist practices."²⁶ As the conceptualization of Seattle spread, by 1900, 406 African Americans called Seattle home and earned modest wages as porters on railroads, domestic servants, and waiters in hotels. In order to establish community in their new city, these early Seattleites established a number of organizations specifically focused on human dignity, community, and culture. To highlight the presumed escape of racial discrimination, W.E.B. Du Bois commented in 1913:

²⁵ Taylor, Quintard. *The Forging of a Black Community: Seattle's Central District, from 1870 through the Civil Rights Era*. Seattle: University of Washington, 1994. Print.

²⁶ Taylor, Quintard. *The Forging of a Black Community: Seattle's Central District, from 1870 through the Civil Rights Era*. Seattle: University of Washington, 1994. 80. Print.

Here the fight against race prejudice has been persistent and triumphant...Washington has over 6,000 Negroes and 2,500 live in Seattle...Why [should] 3,000 [people] in Seattle mean so much more to themselves and the world than 100,000 of the same people in parts of Alabama or Georgia?²⁷

The answer is directly linked to the notion of the politics of locality, which informed the conscious decision of most African Americans to move not only to the North, but also to the West Coast. At the same time that Du Bois poses a critical question regarding the westward migration of African Americans, the question of post-settlement injustice and place begs engagement.

Between 1900-1940, Seattle's population was well over 80,000. With the African American population increasing by a few hundred each year, the binary of place and protection is reified. More specifically, the western assertion of Jim Crow laws highlights the desire to protect wealth and create racial exclusivity in Seattle's neighborhoods. For example, MacDougall and Southwick, a dry-goods outlet located in downtown Seattle, discouraged African American patronage.²⁸ In addition, popular theaters, such as Strand and Palomar, forced African Americans into segregated balconies. The explicit racial discrimination was also evident in public schools. Maxine Hayes recalls being called "chocolate drop," and

²⁷ Ibid.

²⁸ Ibid.

“coon” by her classmates.²⁹ As a response to the racial epithets, Hayes’ principle insisted that she promise to ignore her classmates. Inevitably, Hayes retaliated as a response to the epithets. Interestingly, because Hayes broke her promise to her principal, she was disciplined instead of her classmates. Thus, the West as African Americans had imagined it, was in fact plagued by stereotype and stigma. As a result, the politics of locality, emerging out of place, belonging, and racial identity dictated where and how one navigates spaces, as well as how an individual accesses a space. This phenomenon marks the crux of housing segregation in Seattle.

In response to the racial order that characterized Seattle throughout the 1900s, most African Americans avoided challenging civil rights issues, while some individuals took civil rights issues to the Universal Negro Improvement Association, NAACP, and the Communist Party.³⁰ However, these efforts did not stop institutional, personal, and systematic mechanisms from using racial identity to destabilize communities and individuals. Bearing in mind that class is inextricably linked to race, an increase in economic inequality, a re-concentration of wealth, a growing income gap between white and Black Seattle diminishes the American

²⁹ Ibid.

³⁰ Ibid.

Dream (however one defines or gauges it). Specifically, the context of one's opportunity to acquire land, build community, and generate wealth had been and arguably still is constructed by local and state policies. Particularly, Seattle's wealthy and middle-class residents moved to the exurbs³¹ of the city (also called the Hills) to protect their property, wealth, and ensure the expansion of each. Meanwhile, in Seattle's core, African Americans were concentrated in the Yesler-Jackson and East Madison neighborhoods (referred to the Central District by WWII). The primary reason is the low-wages that most African Americans earned throughout the 1900s and the purposefully expensive rent costs outside of Yesler-Jackson and East Madison.

Furthermore, the Yesler-Jackson corridor, located southeast of downtown Seattle, was home to the Sleeping Car Porters Club, lodging houses, and saloons. The low-rents and railroad accessibility accommodated the single black, male population. With respect to the affordable housing availability in this area, such expedient conduct insisted on creating racially exclusive neighborhoods, which essentially designated place for new residents, limited the act of belonging, and

³¹ Coined by A.C. Spector in 1955, an exurb is a semi-rural suburban area, located beyond a densely populated suburb.

raised questions such as: “Who or how does one have the right to the city?” and “To what meaning-making end does social division exist?”

Industrialization and the Asian Community:

As more job opportunities in the Pacific Northwest became available, the Asian presence expanded and made a unique impact on Seattle’s urban landscape. The Japanese, particularly, immigrated to the Pacific Northwest in 1883 in light of its expanding regional economy and Asia’s conflicting relationship with industrialization and colonialism.³² Particularly, capitalists targeted Asian laborers, considering a general disinterest in becoming permanent residents of the United States. The Japanese immigrants, like the African American migrants, came with hopes of well-paying jobs to provide economic opportunities and financial stability to their families.³³

Specifically, the Japanese identified themselves as temporary workers and found it increasingly difficult to support their families in their homeland. Asian men earned low-wages and long work hours under the threat of deportation. For example, Banzo Okada, a Japanese resident of

³² Ziontz, Lenore. "The Anti Chinese Riots in Seattle." *The Pacific Northwest Forum* 6.2 (1891): 28-37. Web.

³³ Ibid.

Seattle stated, "I planned to work three years in the states to save 500 yen and then go back to Japan. However...to save enough was out of the question."³⁴ Regrettably, there are a number of stories similar to Okada's, where a high percentage of Japanese immigrants made Seattle a permanent residence, while homeownership, which indicates an Americaness, citizenship, and a sense of belonging, was a mere illusion. Ascribable to the economic climate and low-income housing policies of Seattle, Japanese immigrants were confined to the Central District neighborhood, like the early African American migrants.

Undoubtedly, both Chinese and Japanese immigrants crossed social and cultural barriers of the time and created a sense of we-ness. However, racial tensions quickly increased and the Chinese immigrants, in particular, were viewed as inferior in response to their unhealthy living conditions and their loyalty to their home country and families.³⁵ Due to the shortage of job opportunities in Seattle and the Pacific Northwest, white Seattleites became increasingly apprehensive of Chinese immigrants. As job availability decreased, white Seattle engaged in economic expulsion of communities of color. Specifically, rumors about Chinese men, such as

³⁴ Ibid.

³⁵ Ibid.

their common attack of white women, became universal³⁶ and forced them outside of Seattle's social, economic, and political spheres.

By the beginning of 1883, America's economy witnessed a decline and the American West, out of chauvinism, blamed the Chinese. This marked the ways in which Seattle constructed race as a symbol of conflict, which essentially identified the existence of a *them* and *us* dichotomy and simultaneously established a social hierarchy. At this point on, Seattle was challenged with constructing policies such as Sam Smith's Open Housing Bill that would yield racial and economic integration. Yet Seattle denied any issues of inequality, but insisted on holding a façade of social progressivity. This is primarily due to the realization that Seattle could not address the tension between the universalistic principles of citizenship and its particular bond to a culturally defined community.

Developing Neighborhood Boundaries in the 1940s

Starting from the 1940s, affordable housing was concentrated in one neighborhood of Seattle—Yesler-Jackson. Together with the economic concentration, the formation of a stigma of Yesler-Jackson (i.e. notions of social deviance and criminality) underlined Seattle's social

³⁶ Ibid.

division. The otherization mechanism, or neighborhood stigma, stimulated the division between low-income and middle-class African Americans, in response to the residential patterns of white Seattle. Rivetingly, a number of media outlets, such as the *Seattle Post-Intelligencer*³⁷ created a market for otherization, by publishing exaggerated narratives of African American life along the Yesler-Jackson corridor. One article in particular described the homeless as “The hollowed-eyed blanch-faced morphine fiends” and sidewalks being littered with “decaying fruits, refuse and garbage of all kinds, old cans and cast off clothing.”³⁸ As a result, the black, middle-class sought to separate from this stigma and create their own neighborhood and establish socially palpable values, which is now referred to East Madison. However, their efforts were short-lived, considering class did not suggest difference or racial equality. For instance, an African American family was not allowed to move into a home that they purchased in the Mount Baker neighborhood, due to the policies constructed by its developer, the Hunter Tract Company.³⁹ So, by WWII, limited housing availability, population growth, and the inelasticity of

³⁷ The *Seattle Post-Intelligencer* was founded in 1863 and was one of two main print daily newspapers in Seattle. As of March 18, 2009, it became an online media source.

³⁸ Taylor, Quintard. *The Forging of a Black Community: Seattle's Central District, from 1870 through the Civil Rights Era*. Seattle: University of Washington, 1994. Print

³⁹ Ibid.

Seattle, expanded East Madison and Yesler-Jackson inward and established a distinct African American community—the Central District.

During the Second World War, Seattle had been a forerunner of ship and aircraft construction. Boeing Aircraft, the largest employer in the Pacific Northwest, employed well over 40,000 individuals in 1943, mostly consisting of African American men and women assemblers from rural Texas, Oklahoma, Louisiana, and Arkansas. This was due primarily to the availability of workers in Washington during World War Two. As a result, by 1943, the Pacific Northwest became home to roughly 43,000 African Americans and 5,400 put down roots in Seattle. It is important to note that the National Youth Administration⁴⁰ created an employment program, which brought the first group of African Americans to Seattle to work as aircraft construction workers. In light of the influx of African Americans, most found work in the government sector, which was ostensibly a city, state, and national milestone. At this moment in time, African Americans saw themselves in positions of power, but salary equality, employment conditions, and employment politics were largely speculative. Considering

⁴⁰ The National Youth Administration emerged out of the New Deal on June 26, 1935 and was funded by the Emergency Relief Appropriation Act of 1935. Their mission was to provide job training to citizens ages sixteen to twenty-five in economic hardship.

the perceived economic progress of black Seattleites, negative economic situations and poor housing conditions shortly ensued.

Moreover, one of the greatest speeches that Martin Luther King ever delivered, “I Have a Dream” is deeply rooted in the consciousness of many Americans. However, as King delivered his Nobel Peace Prize winning speech, the City of Seattle was cognizant of housing discrimination, but failed to construct policies to reverse the phenomenon in the 1940s. Still, Seattle decided to disregard this social and human rights issue. To highlight the housing discrimination, the Seattle Urban League printed a response to an African American home buyer, which stated “Nothing available here. It’s our policy: no pets or Negroes.” (See Appendix B for examples of restrictive covenants). Unfortunately, the Seattle Urban League, progressive city council members, and African American residents did not gain any support for open housing. The main reasons are due to in-group and self-interest politics, the larger high-handed opposition of the Seattle Real Estate Board, as well as the Seattle Apartment Operators’ Association. Some Seattleites also insisted that open housing “violated their property rights” on the basis of forced housing.⁴¹ Yet minorities did not have a voice in their human rights issue.

⁴¹ *Parents Involved in Community Schools VI*, 551 U.S. at 733.

Thus, politicians supposedly have open ears and eyes for their respective districts, but often propose and object certain pieces of legislation in the interest of re-election. For example, Councilman Sam Smith⁴² proposed House Bill 117, which would have denied discrimination by real estate agents and homeowners in the 1960s. Needless to say, the bill did not make it past the Judiciary Committee, due to political climate of the United States in 1967 and his peer's peril of losing political affiliates. In response, a protest march erupted led by Reverend Mance Jackson⁴³ on July 1st of 1963 to occupy Mayor Gordon Clinton's office for twenty-four hours. Although this demonstration divided Seattle along racial lines and dissuaded some indecisive Seattleites from supporting open housing, a significant amount of pressure was placed on city government and the Seattle Human Rights Commission⁴⁴ was created.

⁴² Sam Smith was the first African American city councilman in Seattle and held incumbency for twenty-four years. He also represented Seattle's 37th district in Legislature for ten years.

⁴³ Reverend Mance Jackson was head of the Cherry Hill Baptist Church in the Capitol Hill neighborhood of Seattle. He was invested in addressing civil and human rights issues by acts of protest and led the march to occupy Gordon Clinton's office using the tagline, "As citizens of Seattle and members of the Central District Youth Club, we feel humiliated by the slow process of the City of Seattle to adopt open housing."

⁴⁴ Founded in 1963, the Seattle Human Rights Commission advocates for equality and social justice and combats discrimination in the public and private sector.

Notably, Councilman Sam Smith proposed Bill 426 by stating, “voting against the motion [Bill 456] would say to the minority groups that they were good enough to go to Vietnam and die, but not good enough to live in integrated communities.”⁴⁵ Needless to say, the motion to pass Bill 456 was approved by Smith’s fellow councilmen, sixteen hesitant Republicans. Interestingly, Smith used the same oratory technique as Booker T. Washington’s Atlanta Compromise Speech by using facts about housing discrimination and social conditions to curtail doubt. Smith also presented deed restrictions stating, “No person or persons of Asiatic, African, or Negro blood, lineage, or extraction shall be permitted to occupy a portion of said property.”⁴⁶ Additionally, a number of housing discrimination acts were performed by banks, such as denying credit to minorities, which essentially drew the contours of Seattle’s racial neighborhood boundaries in the 1960s.

In light of the approval of Bill 456, Smith’s fellow councilmen received requital requests from members of their respective districts. Additionally, minority leader, John O’Brien, believed Smith was trying to fire minority political leaders. In this respect, the political leadership and

⁴⁵ Smith, Samuel J., and Dianne Bridgman. *Samuel J. Smith: An Oral History*. Olympia, WA: Washington State Oral History Program, Office of the Secretary of State, 2000. Print.

⁴⁶ Smith, Samuel J., and Dianne Bridgman.

persistence of Sam Smith, as well as his supporters, like the Associated Republican Women and the United Republican Club of Washington brought significant results. After a ten-year battle with the Republican caucus, the “high-brow” legislation for open housing passed on April 19th of 1968 (two weeks after Dr. Martin Luther King was assassinated) with an emergency clause. So, to counteract social unrest, it is no surprise that Republicans and Democrats alike voted in favor of the civil rights legislation. Seattle’s social progress post-open housing legislation, moreover, consisted of the promotion of several black police officers to lieutenant, a Mexican-American voice in city government, and the revision of lending policies to become available to applicants, regardless of their race. Yet in the midst of Sam Smith’s political legacy for inclusivity, Seattle is witnessing a racial and economic isolation.

The Urban Landscape of Seattle in the 1970s:

Approximately ten years after the approval of fair housing legislation, Seattle’s residential patterns continued on the path of segregation. Echoing the early 1900s, minorities remained concentrated in the central and southeastern section of Seattle (See Appendix B). The cause of this realization is the lack of policies in place that would support

the achievement of the Fair Housing Act. Instead, exclusionary zoning, insurance discrimination, rental and sales discrimination, had a disproportionate impact on minority groups.

As for exclusionary zoning, a Jewish refugee from Austria, Richard Ornstein, contracted to purchase a home for his family in the Sand Point Country Club area, which was and still is an affluent area in Seattle. Despite the U.S. Supreme court decision to outlaw racially restrictive covenants in 1948, Ornstein was not allowed to purchase the home in light of his religious affiliation. The reason is that the ruling did not address the enforcement of such exclusionary zoning within the personal realm. Before Ornstein could petition the exclusionary action, the Head of the Sand Point Country Club Commission, Daniel Boone Allison told the realtor asserted, "The community will not have Jews as residents."⁴⁷ Regrettably Ornstein moved to an area of Seattle where his presence did not threaten the residential pattern. Yet Seattle prides itself on being historically and contemporarily progressive and pluralist.

⁴⁷ Memo written by John H. Heitzman, 29 January 1953, Civic Unity Committee (CUC) Collection. University of Washington Libraries, Special Collections. Accession 479, Box 13, Folder 2.

In response to fair housing, moreover, the Seattle Office for Civil Rights (SOCR)⁴⁸ sought to investigate charges of housing discrimination, and negotiate agreements between aggrieved parties.⁴⁹ Yet the statute of limitations was only 180 days and the SOCR only responded to incidents that were either detected or reported. Frankly, the SOCR did not receive much reports because once an individual became a victim of discrimination, they believed it was much easier to move to an area where they were welcomed, such as Ornstein. Thus the neighborhoods of Seattle became segregated, zoning regulations solidified the residential patterns of the time, and the dominant group informed the politics of locality, for most minority groups.

In accordance to the Pacific Development Concepts,⁵⁰ Seattle's subsidized housing policies were in place to address Seattle's racial division issue. The housing policies were meticulous about placing subsidized housing in every district in Seattle outside of the Central and Southeastern sections of the city. This equal housing campaign sought to do the following:

⁴⁸ The Seattle Office for Civil Rights emerged in 1969 to achieve social justice worldwide.

⁴⁹ Davis, Kate. *Housing Segregation in Seattle*. Working paper. Seattle: Seattle Human Rights Department, 2005. Print.

⁵⁰ Ibid.

1. Discourage the construction of affordable units within low-income areas
2. Revitalize Central and Southeastern Seattle
3. Provide opportunities for homeownership in low-income areas⁵¹

In light of this, the city was very conscious of the neighborhood segregation, but Seattle's dissimilarity index⁵² in regards to low-income individuals changed very little (See Appendix B). This realization is due in part to the cultural politics of belonging to a certain place. Considering Seattle's construction and otherization of ethnic minorities, Stephen Castles and Alastair Davidson argue:

Dominant or majority groups are generally not aware of their ethnicity unless it is threatened in some palpable way. It is the minority groups who are referred to (usually pejoratively) as 'ethnics'. Majorities tend to see their own values, traditions, and morals as 'normal' or as 'the national culture', rather than as an expression of particular ethnic belonging.⁵³

So, this speaks to the social reality of minority groups who found themselves in a strenuous place, due to their values, traditions, and

⁵¹ Ibid.

⁵² Ibid.

⁵³ Castles, Stephen, and Alastair Davidson. *Citizenship and Migration: Globalization and the Politics of Belonging*. New York: Routledge, 2000. 60-70. Print.

morals that were viewed as left of mainstream. Furthermore, despite the efforts of Seattle to integrate its districts, the self-definition and other-definition of ethnicity emerged. The self-definition of ethnicity is defined as the perception of members' shared language, tradition, religion, history, and experiences. However, the other-definition of ethnicity is defined as the dominant group's perception of the ethnic minorities and their tendency to construct values and experiences and project them through their power.⁵⁴ This social construction comes in the form of discrimination, stereotyping, and social practices, such as exclusion. So, the subsidized housing policies did not consider the social ramifications of racial and economic integration. Still, Seattle saw itself racially and economically divided.

Seattle's Urban Landscape in the Age of Obama:

Citizenship is fundamentally equated to personal liberty and rights of property. Theoretically, citizenship becomes a practice of rights, pursuing ones' own rights, and assuming the rights of others within the legal, political, social, and even cultural communities that have been

⁵⁴ Castles, Stephen, and Alastair Davidson.

formed.⁵⁵ In the Era of Obama, Seattle witnessed a rise of urbanization with respect to its industries, population, and educational opportunities, but triggered a decline of citizenship in regards to its minority population, their economic capacity, and the right to homeownership.

The economic capacity of minority groups in Seattle is incomparable to that of the majority population. One's place and economic capacity are factored in culmination in order to determine educational opportunities that are available to them. More specifically, one's spatial geography, determines his or her school attendance opportunities. In light of the rising population of communities of color the spatial structures in Seattle have been historically structured to segregate racial minority groups, which in part denies their citizenship, but forces them to accept the social costs of their social condition. So, what can be said about the strategy for integration to add diversity to the Seattle Public School System and its communities?

As President, Barack Obama carries an agenda that does everything but explicitly address American race relations so that there is equal representation of all citizens. This is primarily due to the fact that majority of Americans wish to think of Obama as the image of racial equality and colorblindness. Considering his success hitherto, the racial

⁵⁵ Ibid.

tensions that exist in Seattle continue to construct American nationhood, label minorities as other and divide the progressive city simultaneously. Even though he is in no way as radical as Sam Smith, his political agenda does anything but bridge the economic gap between minorities and white Seattleites. According to the analysis of new Census data:

The wealth gaps between whites and minorities have grown to their widest levels in a quarter-century. The recession and uneven recovery have erased decades of minority gains, leaving whites on average with 20 times the net worth of blacks and 18 times that of Hispanics.⁵⁶

This statistical analysis speaks volumes to the current residential segregation that is apparent in Seattle (See Appendix B). The current economic and housing segregation does anything but deconstruct the structural racialization that influences segregation in Seattle's Public School System.

Racial Equity and the Promise of an Integrated Classroom

⁵⁶ Yen, Hope. "Politics & Government." *Wealth Gap Widens between Whites, Minorities*. The Seattle Times, 26 July 2011. Web. 2 Dec. 2012.

Seattle Public School System prides itself on academic success. Their motto: “Every student achieving, everyone accountable”⁵⁷ is as much an inspiring gesture, as it is a pretext to look past the public school segregation. In light of the many awards that a number of Seattle’s public schools have received ranging from recognition for their “performance on the Achievement Index”⁵⁸ to their National Merit Scholars winners in 2012, these awards are primarily given to schools in more prominent neighborhoods in Seattle. In light of the “progressive” city’s inaction to desegregate their public schools, particularly their twelve neighborhood high schools, their motto, as well as their academic vision they so adamantly promote is deemed invalid. Their academic vision states, “We are focused on improving academic achievement for all students and committed to ensuring that all students graduate from high school prepared for college, careers, and life.”⁵⁹ However, Lynne Varner of the Seattle Times argues:

For a city so arrogant about its progressive values, Seattle is as awkward about race as a preteen talking about sex. As I wrote in my Friday column, conversations about how different ethnic groups have been treated both historically and today are happening in households, including mine, all of the time. These conversations

⁵⁷ Seattle Public Schools. *New Student Assignment Plan. Attendance Area Boundaries*. Seattle Public Schools, 1 July 2009. Web. 3 Nov. 2012.

⁵⁸ Ibid.

⁵⁹ Ibid.

should not make us feel guilty or victimized, it should make us better informed thinkers.⁶⁰

In light of this critique, I argue that a segregated classroom influences a limited perspective and denial hinders racial and cultural inclusivity in neighborhoods and classrooms.

More importantly, the U.S. Department of Education is investigating the compliance of Seattle Public Schools. Jim Bradshaw, spokesman for the U.S. Department of Education, publicly announced, "The department is investigating whether Seattle Public Schools discriminates against African Americans by disciplining them more frequently and more harshly than similar situated white students."⁶¹ Surprisingly, the investigation started May of 2012, but the public did not receive notice until March of 2013. Moreover, José Banda, District Superintendent announced in March, "I think we have a serious problem here. We do. We acknowledge that. We acknowledge the fact that the data is clear that there is a disproportionate number of students of color being suspended and expelled." In this respect, Seattle Public Schools have been anything but transparent in regards to their compliance issues. However, in response to the public attention, school board member, Harium Martin-Morris,

⁶⁰ Varner, Lynne. "Editorials / Opinion." *In a Word: How Does Seattle Public Schools Treat Minority Schoolchildren?* The Seattle Times, 8 Mar. 2013. Web. 27 Mar. 2013.

⁶¹ Ibid.

commented, “The goal should be, obviously, to get every kid in school so that we can teach them. It’s hard to teach a student who’s not in school.”⁶² In light of this comment, the how and when to the so-called goal is missing from the school board’s response. Also, Stephanie Alter Jones, a community organizer and parent, said, “Kids are tossed from the classroom often...the ones most in need...” This issue speaks to a much larger issue—school segregation as an educational disaster.

In June of 2007 the Seattle-based, non-profit group, Parents Involved in Community Schools (P.I.C.S), sued Seattle’s School District Number One, due primarily to the racially segregated schools. More specifically, P.I.C.S sought to integrate public schools by promoting school-choice programs in District One to choose racially diverse, and in essence class diverse institutions. Due to P.I.C.S. efforts, local officials supported such programs due to their dedication to their political constituents. However, when the plan was urged to be a citywide mandate, the U.S. Supreme Court deemed integration plans set by school officials in Seattle to integrate public schools unconstitutional due to the use of race

⁶² Ibid.

to determine school attendance.⁶³ Nevertheless, the school-choice program had two intentions:

1. Give families the right to school-choice
2. Establish a balanced system of integrating Seattle's schools on the basis of class, political influence, race, and available resources⁶⁴

From a geographic perspective, the school-choice plan set forth by P.I.C.S would lower the chances of economic and racial dissociation. Yet, the Supreme Court ruled, "The white plaintiffs' 14th Amendment⁶⁵ was violated considering the school-choice program. The reason being is that if there was a high school in District One that had a high percentage of white students, a white student cannot petition to attend that particular school. As it happens, the Supreme Court implies a colorblind law, but consciously, it is subscribing to a racially and economically unequal educational system in Seattle.

Considering the *Parents Involved in Community Schools v. Seattle School District No 1*, it is apparent that the American legal system is designed to work for certain communities and against other communities.

⁶³ Wells, Amy S., and Erica Frankenberg. "The Public Schools and the Challenge of the Supreme Court's Integration Decision." *The Phi Delta Kappan* 89.3 (2007): 178-88. Print.

⁶⁴ Ibid.

⁶⁵ The 14th Amendment provides equal protection under the law.

More specifically, the legal system works for communities in power, the one percent, and those with political clout. Erik Luna, Professor of Law at Washington and Lee University, asserts that the law institution is simply a “stable, valued, recurring pattern of behavior...to prescribe and execute authoritative decisions.”⁶⁶ In this regard, American law continues to treat race as a non-factor in society. However, race is a socially constructed allegory that is contested at all levels of social interaction. The levels, include, but are not limited to everyday life, residential life, economic relations, and political relations. However, Justice Ginsburg⁶⁷ has openly stated that unconscious and conscious racism remains very alive in our land. Due to this, our values and ideals are informed by such phenomenon. So, a system that is supposedly colorblind is constructed in a way to respond to criminal behavior, not constructed to avoid social division and its ensuing effects.

Above that, the missing component that the Seattle Public School System and the colorblind Supreme Court that should be recognized is the goal of a strong and pluralistic democracy. This goal cannot be met if schools systems continue to be racially and economically segregated and

⁶⁶ Luna, Erik. "Race, Crime, and Institutional Design." *Law and Contemporary Problems* 66.183 (2003): 183-219. Print.

⁶⁷ Ruth Bader Ginsburg is an Associate Justice of the U.S. Supreme court. She took the oath of office on August 10, 1993, during Bill Clinton's presidency.

insist on the title of “progressive” and “pluralist.” As specified by Vanessa Siddle Walker,⁶⁸ segregated black schools were compromised by larger structures, which denied them the resources that could potentially lead them to be successful in colleges, university, and their respective careers.⁶⁹ In other words, the structural inequality⁷⁰ places minority youth on the path to becoming inherently unequal to their white and middle-class counterparts.

In accordance to the existent social inequality, there are tragic outcomes to segregated public schools. Concentrated poverty and a lack of racial integration ensue because of a lack of public support, due to the low academic achievement in segregated institutions. Quite frankly, if there is a low-investment in low-performing schools, teachers and cities are less inclined to direct funds and energy into these schools. At the same time, the U.S. Supreme Court encourages a colorblind society, which is detrimental to the efforts to reverse the residential patterns in Seattle and their segregated community schools.

⁶⁸ Vanessa Siddle Walker is a Winship Distinguished Research Professor at Emory University.

⁶⁹ Wells, Amy S., and Erica Frankenberg. "The Public Schools and the Challenge of the Supreme Court's Integration Decision." *The Phi Delta Kappan* 89.3 (2007): 178-88. Print.

⁷⁰ Ibid.

Reform Recommendations

In light of the lack of support of progressive policies involving school desegregation, there are a number of efforts that should be considered to reverse public school segregation in Seattle, Washington. Particularly, more funds should be allocated towards transportation for students, acknowledge the viability of having fewer schools, and constructing a political strategy to unite residents of central cities and suburban regions in a new coalition that will support integration efforts. However, the first step to addressing school, housing, and economic segregation is acknowledging that there is a social division phenomenon occurring.

Considering the state of Seattle's public education, there should be a great amount of transformative activity across states to catalyze education reform, starting with allocating more funds to transportation options to students. Seattle Public School's \$591.4 Million budget is broken down into the following percentages:

- Teaching and Instruction: 72%
- Transportation, Food Services, and Maintenance: 16%

- Central Administration: 6%
- Principals' Offices: 6%

Considering these percentages, there have been a number of people who have realized the shortcomings of Seattle's public education, such as the lack of plurality. To give equal opportunities to all students, meaning the opportunity to be educated with students who have a different perspective from their own. This phenomenon can be addressed if there is first an investment in providing more transportation options for students to schools outside of their immediate community area. So, communities should look past the mirror to acknowledge the ways in which race influences social division in progressive Seattle. In light of this finding, a school-community initiative should be rightfully started. Furthermore, the emergence of a school-community culture that embraces the value of diversity would provide constructive criticism to Seattle's Public School System. This, in part, can be achieved while constructing a policy that supports more transportation efforts to integrate schools and initiatives to reduce the number of public schools in community areas.

From the efforts of Sam Smith, the development of the Seattle Office of Civil Rights, the work of Parents Involved in Community Schools, Seattle continues to hold the façade of a progressive city. This is not only

damaging, but influences the social division occurring in Seattle. The reason is that when race and class are not taken into account, the phenomenon is acknowledged, while methods to counteract the process are not properly considered. To some residents of Seattle, having a divided public school system is not a matter of circumstantial and forced placemaking on the basis of race and class, but it is a collective shortcoming of educational policy, housing policy, and American law. When public schools are not placed on an equal field and one's residential status is determined by economic capacity, students and families there is limited exposure to educational and job opportunities. More specifically, when students are not granted the same opportunities, certain students are disconnected from instrumental social networks that are beneficial to a decent career or even a favorable college. Considering the growth of minority communities, the disinvestment in legislating diversity within public schools, and the increasing social isolating, what is the vision of democratic citizenship? What is the relationship between democratic citizenship and the formation of people?

CONCLUSION

In 2000, approximately 69 percent of individuals who lived in large metro areas with African-American populations of 5% or more were living in areas of high segregation for African Americans, as measured by a dissimilarity index of 60 or above. In 2010, that percentage was still approximately 65 percent.

-Craig Gurian, Executive
Director of the Anti-Discrimination Center

The social stratification and the resulting educational inequity in Chicago, Illinois and Seattle, Washington; America is becoming a divided nation, where civil rights and liberties are noticeably sparse. Nearly a half-century ago, the U.S. Supreme Court decided that school segregation was unconstitutional and inherently unequal. Still, several public schools throughout the United States are becoming racially and economically isolated, due to the pronounced neighborhood racial isolation across a number of metropolitan areas. Notably, this sustained phenomenon drastically increased throughout the 1990s, as a result of residential segregation, which was influenced by income inequality, placing affordable housing in specific areas, and the implementation of economically immobilizing policies. In light of the increasing diversity of the United States, racial and economic isolation continues to exist.

According to Gary Orfield⁷¹ and Nora Gordon,⁷² much educational progress for black students, dwindled since the 1960s, as a result of the school desegregation limitation of Supreme Court decisions. First, *Swann v. Charlotte-Mecklenburg Board of Education* of 1968 ruled that busing students to schools based on geography, rather than race, was a proper

⁷¹ Gary Orfield is a Professor of Education at the University of California, Los Angeles.

⁷² Nora Gordon is Associate Professor of Public Policy at Georgetown University.

remedy to ensure public school integration and provide equal educational opportunities. Second, *Milliken v. Bradley* of 1968 concluded that freedom of choice plans and race data were to be critically analyzed to prove school districts were deliberately engaging in school segregation efforts. In other words, desegregation efforts could not begin until a school district has proven such behavior. Thus, together with the growth of communities of color, *Milliken* and *Swann* influenced racial and economic isolation, which has been a phenomenon in many metropolitan areas across the United States post-*Brown v. Board*.

In view of the segregated residential patterns and the inherent school re-segregation in Chicago and Seattle, among other metropolitan areas, a dual public school system emerges—one that encourages critical thinking and one that values regurgitation. More specifically, racial-majority students are offered quality resources, impeccable school infrastructure, and exceptional academics, while minority students notice their school's unequal school resources and substandard schools conditions, such as crumbling infrastructure. According to Gary Orfield:

Re-segregation is contributing to a growing gap in quality between the schools being attended by white students and those serving a large proportion of minority students...schools are becoming increasingly segregated and are offering students vastly unequal educational opportunities. This is ironic considering that evidence

exists that desegregated schools both improve test scores and positively change the lives of students and that Americans increasingly express support for integrated schools.⁷³

With respect to test scores, the increasing residential and school re-segregation phenomenon directly impacts college access, as well as college retention, as well. Interestingly, the 2010 census found that 18.5% of white Americans hold a bachelor's degree, while 11.6% of Black or African Americans, 8.7% of American Indians, 30.0% of Asians, and 8.9% of Latino individuals hold bachelor's degrees. . Therefore, the emergence of America's dual public school system is linked to the concentration of wealth and poverty, which categorizes the haves and have-nots of higher education.

Furthermore, nine-tenths of segregated African American and Latino schools are characterized by a high percentage of poverty.⁷⁴ Research from 2000 demonstrates that 39.3% of African American students and 44% of Latino students are low-income.⁷⁵ However, 19.6% of white students are low-income.⁷⁶ In terms of educational development,

⁷³ School segregation on the rise despite growing diversity among school-aged children (2001, July 17). Press release. Harvard Graduate School of Education. Retrieved from

<http://www.gse.harvard.edu/news/features/orfield07172001.html>.

⁷⁴ Ibid.

⁷⁵ Ibid.

⁷⁶ Ibid.

“poverty levels are strongly related to school test score averages and many kinds of educational inequality.”⁷⁷ In the midst of the social division phenomenon, demonstrated by the poverty levels, the 14th Amendment is called into question, while educational liberty and the civil right of education is deprived.

As a further matter, policymakers, scholars, educators, and politicians are at the forefront of school and residential desegregation efforts. With respect to their work, the importance of desegregation is not at the center of political and educational policy agendas. To say the least, school integration provides full educational benefits of diversity, promotes the deconstruction of racial stereotypes, gives students the opportunity to explore, develop, express their individuality⁷⁸, and prepares students for American’s globalizing economy. As a result, the liberty of school-aged youth is not deprived. Until housing and public school policies are constructed to reverse the school re-segregation phenomenon, citizenship, belonging, equality, openness, and diversity become unfathomable.

In closing, the residential patterns and public school re-segregation analyses of Chicago and Seattle have been shaped by the exodus of minority groups, affordable housing availability, former and present

⁷⁷ Ibid.

⁷⁸ *Fisher v. University of Texas at Austin*, 645 F. Supp. 2d 587 - Dist. Court, WD Texas 2009.

litigation, and selective school admission standards. To reverse the school re-segregation and residential segregation phenomenon occurring in many cities across the nation, I recommend the following actions:

- Publicize the racial concentration and school re-segregation phenomenon in a number of metropolitan areas;
- Record and critically analyze the educational development of students in racially/economically homogeneous schools;
- Create and implement city-specific desegregation policies, which should be informed by its historical and current residential patterns;
- Allocate extra transportation funds to suburban and city school districts to promote school integration;
- Encourage more support from private organizations to aid school desegregation litigation and affordable housing research by community development organizations;
- Analyze and publicize exurban housing patterns alongside city-wide housing patterns to demand implementation of city-wide affordable housing;
- Explore the benefits of transit equity and advocate its benefits (such as the development of jobs);

- Connect communities and schools to their community assets to display social importance and increase social interest.

With respect to my recommendations, I am hopeful that structural effects of school re-segregation and residential segregation, such as structural unemployment, will decline. Furthermore, as the concentration of poverty dissipates, economically and racially isolated groups are able to participate in pluralist politics. Consequently, social division is curbed, diversity is rightly valued, and educational equity increases. Therefore, the interconnectedness of race, class, and citizenship becomes a secondary informative case to the politics of locality, instead of the primary case. More specifically, scholars, policymakers, politicians, and educators may objectively consider the politics of locality a self-motivated theory, rather than a reflection of social stratification.

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