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ABSTRACT

This paper contends that recent evidence provides a long-term rationale for supporting desegregated schooling which is not generally given as a pro-desegregation argument: the reduction of specific barriers that exclude minorities from opportunities for career success. The evidence shows that black workers are overrepresented in a restricted range of types of occupations, but attendance in desegregated schools may help produce a wider range of career choices and opportunities. Also, black adults who attended desegregated schools are more likely to function in desegregated environments later in life. The paper further calls for further research to more carefully define and study specific structural barriers to equal opportunities, and to investigate the relationship of desegregation to these structural factors. (Author/JCD)

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THE IMPACT OF DESEGREGATION ON GOING TO COLLEGE AND GETTING A GOOD JOB

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and

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Introductory Statement

The Center for Social Organization of Schools has two primary objectives: to develop a scientific knowledge of how schools affect their students, and to use this knowledge to develop better school practices and organization.

The Center works through five programs to achieve its objectives. The Studies in School Desegregation program applies the basic theories of social organization of schools to study the internal conditions of desegregated schools, the feasibility of alternative desegregation policies, and the interrelations of school desegregation with other equity issues such as housing and job desegregation. The School Organization program is currently concerned with authority-control structures, task structures, reward systems, and peer group processes in schools. It has produced a large-scale study of the effects of open schools, has developed Student Team Learning Instructional processes for teaching various subjects in elementary and secondary schools, and has produced a computerized system for school-wide attendance monitoring. The School Process and Career Development program is studying transitions from high school to post secondary institutions and the role of schooling in the development of career plans and the actualization of labor market outcomes. The Studies in Delinquency and School Environments program is examining the interaction of school environments, school experiences, and individual characteristics in relation to in-school and later-life delinquency.

The Center also supports a Fellowships in Education Research program that provides opportunities for talented young researchers to conduct and publish significant research, and to encourage the participation of women and minorities in research on education.

This report, prepared by the Studies in School Desegregation program, examines previous research on school desegregation effects and suggests new research directions to provide useful information for policy deliberations about desegregation.

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Abstract

The traditional rationale for supporting school desegregation is twofold: first, that students have a constitutional right to attend desegregated schools; second, that desegregated schooling will help to improve people by improving minority student achievement and reducing prejudice and stereotyping. This paper argues that recent evidence provides another, long-term rationale --that desegregated schooling may reduce specific barriers that exclude minorities from opportunities for career success.

The evidence shows that black workers are overrepresented in a restricted range of types of occupations, but attendance in desegregated schools may help produce a wider range of career choices and opportunities. Also, black adults who attended desegregated schools are more likely to function in desegregated environments (colleges, neighborhoods, places of work) later in life.

The paper calls for further research to more carefully define and study specific structural barriers to equal opportunities, and to investigate the relationship of desegregation to these structural factors.

Introduction

The way different groups understand the potential benefits of school desegregation may be of great importance to future progress in the area. This paper calls for new ways of thinking about why desegregated schooling can have worthwhile consequences. We argue that instead of concentrating only on how school desegregation may improve people by increasing student test scores or reducing prejudice and stereotypes, emphasis should be placed on how desegregated schooling can open opportunities for career success by reducing specific barriers that frequently exclude minorities from fair competition. We shall suggest that such a change in emphasis can significantly affect how various audiences evaluate school desegregation, including parents who are making school choices for their children and public officials who are developing policies to cope with major social problems.

The Need for a Broader Rationale

The belief that segregated schools exclude minority students from learning environments needed for optimal individual development provides the foundation for most legal and political rationales for school desegregation. It begins with the argument in the Supreme Court's 1954 Brown decision that segregation negatively affects the "hearts and minds (of minority children) in a way unlikely ever to be undone." And, although many subsequent desegregation cases have concentrated on the intent of school or housing policies in local areas, an interest by the courts in the effects on student learning has usually also affected the remedies

prescribed. Similarly, when political spokesmen disagree about future directions for school desegregation policies, their arguments usually include differences of opinion about the impact of school desegregation on student test scores and attitudes.

A broader rationale for thinking about school desegregation policies is suggested by recent research studies of the sources of unequal adult attainments. This rationale may generate a deeper understanding by relevant audiences of the long-term impacts of desegregation.

There is a growing awareness in the research community that race, sex, and age differences in career success are not fully explained by differences in human capabilities. Although the studies are still in their early stages, the research indicates that inequalities in educational and occupational attainments are also sustained by specific structural barriers in labor markets, organizations, and firms (Baron and Bielby, 1980; Stolzenberg, 1978; Jencks, 1980). These structural barriers involve not only overt discrimination, in which selection officials withhold position from qualified minorities, but also include a variety of formal and informal practices that unintentionally but effectively prevent minority access to promising opportunities (McPartland and Crain, 1980). Thus, public policies that eliminate differences in the distribution of skills and training among different population groups would still leave significant inequities in adult success, due to the continuing influences of structural exclusionary barriers that work against minority opportunities. Desegregation policy deliberations should also take advantage of these research developments, by considering the possible links between school desegregation, various exclusionary processes, and long-term adult outcomes.

In the realm of public opinion and political support, various important audiences have had trouble with the limited rationale for school desegregation based on individual student improvement. A broader justification concerning ways in which desegregation may break down the exclusionary barriers to equal opportunities should contribute to more helpful discussions among these groups.

Many minority spokesmen have found the idea unattractive or unconvincing that the purpose of desegregated schooling is to improve minority student achievement (Hamilton, 1973). They reject any implications of this idea that minority students need to sit in classes with whites to learn, and that no all minority school can provide an optimum learning environment. As a consequence, minority opinion leaders are more comfortable arguing for school desegregation on the basis of constitutional rights (no students should be prevented from attending any particular public school because of their race) or from the perspective of power politics (minority students can get funding for first-rate educational facilities only if there are whites in their schools who can make effective demands on government officials.) Any new evidence that desegregation is tied to the structure of career opportunities, even if racially isolated schools can do just as good a job in teaching academic skills, would generate a useful basis for further discussion of the issue among minority parents and opinion leaders.

Similarly, problems arise with majority public opinion when school desegregation is defended primarily on the basis of raising minority student achievement. Under these terms, school desegregation policies can be judged as giving special compensatory advantages to minorities at

the expense and inconvenience of other citizens (Glazer, 1976). Further debate with this focus is unlikely to produce a broader consensus on the importance of school desegregation. On the other hand, there is deep appeal in this country for the goals of equal opportunity and fair competition. Thus, a better understanding of conditions that inhibit equal access to career opportunities is especially useful for constructive public policy debates. In particular, public discussions about school desegregation policies could be significantly enriched with new information showing how desegregation may open adult opportunity structures for minorities that are otherwise available to whites only.

State or federal agencies and policy makers concerned with employment inequities and discrimination do not usually propose solutions to reduce the unintentional exclusionary processes embedded in labor market and organizational structures. These agencies ordinarily are more concerned with reducing overt or intended discrimination in the labor market by establishing and enforcing fair employment practices. Racial segregation of schools is seldom considered as part of the problem by public officials concerned with equalizing adult career opportunities. A broader understanding of the role of desegregation in providing minority access to adult opportunities could gain the attention of public agencies and officials concerned with employment issues, who rarely consider segregation as directly relevant to their concerns.

Desegregation and the Structure of Opportunities

Although researchers have conducted only a few direct studies of the possible links between school segregation and the structure of opportunities, it is useful to consider some specific examples of conditions in

labor markets and firms that may place minorities at an unfair disadvantage. These examples indicate some of the major current directions in research on structural determinants of adult success, and argue that public policies are insufficient when restricted to the improvement of minority employment qualifications because exclusionary barriers remain that restrict equal access to opportunities. Where it exists, direct and indirect evidence will be cited to suggest that school desegregation plays a role in differential opportunity structures.

The structure of the labor markets

The first insight to be drawn from recent research is that the chances of occupational success differ among several distinct labor markets or types of work. No longer are researchers thinking that there is a single general labor market in this country or a single career process by which an individual's educational credentials and human talents become translated into occupational prestige, income or employment stability. Instead, different segments of the labor market or different occupational types are now being identified in which the chances of career success or the importance of education are generally not the same.

Evidence is acculumating that black workers are overrepresented in a restricted range of types of occupations, and that these so-called "traditional" fields of work offer less income payoff for each additional year of educational attainment than other occupational fields where blacks are underrepresented. (See, for example, Gottfredson, 1977, Marshall, 1974, Piore, 1977, Kallenberg and Sørensen, 1979, Wilson, 1978, Wright, 1978.) The separation of black and white workers into differe t types of occupations cannot be adequately explained by racial differences in educational

attainments and the educational requirements of different fields of work: one study estimates that educational factors account for less than half of the existing differences in racial distributions across fields of work (Braddock, Dawkins and McPartland, 1980). The studies indicate that income gaps will remain between many black and white workers, even if differences in educational attainments are lessened, as long as minority workers continue to be disproportionately relegated to a restricted set of labor markets and fields of work. A Congressional Budget Office (1977) study of income differences found major black-white differences across occupational categories net of region, sex and educational levels, and concluded: "Before the large part of the overall (racial) income disparities is removed, the occupational distributions, and particularly the distributions within subcategories of the major occupational groups, must be equalized" (See also, Kluegel, 1978).

The analysis of segmented labor markets that has received most attention is the notion of a dual labor market used to distinguish the sector of lower-level unstable jobs from the sector of upper-level career ladder jobs available in the economy. According to this view, blacks and other minority workers are more often channeled into the lower-level sector of jobs, which neither offers high pay and sustained employment nor leads to dependable career lines (See, for example, Beck, Horan and Tolbert, 1980, Spilerman, 1977, LaGorg and Magnani, 1979).

Some other studies of multiple labor markets have used typologies of occupations based on job requirements, characteristics of job occupants, and the regularities of movement of workers among jobs (Gottfredson, 1977. Gottfredson and Joffe, 1980). These studies provide a clearer

picture of the types of occupations in which minority workers are over or under-represented, and the income consequences of such concentrations. Black workers are found much more frequently than similarly educated whites in "social" occupations, such as education and social service jobs. For example, among the most highly educated workers in 1970, 47 percent of black men were in "social" occupations; compared with 19 percent of white men of similar age and education. And black workers are greatly under-represented in "enterprising" occupations, such as business management or sales, and in "investigative" occupations such as scientific work: for highly educated workers in 1970, 12 percent of black men compared with 39 percent of white men were in enterprising occupations, and 12 percent of black men compared with 21 percent of white men were in investigative occupations. Further study has also revealed that the income returns for increased education is much less for the occupational types in which blacks are overrepresented than for those in which blacks are underrepresented: an additional year of education is associated with an additional income of $200 to $300 per year in social occupations; $400 to $600 in investigative occupations; and about $1000 in enterprising occupations (Gottfredson, 1978a). Thus, the separation of blacks and whites into different segments of the occupational structure is a factor with important income implications, as blacks are channelled more toward fields that require extensive education for a high income but which pay off less for increases in educational attainments.

Is there reason to believe that school segregation contributes to continued racial separation in types of work, and that desegregation would produce a more rapid movement of minorities into the nontraditional fields that have frequently been closed to them in the past?

There is good evidence that the racial divergences in occupational expectations develop during the secondary school ages. At the college level, student choices of major fields show the same patterns of black over- and underrepresentation described above. A recent study of elementary and secondary student aspirations for different occupational types indicates that racial differences usually first occur during the junior high and senior high school ages. Data from the 1976 National Assessment of Career and Occupational Development show that the occupational expectations and values of black and white students are similar at elementary school age, but diverge toward the end of high school to match traditional race and sex stereotypes and continue to diverge after initial employment (Gottfredson, 1978b). Comparisons of the major fields of 1974 college students also demonstrate the continuing racial differences in occupational aspirations (Thomas, 1978). Among four-year undergraduates, blacks major in education, social sciences, and social work at a higher rate than whites; and they major in natural or technical sciences at a lower rate than whites. The racial differences in major fields at the graduate levels of higher education follow the same pattern and are even larger (Institute for the Study of Educational Policy, 1976, Thomas, 1981).

The only analyses currently available on the relationship between occupational outcomes and school desegregation have been based on data collected in a 1966 retrospective survey of black adults, most of whom had completed their elementary and secondary schooling before 1960. The study analyzed approximately 300 cases from the original sample of 1,624 black adults who had attended Northern high schools and who reported their current jobs in 1966 (Crain, 1970). It was found that black men

from desegregated schools were more likely to hold nontraditional jobs in sales, crafts, and the professions (33 percent) than those who attended segregated schools (21 percent).

Further work is needed to better understand why opportunities are restricted for minorities to move into certain labor market segments and occupational career lines, and to determine with more current data whether school desegregation helps to interrupt the processes that direct many minorities into the traditional and less promising directions. National longitudinal data sets have recently become available for these purposes, so we can expect improved research knowledge on these points. At this time, it is clear that the processes channelling minorities into a restricted range of careers are a very important source of income inequalities, and that these processes exist apart from differences in educational credentials and other relevant individual employment capabilities. Also, based on the limited research available, it seems reasonable to expect that school desegregation may be able to interrupt these processes for minority students and produce a wider range of career choices and opportunities.

The structure of firms

A second consideration derived from recent studies is that a firm's personnel selection practices and reward systems can affect the opportunities for different workers to find a job and establish a stable career (Baron and Bielby, 1980; Thurow, 1975). These practices may limit the access of potential minority applicants to formal and informal networks of information, contact, and sponsorship through which many jobs and promotions are obtained (Becker, 1979). In other words, structures may be in place

that unfairly limit the chances of minorities to know about and apply for job opportunities for which they are equally qualified. The claim can be made that segregation of schools limits the equal access to useful networks of information and sponsorship, and thus contribute to an exclusionary barrier to equal opportunities.

Research is currently establishing the importance of networks of opportunity for adult career success, especially informal social ties that can provide job information and employment sponsorship (Lin et al., 1981). There is less firm evidence that blacks and other minorities are frequently deprived access to the more effective networks, but some indirect research results imply that they are (Becker, 1979).

Similarly, there is a growing awareness that firms vary in their internal practices that influence how individuals enter specific jobs and receive promotions, but at present there is limited direct evidence on the specific variations and how they differentially affect whites and minorities (Baron and Bielby, 1980). Nevertheless, some research does support speculating that minorities are at distinct disadvantage regarding networks of opportunity and internal practices of firms, and that desegregation may help to penetrate some of these barriers.

There is very little evidence on the effects of segregation in limiting access to important informal networks of opportunity. Some indirect evidence, however, suggests that this is a promising area for future research.[1]

Most of this evidence comes from a study of 434 personnel managers of the largest employers in 15 major cities conducted in 1967 by Rossi et al. (1974) for the National Advisory Commission on Civil Disorders. In this study, each personnel manager reported the number of blacks among

the last 20 individuals who applied for work and among those who were hired at 3 broad skill levels (professional and white collar, skilled workers, and unskilled workers). This information was related to other data about each firm and about each city's labor supply, including the firm's personnel recruitment practices, the racial composition and size of the work force in the firm and the city, city differences in industrial composition, and the degree of concurrent school segregation and racial educational differences in the city.

The authors reasoned that the past employment practices of a firm (as measured by the percentage of blacks in the current work force) could be used as a variable to indirectly assess the importance of social networks of opportunity in the job recruitment process and the willingness of that firm to admit blacks in the hiring process. According to the authors, if the current racial composition of a firm is the best predictor of the rate of recent black application, we would have indirect evidence that the social networks through current black employees provide an important recruitment channel to reach potential new black applicants. If a firm's current racial composition is the best predictor of the rate at which black applicants have been recently hired, it could be inferred that a firm's evaluation of blacks as potential employees is more positive after it has had some experience with blacks in its work force. If current racial composition is the best predictor of both the rate at which blacks had recently applied and the rate at which black applicants were recently hired, it could be argued that both disadvantages of informal networks for blacks and racial preferences of firms for their employees can account for employment outcomes that discriminate against blacks. This study finds that the proportion of blacks in a firm's current work force is an important

predictor both of the likelihood that blacks had recently applied for work and of the fact that black applicants were recently hired, even after all other measured characteristics of the firm and the city (including racial composition of the city) were taken into account. The result was particularly strong for professional and white-collar applicants and hiring; in those occupations, the current percentage of blacks in the work force accounted for more variance than any other measured characteristic of the firm or city. Yet without time series data on rates of black employment, applications, and hiring in different firms, it is difficult to view the reported correlations as good evidence that social network mechanisms are actually operating to affect the employment access of minorities.

An analogous result has been obtained by Becker (1980) in his recent study of racial segregation in places of work. Becker used the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission survey of the racial composition of firms to calculate an index of the segregation of employment across firms for nine occupational levels. He found that the racial composition of an establishment's work force in one occupation is strongly related to its racial composition in other occupations, particularly for occupations within the blue-collar and white-collar subgroups.

Although the Rossi et al. data (1974) from personnel managers include direct measures on the recruitment channels used by firms and on the concurrent level of school segregation in each city, results using these measures were not consistent and strong in explaining differences of black application and hiring rates at each occupational level. The reported use of specific recruitment channels did not relate to minority rates of application or employment, but the authors point out the available data do not

indicate which channel was actually used by the black applicants or employees. The degree of school segregation in each city also fails to be significantly related to the rates of application or hiring of blacks by firms at any occupational level. However, this is not a test of the long-term effects of school segregation on occupational opportunities for blacks, because the measure was not of the school desegregation experiences of those blacks presently in the work force but of the segregation of students still in school who resided in the same city as the firms whose employment practices were being studied. The only research that links the school desegregation of blacks to their own later life employment success is the retrospective study conducted in 1966 for the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights (1968, Crain 1970). Although the sample size was small in this study and covered an earlier historical period, the study shows a positive effect of earlier school desegregation on present black income and job status. This study also suggests that black adults who had attended desegregated schools had developed a more useful social network for job referrals and had a better knowledge of specific job opportunities (Crain and Weisman 1973).

The perpetuation of segregation and perceptions of opportunity

A third implication of recent research is that segregation tends to be perpetuated across stages of the life cycle and across institutions when individuals have not had sustained experiences in desegregated settings earlier in life. Contributing to the social inertia that sustains segregation over time is the fact that segregated experiences may influence minority students' perceptions of opportunity.

Studies based on recent longitudinal data show that school desegregation affects the movement of minority students into desegregated settings after high school graduation. Comparing the adult behavior of blacks who had attended segregated or desegregated schools, it has been shown that those from earlier segregated school settings are more likely at later stages in their life to be in segregated colleges and segregated work groups, while whose who graduated from desegregated schools are more likely to enter desegregated college and work groups. The phrase "perpetuation of segregation" has been used to characterize these processes.

The evidence on the effects of earlier school desegregation on attending desegregated colleges is drawn from studies that included statistical controls on factors such as the students' region, social class background, college admissions credentials (high school grades and test scores) and residential proximity to alternative colleges (Braddock and McPartland, 1981, see also Braddock, 1980). Using national longitudinal data from over 3,000 black students who graduated from high school, these studies find both direct and indirect effects of earlier school desegregation on attendance at desegregated colleges.

In the South, where a large number of both predominantly black and

predominantly white two-year and four-year colleges are available, elementary-secondary school desegregation directly affects black student enrollment at desegregated colleges. The rate of black student attendance at some college was about the same for those from segregated or desegregated elementary and secondary schools, but the choice of a desegregated college was significantly higher for those with earlier experiences in desegregated schools before high school graduation. This effect on the choice of a desegregated college was especially strong for students entering four-year institutions.

In the North, both majority black and majority white two-year colleges are widely distributed, but almost all four-year institutions are majority white. A direct effect of early desegregation was found among Northern black students who entered two-year colleges--the enrollment rates at desegregated institutions were significantly higher for those who came from desegregated elementary and secondary schools. Direct effects could not be assessed for four-year college students, because almost all four-year institutions in the North are desegregated--there are no segregated options for black four-year students to choose. However, studies of Northern students did reveal a significant positive impact of early school desegregation on whether a black high school graduate enrolled at all in a four-year college: black students from Northern desegregated elementary and secondary schools were significantly more likely than black students from segregated schools to attend some four-year college, after controlling on family background and college qualifications (See also Crain and Mahard, 1980). Thus, desegregated elementary and secondary schools are creating a greater proportion of blacks who enroll in desegregated colleges than are created by segregated elementary and secondary schools. In other words, there is an indirect effect for Northern blacks of early school desegregation on attendance at desegregated four-year colleges, due to the

direct positive influence on enrollment at some Northern four-year college.

Preliminary evidence also indicates that earlier experiences in desegregated schools affect the likelihood that blacks will be members of desegregated work groups as adults. Tabulations from a 1979 followup survey of a national sample of black adults who were college freshmen in 1971 show that individuals from desegregated high schools are significantly more likely than segregated high school graduates to be working in a desegregated work group.[2] These studies are preliminary and require careful statistical controls to more firmly establish the direct relationship between school desegregation and employment desegregation, but they provide the first available investigation of this relationship and are based on a large sample of students who had entered college.

Some other studies also suggest that students who attended desegregated schools are more likely to function in desegregated environments in later life, and that this relationship may be due in part to the influence of desegregated schooling on minority students' perception of opportunities. An earlier study based on a 1966 retrospective survey of adults reported that both black and white adults who attended desegregated schools were more frequently found to live in desegregated neighborhoods, to have children who attended desegregated schools, and to have close friends of the other race than did adults of both races who attended segregated schools (U.S. Commission on Civil Rights, 1967). The same data provide evidence that Northern blacks from desegregated schools have a stronger sense that occupational opportunities are available to them (Crain and Weisman, 1972). Other studies have also pointed to the effects of school desegregation on black students' sense of personal efficacy (Coleman et. al., 1966) and on desegregated college students' perceptions of fairer opportunities to get a good job (McPartland and Crain, 1980).

In our view, the strongest direct research evidence available at this time of the long-term effects of elementary-secondary school desegregation pertains to the perpetuation of segregation. Minority students who have experienced desegregation earlier in their lives are found to be moving more often and more successfully into desegregated settings as adults. It will be important to extend future research to examine other important measures of adult accomplishment and participation, including income attainment and involvement in political and civic activities and leadership.

School Desegregation and Public Policy

Experience in recent decades has taught us that the problems of racial inequalities in adult life are deeply complex, and public policies aimed simply at reducing gaps in human capabilities and eliminating overt discrimination will be painfully slow at best in dealing with the problems. Recent research helps us understand some of the complexities, and reveals specifically that structural barriers exist which restrict minority opportunities even though no individual or organization may be intentionally imposing these restrictions. Put another way, we are beginning to learn that "discrimination" is a poor word to characterize the continuing exclusionary barriers, because unequal opportunities frequently are imbedded in structural processes and inaccurate perceptions that go beyond bad intentions or selfish judgments (Alverez et al, 1979; Crain and Weisman, 1972; Feagin and Feagin, 1978). The task for public policy is to incorporate this perspective into effective programs that deal with the true complexities of unequal opportunities and exclusionary processes.

Segregation of schools may be related to the structure of opportunities; and desegregation may be a viable public policy alternative if viewed in the long run and in the context of inequities of adult life. We already have some evidence that current progress in planned school desegregation programs is an investment for the future, in the sense that graduates of desegregated schools are more likely as adults to freely choose desegregated colleges, neighborhoods, places of work, and schools for their children, reducing the need for future public policies in these areas. More generally, there is some reason to believe that school desegregation may be linked to the equal access for minorities to the structural opportunities for adult success. Desegregation may help penetrate the continuing exclusionary barriers that channel blacks in less promising directions, limit their access to useful networks of information and sponsorship, or create special burdens that foreclose consideration of potential opportunities. The task for research is to more carefully define and study specific structural barriers to equal opportunities, and to investigate the possible linkages of desegregation to these structural factors. This work needs to broaden discussions of problems of adult inequities beyond the concentration simply on problems of overt discrimination and differences in human capabilities, which can only account for a limited part of the problem, to include an awareness of structural barriers that limit opportunities. Likewise, public policies such as school desegregation should be considered for their potential effects not only on improving student learning but also on opening opportunities.

Footnotes

[1]The following discussion is largely drawn from McPartland and Crain, 1980, 114-115.

[2]Personal communication from Kenneth C. Green, Higher Education Research Institute, Los Angeles, California.

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