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ABSTRACT

The relationship between school desegregation and housing desegregation is the subject of this study, which used official census and school district data from the 25 central cities with black populations over 100,000 in 1980. Both school and housing desegregation were measured with the index of dissimilarity. Results show a clear correlation between school desegregation and housing desegregation. The southern cities, which typically experienced considerably more school desegregation than northern cities and at an earlier date, also experienced greater reduction in housing segregation. Other factors in addition to southern location may have caused both schools and housing to become desegregated, thus rendering the relationship between the latter two spurious. To test these possibilities, regression equations using region and five other variables were computed. The results do not suggest that the relationship between school desegregation and housing desegregation is spurious. Furthermore, a test of the hypothesis that school desegregation affects housing through white flight (in that the apparent increase in housing integration is really the middle stage of a city in massive racial transition) shows little support for the hypothesis. It is argued that the results suggest that school desegregation is the most effective way of countering housing segregation, thus providing an additional rationale for school desegregation. Following the narrative, appendices present material dealing with the cities and variables examined. (CMG)

# LESSONS NOT LOST:

# THE EFFECT OF SCHOOL DESEGREGATION ON THE RATE OF RESIDENTIAL DESEGREGATION IN LARGE CENTRAL CITIES

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It is still true that in large American cities, where one lives, and particularly where one does not live, can be fairly accurately predicted on the basis of skin color or ethnicity. Housing is not the only institution that has maintained this caste-like character, but it clearly lags behind most other institutions, such as schools and places of employment, which have gradually become increasingly racially and ethnically diverse settings. In part this is because hiring decisions or assignments to schools are more easily accessible to litigation and are more quickly changed than are housing choices.

In contrast to school segregation or employment discrimination, housing segregation has proved to be remarkably immune to legal remedies. The striking down of enforceable restrictive covenants, the prohibition of mortgage loan discrimination (including redlining) as well as other discrimination practices, and the inability of realtor associations to formally or informally sanction members who "open up" previously segregated housing to minority buyers still leaves untouched the bulk of discriminatory practices (Pearce, 1979 and 1983; Tisdale, 1983). Because of their sublety, such

strong relationship between school and housing desegregation, and present evidence that it is the level of school desegregation that causes housing barriers to fall, and not the other way around.

Other research has found that metropolitan school desegregation causes changes in the housing market which encourage residential desegregation. Pearce (1980) analyzed seven matched pairs of communities, with one city in each pair having desegregated its schools on a "metropolitan" basis, (i.e., its desegregation plan covered all or nearly all of the relevant housing market) and the other city either had segregated schools or desegregation of schools which was limited to the central city area only. It was found that in the community with metropolitan-wide desegregation had a significally greater decrease in housing segregation than its counterpart. School desegregation apparently affected the way in which homes were marketed as well; in 6 of the 7 pairs, real estate advertisements in areas with metropolitan-wide school desegregation were significantly less likely to mention public schools by name, and informal interviews with

real estate agents confirmed that agents were less likely to use schools in steering customers racially. Farley, Richards and Wurdock (1980) found that school desegregation plans which encompassed entire metropolitan areas have less "white flight" on the average than plans which cover only the central city.

Metropolitan school desegregation can operate to accelerate the pace of housing desegregation in several ways. At the individual level, it creates positive interracial contact on a daily basis for students and school staff; moreover, unlike employment or politics, parents, students and school personnel are engaged in an activity, education, that is mutually enhancing, a cooperative rather than a competitive venture. In addition, interracial fears are reduced, for black families know that, should they move into a white neighborhood they will not be the first minority faces seen there.

At the neighborhood level, racial balancing of school populations helps to stabilize neighborhoods through guaranteeing that all schools will fall within a known range in terms of ethnic composition. Typically, in cities with a neighborhood school policy, the schools in a transition neighborhood will change

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Metropolitan school desegregation can operate to accelerate the pace of housing desegregation in several ways. At the individual level, it creates positive interracial contact on a daily basis for students and school staff; moreover, unlike employment or politics, parents, students and school personnel are engaged in an activity, education, that is mutually enhancing, a cooperative rather than a competitive venture. In addition, interracial fears are reduced, for black families know that, should they move into a white neighborhood they will not be the first minority faces seen there.

At the neighborhood level, racial balancing of school populations helps to stabilize neighborhoods through guaranteeing that all schools will fall within a known range in terms of ethnic composition. Typically, in cities with a neighborhood school policy, the schools in a transition neighborhood will change

in racial composition more rapidly than the neighborhood itself. Thus racial balancing of the schools metropolitan wide counters rapid racial turnover by acting as a brake rather than an accelerator on racial change in the neighborhood. In some instances that effect is further enhanced by elements of the desegregation plan that reward stable desegregated neighborhoods with an end to busing, contingent upon their remaining integrated and not resegregating (Orfield, 1981). In addition, the creation of magnet schools and programs, which draw their enrollment from throughout the district, further unhooks residential location from school assignment and school racial composition.

At the city or metropolitan area level, the major effect is to remove white enclaves, at least as far as schools are concerned. No matter where one moves, one's children will attend an integrated school whether in or outside the immediate neighborhood. The absence of racially identifiable schools leads to changes in housing market practices, lessening the potential for using schools to steer homeseeker choices along racial lines. The tendency for choices about housing location to be less often based on racial

considerations is further reinforced by the fact that a major and pervasive institution, the public schools, has come down on the side of equal opportunity rather than on the side of segregation, a message not lost on adults as well as children.

The present research differs from the earlier Pearce research in two important ways. First, 1980 census data is now available, while the Pearce paper used local censuses and school district data to estimate post-1970 change in housing segregation. Second, the data are for 25 central cities, most of which did not experience metropolitan-wide school desegregation. When desegregation occurs in the central city, but not in the adjoining suburbs, the impact on housing may be different in degree as well as in character than that observed within metropolitan desegregation. On the one hand, many of the effects of metropolitan school desegregation, including legitimation of integration, neighborhood stabilization and reduction of interracial fears, may happen regardless of the geographic extent of the desegregation. On the other hand, "white flight" from school

desegregation, exacerbated by the presence of white enclaves (in the form of suburbs not included in central-city-only desegregation plans), may increase housing segregation, overwhelmingly the desegregation effects of school desegregation. This is the essence of the Coleman argument against busing, that through the (presumably permanent) excessive loss of whites, desegregation causes school and neighborhood resegregation and after several years a net increase in segregation (Coleman, Kelly, Moore, 1975).

Data

In this analysis we use official census and school district data from the 25 central cities with black populations over 100,000 in 1980. We have not included 3 cities with black populations this large because they were not the dominant central city of their area: these were Oakland, Gary and Newark. We measured both school and housing segregation levels with the index of dissimilarity, using individual schools as the unit of measurement for school segregation and census blocks for housing. The index of dissimilarity is the common index for measurement of spacial segregation of groups and can be thought of as the proportion of all blacks or all whites who would need to change residence (or change schools) in order that every block (or every

school) would have the same black-white ratio as the city (or school district) as a whole.

The dissimilarity indices for residential segregation in 1980 are taken from Taeuber (1983). The index for 1980 averaged 81; high though this may seem to be, it in fact reflects an improvement in housing segregation over the recent past; for in 1970 the index was 87 for this same group of cities.[1/] The change was considerably less in the preceding decade (Taeuber, 1977; Van Valey, et al., 1977). Black-white indices are not available for 1960, but the 1960 white-nonwhite index was 89, falling by 1970 to 86. Since the white-nonwhite index in 1970 differs by only 2 points from the black-white index for that year, it seems reasonable that the rate of change of 3 points between 1960 and 1970 would be about the same if black-white indices were used. Therefore, it seems safe to conclude that, using this index, housing has desegregated during the 1970's at approximately double the rate of the 1960's.

The dissimilarity index for schools was computed by Farley (1982) from data gathered by the Office of Civil Rights of the Office of Education. These data exist for 1967 and even-numbered years

thereafter. Compared to housing segregation, these has been a much greater decrease in the average level of school segregation, with most of the change occurring in the South in the early 1970's. At our earliest data point, 1967, the school index stood at 83. This number should be considered high, even though it is lower than the 1970 housing index of 87, because public schools generally encompass a much larger geographic area than a single census block.[2/] In the late sixties there was little more than token desegregation under "freedom of choice plans" and most northern school systems followed a "neighborhood school" policy of assigning people to the school nearest their home. But by 1974 the school index had dropped 12 points to 71; this drop mainly reflects the desegregation of southern schools in 1969-71 (Orfield, 1978).

Results

Figure 1 plots the relationship between the change in school desegregation between 1967 and 1976 and the change in housing segregation between 1970 and 1980 for the 25 cities. We have lagged the change in the housing index by 4 years because we assume that the impact of school desegregation on housing takes several years to become apparent.

For clarity, we report decreases in level of segregation as positive values for both schools and housing, i.e., the higher the number, the more housing or school desegregation experienced by the city.

Figure 1 shows a very clear correlation. The median decrease in school desegregation between 1967 and 1976 in this sample is about 12.5 points. The 10 cities which had less change in schools than this had a mean decrease in housing segregation of only 2.4 points; the 11 cities which had a greater decrease in school segregation than the median had a mean decrease in housing segregation of 8.5 points--over 3 times greater.

The data in Figure 1 seem to show a curvilinear effect, reflecting a decreasing return in housing desegregation as greater amounts of school desegregation occur. We found the data best fitted an equation of the form:

$$\text{housing desegregation} = A\,(\text{cube root of school desegregation}) + k.$$

The cube root is the simplest mathematical function which would show a declining return on investment in school desegregation and would also be defined

for negative values of school desegregation. The correlation between the cube root of the amount of school desegregation and the decrease in housing segregation is .765.

Testing for Spuriousness

In figure 1 the 9 southern cities are identified by their names being given in all capitals (Baltimore and St. Louis are defined as northern cities here). The southern cities typically experienced considerably more school desegregation than did northern cities and often at an earlier date. The least desegregated southern city, New Orleans, has had more school desegregation than 8 of the 16 northern cities. Southern cities have also experienced greater reduction in housing segregation as well; the least residentially segregated southern city, Atlanta, has experienced more housing desegregation than 11 of the northern cities. This raises the possibility that what appears to be a relationship between school desegregation and housing desegregation in Figure 1 is simply a spurious relationship caused by another variable--region. In other words, the trend in the figure is merely because southern cities cluster in the upper right and northern cities in the lower left.

Other factors in addition to southern location may have caused both schools and housing to become desegregated, thus rendering the relationship between the latter two spurious. To test these possibilities, we computed regression equations using region and five other variables as possible causes--these are population growth 1970-1980 (to test the hypothesis that growing cities desegregate schools and housing both), decrease in housing segregation, 1960-1970 (to test the possibility that school desegregation which occurred after 1967 is really the result of housing desegregation that occurred in the sixties) the amount of housing segregation in 1970, city size in 1970, and the racial mix of the public schools in 1968. The results are shown in Figure 2. The results do not suggest that the relationship between school desegregation and housing desegregation is spurious. First, the standardized regression coefficient of housing segregation change on school desegregation is .66, only slightly lower than the zero-order correlation of .765. Only one other factor seems to be significantly related to decrease in housing segregation. This is population growth. Apparently the reason why southern cities experience greater

desegregation in housing is because their central cities are more likely to be growing. While it is beyond the scope of this paper to analyze this relationship in detail, we can hypothesize two factors that might be going on here. First, population growth probably results in construction of new residences. These new housing developments and apartment complexes are being marketed and occupied initially in the context of antidiscrimination laws. In contrast, older areas of cities, where housing was originally marketed legally and explicitly in a segregated manner, are likely through inertia to maintain the segregated character of those areas. In addition, without the pressure of increasing numbers, especially of minorities, the boundaries between black and white areas will be none stable, making it possible for whites to flee from predominantly black areas without a compensating movement of blacks into formerly white areas.

Second, there does not seem to be some third factor, or factors which causes both school and housing segregation. In fact, the factors which are positively correlated with a

decrease in housing segregation are typically negatively correlated with amount of school desegregation, and vice versa. The most important predictors of school desegregation are the size of the city in 1970 and the percent black of the schools in 1968. School systems in small cities and in cities with small black populations are easiest to desegregate, and these are the ones most likely to have been desegregated. Note that neither city size nor the racial composition of schools is correlated with change in housing segregation. Contrary to expectation, the amount of decrease in housing segregation in the 1960's is a poor predictor of the decrease in housing segregation in the 1970's. Southern districts and districts with more housing segregation in 1970 show a slight tendency to desegregate their schools more, but these two variables are only weakly correlated with change in housing segregation. In sum, we have tested six variables and find little evidence here of the possibility of some other variable behind the relationship between the amount of school desegregation and the amount of housing desegregation. The complete correlation matrix of these and other variables is included in the Appendix.

Is School Desegregation Working Through White Flight?

There remains one alternative hypothesis worth examining, that school desegregation does affect housing, but does so through "white flight." That is, school desegregation desegregates housing by driving whites from the city, opening up opportunities for black families to move into apartments or owner-occupied residences in formerly white neighborhoods, so that the apparent increase in housing integration is really the middle stage of a city in massive racial transition. We test this hypothesis by adding to our significant predictors measures of first, change in the racial composition of the city, and second, change in school racial composition.

Our findings are shown in Table 1. In the first column we show a regression equation using the 3 largest predictors of change in housing segregation from figure 1: amount of school desegregation, population growth during the 1970's, and decrease in housing segregation during the 1960's. In the second column, we add two "housing" measures of the transition-not-integration hypothesis: the percentage black of the city's population in 1970 and the increase in percentage black of the population between 1970 and 1980.[3/] The two new variables are not significantly correlated with decrease in housing segregation. The standardized regression coefficient

relating school desegregation to a decrease in housing segregation is essentially unchanged.

The equation in the third column adds the two parallel variables for schools--the percentage black of the school enrollment in 1968 and the increase in the percentage black enrollment in the city schools between 1968 and 1976. Neither variable is significant, although they are in the predicted direction. Those cities with a growing percentage black in their schools show a greater decrease in housing segregation. The effect of school desegregation on housing desegregation is slightly weakened--the standardized coefficient drops from .64 to .61. This suggests that to some very small degree school desegregation does promote housing desegregation through white flight. However, the new variables are well below significance and the failure of the standardized coefficient for school desegregation to drop very much (or to drop at all when change in residential percentage black is entered in Column 2), means this hypothesis is not supported. The addition of either set of "white flight" variables increases the multiplier of the regression equation only 1%, from .90 to .91.

Implications for Further Research

The present study has too small a sample size to permit testing for interaction effects. For example, is the effect of school desegregation on housing desegregation stronger in those cities which do have metropolitan desegregation plans? Or stronger in small cities? Both possibilities are suggested by Figure 1, but such questions must wait for another study with a larger sample size.

It would also be useful to make more detailed analyses of cities in order to learn more about the process by which school desegregation affects housing desegregation. We have hypothesized that school desegregation can speed the rate at which blacks are allowed to (or wish to) move into formerly white areas, speed the rate at which whites move into formerly black areas, or slow the rate at which whites flee from areas of transition. It seems unlikely to us that the main effect of school desegregation on housing is through the movement of whites into formerly black areas. In Denver, it has been reported that white families have moved into previously all-black blocks after desegregation, but we think even there the process is numerically

not of great importance. When there is a discussion of "gentrification" Washington, D.C. is often cited but the figures cited here suggest that there has been no net increase in residential desegregation during the 1970's in Washington, and the research of Spain (1983) seems to indicate little real impact of gentrification on segregation anywhere in the United States, despite the attention it has received from the media.

Research separating the impact of school desegregation on the opening of all-white blocks to blacks from the stabilization of existing integrated blocks may require analysis using other indices (such as a count of the number of racially homogeneous blocks in the city). Alternatively, disaggregating the index of dissimilarity may reveal how much change can be attributed to each component of the process, perhaps using a method analogous to the disaggregation of variance in least squares statistics.

Policy Implications of the Research

These data strongly suggest that school desegregation is the most effective policy instrument we have against housing segregation. A school desegregation program can easily result in a change in the index of dissimilarity for schools from, for example, 85 to 55. Of our 25

cities seven, including four in the North, changed this much. According to our analyses, such a change occurring in the presence of the open housing laws of the 1970's, together with modest growth, led to a change in housing segregation of about six points in the index of dissimilarity. This is double the rate at which housing desegregation occurred during the 1960's for this sample of cities, and double the rate at which housing desegregation occurred in those cities which did not desegregate their schools during the 1970's. Put another way, the data indicate that in spite of major civil rights legislation and litigation victories, increases in minority income and other factors, without school desegregation there would have been no increase in the rate of housing desegregation in large central cities during the decade of the 1970's.

Many citizens are aware that school desegregation can play a role in housing desegregation. In Denver, the most significant school desegregation decision in the North resulted from a suit filed at the behest of a group of citizens representing an integrated community which was fearful of becoming

resegregated. School desegregation has been used as an active policy to stabilize racially changing suburbs in Shaker Heights (near Cleveland) and Oak Park (near Chicago). The Kentucky Commission on Human Relations published several reports arguing that school desegregation in Jefferson County (the Louisville metropolitan area) has furthered the desegregation of housing there, and the school system actively encouraged desegregative housing by exempting those making them from the busing program.

Despite these scattered efforts it appears that most school and government officials are unaware of the impact of the impact of school desegregation on housing (Orfield, 1981). This is unfortunate because in many cases there are simple actions schools can take which would cause their desegregation plan to have an even greater impact upon housing. For example, plans can be drawn so as to exempt integrated neighborhoods from busing. School systems could enhance these effects by being more aggressive in informing segregated communities that they

would be exempt from pupil transportation if their community accepted enough residents of the opposite race. Although the Hawley et al. (1981) report makes recommendations about how schools could further housing desegregation and thus reduce the need for busing, we do not believe very many school districts have considered this possibility as yet.

We began this paper with the discouraging observation that of all urban institutions, housing segregation has been the most intractible. The data and analyses presented here, however, suggest that housing segregation is not that immune to change, that this particular strand of the "web of discrimination" can be broken, and that school desegregation is a strikingly effective tool to this end.

The choice of schools as the first segregated institution to attack had many underlying rationales, but its effect on housing was not one of them (Kramer, 197 ). In the three decades since Brown, the emphasis on dismantling school segregation has been questioned again and again. Obviously, this data does not speak to the question of efficacy of school desegregation (for example, on black achievement or race relations)

but it does suggest that school desegregation contributes to substantial opening up of opportunities for blacks, via means different than anticipated by civil rights lawyers, but to the same end. Clearly, official policies that state that segregated institutions are inherently unequal are lessons not lost.

1/ The 1970 index measures a slightly different phenomenon, in that Asians, Native Americans and other non-blacks non-whites are omitted entirely, whereas in 1980, they are included with non-blacks. Thus the 1970 index measures the segregation of blacks from whites, and the 1980 index measures segregation of blacks from non-blacks. Given the small number of persons excluded by this process, it is unlikely that this has a large effect on the index in most cities. In both years, Hispanics can be of either race.

2/ The larger the unit of measurement, the greater the likelihood that the unit will be racially heterogeneous, ceteris paribus. Hence, with the same level of segregation, one should expect a smaller index for public schools than for blocks.

3/ The percentage black in housing/schools at the beginning point is entered because it can be argued that in cities/school districts with smaller white populations, ceteris paribus, a larger percentage of the white population will be in the transition band (or group of schools), than where blacks are a small percentage of the city's (or school district's) population.

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Table 1: Importance of an increasing black population relative to an increasing black enrollment in city schools in the prediction of a decrease in housing segregation

| Independent Variables | (1) Decrease in Housing Segregation | (2) Decrease in Housing Segregation | (3) Decrease in Housing Segregation |
|---|---|---|---|
| Amount of school desegregation (1967-76) | .64* | .66* | .61* |
| Population growth of city (1970-80) | .46* | .53* | .54* |
| Decrease in housing segregation (1960-70) | .15 | .21 | .20 |
| Percent black of population (1970) | | .15 | |
| Increase in percent black of population (1970-80) | | .07 | |
| % black enrollment in city schools (1968) | | | .11 |
| Increase in % black enrollment of city schools (1968-80) | | | .10 |
| Multiple R | .90 | .91 | .91 |

Coefficients reported are standardized regression coefficients.

*P<.001

APPENDIX TABLE A

List of Variables

| Name | Description | Mean | Std. Dev. |
|---|---|---|---|
| School segregation (ss) | | | |
| 1967 | Index of dissimilarity: 0 | 82.8 | 9.7 |
| 1970 | if all units (schools or | 79.4 | 8.8 |
| 1974 | blocks) have identical | 70.0 | 17.5 |
| 1976 | white-black ratios; | 65.8 | 17.5 |
| 1978 | 100 if totally segregated | 63.3 | 17.4 |
| Housing segregation (hs) | | | |
| 1960 | (nonwhite vs white) | 89.0 | 4.8 |
| 1970 | (nonwhite vs white) | 86.1 | 5.3 |
| 1970 | (black vs white) | 88.2 | 4.7 |
| 1980 | (black vs nonblack) | 82.3 | 5.0 |
| Change in school segregation ss1968 - ss1976 | | 17.0 | 18.7 |
| cube root of change in school segregation | | 1.79 | 1.88 |
| Change in housing segregation hs1980 - hs1980 | | 5.9 | 4.6 |
| hs1960 - hs1970 | | 2.9 | 1.5 |
| Population | | | |
| 1970 | (log base 10) | 5.91 | .34 |
| 1980 | (log base 10) | 5.87 | .35 |
| Growth | 100 x (pop 1980)/(pop 1970) | 91.7 | 11.6 |
| Percent black of city population | | | |
| 1970 | | 31.6 | 14.0 |
| 1980 | | 38.2 | 16.2 |
| Increase in % black of city, 1980-1970 | | 6.6 | 4.8 |
| Schools, 1968: | percent white | 49.7 | 16.9 |
| | " black | 46.4 | 18.4 |
| | " other | 3.9 | 7.1 |
| 1980: | percent white | 30.3 | 16.7 |
| | " black | 60.8 | 20.1 |
| | " other | 9.0 | 13.7 |
| Increase in % black enrollment 1980-1968 | | 14.4 | 7.4 |
| Region (south=1, North and Border=0). | | .36 | .49 |

APPENDIX TABLE B: ZERO-ORDER CORRELATIONS AMONG VARIABLES

| | decrease in seg: housing | % blk., schools | increase schools % blk. | pop. 1970 | pop. growth 1970-80 | hous. seg. 1970 | dec. hous. seg. 1960-70 | % blk. pop. 1970 | inc. % blk. pop. | south |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Decrease in housing segregation, 1970-80 | 1.000 | .765 | -.461 | .317 | -.314 | .681 | .429 | .033 | -.311 | .108 | .619 |
| Decrease in school segregation, 1967-76 (1/3 root) | .765 | 1.000 | -.391 | .563 | -.595 | .336 | .521 | -.217 | -.332 | .264 | .497 |
| % black, schools, 1968 | -.461 | -.391 | 1.000 | .037 | -.157 | -.517 | -.214 | -.284 | .942 | .299 | .002 |
| Increase in % black of schools, 1968-80 | .317 | .563 | .037 | 1.000 | -.477 | -.166 | .228 | -.216 | .066 | .820 | .317 |
| Population, 1970 (log) | -.314 | -.595 | -.157 | -.477 | 1.000 | .084 | -.327 | .411 | -.155 | -.210 | -.413 |
| Pop. growth, 1970-80 | .681 | .336 | -.517 | -.166 | .084 | 1.000 | .397 | .041 | -.371 | -.309 | .531 |
| Housing seg., 1970 | .429 | .521 | -.214 | .228 | -.327 | .397 | 1.000 | -.343 | -.170 | .078 | .535 |
| Decrease in housing segregation, 1960-70 | .033 | -.217 | -.284 | -.216 | .411 | .041 | -.343 | 1.000 | -.314 | -.124 | -.166 |
| % black of pop. 1970 | -.311 | -.332 | .942 | .066 | -.155 | -.371 | -.170 | -.314 | 1.000 | .333 | .152 |
| Increase in % black of pop., 1970-80 | .108 | .264 | .299 | .820 | -.210 | -.309 | .078 | -.124 | .333 | 1.000 | .243 |
| Southern region | .619 | .497 | .002 | .317 | -.413 | .531 | .535 | -.166 | .152 | .243 | 1.000 |

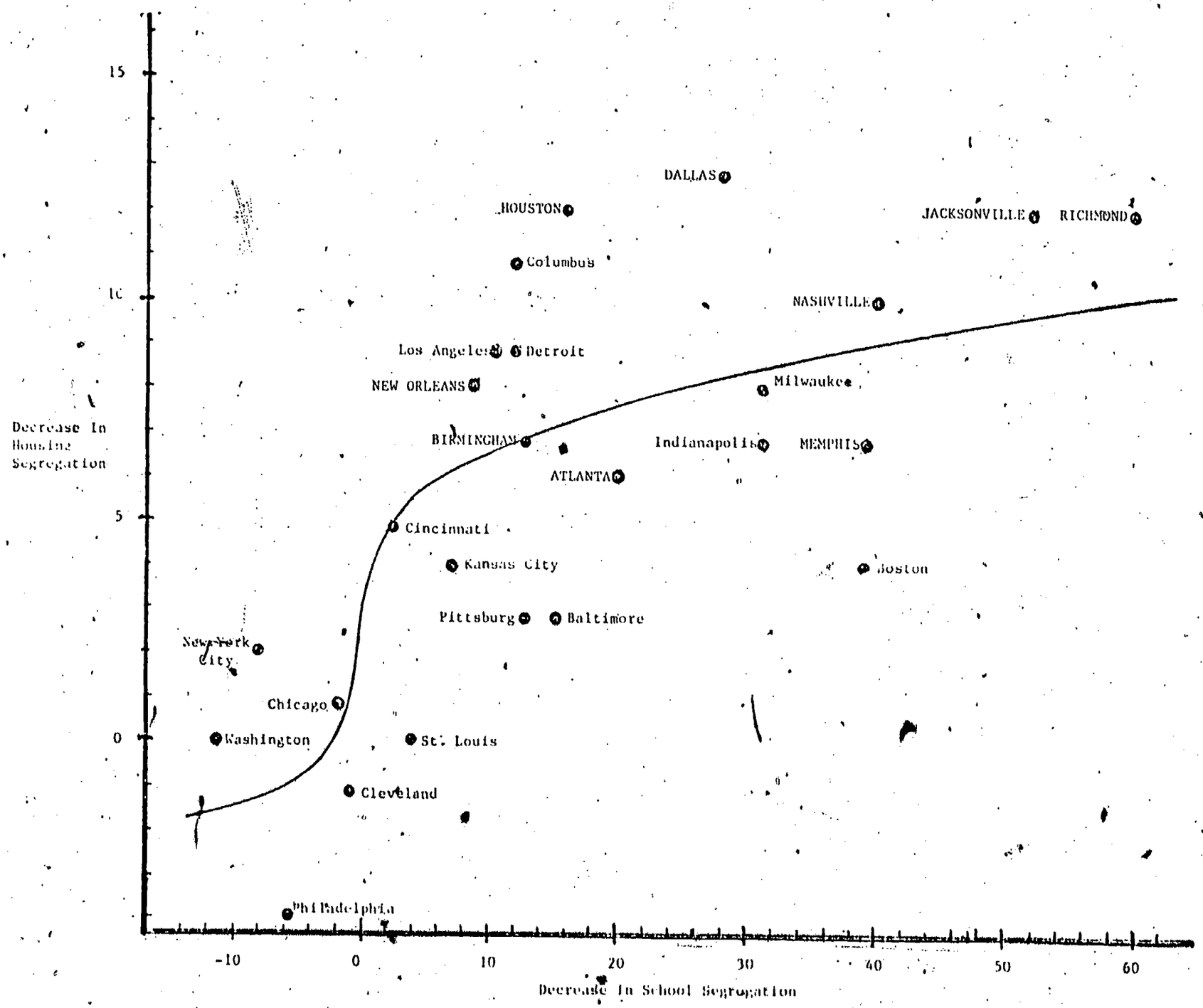


Figure 1: The Relationship Between School Desegregation and Reduction in Housing Segregation

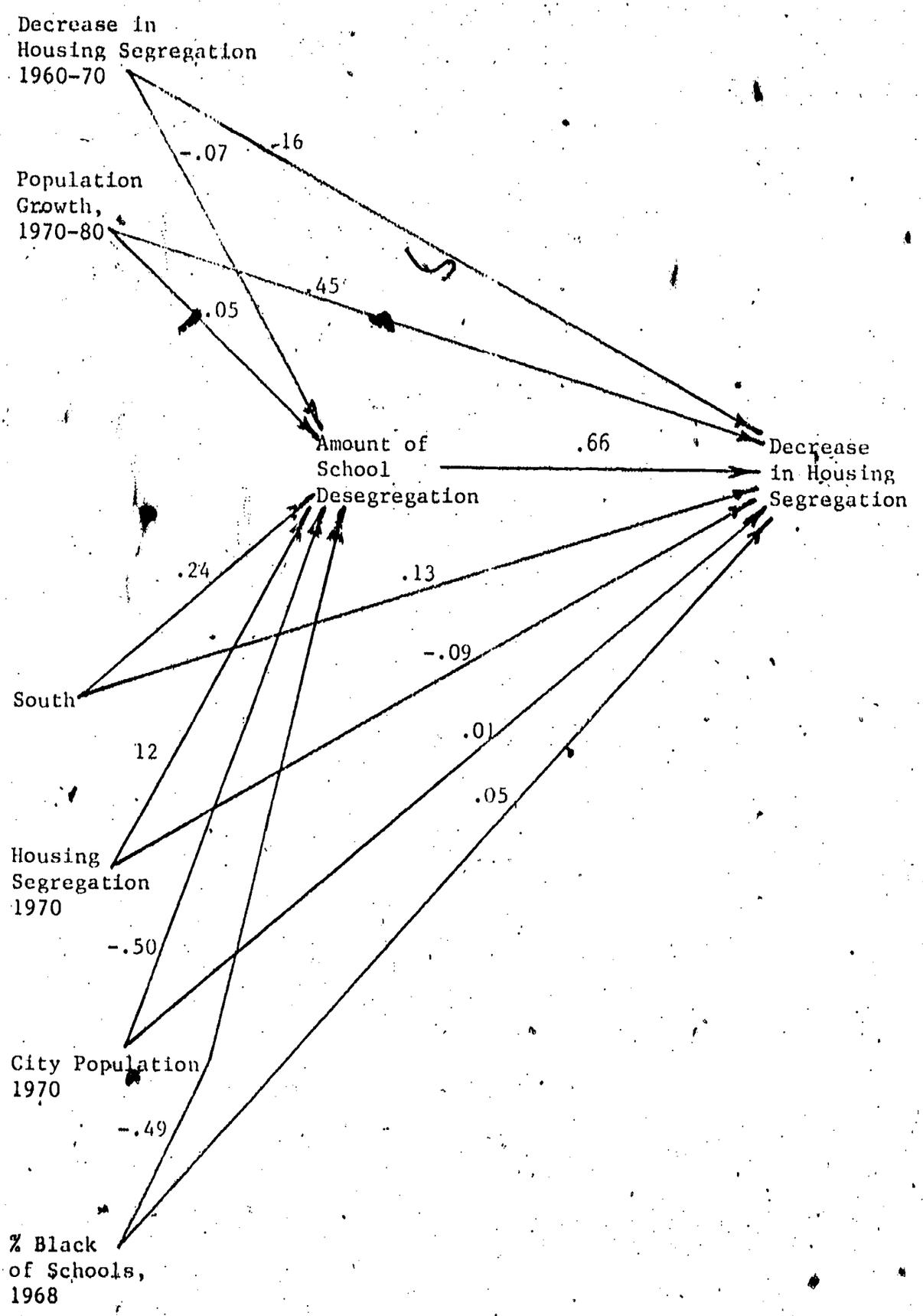


Figure 2: Correlates of Change in School Desegregation and Correlates of Change in Housing Segregation

*p<.01