Racial Residential Segregation and Racial Gerrymandering: An Overlooked Nexus

Overview

I. Racial Residential Segregation in the United States: Trends and Patterns
II. Racial Political Polarization and Political Segregation
III. Racial Gerrymandering as Segregation
IV. The Forgotten Solution: Integration
Stuck in the Past

- **Hot take:** Fair Housing Advocates – lawyers and grassroots orgs – are stuck in a 1960s/70s view of racial segregation.

- Most of us understand that gentrification and patterns of regional segregation (the “Great Inversion”) are changing our understanding of segregation, and that segregation is more inter-municipal than neighborhood based, but I am talking about something more fundamental.

- The research into the causes, effects and consequences of segregation – as well as the very measures we use – are outdated.

- In the last few years, there has been a ‘virtual explosion’ of research into the issue of segregation, with new tools and measuring sticks.

Early Scholarship (Pre-1950)
1\textsuperscript{st} Generation Scholarship on Segregation (1968-1990s)

2\textsuperscript{nd} & 3\textsuperscript{rd} Generation Scholarship
Measuring Segregation: The Index of Dissimilarity

- By far the most popular measure of segregation – measures “spread” or “evenness.” The dissimilarity index indicates the percentage of a subgroup that would have to move to achieve integration.

- Some claim it’s the easiest to understand.
  - A score of 100 indicates that every neighborhood has residents of only one particular group (“complete segregation”), whereas a score of zero indicates proportional representation of each group throughout the metropolitan region (“complete integration”).

- Segregation: 2010 measure of B/W segregation, 59.0, is considered a very high level of segregation. That means that more than half of African Americans (or whites) would have to move residence to achieve a fully integrated society.

![Residential Dissimilarity Index 1910-2000](image-url)
Dissimilarity Index in the Bay Area

Problems with the Dissimilarity Index

1. The Index is binary – it can only examine segregation between two groups at a time.
2. As an artifact of the formula, if a third group (group C) moves into an area, the A-B Dissimilarity score will fall, even if no member of either group A or B moved residence!
3. The “Modifiable Areal Unit” problem: a technical problem, but basically the score can be a byproduct of the selected geography.
4. Not “Decomposable”: Gives you a score for a region, but not subscores for places within a region.
5. Masks or obscures the “typical” case. A small number of group A moving into a Group B neighborhood may imply more progress than is actually experienced.
Different Worlds: Exposure Index

- **The Exposure Index**
  - The Exposure Index and Isolation Index measure the average neighborhood of a member of a racial group.
  - As of 2010, the average white resident of a metropolitan area resides in a neighborhood that is 75.4% white, 7.9% Black, 10.5% Hispanic, and 5.1% Asian. In contrast, a typical African-American resident lives in a neighborhood that is 34.8% white, 45.2% Black, 14.8% Hispanic, and 4.3% Asian.
  - The “exposure” of the average African-American to the majority white population is “35,” a figure that has not improved since 1950.

The Divergence Index

- Created by Elizabeth Roberto in 2015, this is a new way of calculating segregation, which measures the difference between the overall proportion of a group in a region and the proportion of each group in a local area within that region.
  - Unlike many other measures of segregation, the Divergence Index can measure a region’s segregation for multiple racial groups simultaneously, is decomposable, etc.
  - But the best part is that it is great for mapping!
Divergence Index in the Bay Area

Aside on Mapping Segregation

- I have a pet peeves: Racial Demographics **DOES NOT** equal Racial segregation
  - Many efforts to map racial segregation are often racial demographic maps rather than illustrating racial segregation itself.

- Efforts to map segregation are only able to represent segregation levels for two groups at a time, such as Black-white segregation.

- Or they try to overlay diversity with racial concentration.
Example 1: The Racial Dot Map

Example 2: Segregation by Design

Local Politics and Inequality in American Cities

by Jessica Trounstine
Example 3

Low-income Black households in the Bay Area increased by 8% between 2000 and 2015 even as the Black population overall fell. However, as shown in Map 1 and Map 2, this modest overall change reflected a concentrated increase and decrease in only a small number of neighborhoods. In both the San Francisco Peninsula and the East Bay, these swaths of the region had a few low-income Black households that saw their estimates of change were unrelated.

Decomposition of low-income Black households were concentrated in central, historically Black neighborhoods, while increases occurred mostly in the region’s outer suburbs. In 2015, most Black households in the Bay Area lived in small number of cities: Oakland, Richmond, Emeryville, Alameda, and Pittsburg, as well as cities neighborhoods on San Francisco Peninsula counties similar to many other cities in the US at the time.

However, most of the Bay Area cities and neighborhoods that housed the majority of the Black population of 1970 have since seen a large exodus of Black residents. Qualitative research has shown that the shift was driven by both “push” factors including environmental injustice and violence, as well as “pull” factors like affordable homeownership and better public schools in more distant suburbs.

In San Francisco, most losses of low-income Black households were in the Western Addition, Bayview Hunters Point, Oceanview, and the Outer Mission, contributing to a 17% decrease in low-income Black households between 2010 and 2015. This loss continued despite decades-long trends of displacement and gentrification in San Francisco driven by deindustrialization, redevelopment projects, and speculative housing practices.

In the East Bay, there were large losses of low-income Black households in historically Black neighborhoods in Alameda, Berkeley, Richmond, Oakland, Pittsburg, and Livermore. Several parts of Oakland also saw decreases in low-income Black households, particularly in the neighborhoods near the decommissioned shipyard where housing stock is older. Finally, decreases in San Mateo County were most evident in East Palo Alto.

Example 4

The Road to Re-segregation: Northern California and the Failure of Politics

Alex Schafan

Racial Segregation in the San Francisco Bay Area

Segregation is one of our nation’s most enduring and intractable problems. More than 60 years since the Supreme Court’s landmark Brown v. Board of Education decision denounced racial segregation in primary and secondary public schools, and 50 years since the enactment of the Federal Fair Housing Act, our neighborhoods and schools have yet to reflect the rich diversity of our nation as a whole. Given the seriousness of the problem of racial segregation as a cause of racial inequality and the complexity in understanding the nature of this problem, the Institute is launching a series of briefs that will attempt to illuminate these patterns and demystify the reality of segregation in the San Francisco Bay Area.

Part 1: Segregation

In the first brief, we present a series of detailed maps illustrating segregation across the region, within each of the nine Bay Area counties, and in its major metropolitan areas. Our goal is that readers in the Bay Area, for the first time, will have a clear portrait of the reality and extent of the racial segregation in their communities. We highlight and discuss the varying levels of residential racial segregation within the region and show which communities and neighborhoods are the most segregated, and the most integrated.

Part 2: Demographics

In our second brief we disaggregate and unpack patterns of segregation into specific patterns of racial demographics. We examine the unique patterns of racial distribution in the San Francisco Bay region, and across major metropolitan areas. In particular, part two of this series illustrates the distribution of white, black, and Hispanic populations.
Racial Residential Segregation in the Bay Area
Mapping Segregation in the U.S.

Click Any Tract
Racial Political Polarization

- In her book, segregation by design, Jessica Trounstine argues that racial residential segregation predicts racial political polarization.
- She finds that a city in the 10th percentile of segregation has a 35 percent point divide in racial support for a political candidate, compared to a 63 percent point divide at the 90th percentile. In other words, the more segregated, the more political polarization.
- We find the same.

The Most Politically Polarized MSAs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Polarization Rank</th>
<th>City</th>
<th>Precinct Divergence from CBSA</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Jackson, MS</td>
<td>18.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Beaumont-Port Arthur, TX</td>
<td>18.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Albany, GA</td>
<td>16.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Hattiesburg, MS</td>
<td>15.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Memphis, TN-MS-AR</td>
<td>13.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Cape Girardeau-Jackson, MO-IL</td>
<td>13.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Atlanta-Sandy Springs-Marietta, GA</td>
<td>13.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Macon, GA</td>
<td>12.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Columbus, GA-AL</td>
<td>12.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Greensboro-High Point, NC</td>
<td>11.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>New York-Northern New Jersey-Long Island, NY-PA, PA</td>
<td>11.8%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Least Politically Polarized (and segregated) MSA
Political Gerrymandering and Segregation

- Racial gerrymandering cases have characterized by key justices in terms that look like racial segregation.
- In *Shaw v. Reno*, Justice O’Connor characterized racial redistricting as “an effort to segregate voters into separate voting districts because of their race.” As she explained:
  - “Racial classifications with respect to voting carry particular dangers. Racial gerrymandering, even for remedial purposes, may balkanize us into competing racial factions; it threatens to carry us further from the goal of a political system in which race no longer matters—a goal that the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Amendments embody, and to which the Nation continues to aspire.”
Political Gerrymandering and Segregation

  – "the essence of the equal protection claim recognized in Shaw is that the state has used race as a basis for separating voters into districts."

• Later Justice Kennedy rejected the General Assembly's contention that "the evidence of a legislature’s deliberate classification of voters on the basis of race cannot alone suffice to state a claim under *Shaw*."

Political Racial Polarization

• Racial polarization in voting combine with racial residential segregation makes it much easier for political redistricting efforts to draw districts to maximize political advantage.

• But if racial residential segregation were to decline, then this strategy would be more difficult.