8-8-2023

Social Structural Sorting in U.S. Schools

Sarah Roche

Social Structural Sorting in U.S. Schools

by

Sarah Roche

Under the Direction of Amy Spring, PhD

A Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

in the College of Arts and Sciences

Georgia State University

2023

ABSTRACT

While school segregation closely maps onto residential segregation, the decline in residential segregation has not led to a similar decline in school segregation. In fact, in recent years school segregation has increased. This led me to ask, what other factors and processes, particularly at the neighborhood level, might impact school enrollment patterns? Using the Social Structural Sorting Perspective (Krysan and Crowder 2017) as a framework, I examine both compositional and contextual effects of neighborhoods on school sorting. My first empirical chapter utilizes nationally representative data from the Neighborhood Change Database (Geolytics) and responses from the NHES survey Parent and Family Involvement (PFI) in Education supplement to analyze whether living in a changing neighborhood predicts a decrease in neighborhood school enrollment. I find that neighborhood stability operationalized as percentage of new residents is positively correlated with enrollment in the local schools. However, change in the racial makeup is negatively correlated with enrollment in the local schools. Next, I utilize data from Atlanta Public Schools and Census tract data to calculate each school's race enrollment gap, or the difference between the racial makeup of the neighborhood and the racial makeup of the neighborhood school. The gaps were most extreme at the middle school level and for Black students. The school zones with the largest racial enrollment gaps were North Atlanta, Midtown and Jackson. Finally, I conducted a series of interviews (n=19) with parents of K-12 students within the three clusters identified above about their neighborhood and school choice process. Many Atlanta parents expressed a desire for schools that were both diverse and of high quality, but nonetheless arrived at different school decisions. The importance of race and class identity in the development of these choices and the spatial clustering of choice types is discussed.

INDEX WORDS: School segregation, Neighborhood change, Racial enrollment gap, School choice, Atlanta public schools

Social Structural Sorting in U.S. Schools

by

Sarah Roche

Committee Chair: Amy Spring

Committee: Tomeka Davis

Katherine Hankins

Daniel Immergluck

Electronic Version Approved:

Office of Graduate Services

College of Arts and Sciences

Georgia State University

August 2023

DEDICATION

For the children I have known, both my own and otherwise, who have taught me so much.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

A dissertation is not the labor of a single person, but represents the time, effort and support of many others. First of all, to my husband, who has only ever wanted for me what I wanted for myself and who has seen me through it all with humor and fortitude. To my children who remind me to play and to feel with my whole being even under a deadline. To my parents and parents-in-law, who offered their unconditional love and support and many hours of childcare! To my village, you know who you are, balancing motherhood and life and self and work has been made that much easier in the sharing. To my committee whose doors were always open and whose expertise was most welcome. And finally, to my chair whose encouragement and belief in me never wavered, so far as I know! I could not have done this without you. To all of you, I hope I have made you proud.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF TABLES

LIST OF FIGURES

SOCIAL STRUCTURAL SORTING IN U.S. SCHOOLS

1.1 Introduction

Understanding the sorting of children across schools by race and income is vitally important for a few reasons. For one, the U.S. operates on the premise that there is equal opportunity to move up and down the socio-economic ladder. But poverty and affluence are often passed down to future generations in a way that suggests our system does not operate so openly. In fact, economic mobility in the U.S. has fallen in recent decades (Chetty et al. 2014). This durable nature of inequality coupled with the spatial sorting of groups, has led to many children being "stuck in place" (Sharkey 2013). This impacts access to resources, including schools. Additionally, racial segregation in certain neighborhoods and schools remains persistently stubborn (Massey 2020).

Today in the U.S. there are significant differences by race and class in terms of school enrollment demographics. A 2017 Economic Policy Institute report shows that only 12.9% of White children attend a school where a majority of students are Black, Hispanic, Asian, or American Indian. However, 69.2% of Black children attend such schools. 31.3% of White children attend a high-poverty school, compared with 72.4% of Black children. Because of the connection between race and class in the U.S., a Black child has a 60% chance of ending up in a school where a majority of her peers are both poor and students of color. This is true only for 8.4% of White children. On the other hand, 23.5% of White children attend schools where most of their peers are White and not poor, while only 3.1% of Black children attend such schools (Carnoy and Garcia 2020).

This matters not just because we are not living up to our democratic promise and ideals, but also because early neighborhood and school experiences have huge implications for a wide

range of life outcomes (Leventhal and Brooks-Gunn 2003; Roux 2010; Downey and Condron 2016). The continuing stratification, and in some cases re-segregation, across schools and neighborhoods serve to reproduce divergent life trajectories for children living in different parts of town, which also means maintaining the opportunity gap between children of different race and class backgrounds.

When considering the mechanisms of school segregation, we must consider the context. Currently the U.S. is experiencing 1) declining residential segregation (although still high), which should mean a decrease in segregated neighborhood schools 2) increasingly diverse cities, which would presumably bring diverse groups in closer proximity via public institutions like schools and 3) increasing school choice, which is purported to increase diversity as students living in pockets of racial or socio-economic isolation could increase diverse exposure by choosing a school outside their neighborhood. However, school segregation by income and between districts is on the rise (Reardon and Owens 2014). Meanwhile, school segregation by race has seen a slight decline but remains high (Goyette 2014).

I therefore seek to understand what processes could be contributing to growing school segregation in an environment of steady or decreasing residential segregation. Once we account for the contributions of residential segregation and school choice policy, what remains? What other factors are we missing that have contributed to the resegmentation of American schools? Pulling from theories on the political, economic and social dimensions of neighborhoods and schools, I hope to offer some new insights into the forces shaping school segregation in the U.S. today.

1.2 Background

The history of segregation in the U.S. is well documented, but worth summarizing here. The history of race in the U.S. is largely one of enforced separation. Physical separation was accompanied by other forms of social distancing and boundary maintenance used by Whites to maintain a strict racial hierarchy (Feagin 2006). This separation was embedded in our legal system, in our institutions, and in our customs. Racial groups were segregated across all areas of public life from residential neighborhoods to schools, churches, entertainment venues and shops (Feagin 2006; Rothstein 2017). In the middle of the 20th century, as the federal government began making moves to desegregate our society via new laws and court-rulings, White individuals, community organizations and local governments sought ways to subvert or otherwise avoid integration (Feagin 2006; Rothstein 2017). But some of the most organized push-back to the new social order came around the issues of housing and schools.

Although Brown vs. the Board of Education was determined in 1954, it was nearly 20 years later before the last state and local school district fully accepted and began to fulfill their constitutional duty to desegregate (Orfield and Eaton 1996; Clotfelter 2004). Meanwhile, private school enrollment, particularly across the southern states, steadily rose from the 1940s to 1970s. Much of this enrollment was driven by newly formed so called "segregation academies" (Walder and Cleveland 1971; Champagne 1973). As a result of White reluctance and bureaucratic foot-dragging, it was the late 1980s before U.S. public schools reached the height of desegregation (Orfield and Eaton 1996; Clotfelter 2004). Although, as Karolyn Tyson points out, schools that desegregated were not necessarily fully integrated (2011).

However, U.S. schools were soon subject to another set of developments. Against a backdrop of globalization, free trade, and emergence of neoliberalism, a new wave of

suburbanization crossed the country in the 1980s resulting in heavily depopulated and increasingly impoverished urban centers (Wilson 1987). This rapid depopulation affected traditional public-school enrollment in the city even as suburban districts grew. As a result of this massive disinvestment, many urban neighborhoods and schools became sites of concentrated poverty (Wilson 1987; Kozol 1995) while the suburbs experienced a second wave of newcomers (Jackson 1985).

Recent decades have seen a slight reversal in the fortunes of urban cores in select cities across the Northeast and Midwest (Short and Mussman 2014). Meanwhile, urban centers across the South and West are growing rapidly (Frey 2020). The return of White residents to central city districts and the growing racial and ethnic diversity as a result of immigration has contributed to less segregation across a number of U.S. cities (Zhang and Logan 2016). At the same time, growing economic inequality has led to greater class segregation than ever (Reardon et al. 2018). As this summary indicates, patterns of urban growth and change are not homogenous as different regions, cities and populations have experienced different trajectories (Logan 2013; Lichter et al. 2015; Hwang 2015; Owens and Rich 2023). And while these trends do not tell the whole story, they have set the stage for the resegregation of schools.

1.2.1 Space, place and the neighborhood-school connection

The choice of neighborhoods and the choice of schools are connected (Lareau and Goyette 2014) despite the impetus of the school choice reform movement to disconnect the two (Chubb and Moe 1990). School choice theory presupposes that schools and neighborhoods can be completely detached from one another. This rests on the assumption that school is an experience contained in place, but not co-constituted with place; it is a commodity rather than a site of human activity. From one perspective, detaching school enrollment from one's

neighborhood of residence should at least interrupt one pathway by which children are "stuck in place" (Sharkey 2013). Put another way, it seems entirely plausible that students living in pockets of racial or socio-economic isolation could increase diverse exposure by choosing a school outside their neighborhood.

But this has not borne out. As Betancour and Smith argue, families are not stuck in place so much as corralled in place (2016). This de facto segregation in modern U.S. cities is mostly maintained via market forces - there is not a single market of neighborhood choice, but rather separate markets; one that remakes the neighborhood to the taste of the highest bidder and one whose profit margins rest on the exploitation of the underclass (Betancour and Smith 2016). School choice theory assumes a single market, but perhaps like residential markets, school markets have split (Ball et al. 1995). Furthermore, markets are not just collections of supply and demand for products and services. Nor are schools simply part of the geographic hardscape or the opportunity structure. Markets and schools are social institutions, informed by the identities and values of those who lead them and engage with them. As located institutions that are both part of and apart from the neighborhood, schools have their own cultures, histories and meanings across families, neighborhoods and cities (Bell 2020). Schools can be one way in which people perceive and evaluate a neighborhood's identity (Bell 2020).

As Hwang found in her study of gentrifying Philadelphia, neighborhoods undergoing change are often sites of contestation and boundary work, with different demographic groups often offering up different narratives of identity and place (Hwang 2016). When place identity is connected to local history and/or to a feature of the material space, the place narrative can become solidified in the public consciousness, is thus more easily transmitted and perhaps even translates into other forms of neighborhood stability (Osman 2011). For instance, a perception or

sense of the neighborhood can begin to develop even amongst those who are less familiar with the area, often building upon heuristics or schemas that connect to the established place identity (Evans and Lee 2020). It seems plausible that this reputation will extend to the institutions within the neighborhood as well, such as schools. Schools, as located institutions, can also serve as reputational objects or aspects of the neighborhood that stand in for the neighborhood's reputation (Bell 2020; Parker 2018). When a place holds multiple meanings or contested meanings this could lead to divergent reputations according to which meaning an individual or group has assigned to the place (Sánchez-Jankowski 2008), thus impacting which neighborhoods and/or schools become part of a given individual's choice set (Bell 2009a).

1.2.2 The continuing significance of race

Despite the frequent use of racial and ethnic categories in quantitative neighborhood research, I contend that much scholarly work in the neighborhood and school choice literatures undertheorizes race. Racial capitalism in particular serves as a useful frame for this work. Racial capitalism is the extraction of value based on someone's racial identity (Robinson 1983). It is also an acknowledgement of the historical and deep-seated racialization of class in the U.S. Race as capital can be expressed in a number of ways – through the primacy of whiteness in the broader political economy (Lipman 2011), through the dispossession and displacement of low-income minority neighborhoods during gentrification (Jones and Dantzler 2021), and through the cultural and social capital wielded by White middle-class parents in urban schools (Lareau 2003; Hagerman 2018).

Social psychological theories of status also offer a critical lens to the way in which different racial groups engage with one another and with the social structure. Because racial group membership can be a signifier of status, places associated with a specific group will likely

share a similar status (Ridgeway 2014). This relationship can be seen in the reputation of neighborhoods, and by extension that of schools. Place reputations are persistent, especially reputations that are stigmatized, and are persistent regardless of individual motivation (Evans and Lee 2020). Whether a household move is motivated or constrained, whether the move is about economics or social dynamics, the selection of neighborhoods continues to be informed by prior reputation. And as families slot into neighborhoods and schools whose reputation fit their spatial position and disposition (Yoon and Lubienski 2017), the pattern continues. This approach to race and space as affiliate statuses is in alignment with what other scholars have argued about how racialized processes in the contemporary U.S. operate in implicit or subtle ways (Rothstein 2017) and how multiple articulations of oppression/privilege can be interlocking, resulting in a cascading effect (Crenshaw 1989; Feagin 2006).

1.2.3 The creation of choice sets

Krysan and Crowder's Social Structural Sorting Perspective argues that housing decisions are actually made in stages (2017). In the first stage, movers identify a choice set of potential neighborhoods or areas they would consider moving to and in the second stage they evaluate individual housing units within those neighborhoods. But perhaps the most interesting aspect of this model is the proposed pre-stage. This is an ongoing and perhaps mostly unconscious process in which people are constantly updating their mental map of the city based on information from their social networks and the media that sets the stage for which neighborhoods they are willing to draw from to create their choice set. The pre-stage and the first stage, according to Krysan and Crowder, are heavily influenced by heuristics or mental short-hand as a way of dealing with the cognitive overload involved in winnowing down choices.

These heuristics and mental maps are influenced by demographics and racial stigma, as evidenced in a number of studies (Quillian and Pager 2001; Bruch and Swait 2019; Burdick-Will et al. 2020). Quillian and Pager's 2001 study on the perception of neighborhood crime demonstrates that these perceptions drive outcomes that have very real consequences. As they state, "Even if neighborhood evaluations and decisions to move are largely determined by nonracial considerations, such as perceptions of neighborhood crime, if these perceptions are themselves influenced by racial context, then they can no longer be thought of as race-neutral" (Quillian and Pager 2001: 721). Thus, it seems likely our heuristics and mental maps are raced and classed, both in determining preferred areas and areas not even under consideration (Krysan and Crowder 2017). This is further evinced in a recent study where Jones and Dantzler showed that neighborhood perception had a stronger relationship with neighborhood selection than did actual neighborhood characteristics (2021).

In the school choice literature, similar arguments exist for how parents approach the school choice decision. Bowe, Ball and Gewirtz's study of gentrifier parents and school choice has become a classic of the field (1994). These theorists expand on the notion of choice within the political frame of personal responsibility in a postmodern marketplace of consumers. They find that parent gentrifiers operate in self-identified mini markets (or circuits of schooling) as they seek out opportunities for class based social reproduction and mobility. In essence, parents draft a list of acceptable schools based on a variety of factors; the list may include both public and private schools, but the list is usually geographically constrained in some way and the same set of schools are frequently selected together (Bowe et al. 1994). This is what is meant by circuits. Using the lens of circuits of schooling, Butler and Robson conduct further studies and find that middle and upper-middle class gentrifiers in London develop a number of different

strategies to gain access to quality schools and that these strategies are often informed by the socio-spatial context of their immediate and surrounding neighborhoods (2003). These mini-markets or circuits of schooling are similar to the mental map of neighborhoods identified in the pre-planning stage by Krysan and Crowder (2017). Likewise, research by Courtney Bell showed how despite similar approaches to the school search, the set of schools considered by parents differed significantly by class background (2009a).

These choice sets or circuits of schooling do not always perfectly map onto administrative or institutional logics or follow what rational choice theory might predict. Indeed, choice sets are also informed by external institutional pressures (Nast 2020), neighborhood context (Bell 2009b) and preferences for a school to fit certain material, social and psychological parameters (Reay and Ball 2006; Denessen et al. 2007; Ellison and Aloe 2019). This results in parents applying a range of strategies to find their "best fit" (Kafka 2022). Some parents employ their talents in placemaking to remake the school in their image or their skills in advocacy to fight for the school to right size itself to their child (Lareau 2000; Posey-Maddox 2014). Other parents seek "the best" option and plan only to adjust later if the school turns out to not be the best fit for their child (Holme 2002). Some parents choose to supplement an underwhelming experience with outside resources (Kimelberg 2014). Yet other parents take a wholly pragmatic approach and organize their children's schooling not around their aspirations for the child, but around the needs of the family (Rhodes and Deluca 2014). And finally, some parents make their decision based primarily on personal values (Cucchiara and Horvat 2014) or a generalized sense of trust (Strier and Katz 2016). Furthermore, in addition to the various trade-offs involved in a given decision (Erickson 2017), educational priorities can change over time as children grow or

as families change or after a negative school experience or when people relocate. The school decision is not a single decision, but a choice that gets made again and again.

1.2.4 Theories of spatial sorting

Recently, several social scientists have attempted to bring together theories of space and place, supply and demand, fields and habitus, structure and agency. In critical geography, Betancour and Smith have argued that neighborhoods are now shaped by a process they call flexible spaces of accumulation (2016). This is the notion that space is more valuable when its uses are not fixed and that this approach leads to greater urban polarity between gentrification and ghettoization (Betancour and Smith 2016). Also, from critical geography comes the work of Yoon and Lubienski who take a Bordieuan approach to the analysis of spatial positions and spatial dispositions in school choice. In their words,

> Urban neighborhoods, theorized as sites, reflect varying concentrations of symbolic, social, economic, and academic capital available within one's geographic parameters (Bourdieu 2006/1986). Further, these neighborhoods embody certain spatial histories and meanings that are associated with social and racial divisions and inequality (Bell 2009; Good 2016; Gulson & Symes 2007; Reay 2007; Soja 1996). As such, neighborhoods generate a sense of inclusion and belonging for some groups but not others (Kwan & Ding 2008; Matthews et al. 2005). (Yoon & Lubienski 2017, p. 5)

In the sociology of neighborhoods literature, Krysan and Crowder have developed an approach they call the social structural sorting perspective, which attempts to link social dynamics to social structure in the context of housing selection (2017). Krysan and Crowder point out the power of personal identity, race and class bias, perception and narrative in the determining of choice sets, well before people are even cognizant of their preferences (2017). Likewise, Yoon and Lubienski argue that dispositions, or the emotions, history, comfort, social ties and sense of belonging that people develop around space, affect people's choices within the opportunity structure created by their spatial position (2017). It might be argued that the

decreasing segregation between racial groups paired with the growing segregation by class reflects a shift in the spatial positioning of various social groups. And it would follow that this would likewise impact spatial dispositions. Therefore, the social dynamics of neighborhoods require closer examination in the segregation literature.

1.3 Literature Review

1.3.1 Understanding school segregation

Recent school segregation patterns seem clear: school segregation by race is trending down while school segregation by income is growing (Reardon and Owens 2014). The school segregation literature consistently finds that the height of racial integration was the early to mid-1980s (Wells 2009; Orfield and Lee 2007; Richards, Stroub and Kennedy 2020). Since that time, studies show that racial segregation was stable (Logan, Oakley and Stowell 2006) or increased slightly during the 1990s (Stroub and Richards 2013) but declined again slightly in the 2000s across schools and across districts (Owens, Reardon and Jencks 2016; Stroub and Richards 2013). However, Black students remain twice as segregated from Whites as Asians and 1.2 times as segregated as Hispanics (Stroub and Richards 2013). Despite significant movement in a positive direction, the segregation between Black students and White students remains an enduring feature of schools (Richards, Stroub and Kennedy 2020).

Another important aspect of segregation to consider is its distribution. Today school segregation is found primarily between districts rather than across individual schools (Reardon and Owens 2014; Reardon et al., 2000). In fact, by 2010 about 60% of all school segregation was due to race and class stratification across neighboring school districts (Stroub and Richards 2013). Fiel (2013) undertook a decomposition study to try and determine what amount of school racial segregation between 1993-2010 was the result of demographic changes and how much was

due to a redistribution across schools or districts. He found that due primarily to declining numbers of Whites and a growing Latino population, White and minority distribution became more even across schools during this time period, but that racial distribution grew more uneven across districts (Fiel 2013). This supports Reardon and colleagues' earlier finding that the majority of the increase in racial segregation over the 1990s was due to sorting across district borders (Reardon et al. 2000). Owens also finds that children are more segregated than adults and that accounting for school boundaries explains away a good portion of this difference suggesting that school boundaries are a segregating feature of the sociocultural landscape (2017)

What is perhaps most surprising about recent trends in school segregation by class is that while income segregation across districts has increased about 15% between 1990-2010, it has grown by an astounding 40% across schools in the 100 largest districts during that same period (Owens, Reardon and Jencks 2016). The national and global rise in income inequality appears to be driving a great deal of these processes (Owens, Reardon and Jencks 2016). However, local policy matters too. Richards (2020) found that when school districts secede, average levels of segregation across multiple dimensions increased, even as the bulk of segregation shifted from between schools to between districts. These districts tend to be smaller, whiter and richer than the districts from which they withdrew. Furthermore, it appears that race and class interact to create diverse patterns of segregation. For example, one study found that while Black students across the board had become less segregated from Whites, this relationship was most pronounced among affluent Black students. On the other hand, poor Whites have become increasingly segregated from all other racial groups (Richards and Stroub 2020). There have been some questions recently about the extent to which residential segregation still explains school segregation (Davis and Oakley 2013; Coughlan 2018; Bischoff and Tach 2018, 2020; Candipan

2020; Rich et al. 2021). The introduction of public-school choice has led some to argue that the neighborhood-school link is weakening (Renzulli & Evans 2005; Davis and Oakley 2013) while others point out the continuing draw of a good school district (Owens 2017; Lareau and Goyette 2014). Therefore, I turn next to a summary of the role of residential segregation and school choice policies in school segregation.

1.3.2 The role of residential segregation

According to a multitude of media reports and policy reports, school segregation in the U.S. is currently experiencing an uptick while residential segregation is decreasing.[1] Moreover, some academic and grey literature suggests the same: while school segregation has increased in recent decades (Orfield and Yun 1999; Reardon and Yun 2002; Reardon and Owens 2014; Chang 2018) residential segregation seems to be slowly declining or holding steady (Reardon and Yun 2002; Glaeser and Vigdor 2012; Firebaugh and Farrell 2016). Collectively, these findings suggest that perhaps the connection between neighborhoods and schools is weakening.

However, a closer look at the literature on residential segregation shows a more complicated picture than what recent news headlines suggest. While Black isolation has declined in recent decades (Farley and Frey 1994; Cutler, Glaeser, and Vigdor 1999), this shift is mostly due to increasing numbers of Latinos and Asians moving into historically Black neighborhoods (Iceland 2004; Logan 2013; Krysan and Crowder 2017). Black-White segregation, as measured by the dissimilarity index, has also decreased, but at a much slower rate

[1] A quick internet search will pull up plenty of examples, but here's a small selection. https://www.gse.harvard.edu/news/new-national-study-finds-increasing-school-segregation, https://www.cbsnews.com/news/school-segregation-on-the-rise-65-years-after-brown-v-board-of-education/, https://www.urban.org/urban-wire/residential-segregation-declining-how-can-we-continue-increase-inclusion, https://www.brookings.edu/blog/the-avenue/2018/12/17/black-white-segregation-edges-downward-since-2000-census-shows/

(Glaeser and Vigdor 2012; Logan 2013; Krysan and Crowder 2017). And given the extremely high levels of Black-White segregation in this country, this modest decline has not done much to increase overall Black-White exposure, another common measure of segregation[2] (Krysan and Crowder 2017).

While Black-White residential segregation remains high, it has been on the decline since the late 1960s and that trend continues. Latino-White and Asian-White segregation has been steady or slightly declining, mostly due to increased Latino and Asian population rather than neighborhood mobility (Iceland and Sharp 2013; Massey 2020). On the other hand, socio-economic residential segregation has increased since the 1980s, tracking closely with rising income inequality (Taylor and Fry 2012; Loh, Coes and Buthe 2020). After a decline during the 1980s and 90s concentrated poverty has been trending back up since 2000, and especially post 2008 Great-Recession (Massey and Rugh 2020; Kneebone and Holmes 2016; although see Swanstrom et al. 2007), but the real shift has been increasingly segregated affluent neighborhoods (Reardon and Bischoff 2011; Massey and Rugh 2020). Although, it appears this pattern is not as extreme as first thought and also contains a fair bit of heterogeneity (Reardon et al. 2018; Logan et al. 2018). For example, Mayer found most of the change in socioeconomic segregation within cities was due to overall growth in economic inequality rather than increasing economic segregation of census tracts (Mayer 2001). This pattern of income segregation has been found to be especially acute among families with children (Owens 2016), young adults and renters (Frost 2020).

Furthermore, patterns of segregation by race and class also seem to have to do with the region as well as the size, age and spatial layout of the city (Iceland, Sharp and Timberlake 2013;

[2] There are many ways to measure segregation, but regardless of the method used the broad trends remain the same. For a good introduction to segregation measurement see Massey and Denton 1988.

Glaeser and Shapiro 2001). Cities in the West and South, newer cities, faster growing cities, and sprawling cities are more racially diverse and less segregated but also more socioeconomically fragmented (ibid. Delmelle 2017; Florida and Adler 2017; Foote and Walter 2017; Lichter et al. 2023). Furthermore, Owens (2016) found that income segregation between families with children was higher in metropolitan areas that are highly fragmented, that is with a greater number of political jurisdictions such as school districts, incorporated communities and so forth.

In addition to the macro-processes of demographic change, growing inequality and the "stuck in place" phenomenon characterized by older, historically segregated cities, segregation is reinforced by local policies, movements and developments such as zoning regulations (Rothwell and Massey 2010), the physical design of the built environment (Schindler 2014), local growth politics (Purcell 2001), the micropolitics of secession and incorporation (Allums and Markley 2020), and the application of "color-blind" policies more broadly (Connor 2015). As a number of sociologists, educators, and public health researchers have pointed out, color-blind policies make it easier for individuals to ignore systemic harm (Bonilla-Silva 2006; Wells 2014; Cunningham and Scarlato 2018). In conclusion, we are seeing 1) an increase in economic inequality across the country that is unevenly spatially distributed 2) some shifts in demographics leading to increasing racial diversity in cities and neighborhoods and 3) mobility patterns (or immobility patterns) whereby metro areas are experiencing a variety of dis/investment configurations.

1.3.3 The role of school choice policy

Thus far, I have laid out the recent patterns in residential and school segregation by race and class as well as what this distribution looks like across regions, cities, districts, and neighborhoods. But how much of this segregation is related to an increase in school choice? In the last three decades school choice has become an increasingly popular school reform and

improvement strategy. Proponents of school choice argue that a market approach forces schools to be responsive to parent and student demands in a way that government-run schools are not (Chubb and Moe 1990). Furthermore, choice proponents argue that allowing parents more say in their children's education is a source of empowerment and an escape valve for talented and motivated youth stuck in low-achieving public schools (Viteritti 1999). Of course, the choice between public and private schools has always existed for those with the means to exercise it. But the notion of public choice is relatively new.

Despite its popularity with policy makers, there also exists a significant number of critics of school choice. One common critique is that choice does not function the same for all families and in fact has increased rather than decreased educational inequality (Fuller and Elmore 1996). To begin with, there are several logistical challenges that might keep families from participating in a system of choice equally. For instance, parents of different social classes do not consider the same schools in their searches (Bell 2005; Rhodes and DeLuca 2014). Whether this is due to lack of information, time, or financial resources to do the necessary research or different social networks, the results are that segregation by class is reinforced (Holme 2002; Bell 2009a). Working parents may also struggle to arrange for transportation to a school that could be some distance from home or make adequate aftercare arrangements (Rhodes and DeLuca 2014). This struggle is amplified when considering families may have multiple children in multiple schools.

A recent systematic review of the literature found that across a wide variety of system designs, localities and stage of development, school choice ultimately leads to increased segregation whether by race/ethnicity, socio-economic status, religion or other group identity (Wilson and Bridge 2019). For example, in Chile and England national reforms led to open enrollment policies where students can attend any school to which they are admitted, and the

funding follows the student. This has resulted in greater levels of socio-economic segregation across schools in both countries (Wilson and Bridge 2019). Another study of charter schools from 2008 came to a similar conclusion: charter schools did not improve school diversity (as touted) along the lines of race and class, and in some cases made the problem worse (Mickelson et al. 2008).

In Vancouver Canada, market reforms have recently been introduced in a context of widening economic inequality. Yoon and colleagues (2018) find that students who opt-out of their local school tend to be higher income and the schools where these students relocate tend to have a wealthier student body than the schools they exited. This pattern of better-off students being more likely to leave for wealthier schools has left schools in lower-income areas under-enrolled and thus further deprived of human, economic and social capital (Yoon et al. 2018). Another study in Pennsylvania found that charter school enrollment increases racial segregation for White, Black and Latino students as well as increased economic segregation in urban areas, but not in the suburbs (Kotok et al. 2017).

Some researchers have argued that when choice policies are race-neutral they result in greater racial segregation whereas in schools or systems where race is considered as part of the application process or as part of the school assignment process, there is a greater chance of achieving diversity and equity as well as improved academic outcomes (Wells 2009; Roda and Wells 2013). Others have found that unless the system is operating under a desegregation plan, or offers a full district magnet program, choice policies are likely to lead to increased segregation, not only by race and class, but also by ability and achievement levels (Michelson et al. 2008; Bifulco, Cobb and Bell 2009).

School choice as conceived of in the public imagination, where families compete for limited spots at charter schools, is primarily limited to a handful of U.S. cities (affecting only about 6% of students in 2016 (Wang et al. 2019). For example, the majority of charter schools are in urban settings, with the top 10 cities in 2018-2019 for total charter school enrollment being: NYC, Los Angeles, Houston, Philadelphia, Chicago, Phoenix, New Orleans, San Antonio, Washington DC, and Dallas (Gerstenfeld and Xu 2020). Furthermore, the racial demographics of charter schools are not representative. Despite being only 14% of the student population nationally, in 2016 Black students made up 23% of charter enrollees. Similarly, Latino students are 24% of the national student body but are 30% of charter enrollees (Wang et al. 2019). In almost every case, students who left their local school for a charter school ended up in a more racially segregated school (Weiher and Tedin 2002; Frankenberg and Lee 2003; Renzulli 2006; Miron et al. 2010; Monarrez et al. 2022). In districts that were more heavily segregated across schools, the number of Black students enrolling in charter schools was significantly greater than in more integrated districts (Renzulli 2006). Overall, charter schools account for a 6% decrease in the chances of Black and Latino students being exposed to students of other racial-ethnic backgrounds (Monarrez et al. 2022).

1.4 Overview of the Project

1.4.1 Study purpose

According to the Social Structural Sorting Perspective, once large-scale structural processes are set-in motion, they become self-perpetuating such that uncoordinated individual level choices make no dent in the larger pattern. Rather, when operating within such a context many micro-level processes reify existing structures. Such patterns will continue without targeted or coordinated interruption (Krysan and Crowder 2017). In considering the macro-micro

cycle of school segregation, an analysis of the socio-spatial forces operating across dimensions, institutions and scales is critical to understanding how inequality and segregation feed into one another and are continually reproduced. This paper seeks to contribute to this analysis by testing a variety of social sorting mechanisms that may be operating at the neighborhood or school zone level resulting in unequal sorting across schools. Consider: 1) racial capitalism structures the contexts in which we live 2) place reputation is derived from superstructure, but also operates as part of the social environment which people interact with and respond to 3) social fit is an important motivation for many people, therefore, unrestricted choice will interact with the context established by racial capitalism and place reputation in such a way as to maintain the status quo. Using the Social Structural Sorting Perspective introduced by Krysan and Crowder (2017), I examine differences by race, class and place in how school decisions shape and are shaped by neighborhood level compositional and contextual factors, and how notions of fit in a fractured social space contribute to the maintenance of sorting across schools by race and class.

1.4.2 Study outline

Given that the motivating question behind this research project is quite large, it makes sense to approach it from multiple angles. Therefore, this project, in the spirit of Small (2011) and Deterding and Waters (2021), is a mixed methods study in which different types of data are collected as appropriate to a range of research questions, but which all drive upwards towards the same general aim: understanding the patterns of school enrollment across neighborhood type. I therefore have chosen to tackle the question through three complimentary studies.

In my first empirical chapter, Chapter 2, I develop an overall picture of the relationship between neighborhoods and school selection. I do this by identifying Census tracts that are changing and determining whether changing neighborhoods impact the chances of enrolling in

the local public school. I use a nationally representative geocoded data set to establish whether and what type of neighborhood change may influence likelihood of enrollment. I estimate several logistic regressions predicting enrollment with different measures of neighborhood change from 2008-2018, including different change trajectories by race and class. In other words, do the particular ways in which neighborhoods change matter and what aspect of neighborhood change is most relevant? Given the prior literature and my theoretical perspective, I hypothesized that parents in neighborhoods undergoing change will be more sensitive to the decision of schools and therefore more likely to opt out of the local public school. Chapter 2 results indicate that it is not just a matter of neighborhood change that matters for school choice, but more specifically that the long-term residence of individuals as well as racial compositional change are significant while socioeconomic compositional change was not. On the other hand, family level socioeconomic and educational status were highly predictive of exiting the local school.

In my next two chapters I turn to how local context can shape school enrollment patterns. Historically, much work on segregation, mobility and neighborhood change has been focused on the industrial cities of the Northeast and Midwest. However, our national demographic distribution has been shifting in recent decades, therefore Chapters 3 and 4 take a closer look at the city of Atlanta, Georgia. Not only were the South and the West the fastest growing regions between 2010-2020, but the South now has by far the largest majority of the population at 38% (Census 2020). Additionally, the city of Atlanta itself is gentrifying very quickly (Brummet and Reed 2019; Maciag 2015). Furthermore, although Atlanta has a history of being an important center of Black life and culture, and of interracial harmony, the city center became whiter at a faster rate than any other city between 2000 and 2006, even as the metro-area has grown increasingly diverse (Gurwitt 2010).

Chapter 3 asks whether and to what extent the racial makeup of the neighborhood matches the school enrollment demographics across the 9 school catchment areas of Atlanta Public Schools. Based on prior literature, I hypothesized that the neighborhood-school enrollment gap will be larger in more diverse neighborhoods. In fact, the neighborhood-school racial enrollment gap in Atlanta is largest in the Whiter neighborhoods. This is true whether those neighborhoods are predominately White or White residents simply represent a significant minority. On the other hand, neighborhoods that are predominately Black have small enrollment gaps. So yes, the most diverse neighborhoods do have large gaps, but so do predominately White neighborhoods. This indicates a particular relationship with public schools for White families in Atlanta. This could be partially driven by the overall racial makeup of the city as a majority Black city. For example, prior research has indicated that higher concentrations of people of color and specifically Black individuals, is correlated with higher rates of segregation (Massey 2020) and of White students exiting the school (Billingham and Hunt 2016). However, these findings likely also signal something about class as those most likely to exercise school choice have higher incomes and levels of education (Ball et al. 1995; Teske and Schneider 2001; Saporito and Sohoni 2007; Sikkink and Emerson 2008).

Finally, in Chapter 4 I use the results of my Atlanta neighborhood/school gap analysis to identify three school clusters that represent a range of neighborhood types. I then recruited and interviewed 6-7 families from each of these three clusters for a total of 19 interviews. The interviews focus on how parents' social networks and notions of place and community have impacted their neighborhood and school decisions, and by extension may contribute to continuing segregation. Based on the social structural sorting perspective, existing segregation patterns inform our social networks, spatial knowledge and daily activities, which in turn color

our attitudes and beliefs about places such as neighborhoods and schools (Krysan and Crowder 2017). I anticipated finding different circuits of schooling or school choice sets across the three neighborhoods and that these choice sets were informed by the interviewee's social networks. Instead, I found that parents tended to approach the school decision-making process in a variety of ways and that their approach was informed by their race and class identity.

Chapter 5 provides a summary of the dissertation findings, discusses how the various analyses relate to each other and the broader literature on schools, neighborhoods and segregation, and finally offers up some policy implications and directions for future research. Although previous work has examined the neighborhood-school connection, this dissertation attempts to place this relationship within a larger conversation about how place and choice operate as expressions of power, belonging, and exclusion under conditions of structural inequality.

2 SCHOOL ENROLLMENT IN THE CONTEXT OF CHANGING NEIGHBORHOODS

2.1 Introduction

This chapter lays out the current landscape of school enrollment within the U.S. as a condition of neighborhood change. Existing literature on neighborhoods and schools has overwhelmingly focused on structural or institutional factors such as the role of neighborhood segregation, zoning and jurisdictional boundaries, school choice policies and availability of alternatives. One question that continues to be of both theoretical and empirical interest, is, controlling for these structural and institutional contributions what factors operating at the meso or micro level contribute to school segregation? Early research in this field suggested that White parents, wealthier parents, and more educated parents were more likely to exercise school choice (Teske and Schneider 2001; Sikkink and Emerson 2008). We now know that disadvantaged Black students also engage in school choice at higher rates than their peers (Bifulco and Ladd 2006). However, advantaged White students typically enact this choice through moving to a "better" school district or going private while disadvantaged Black students enact this choice by enrolling in public schools of choice (de Brey et al. 2019).

However, given the emergence of evidence from the field of neighborhood effects it also seems the context in which such a choice is made might matter too. Lauen outlined there are several approaches to considering this question (2007). One tactic is to consider compositional effects. Studies in this vein have shown that both race and socioeconomic composition matter for school selection (Saporito 2003; Krysan et al. 2009; Hedman et al. 2011, Jargowsky 2014) but that school composition matters differently by racial background (Saporito and Lareau 1999). When choosing a school, White parents avoid schools with a high percentage of Black students

while Black parents avoid schools with high rates of poverty (Saporito and Lareau 1999). The other major approach is to consider contextual effects, such as the neighborhood or school environment. Studies on how an environment affects thinking about schools have focused on the role of social networks (Bader et al. 2019; Burdick-Will 2018), peer effects (Zwier et al. 2023), stigma (McWilliams 2017), social position (Goyette 2008), spatial position (Jacobs 2013; Bader et al. 2019) and sense of belonging (Yoon and Lubienski 2017). Additionally, studies have established that in neighborhoods with greater demographic heterogeneity (Bischoff and Tach 2020), a greater number of new residents (Candipan 2020) and with more nearby school options (Bischoff and Tach 2018; Candipan 2019) fewer residents enroll in the local school. This relationship is particularly strong in neighborhoods that are gentrifying or undergoing socioeconomic ascent (Pearman and Swain 2017; Bischoff and Tach 2018; Candipan 2019).

2.2 Neighborhood Change and School Enrollment, What Matters Most?

Neighborhoods can be considered as a bundle of features, but they also have emergent properties. Prior neighborhood studies have tended towards conceptualizing neighborhoods either as a set of decomposable features or as having emergent properties, but rarely do studies attempt to operationalize both aspects of neighborhoods. Investigating neighborhoods undergoing change can make it easier to tease apart various features and dynamics of the neighborhood. Even when we understand parents (and/or children and/or schools) to be paying attention to the neighborhood in their development of neighborhood heuristics and ultimately their choice-sets, it is not clear what about the neighborhood is most salient and whether what is salient might vary across time, place and social background.

Since neighborhood change is likely to affect both who lives in the area as well as the reputation of the neighborhood, it is plausible that neighborhood change would influence local

school enrollment (Bischoff and Tach 2020). Furthermore, one's social connections are influenced by neighborhood change and these connections can inform school decisions, especially connections with other parents (Bader et al. 2019). This may be even more likely in an era of school choice when opting out of your local school is easier than ever. Studies have even shown that compositional changes in neighborhoods and compositional changes in schools might both result from school choice, even when the trajectory of change is in opposite directions (Rich et al. 2021). But what informs this process; what is it in particular about changing neighborhoods that is relevant for school choice? Below I summarize some of the findings on schools and various dimensions of neighborhoods.

2.2.1.1 Racial Composition and Change

Racial composition has historically been found to influence neighborhood preferences of Whites but is less important to other racial and ethnic groups (Krysan et al. 2009; Lewis et al. 2011). These preferences contribute, at least partially, to residential segregation although the relationship is more complex than older theories such as neighborhood tipping would suggest (Bruch and Mare 2006; Hwang and McDaniel 2022). At the same time, patterns of residential composition and segregation are changing, although whether this is primarily the result of structural changes or if preferences are also changing is unclear (it is difficult to tease out preferences from behaviors, see Bruch and Mare 2006; Billingham and Hunt 2016). Whatever the causes, neighborhoods are becoming more racially diverse and since the racial composition of neighborhoods has historically been closely linked to the racial composition of schools (Reardon and Yun 2003; Clotfelter 2004; Frankenberg 2013), it is expected that the racial composition of schools would also change. This has not happened; therefore, some studies have looked at the role of racial composition within the school, separately from the neighborhood.

These studies find that racial composition of the school is very important for White parents (Saporito and Lareau 1999; Billingham and Hunt 2016; Hailey 2022) and that in some cases changes in the composition of the school appear to influence composition of the neighborhood, rather than the other way around (Weinstein 2016). There currently exists little research on the role of racial change in school choices.

2.2.1.2 Socioeconomic Composition and Change

Neighborhood segregation by socioeconomic status is growing, although this appears to be driven more by growth in inequality than shifts in neighborhood mobility patterns (Delmelle 2016). Furthermore, the segregation of schools by socioeconomic status has also increased (Owens et al. 2014; Owens 2016) and while racial segregation is now greater across districts, the level of income segregation grew the most within districts (Owens et al. 2014). Additionally, race and class interact such that the level of school poverty relative to the neighborhood is greater in minority neighborhoods (Sohoni and Saporito 2009). And finally, Cuddy, Krysan and Lewis conducted interviews with working- and middle-class families and found that families had diverse strategies for considering schools and housing and these strategies were highly correlated with class (2020).

More recently, scholars have looked at change in socioeconomic status rather than static compositional measures. Bischoff and Tach conducted a series of studies looking at neighborhood-level demographic change and local school enrollment demographics (2018; 2020). They found that neighborhoods that were undergoing economic ascent were most likely to see a growing school racial enrollment gap (2018) indicating that parents in those neighborhoods were more likely to opt out of their local school. Further study found that this relationship was also affected by the starting level of social difference (defined as race and class differences) in

the neighborhood such that the greater the social distance the larger the enrollment gap (Bischoff and Tach 2020). Candipan also found that neighborhoods undergoing socioeconomic ascent saw a larger change in the White enrollment gap than other neighborhood types (2019).

2.2.1.3 Stability

Neighborhood change is often operationalized as a change in the composition of race, class or some combination of the two. It now seems clear that neighborhoods on average tend towards stability (Wei and Knox 2014) and that at least when compositional change happens it is typically slower and more stable than generally conceived of in the public imagination (Ellis et al. 2018) and neighborhood socioeconomic status in particular seems exceptionally durable (Sampson 2009; Delmelle 2016). Additionally, place attachment and social cohesion appear predictive of neighborhood stability (Temkin and Rohe 1998). And social networks (Bader et al. 2019; Roberts and Lakes 2016) and institutional reputation (Knudson 2021) at the neighborhood level have been found to matter for school selection strategies. However, a number of researchers have started to question how *change* in social context might matter. One particular type of neighborhood where change is readily apparent is the gentrifying neighborhood.

2.2.1.4 The particular case of gentrification

Why do some public schools in gentrifying neighborhoods get invaded by incoming middle-class parents (Cucchiara 2013; Posey-Maddox 2014), while others are shunned in favor of starting a new charter school (Hankins 2007)? Or has the choice of neighborhood and school become increasingly disconnected (Candipan 2019; Pearman and Swain 2017)? Gentrification makes for an interesting study of neighborhood change because it typically includes change along the three previously mentioned dimensions: racial change, socioeconomic change, and the in and out-mobility of groups.

There is some evidence that gentrifiers are less likely to enroll in the local neighborhood school than parents in other neighborhoods, especially when there are nearby alternatives (Candipan 2020). Additionally, there could be qualitative differences between early gentrifiers and those who move in after the neighborhood has begun transitioning (Brown-Saracino 2009), with some evidence suggesting that longer residence in the neighborhood is associated with a greater chance of enrolling in the assigned school (Candipan 2020). On the other hand, it may be that gentrifiers have specifically sought out a diverse urban neighborhood and will opt into the local school (Mordechay and Ascue 2020). Some gentrifiers may even see this engagement with the local school as a sort of mission (Cucchiara 2013; Posey-Maddox 2014).

One recent study found that having more local school choice options increases the likelihood of gentrification (Pearman and Swain 2017). The authors posit that for middle and upper-income families in urban areas, where there are lots of school choice options, parents choose schools and neighborhoods in entirely separate processes (2017). Mordechay and Ayscue (2020) found that the most recently gentrified neighborhoods in DC did have less segregated neighborhood schools, but the demographics of the local charter schools were not affected and remained highly segregated (Mordechay and Ayscue 2020). Meanwhile, Candipan's nationally representative study utilizing NCES's Common Core of data found that parents are more likely to opt out of the local school in gentrifying neighborhoods as compared to non-gentrifying neighborhoods (2019).

2.3 Purpose of the Study

This project seeks to address the following question: does neighborhood-level change affect the likelihood that parents enroll their child in the local school? Building upon prior work by Candipan (2019), this chapter uses newly available nationally representative survey data that

specifically asks about type of school the child attends, geocoded to neighborhoods. Her paper estimates the change in the White enrollment gap over time. However, my data allow me to not just estimate enrollment rates based on school-wide or neighborhood-level enrollment data, but to predict individual chances of enrollment. Furthermore, the data I use are more recent allowing me to see whether trends from 2008-2019 are similar to the trends identified by Candipan from 2000-2010. And finally, I model my predictor variable of neighborhood change in a variety of ways to better understand which aspects of neighborhood change are most relevant to school enrollment as well as to address the call for more nuanced approaches to capturing neighborhood effects (Small and Feldman 2012; Sharkey and Faber 2014; Levy 2021). Using nationally representative data from the Parent and Family Involvement supplement to the National Household Education Survey linked to Census data, I test whether a change from 2008 to 2018 in neighborhood sociodemographic makeup affects whether a given family chooses to enroll in their zoned school in 2019. Based on theories of social sorting, it could be that changes in neighborhood composition will impact the status of the neighborhood, leading to a shift in the perceptions and choices of individuals. On the other hand, neighborhoods trend towards stability, which could plausibly influence school enrollment towards stability as well. Therefore, I test whether stability, changes in neighborhood race/class composition, or a particular trajectory of change better explains local school enrollment. Given prior work on school enrollment in gentrifying neighborhoods (Pearman and Swain 2017; Bischoff and Tach 2018, 2020; Candipan 2019, 2020) I predict that the greater the change in their neighborhood over the decade prior, the less likely parents will be to choose their local public school.

2.4 Data and Methods

2.4.1 Data Sources

This study utilizes Census data from the Neighborhood Change Database (Geolytics) and responses from the NHES survey Parent and Family Involvement in Education (PFI) supplement. The National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) began the National Household Education Survey (NHES) program in 1991 to collect data directly from families that would supplement the data already collected from students and school personnel. This data is collected every three years from a nationally representative sample of parents of children (ages 3-20) enrolled in K-12 schools or homeschooling. The most recent data, being used in this analysis, are from 2019.

The NHES is an address-based sample covering the 50 states and the District of Columbia and is conducted by the United States Census Bureau. PFI questionnaires are completed by a parent or guardian who knew about the sampled child. The total number of completed PFI questionnaires in 2019 was 16,446, with a response rate of 83.4% (NCES 2019). Starting in 2016, geocoded NHES data files, including information on school choice options, are available to approved researchers through the NCES restricted-use data license system. These files include geographic identifiers down to the census block group for the household's residential neighborhood which allowed me to link the survey responses to the respondent's census tract.

The tract data used for this chapter comes from the Neighborhood Change Database (NCDB). The NCDB contains data from each decennial Census up to 2000 and the 2006-2010 ACS data. This data has been weighted and reshaped so that census tract boundaries are

standardized to the year 2010. This makes comparisons across time and space easier for the purposes of social research (Geolytics).

2.4.2 Variables

2.4.2.1 Dependent variable

The outcome variable is a dummy measure of whether or not the child was enrolled in their zoned public school in 2019. This variable is constructed from a series of questions on the PFI that ascertains whether the child attends a private or public school and whether the public school they attend is their assigned district school.

2.4.2.2 Individual and family level variables

Predictor variables include a number of theoretically significant family and individual level characteristics[3] collected during the 2019 survey wave including 1) whether the primary parent is married, 2) whether the primary parent is employed, 3) whether the primary parent owns their home, 4) a categorical measure of the primary parent's highest level of education, 5) a categorical measure of the total household income, 6) a categorical measure of the child's race/ethnicity, and 7) the child's sex. Additional controls include whether the school attended is the family's top choice and whether the family moved to attend this school.

2.4.2.3 Neighborhood variables

Since my outcome measure is from 2019, I use the 10-year period from 2008 to 2018 to calculate my neighborhood change variables. The NCDB[4] provides tract data harmonized to 2010 boundaries for decennial census years (1990, 2000, 2010). Following prior research (Sharkey 2012; Crowder and South 2008), I use linear interpolation to estimate data for the

[3] Removed due to insignificance: parent's immigration status and child's number of siblings
[4] https://geolytics.com/products/normalized-data/neighborhood-change-database

intercensal years, 2008 and 2018. Any financial values are adjusted to 2019 dollars. The neighborhood change measures are calculated at the tract level and include 1) the percent change in adjusted median housing value, 2) the percent change in adjusted average household income, 3) the percent change in the unemployment rate, 4) the percent change in number of adults with a college education, 5) the percent change in the proportion of White residents, 6) the percent change in the proportion of Black residents, 7) the percent change in the proportion of Hispanic residents, and 8) the percent change in new residents. These variables are selected based on their relevance to neighborhood effects theory and in particular I drew on concepts of racial change, socioeconomic change, and gentrification[5] in identifying which neighborhood measures to include.

Because race is highly salient for school choice but there exists little work on racial change and schools, I created four neighborhood racial change variables. And in order to compare and contrast with a similar approach using socioeconomic variables (Bischoff and Tach 2018; Candipan 2019), I also created a three-part typology of socioeconomic change. The racial change typologies are 1) racial makeup is stable, defined as the majority racial group representing >50% remained the same from 2008 to 2018, 2) racial makeup is transforming, defined as the neighborhood shifted from majority one group to majority another group from 2008 to 2018, 3) racial makeup is homogenizing, defined as the neighborhood went from a plurality of demographics to a majority of one group from 2008 to 2018 (where plurality is defined as at least 3 racial/ethnic groups represented and none had >50% representation), and 4) racial makeup is diversifying, defined as the neighborhood shifted from a majority of one group

[5]I created several indices to better capture particular bundles of features that may be relevant, such as for gentrification. These indices were not significant and therefore are not included but will be made available upon request.

to a plurality between 2008 and 2018. The socioeconomic change typologies are based on first, averaging neighborhood change in household income and neighborhood change in adults with a college education into an SES index, and then, dividing this index into quartiles. The resulting typologies are: 1) socioeconomic makeup is stable, defined as the neighborhood remained in the same socioeconomic quartile in 2018 as in 2008 2) socioeconomic makeup is ascending, defined as the neighborhood moved up at least one quartile in socioeconomic status between 2008 and 2018 and 3) socioeconomic makeup is descending, defined as the neighborhood moved down at least one quartile in socioeconomic status between 2008 and 2018.

2.4.2.4 Covariates

Modeling features of neighborhoods and schools run the risk of omitted variable bias. The addition of a fixed effect can help account for omitted variables (Woolridge 2000). After an attempt at using CBSA fixed effects was too colinear, I estimated state fixed effects to control for any unobserved differences by location that may affect the results such as the state's school choice policy. Furthermore, I control for whether the respondent resided in an MSA as prior research has shown that school choice is predominately an urban phenomenon (Blagg and Chingos 2017). I also include the percent change in tract level population as both neighborhood and school characteristics may be dependent on population growth or decline (for example, see Owens 2012). Finally, I included 2008 housing value and household income as sensitivity checks to control for the shocks the housing market and broader U.S. economy was experiencing at that time. Results were substantively the same to those I present here.

2.4.3 Analytic Strategy

Using STATA, I estimated a series of logistic regressions predicting a binary measure of school enrollment (attends zoned school or no), based on measures of neighborhood change. I

began by estimating enrollment with well-established individual and household predictors with the goal of developing a baseline model. I then estimated several models to see whether neighborhood change impacts enrollment above and beyond these established predictors. I began with a bd series of regressions using linear measures of change from 2008-2018 including change over time in census tract racial makeup, change over time in census tract socioeconomic makeup, and change over time in census tract average housing value. I then ran a separate series of regressions using my neighborhood change typologies to predict school enrollment. The purpose of this approach is to attempt to identify which aspects of neighborhood change are most relevant for school enrollment.

2.5 Results

Table 1 describes the sample under investigation. The sample has been weighted with population weights provided by survey administrators. The weighted sample is 49% White, 25% Hispanic, 13.5% Black, 6% Asian or Pacific Islander and 6% Other Race, which includes Native Americans, Multi-racial individuals and all other racial categories. The sample is 48% female and 52% male. 64% of respondents own their home, 77% of respondents report the primary parent is employed, 48% of the sample reports the primary parent having a high school degree or less while 52% report the primary parent has some amount of higher education or training. 71% of the sample reports the primary parent as married. 17% of the sample has a total household income of less than $30,000/year. While 45% report an annual household income between $30,000 and $100,000 per year and 38% report an annual household income greater than $100,000 per year. Finally, 75% of the sample report attending their assigned public school and 17.5% state they moved specifically to attend this school. 79% of the sample report that the school they attend is their first choice.

Table 1 Sample Statistics (N=16,446)

	Mean / %	SD
Individual Measures (2019 PFI)		
Attends Assigned School (1=yes)	74.65%	
Is this your first choice school? (1=yes)	78.7%	
Moved to attend this school? (1=yes)	17.5%	
Child's Grade	5.8	3.7
Child's Sex (1=male)	51.58%	
Child race/ethnicity (1=White)	48.8%	
Black	13.6%	
Hispanic	25.2%	
API	5.99%	
Other race or multiple races	6.33%	
Family Measures (2019 PFI)		
Parent married (1=yes)	70.79%	
Parent education (1=no HS)	12.28%	
High School Diploma/GED	35.44%	
Assoc., Vo-tech cert./some college	12.09%	
Bachelor's degree	25.47%	
Graduate Education	14.72%	
Parent employed (1=yes)	77.1%	
Parent owns home (1=yes)	63.8%	
Total HH Income (1≤ 30k)	17.18%	
30k-60k	22.02%	
60k-100k	23.10%	
100k-250k	30.88%	
≥ 250k	6.81%	
Neighborhood Measures (2008-2018 NCDB)		
Percent Δ Median Housing Value	19.79	19.57
Percent Δ Avg Household Income	1.14	12.77
Percent Δ Unemployment Rate	30.65	48.18
Percent Δ Adults with College Education	11.34	28.54
Percent Δ share Non-Hispanic White	-16.71	28.16
Percent Δ share Non-Hispanic Black	26.09	49.82
Percent Δ share Hispanic	39.88	38.67
Percent Δ Tract Population	15.43	31.89
Percent New Residents	30.76	.1932
Metro (1=yes)	95.31%	
Racial composition (1=stable)	85.67%	
Transforming	1.56%	
Homogenizing	5.12%	
Diversifying	7.65%	
Socioeconomic composition (1=stable)	80.6%	
Ascending	9.81%	
Descending	9.58%	

Sampling weights provided by the PFI have been applied.
All financial variables have been adjusted to 2019 $

Regarding the neighborhood measures, overall, the neighborhoods in this sample saw an increase in population from 2008-2018. There was an increase in average household income and median housing value but also an increase in the unemployment rate. The sampled neighborhoods on average experienced growth across this time period in every racial/ethnic group except for non-Hispanic White, which decreased by roughly 17%. In particular, the proportion non-Hispanic Black grew by 26% and the proportion Hispanic grew by 40%. 85% of the neighborhoods maintained the same racial makeup across the decade and 80% maintained the same socioeconomic makeup. This supports prior work showing that stability of neighborhoods is the norm (Sampson 2009; Delmelle 2016; Ellis et al. 2018).

Table 2 Logistic Regressions Predicting Public School Enrollment with Individual and Neighborhood Measures (N=16,446)

	Model 1: Individual Measures			Model 2: Individual and Neighborhood Measures			Model 3: Neighborhood SES Change typology			Model 4: Neighborhood Racial Change typology		
	or		*(se)*	*or*		*(se)*	*or*		*(se)*	*or*		*(se)*
Individual Measures												
Move for school? (1=yes)	5.00	***	.502	4.91	***	.494	4.92	***	.495	4.91	***	.494
Child's Grade	1.03	***	.008	1.03	***	.008	1.03	***	.008	1.03	***	.008
Child's Sex (1=male)	.935		.052	.939		.052	.939		.052	.939		.052
Child race/ethn (1=White)												
Black	.950		.103	1.05		.113	1.04		.112	1.05		.113
Hispanic	1.11		.089	1.19	*	.099	1.19	*	.098	1.19	*	.098
API	1.26		.179	1.31		.180	1.30		.180	1.33	*	.181
Other or multiple races	1.22		.124	1.24	*	.125	1.23	*	.125	1.25	*	.126
Family Measures												
Parent married (1=yes)	.825	**	.059	.820	**	.059	.821	**	.059	.822	**	.059
Parent education (1=no HS)												
HS Diploma/GED	.957		.132	.931		.127	.932		.127	.946		.129
Assoc./Cert./some college	.898		.133	.869		.127	.871		.127	.879		.129
Bachelor's degree	.671	*	.098	.642	**	.092	.646	**	.093	.652	**	.094
Graduate Education	.601	**	.093	.578	***	.087	.581	***	.088	.587	***	.089
Parent employed (1=yes)	1.14		.084	1.15		.085	1.15		.085	1.15		.085
Parent owns home (1=yes)	1.03		.076	1.00		.073	1.01		.074	.994		.074
Total HH Income (1≤ 30k)												
30k-60k	.961		.105	.946		.103	.948		.104	.943		.103
60k-100k	.899		.107	.867		.102	.871		.103	.869		.102
100k-250k	.773	*	.094	.729	*	.089	.737	*	.091	.736	*	.090
≥ 250k	.495	***	.069	.465	***	.066	.473	***	.067	.465	***	.066
Locational Controls												
Metro (1=yes)				.807		.132	.801		.130	.806		.132

Δ Tract Population '08-'18				1.00	***	.001	1.00	***	.001	1.00	***	.001
Neighborhood Measures												
% Δ Median House Value				.995	**	.002	.996	*	.002	.995	**	.002
% Δ Avg Household Inc				1.00		.003				1.00		.003
% Δ Unemployment Rate				1.00	**	.000	1.00	**	.001	1.00	**	.0006
% Δ Adults w/ College Edu				1.00		.001				1.00		.001
% Δ Non-Hispanic White				1.00		.001	1.00		.001			
% Δ Non-Hispanic Black				1.00		.000	1.00		.001			
% Δ Hispanic				.999		.001	.999		.001			
Stability (% new residents)				.605	**	.095	.599	**	.094	.623	**	.098
Neighborhood typologies												
Racial comp (1=stable)												
Transforming										.646	*	.125
Homogenizing										.966		.128
Diversifying										.793	*	.085
SES comp (1=stable)												
Ascending							1.07		.100			
Descending							1.12		.105			
Constant	3.86	1.08	***	5.58	1.84	***	5.62	1.84	***	5.40	1.77	**
Model fit statistics (AIC or BIC)				5.55e+07			5.55e+07			5.54e+07		

All four models include state fixed effects and sampling weights.

Model 1 tests the correlation between several theoretically relevant individual and household variables and the outcome of interest, attending the assigned public school. Results are largely consistent with prior research. For instance, higher levels of parental education are associated with a lower chance of attending the assigned public school (Sikkink and Emerson 2008). This is also true with regards to household income, as households move into successive income categories, they are less likely to attend the local school (Candipan 2019). The other significant variables in this model are whether the parent is married; if so, families are slightly more likely to enroll in their local school. By far the largest predictor was a family moving to specifically attend this school, in which case they were nearly 5 times more likely to be enrolled in that school.

I next add in the neighborhood measures to see if neighborhood change affects the chances of enrolling above and beyond individual and family factors (see Model 2). All of the individual and household measures maintain their significance. However, some of the newly added variables do appear to contribute to the model. Results indicate that as a neighborhood's

unemployment rate went up, families were more likely to enroll in their local school. Alternatively, as neighborhood average household income increases, likelihood of enrollment goes down. Also, the child's race/ethnicity as Hispanic or Other becomes significant in the positive direction. Finally, high rates of new residents lead to a significant decline in odds of enrolling. Given prior research (Candipan 2019), it makes sense that in a neighborhood with a large influx of new residents, people may be more hesitant to give the local school a shot whereas the flip side of this equation suggests that perhaps in a more stable neighborhood there may be more comfort and trust with the local school (Pattillo 2013). However, it could also be a spurious relationship capturing something about the growing number of school choice options in recent years or about the types of people who are moving into these rapidly changing neighborhoods.

Models 3 and 4 test the predictive power of my neighborhood change typologies. These typologies were developed for two reasons. First, given the complexity of neighborhood change, a simultaneous analysis may be more appropriate than a linear approach. And second, prior work on neighborhood effects suggests there are pathways or trajectories of bundled features, unsuited for linear analysis. Surprisingly the SES typology was not significant. Given prior work by Bischoff and Tach (2020) and Candipan (2020), I expected to find a change in the neighborhood's SES status to matter for neighborhood school enrollment. Given that in both of these studies the sample size is smaller, and Bischoff and Tach's SES variable is similarly constructed to mine, the only explanation I can offer is that my study covered a different time period. My study covered the years 2008-2018, during which the country was undergoing a recovery from the great recession and average household socioeconomic status improved, compared to the 2000-2010 period included in the previous studies (U.S. Census Bureau).

On the other hand, my measures of neighborhood racial change were significant. For example, when the racial makeup of the neighborhood remained stable from 2008-2018, families were more likely to enroll in the local public school compared to if the neighborhood was transforming or diversifying. When the neighborhood racial makeup diversified from any racial majority to a plurality of racial/ethnic groups, families were 20% less likely to enroll in the zoned school compared to families in stable neighborhoods. And, when the neighborhood was transforming, moving from one majority to a different racial majority, chances of enrolling in the local school dropped to 65% compared to stable neighborhoods. This comports with Bischoff and Tach's findings that neighborhoods with greater social distance between groups by race and class tend to have lower rates of White enrollment and that this relationship is stronger in majority Black neighborhoods as compared to moderately diverse neighborhoods (2018). Since at least Freeman's 2009 work on gentrification, it has appeared that some urban neighborhoods are more stably diverse and when they gentrify, they gentrify slowly, while others change much more quickly (see Nyden et al. 1997; Hipp and Kim 2021). It is possible that the difference between diversifying and transforming neighborhoods I have captured is about rate of change, which may also relate to the particular racial mix and the urban racial context, and that this may be relevant to how people experience neighborhood change.

2.6 How Neighborhood Change Matters

Building on prior work examining neighborhood change and schools, this study examines the role of change across the socio-spatial dimensions of neighborhoods by asking what types of neighborhood change matter most when choosing a school and for whom. This chapter utilized newly available national survey data from a nested sampling of families within schools within localities and linked to tract level Census data. This allowed me to estimate the effect of census

tract or neighborhood level changes over a 10-year period from 2008 to 2018 on the likelihood of enrolling in the zoned public school in 2019. Although linear measures of change in the tract's median housing value and the tract's unemployment rate predicted the chances of enrolling in the local school, the neighborhood change trajectories were much stronger predictors of school choice. For instance, when the neighborhood's racial composition was stable between 2008 and 2018, families were 35% more likely to choose the locally zoned school in 2019 compared to families in transforming neighborhoods (where the neighborhood moved from one majority to a different racial majority). And, families in stable neighborhoods were 21% more likely to choose the locally zoned school compared to families in diversifying neighborhoods (where the neighborhood diversified from a racial majority (of any racial group) to a plurality where no racial group represented greater than 50% of the tract).

This seems to indicate that it is not just a matter of neighborhood change versus stability that matters for school choice, but the particular way the neighborhood is changing. While few studies have examined neighborhood change and school enrollment, those that have tend to find that socioeconomically ascending neighborhoods have greater enrollment gaps (Candipan 2019; Bischoff and Tach 2020). Furthermore, a related study uncovered the relationship between neighborhood tenure and school enrollment similar to the findings here (Candipan 2020). What this study contributes is an extension of this work to address the role of increasing racial diversity in American cities.

It appears that when a recognizable shift in the demographics of the neighborhood occurs, families do make different choices about schools. However, there also appear to be a few other significant variables at play. For instance, families who moved specifically to attend that school were likely to enroll regardless of neighborhood change. And neighborhoods with fewer new

residents (moving in in the last five years) had more families attending the local school, again controlling for neighborhood change. This suggests that there are multiple pathways to enrolling in the local school: 1) housing choice as school choice 2) familiarity through length of residence may improve trust in local institutions 3) newcomers who are perhaps less knowledgeable about the local school may be more sensitive to social dynamics such as the opinions of casual acquaintances who share a similar social position (Bader et al. 2019), the school's racial makeup (Ispa-Landa and Conwell 2015) or the school reputation (Roda and Wells 2013). Finally, racial identity is an important lens through which notions of institutional trust, social networks, compositional effects and reputations are likely filtered. Therefore, I aim to further examine the role of racial differences in the social dynamics of neighborhoods in the process of school choice.

2.7 Limitations and Future Research

Future research can further explore and refine these initial findings. For instance, a principal component analysis or k-cluster approach to defining the neighborhood categories would confirm the analytic usefulness of my neighborhood change typology (Wei and Knox 2014; Delmelle 2017; Candipan 2019). Additional controls at the MSA level may also be appropriate such as metro-level measures of racial and socioeconomic segregation or whether the city is a "global" city (Sassen 2001). Additionally, the impact of neighborhood on school choice may also vary by race, age, length of residence in the neighborhood and other individual level variables. For instance, a young single professional who moves into a neighborhood may not care about the schools, but how she feels about the local schools may develop as a result of the neighborhood around her. In the same way a family newly arrived to this country may not know

about the local school options but over time their impressions of the schools may change through experience or the development of social networks. Future research could test these interactions.

This chapter also raises new questions that are better suited to a smaller spatial scale. For example, when do gentrifying parents decide that the local school is to be avoided and when they decide it is an acceptable option? How do middle and upper-class non-White families make a decision about schools in a gentrifying neighborhood? How much do these families depend on what their neighbors or friends are doing to guide their choices? Does the specific history of the neighborhood matter? To prepare to address these questions, I analyze the racial makeup of Atlanta Public Schools as compared to their attendance zone in my next chapter. My goal is to identify within the context of a growing, gentrifying, diversifying and increasingly expensive city, how these changes at the neighborhood level are reflected (or not) in the local school.

3 THE NEIGHBORHOOD-SCHOOL RACE ENROLLMENT GAP IN ATLANTA

3.1 Introduction

Because the drivers of school choice likely vary across context, in addition to a national-level analysis, this chapter zooms in on one specific context – the city of Atlanta. The ultimate

purpose of this chapter is to provide a general picture of the racial dynamics in Atlanta neighborhoods and schools while also providing a backdrop for my analysis of parent interviews in Chapter 4. I begin by providing some background and contextual information on Atlanta and Atlanta Public Schools (APS). I next use APS school enrollment data paired with Census data to calculate neighborhood-school gaps by race/ethnicity. The neighborhood-school gap is a comparison between the proportion by race of school-aged children ages 5-17 in a given school attendance zone and the enrollment proportion by race in the neighborhood school. In other words, it is comparing the racial representation in the neighborhood to the racial representation in the school in that neighborhood. This allows us to see which racial groups are overrepresented or underrepresented in a given school relative to their representation in the attendance zone. The gap is calculated both as a difference, which I refer to as the composition gap, and as a ratio, which I refer to as the comparative gap. I then compare the gaps to characterize the current state of neighborhood-school segregation in Atlanta. I also use the gaps to identify the neighborhoods in which I conduct my qualitative study of parents and school choice.

Atlanta is a useful context to study at this moment in time as the most recent census shows. The South has grown rapidly in recent decades and is now home to 38% of the U.S. population (Census 2020). Meanwhile the 29 counties that make up the Atlanta MSA continue to grow and are increasingly diverse (Gurwitt 2010; Frey 2020) even as the city itself is rapidly gentrifying both in terms of race and class (Brummet and Reed 2019; Maciag 2015). And although Atlanta has a reputation based on interracial harmony (Hobson 2017), it also has a complicated racial history (Kruse 2005). However, the cities that have historically been the focus of the segregation, mobility, and neighborhood change literatures are concentrated in the Northeast and Midwest despite the fact that these regions are losing population (Census 2020).

3.2 History of Atlanta Public Schools

The Atlanta Public School system was established by the Atlanta City Council in 1872 with 3 grammar schools and 2 high schools for White students joining 2 schools for "Negro" students, which were opened in 1866 by the Freedman's Bureau (www.atlantapublicschools.us). By 1950 Atlanta City schools, as they were called at the time, had a White enrollment of almost 32,000 and a Black enrollment of almost 19,000 in a system still formally segregated. 1961 saw the beginnings of integration when the "Atlanta 9," nine high school seniors chosen from a class of 132, integrated the White high schools. Like many school systems, Atlanta experienced a prolonged period of integration. Throughout the 1960s Atlanta made steps towards integration with the reassignment of teachers across the school district, but it wasn't until the 1973 Atlanta Compromise that the student body fully integrated. It was also during this period of the late 1960s to early 1970s that Atlanta Public School enrollment was at its peak; it reached 109,664 students in 1970. This growth was largely due to an enormous increase in Black enrollment, which more than tripled from 1950 to 1970 from 18,972 to 70,296. However, White enrollment hit its peak in the previous decade of the late 1950s to early 1960s when the system reached a maximum White enrollment of 54,530 in 1960. See Figure 1 below.

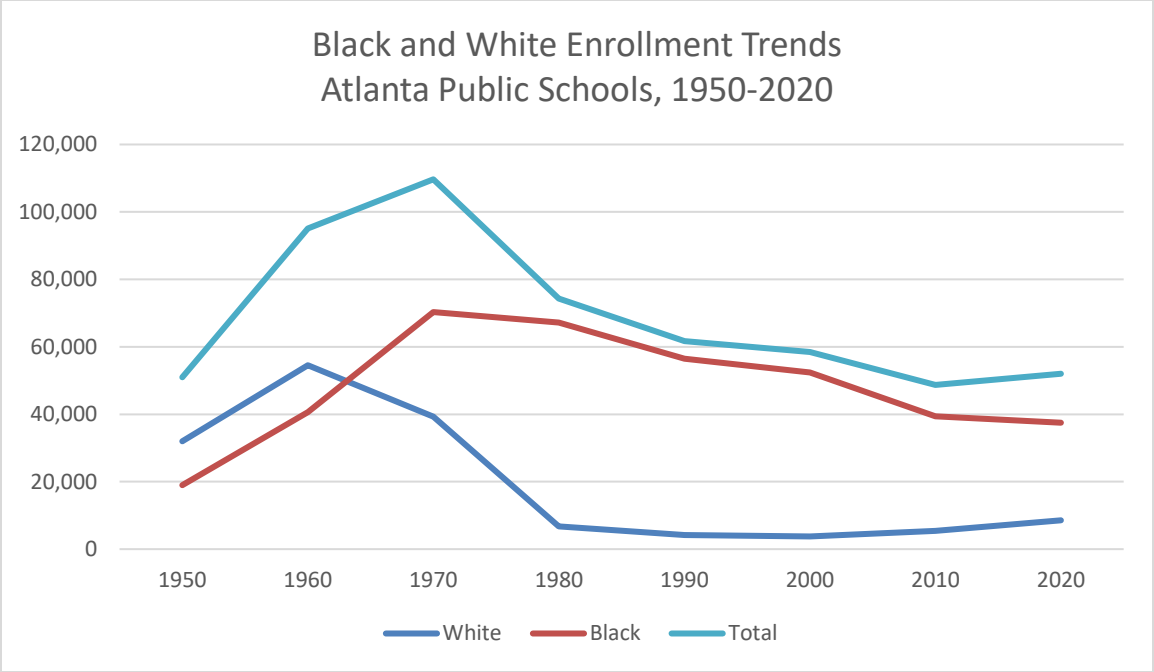


Figure 1 Chart of APS Enrollment by Black and White Race, 1950-2020[6]

3.3 Atlanta Neighborhoods and Enrollment Trends Today

More recent decades have seen a small reverse in these trends. Despite still representing 72% of APS students, Black total enrollment has been trending down since the 1970s and the percentage of Black students has trended down since the 1990s when over 90% of the district's enrollment was Black. At the same time, White enrollment has been steadily increasing since its lowest point in 1996-1997 when White enrollment was 6%. White students now comprise 16% of the APS student body. Although their populations are still too small to register on the graph above, the largest changes in recent decades are among Hispanic and Multi-racial students. Hispanic enrollment roughly doubled from 2% to 4% from the mid-1990s to the mid-2000s and doubled again to 8% by 2018. While the percentage of the student body which identifies as Multi-racial remains small, it is now the fourth largest ethnic-racial group in APS. The total

[6] Source: Georgia DOE enrollment reports found at https://app3.doe.k12.ga.us/ows-bin/owa/fte_pack_ethnicsex.entry_form

number of Multi-racial students increased 10-fold from 1994 to 2020. This matches a similar change in the nation and Atlanta's demographics (Frey 2021). Overall APS enrollment has been trending up since its lowest point in 2009. The White enrollment drop beginning in the 1960s and continuing through the 1980s most likely reflects the response to integration as families either left the city for the suburbs or removed their children from the public schools. While the motivations may be different, the APS enrollment drop among Black students from the 1980s to the late 2000s is likely also driven by a combination of families leaving the city along with the introduction of charter schools and other forms of school choice. Although the Black population has continued to grow, much of the growth in the Atlanta MSA has been in neighboring counties rather than the city center (Immergluck 2022).

From 2012-2014, APS underwent a redistricting process. This process was based on a 2010 forecast study conducted by the district which showed enrollment in the south dropping while neighborhoods to the north and east were growing (Atlanta Public Schools 2010). However, some viewed these changes to also be an attempt to clean up the district's image after the cheating scandal of 2009[7] (Davis et al. 2019; Henry 2012). At the time, the city had 53 elementary schools, 12 middle schools, 2 single gender academies and 21 high schools (many of these high schools were "school within a school" academies housed within the same building). The district also offered 4 alternative programs. As a direct result of the redistricting process, 7 schools were closed, almost all of them in majority Black neighborhoods. Since the 2012-2014 redistricting, other schools have also closed. Based on my count from 2010 to 2015, 13 elementary schools, 5 middle schools, and 1 high school plus almost all of the "school within a school" academies were either closed, renamed or merged with other schools. Figure 2 depicts

[7] See (https://www.washingtonpost.com/blogs/blogpost/post/aps-atlanta-public-schools-embroiled-in-cheating-scandal/2011/07/11/gIQAJl9m8H_blog.html) for more details

the schools and 9 zones or clusters in APS from 2015-2016. The clusters each contain one high school and one middle school with about 5-8 neighborhood-based elementary schools.

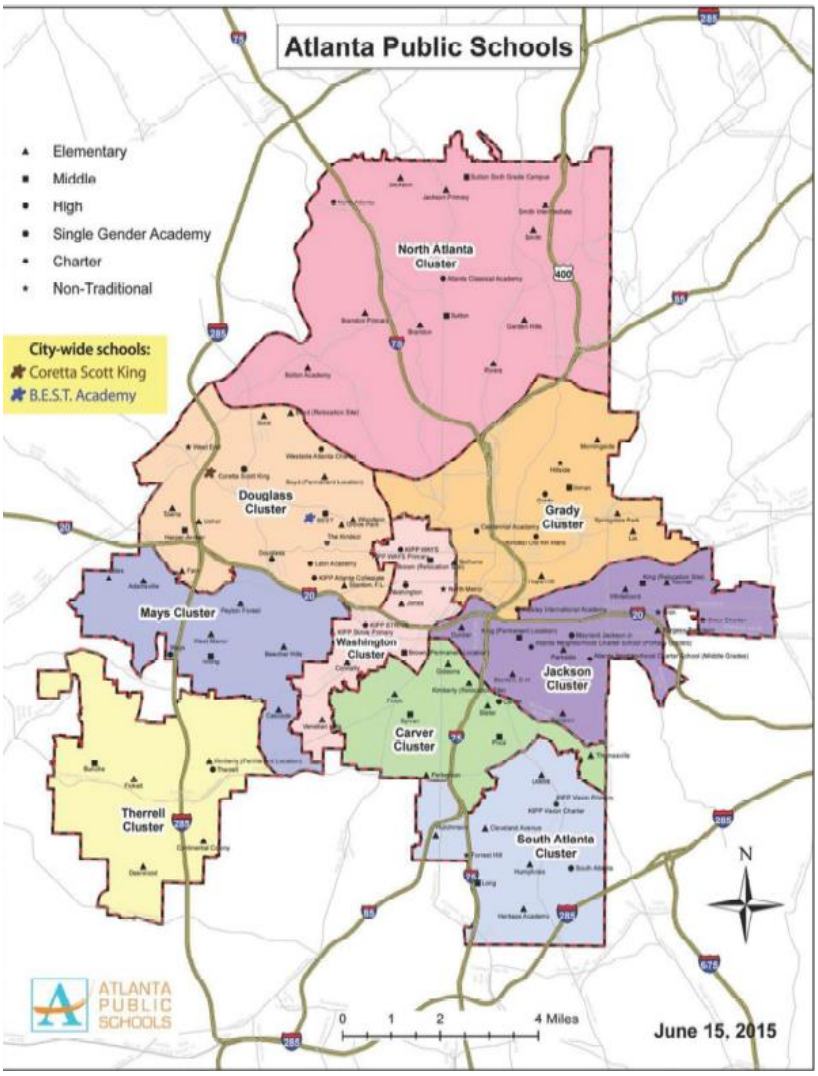


Figure 2 Map of Atlanta Public School Clusters, 2015-2016[8]

3.4 Calculating Neighborhood-School Gaps

To date there are only a small number of studies that have calculated some form of the neighborhood-school gap. Most of this research borrows heavily from Saporito, Sohoni and colleagues' original work (2006; 2007; 2009). Saporito et al. made use of what was then known

[8] Source: Atlanta Independent School System Fiscal Year 2016 Official Budget

as SABINS (now SABS) and GIS technology to link school attendance zone maps to Census block group data (2007). Candipan utilizes Saporito's SABINs dataset linked to CCD, ACS and Private School Survey (PSS) data to conduct her 2019 study investigating the neighborhood-school gap relationship to availability of school choice options and neighborhood socioeconomic ascent. She finds that as school choice options nearby increase and as a neighborhood is experiencing socioeconomic ascent, the neighborhood-school gap grows (Candipan 2019). Candipan revisits these questions of gentrification and school choice using a similar methodology, this time with the PSID as her data-source (2020). Because of the longitudinal nature of the PSID, she is also able to consider variation by length of residence in the neighborhood, where she finds that gentrifiers who have been in the neighborhood longer are less likely to opt out of public schools than more newly arrived residents (Candipan 2020).

Additionally, there are two studies from Bischoff and Tach (2018; 2020) who also make use of Saporito's approach. In the first study, they examine a measure of social distance at the neighborhood level (a more racially diverse and socioeconomically unequal neighborhood has greater social distance) and whether this predicts the neighborhood-school gap. They also consider the role of local school options, similar to Candipan (2019) and using the same data sources. They find that the more social distance in a neighborhood the less the school reflects its neighborhood, especially when there are also nearby school choice options (2018) and that neighborhoods undergoing socioeconomic ascent were more likely to see the racial gap grow (2020).

Finally, there are several related studies worth mentioning even though they do not calculate the neighborhood-school gap as defined above. First, there is a study from Pearman that asks whether neighborhood gentrification is related to a change over time in local school

demographics (2020) in which he found that school enrollment declined in gentrifying neighborhoods and that this decline was larger when the gentrifiers were White. Secondly, there's a study from the Urban Institute which looks at how much the composition of a given school contributes to an overall measure of school system dissimilarity (Monarrez et al. 2019). The measurement they derive, the Segregation Contribution Index, can be used to identify which particular schools in a given system are the most relatively segregated, accounting for the district's racial makeup. They find that most schools reflect their neighborhood fairly closely, but about 1/3 of schools in the sample had a more than 10 percentage point difference between the neighborhood and school. And when the school was in an already racially imbalanced neighborhood, that school or schools drove most of the system level segregation (Monarrez et al. 2019). There is also a neighborhood-school gap dataset hosted at the National Neighborhood Data Archive (NaNDA), but to my knowledge no papers have been published with the data yet.

3.5 Data and Methods

3.5.1 Creating the dataset

I created a unique data set that links school enrollment demographics from the Atlanta Public School system with the neighborhood demographics from each school's catchment area. Both original data sources are publicly available: APS school enrollment files can be found on the APS website as well as on the Georgia DOE website and Census data can be found at data.census.gov. I used the ACS 5-year estimate from 2016, selecting all tracts from DeKalb and Fulton Counties where APS is located. To link the two data sources together I utilized the National Center for Education Statistics' (NCES) School Attendance Boundary Survey (SABS) of 2015-2016, which is the most recently available year. These data come as a shapefile for use in GIS software and provide the geographic boundaries as well as other geographic and school-

related attributes for tens of thousands of school catchment areas or attendance zones throughout the country. Since my analysis is of Atlanta Public Schools, I first reduced the file by selecting on the NCES system ID to identify only schools within the APS system. I then downloaded the 2015 TIGER/line files for the State of Georgia provided by the U.S. Census. This file provides a geoid allowing for the linkage between Census tract-level data and other geographic data, such as the SABs file, within a GIS system. Once the SABs file and the TIGER/line files were uploaded to ArcGIS, I was able to 1) identify the centroid of all census tracts in Georgia 2) select all centroids that fell within an APS school attendance boundary 3) clip the remaining centroids leaving me with a map of census tract centroids that were within APS boundaries.

Unfortunately, many administrative boundaries do not necessarily match up. That is the case for school attendance boundaries and Census tracts. However, based on prior work, there are several methods for determining how to link the SABS shape files to ACS or Census data. Some have used a weighting process (Candipan 2019) others have used the school's latitude and longitude to assign each tract to the physically closest school (Monarrez et al. 2019) and yet others have calculated multiple geographies for each school using census block groups and then took a median value (Gomez-Lopez et al. 2022). I took yet a fourth approach by assigning each census tract to a school by identifying which school attendance boundary the tract centroid fell within. I then populated a table within ArcGIS that attached the Census tract-level data to the SABS attendance zone the tract primarily was located within. I did this three times with the elementary school boundaries, middle school boundaries and high school boundaries and then exported these three tables as CSV files. Finally, I merged these files on the NCES ID with a file from the APS website that includes biannual reports on enrollment numbers by race, gender, and grade-level. These reports are created every October and March; I used the file from March 2016

as I felt the enrollment for the year was likely more settled at the end, rather than the beginning, of a school year.

3.5.2 Measurement

The resulting data file contains each APS school with its enrollment count by race/ethnicity alongside the combined racial group estimates from all census tracts whose centroid fell within that school's SAB. In an attempt to most closely match the potential school population to the actual school population, I used the 2016 ACS estimates of all children ages 5-17 by race. I then collapsed or dropped some of the racial groups resulting in Black, White, Hispanic, Multi-racial (what the source data calls "two or more races"), and Asian-Pacific Islander (API). API is a collapse of Asians and Pacific Islanders for the purposes of sample size. The American Indian and Other categories were left out of the analyses; American Indians due to the small sample size (total APS enrollment was 53 students in 2016) and Other due to the conceptual difficulty of determining what a segregation analysis of 'Other' really means.

I next calculated proportions of each of these four racial groups within the school and within the cluster. At the middle and high school level, these are effectively the same. For sample size reasons and ease of comparison, I summed up the elementary proportions by zone so as to provide a zone-level gap for each school type. My final step was to calculate the school-neighborhood composition gap and school-neighborhood comparative gap for each racial group. Several other studies calculated a single gap, typically the difference in the White proportion of neighborhood children to White students in the local school and used the gap as a dependent variable in regression analyses (Candipan 2019; Bischoff and Tach 2020). This differs slightly from the method preferred by Saporito, Sohoni and colleagues who typically compared the Dissimilarity Index from the neighborhood to the Dissimilarity Index from the school (2006;

2007; 2016). The equations I use are based on those developed as part of the National Neighborhood Data Archive project at the Inter-University Consortium for Political and Social Research (Gomez-Lopez et al. 2022). The equations and further discussion of each measure are below:

$$Composition\ Gap_{(X)} = SCHLenrollment_{(X)}/SCHLenrollment_{(Total)} - Nepopulation_{(X)}/Nepopulation_{(Total)}$$

Where the gap, for any racial group (x) at any given school, is equal to the proportion of racial group (x) within the school minus the proportion of racial group (x) within the school zone, defined as the census tracts whose centroids fall within the school zone boundary. The composition gap is simply the school race proportion minus the neighborhood race proportion. It can be positive (the racial group is over-represented in the school compared to the neighborhood it draws from) or negative (the racial group is under-represented in the school compared to the neighborhood it draws from).

Where possible, I also calculated a comparative gap as:

$$Comparative\ Gap_{(X)} = \frac{SCHLenrollment_{(X)}/SCHLenrollment_{(Total)}}{Nepopulation_{(X)}/Nepopulation_{(Total)}}$$

Where the ratio comparing the proportion of any given racial group (x) in the school to the proportion of the racial group (x) in the neighborhood is equal to the racial group's school enrollment proportion divided by the group's neighborhood proportion. The comparative gap is a ratio of school race proportion/neighborhood race proportion allowing for an easier comparison of the relative size of the gap.

3.6 Results

3.6.1 APS Elementary School-Neighborhood Race Gaps

Table 3 shows the composition and comparative gap for each racial group across all elementary schools in APS in 2016. At first glance, the composition gaps for Hispanic, Asian Pacific Islander and Multi-racial are fairly small, however a single factor ANOVA indicates that these differences are significant. But the comparative gaps for these groups, especially for Hispanic and Multi-racial students, are sizable. Once again, a single factor ANOVA test was run, and the differences are significant. To sum up, the difference between any given racial group living within cluster boundaries and those attending the cluster's elementary schools is rather small, but still significant. However, when the gap is calculated as a ratio, the differences become much more apparent. This is partially due to the overall size of the racial groups. When the group is small, even the difference of just a few students can translate to a significant proportion of the group. That is why the comparative gaps are helpful. Despite the growing diversity of the system, the overall story of segregation in APS very much reflects the typical urban system in which Black and Hispanic students are overenrolled relative to their population and White students are underenrolled relative to their population.

Table 3 2016 Atlanta Public Schools Elementary School Enrollment, Average Race Group Proportions and Neighborhood-Enrollment Gaps

APS Elementary Schools	**White**	**Black**	**Hispanic**	**API**	**Multi-racial**
School Enrollment Proportion (A)	0.15	0.75	0.07	0.01	0.02
Neighborhood Population Proportion (B)	0.16	0.73	0.05	0.01	0.03
Composition Gap (A-B)	-0.03	0.04	0.01	0.00	-0.01
Comparative Gap (A/B)	0.35	1.50	1.48	0.37	0.63

To provide yet another way to visualize the gap, I next prepared a choropleth map for the White, Black and Hispanic composition gaps at the Elementary zone level (see Figure 3). API and Multi-racial populations are not included here because they make up a very small percentage of total enrollment and less data make the maps easier to read and compare. The very lightest and very darkest colors represent the larger gaps: lighter means underenrolled compared to the neighborhood and darker means overenrolled compared to the neighborhood. Right away it is clear that the elementary schools in Jackson stick out as Black students being heavily overenrolled. Furthermore, it appears that the White and Black enrollment gaps are nearly inverse of one another while the Hispanic gap follows a slightly different pattern.

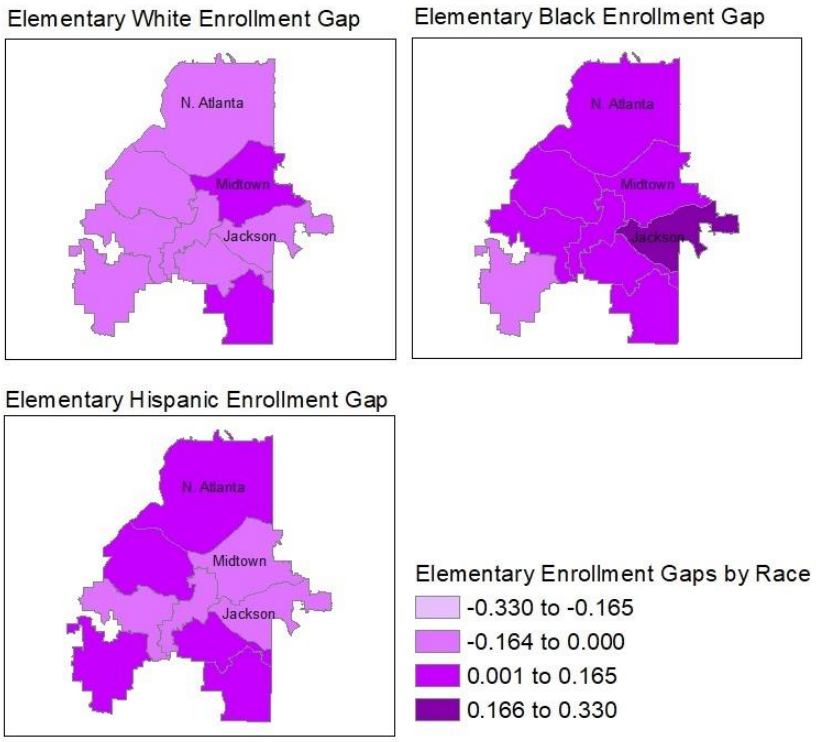


Figure 3 Map of Elementary Cluster-level Neighborhood-School Gaps for White, Black and Hispanic Students

Again, Atlanta is a historically Black mecca with a rapidly gentrifying city center all within an incredibly diverse and still growing metro region. So, it is useful to consider not just whether there is a racial gap between a particular school and its neighborhood, but also where in the city these schools with enrollment gaps are located. For instance, only one elementary school is overenrolled White by more than 10%. This school is located in a heavily privileged area on the Eastside of town. However, almost all of the schools with any kind of gap over 10% are located to the North and East of downtown, which happen to be the whiter and wealthier parts of town. There are a few notable exceptions where there is an overrepresentation of Hispanic students in a few schools on the Westside and to the South. Additionally, one school to the West of downtown is overenrolled Black by more than 10%. This school serves the neighborhood that

has only begun to gentrify more recently, thanks to its proximity to a large-scale redevelopment project called the Beltline.

The schools with extreme gaps, which I have determined to be 20% or greater of any racial group, fall into two main categories. First are schools with an overrepresentation of Hispanic students. Of the five schools that had at least a 10% overenrollment of Hispanic students, 4 of them actually had a greater than 20% overenrollment of Hispanic students. These schools are distributed across the city, but mostly occur outside of the city center and are particularly concentrated in the North Atlanta cluster. The other type of school with an extreme gap follows the pattern of underenrolled White students and overenrolled Black students. These hypersegregated schools are almost exclusively in the Jackson cluster to the eastside, where aggressive gentrification has been happening over the last several decades.

3.6.2 APS Middle School-Neighborhood Race Gaps

Table 4 shows the APS composition gap and the comparative gap for each racial group averaged across all middle schools in APS. The biggest difference from elementary school is the drop in White enrollment and the growth in Black enrollment. As a result, the White and Black gaps are larger in middle school than in elementary school. When we look at the comparative gaps, we can especially see the shift in White enrollment as the ratio goes from 76% (in elementary) to 55% (in middle school). In other words, in 2016 the elementary enrollment of White students was 76% of what would be expected based on the neighborhood population while that percentage drops to 55% for middle school. Looking at Table 4 we can also see that Black students on average are overrepresented by about 1.2 times their proportion in the district while Hispanic students on average are overrepresented at 1.5 times their overall proportion. By the

time they reach middle school, White, API, and Multi-racial students are underrepresented in local schools by about half compared to their neighborhood proportion.

Table 4 2016 Atlanta Public Schools Middle School Enrollment, Average Race Group Proportions and Neighborhood-Enrollment Gaps

APS Middle Schools	**White**	**Black**	**Hispanic**	**API**	**Multi-racial**
School Enrollment Proportion (A)	0.14	0.74	0.09	0.01	0.01
Neighborhood Population Proportion (B)	0.25	0.62	0.06	0.02	0.03
Composition Gap (A-B)	-0.11	0.12	0.03	-0.01	-0.02
Comparative Gap (A/B)	0.55	1.19	1.52	0.47	0.52

Values represent cluster-level averages of 10 middle schools nested within 9 clusters.

The map of the middle school gaps is also enlightening (see Figure 4). Here the widening of the White and Black gap from Elementary to Middle school is visible in that now North Atlanta and Jackson are heavily underenrolled by White students and the North Atlanta, Midtown and Jackson clusters are all heavily overenrolled by Black students while North Atlanta is heavily overenrolled by Hispanic students. The smaller gaps to the south and west of the city are at least in part attributable to the fact that those neighborhoods are overwhelmingly Black, so while the neighborhood-school enrollment gaps are smaller, those students could in no way be considered integrated within the city or APS at large.

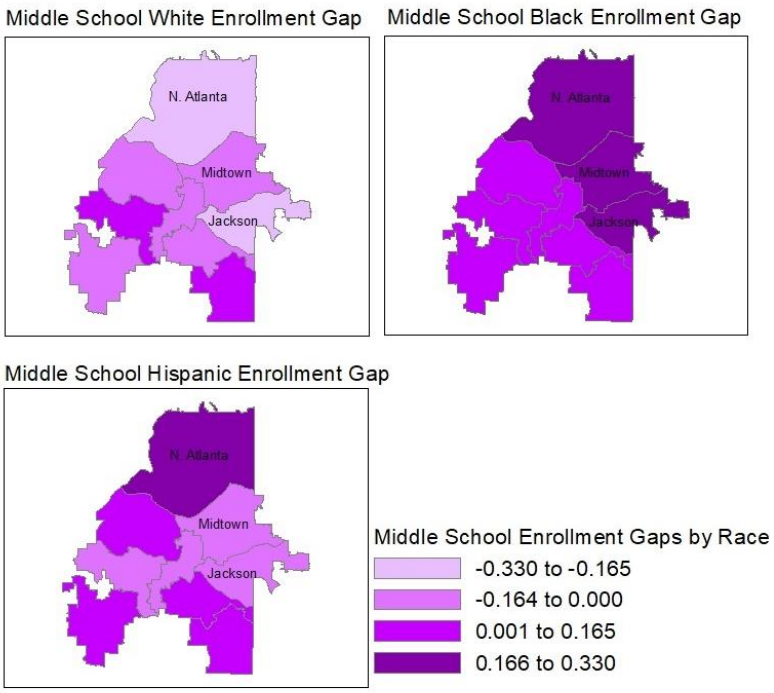


Figure 4 Map of Middle School Cluster-level Neighborhood-School Gaps for White, Black and Hispanic Students

3.6.3 APS High School-Neighborhood Race Gaps

Moving on to High School enrollment in Table 5, the numbers for White students do not change much from Middle school. White enrollment drops slightly, and Black enrollment rises slightly, but the shift is not as large as from elementary to middle school. However, the largest change in Hispanic enrollment as a proportion of their neighborhood population comes during the transition from middle to high school, after an increase in proportional enrollment from elementary to middle. Meanwhile API proportional enrollment sees a slight uptick from middle to high school, but Multi-racial enrollment sees a steady decline at each transition. What this signals is unclear, although at least in the case of API and Multi-racial students these variations could partly be an effect of sample size. As an additional robustness check, I looked at high school graduation rates to make sure the differences at the High School level weren't capturing something about group differences in graduation rates. But the rates by racial/ethnic group did

not vary significantly. It is possible that the Hispanic numbers are capturing something about a cohort shift. Perhaps there are simply more Hispanic students in the younger cohorts than in the high school aged cohorts and that could account for the much smaller high school gap.

Table 5 2016 Atlanta Public Schools High School Enrollment, Average Race Group Proportions and Neighborhood-Enrollment Gaps

APS High Schools (n=9)	**White**	**Black**	**Hispanic**	**API**	**Multi-racial**
School Enrollment Proportion (A)	0.13	0.78	0.07	0.01	0.01
Neighborhood Population Proportion (B)	0.25	0.62	0.06	0.02	0.03
Composition Gap (A-B)	-0.12	0.16	0.00	-0.01	-0.02
Comparative Gap (A/B)	0.52	1.26	1.08	0.49	0.43

What is perhaps most interesting about the map of high school level gaps is how clearly demarcated the spatial clustering is (see Figure 5). There appears to be a fairly clear dividing line running Northwest to Southeast for Black and White enrollment patterns, while again the Hispanic pattern indicates a heavier presence outside of the city center, to the North and South. Also, when comparing the maps to each other the initial patterns only strengthen over time, with the Middle schools in particular experiencing the largest gaps.

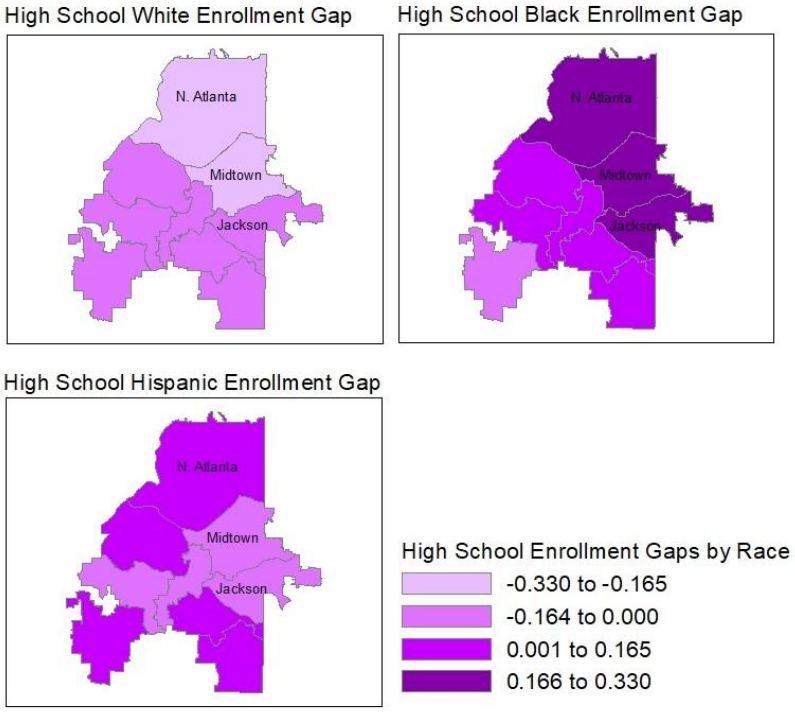


Figure 5 Map of High School Cluster-level Neighborhood-School Gaps for White, Black and Hispanic Students

3.6.4 The Middle School Gap: A Closer Look

Thus far, I have established the neighborhood-school enrollment gaps by school level in APS. However, in Table 6 I show the compositional gap across all nine middle schools in the district. I chose middle schools rather than high schools to examine more closely because this is the transition point from small neighborhood schools to larger comprehensive zone schools. Prior research in the school choice and school segregation literature has also suggested that the middle school transition is particularly fraught for White parents in urban systems (Posey-Maddox 2013; Kimelberg 2014; Butler 20221). Additionally, my neighborhood-school gap analysis unearthed a larger gap for middle school than elementary or high school. Right away it is clear that three schools in particular drive much of the racial enrollment gap. White students are underrepresented at all middle schools as can be seen by the fact that the White gap for all

schools is negative while Black students are overrepresented as can be seen by the fact that the Black gap for all schools is positive. However, in many cases the size of the gap is close to 0, with the particular exceptions of King Middle School, Inman Middle School and Sutton Middle School, highlighted in yellow.

Table 6 2016 APS Middle School-Neighborhood Composition Gaps by Racial Group

School Name	**White Gap**	**Black Gap**	**Hispanic Gap**	**API Gap**	**Multiracial Gap**
Brown Middle School	-0.01	0.02	0.00	0.00	-0.01
Bunche Middle School	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	-0.01
Harper Archer Middle School	-0.03	0.02	0.03	0.00	0.00
Inman Middle School	-0.10	0.17	-0.02	-0.01	-0.02
King Middle School	-0.22	0.28	-0.01	0.00	-0.03
Long Middle School	0.01	0.01	0.05	-0.01	-0.02
Sylvan Hills + Price Middle Schools	-0.01	0.01	0.01	0.00	0.00
Sutton Middle School	-0.29	0.20	0.17	-0.03	-0.03
Young Middle School	0.00	0.07	-0.03	0.00	0.00
Middle School Average Gap	**-0.08**	**0.09**	**0.02**	**-0.01**	**-0.01**

Although the primary purpose of calculating these gaps is to identify school attendance zones from which I will sample my interview participants and to provide some context for the attendant analyses, these preliminary results open up an entire line of potential questions for future investigation. Future analyses could include further ANOVA testing of gap sizes across groups or across school type as well as regression analyses to determine whether neighborhoods that are more racially diverse or with a history of gentrification have greater neighborhood-school racial gaps than more racially isolated or stable neighborhoods.

3.7 Neighborhood-School Gaps in Atlanta: how do they differ by school level, location and neighborhood type?

Although not a formal test of the relationship, the racial gap between school aged children in the neighborhood and enrollment in the local public school appears to grow larger as students transition to middle school. This finding matches some previous work that suggests middle-class urban parents who may be willing to take a chance on the local elementary school, may make different choices when it comes time for their child to attend middle and high school (Posey-Maddox et al. 2013; Kimelberg 2014; Butler 2021). However, many studies of school choice tend to focus on either elementary or high school decisions (Cucchiara and Horvat 2009; Posey-Maddox et al. 2013; Kimelberg and Billingham 2013; Pattillo 2015; Huseman 2016; FriedusFreidus 2019; Jenkins 2020; Sattin-Bajaj and Roda 2020), whereas it seems the transition into middle school may be a critical period for parental school decision-making.

The gaps are especially large at three specific schools: Sutton Middle School in the North Atlanta cluster, Inman (now called Howard) Middle School in the Grady (now called Midtown) cluster, and King Middle School in the Jackson cluster. However, Sutton and Inman are also the most diverse of the middle schools; all of the other middle schools were at least 90% Black whereas Sutton and Inman are, respectively, 36% White, 30% Black and 27% Hispanic and 43% White, 40% Black and 9% Hispanic. This example demonstrates the importance of the overall racial distribution within the city at large. In Atlanta, school clusters with a concentration of White students are on the whole more racially diverse and have greater neighborhood-school composition gaps. One potential explanation here is quite straightforward and is indeed supported by my findings. As has been established in prior work on how to measure segregation, calculations that do not account for the makeup of the area under investigation can be misleading

(Reardon et al. 2009; Monarrez et al. 2019). So, for example, a school that is overwhelmingly one race can at first glimpse look like an egregious example of school segregation. However, if the neighborhood or city itself is dominated by a single racial group, then the issue is not at the school level, but represents a more macro-level of segregation. In the same vein, when populations are small any movement will seem significant. This can lead to two different patterns which are illuminated in the examples of Sutton Middle School and King Middle School.

Sutton Middle School serves the largest geographic area of all APS clusters, North Atlanta. The North Atlanta cluster largely falls within the "V" shape created by the I-75 and I-85 split just north of town (refer back to Figure 2) and includes the second densest economic center outside of downtown, known as Buckhead (Keating 2001). Buckhead is home to some of the most exclusive upper and upper middle-class White communities in the city. However, given the sheer size of the North Atlanta cluster, it also happens to encompass some of the most racially diverse neighborhoods in town as well. The southernmost parts of that district, in the point of the V, and slightly to the south and east of Buckhead, tend towards higher density with apartment buildings and condos. Overall, the Census tracts served by Sutton are 73% White, yet the school is only 36% White. So, while it is the second whitest middle school in APS and on paper is the most racially integrated of all middle schools, it also has the largest White enrollment gap in the city at -0.29. On the other hand, the enrollment gap for each elementary school in North Atlanta is significantly smaller with only two schools having double digit White enrollment gaps: E. Rivers at -20 followed by Sarah Smith at -11. One potential explanation is that the move to Sutton from the more localized neighborhood elementary school reflects a shift in parent's

thinking about schools . The other potential explanation is one of scale and relative versus absolute segregation, as previously mentioned.

King Middle School in the Jackson cluster follows a different pathway. King serves an area that has been primarily Black since the white flight of the 1960s and 70s (Keating 2001). However, this area has begun to see a return of middle-class Whites. In the aftermath of the 1996 Olympics and hastening since the introduction of the Beltline in 2005, gentrification has moved through Kirkwood, East Atlanta, Grant Park and Ormewood Park neighborhoods. Meanwhile, historically Black neighborhoods closer intown such as Peoplestown, Mechanicsville and Summerhill continue to remain primarily Black in population (Keating 2001; Immergluck 2022). However, these neighborhoods have suffered from displacement and disinvestment as swaths of these communities were torn down for large-scale developments (Hobson 2017) . In the King scenario, the pool of eligible students is 23% White and 64% Black, yet the school is 1% White and 92% Black. This may be a case of school gentrification lagging behind neighborhood gentrification (Green et al. 2022). Alternatively, this may be a case of actual or perceived school quality where parents who are able to opt-out do so. As it happens, there are two well-regarded public charter schools in the area, Atlanta Neighborhood Charter (ANCS) and Drew Charter School, which have likely drawn a significant portion of the White families away from King.

Interestingly, the high school in this cluster, Jackson High, is 8% White and 85% Black. Does Jackson have a better reputation than King; if so, why? Are White parents more comfortable with Black exposure with older, as opposed to younger, teens? Are the students themselves more involved in the school selection process at the high school level, indicating a possible divergence in what parents prefer and what students prefer (Hailey 2022)? Alternately, based on findings from my previous chapter where stability in the neighborhood predicted

enrollment in the local school, it could also be a case of the history and place attachment of different populations informing the decision to stay or leave the local schools. Another component to explore further is the various charter schools in the Jackson area. Because many of the charter schools only serve K-8, the change in enrollments at the high school level could reflect charter students returning to the neighborhood system. ANCS in particular, may be contributing to the difference in the gap between middle and high school as the school ends in 8th grade.

Inman middle school features yet a third pattern of enrollment as there is a smaller Hispanic presence than at Sutton, but the White and Black populations are more equally represented than at King. However, the racial history of these intown neighborhoods is no less fraught. The cluster itself covers downtown, midtown and some of the oldest intown "suburbs." Several of the downtown and midtown neighborhoods such as Sweet Auburn, Old 4th Ward, and Reynoldstown are historically Black and maintain an important presence in Atlanta's Black life and culture, not least due to housing the National Martin Luther King historic site (Hobson 2017). On the other hand, many of the historic "streetcar suburbs" such as Inman Park, Candler Park, Lake Clair, Morningside and Virginia Highlands either never saw the same level of decline as other intown neighborhoods or already experienced upgrading in earlier waves of gentrification (Jaret 2002; Henry 2012). Today these areas represent some of the most expensive addresses outside of Buckhead.

The history of schools in the Midtown cluster is a complicated one of race, class, and neighborhood activism that shows the difficulties of maintaining a true neighborhood school community without also encouraging race and class segregation (Henry 2012). Although the middle and high schools have maintained a certain level of diversity since desegregation, the

feeder elementary schools in this zone have remained rather segregated. This is the exact inverse of North Atlanta where the elementary schools were more diverse than the middle and high school. This may largely reflect the segregation levels of the attendant neighborhoods. Morningside elementary has always served a wealthier and whiter community, while Hope-Hill elementary in the heart of Old 4th Ward continues to be primarily Black. Meanwhile, Mary Lin elementary saw a transformation in racial makeup from the 1990s to early 2010s, going from more than 50% Black to only 12% Black in 2015 (Henry 2012; APS Insights 2015). Inman (now Howard) Middle and Grady (now Midtown) High School maintained a fairly integrated student body throughout the 1980s, 1990s and 2000s. This is partially due to the hard work of parent groups who promoted the schools and Grady's well-regarded magnet program (Henry 2012). Overall, the pattern of the Grady cluster reflects micro-level segregation at the neighborhood level but with a larger spatial pattern of integration (in other words, Black and White neighborhoods close together).

3.8 Using neighborhood-school gaps to guide qualitative research with parents

While neighborhood and school gaps are often calculated at the elementary school or neighborhood level (Bischoff and Tach 2018; Candipan 2019), here I have presented them at the high school/cluster level as another important spatial boundary to consider. And it appears that in Atlanta, the cluster boundaries are important to parents. However, it is not clear what features of the cluster as a school zone versus as a spatially concentrated collection of neighborhoods parents may be selecting on. This chapter's descriptive analysis of neighborhood-school gaps opens up many questions about how students are sorted across space and time that are better addressed through a qualitative approach. In this study, I use the gaps to guide a deep dive into some of the social-psychological factors involved in choosing neighborhoods and schools. I

selected the clusters with the largest racial enrollment gaps in which to conduct my research. Whether I used elementary gaps, middle school gaps or high school gaps, the result was the same: North Atlanta, Grady (Midtown) and Jackson clusters have the largest white enrollment gaps. Therefore, these clusters formed the first level of my two-stage sampling approach. I then recruited a minimum of six participants who lived in each of these clusters (for a total of 19 interviews) to ask about their social networks, their sense of community, and their race and class identities with regards to neighborhood and school choice.

4 ATLANTA PARENTS ON SCHOOL CHOICE, GENTRIFICATION AND RACE

4.1 Introduction

As my prior chapters have established, there is a link between certain social and demographic features of the residential neighborhood and the school choices parents make. I have thus far determined that in neighborhoods with a higher proportion of newcomers (as measured by length of residence) individuals are less likely to enroll in the local neighborhood school and when the racial makeup of the neighborhood is becoming more diverse, and especially if the racial majority changes, individuals are less likely to enroll in their local school. Secondly, at least in the context of Atlanta, White students are underrepresented across all public school and neighborhood types (with a single exception) while Black students are heavily overenrolled almost everywhere, but especially in the Jackson cluster. Yet the reasons why families choose to stay in their local school or opt for a private or public school of choice may vary across school and neighborhood types, especially when it is understood that school decisions are not only personal but also social and political (Bruch and Feinberg 2017; Krysan and Crowder 2017).

This chapter aims to identify any common patterns or themes regarding school decisions of parents across various neighborhood and school contexts to provide additional illumination to the nationwide trend of resegregating public schools in a growing and racially diverse city. Although other research has pointed to social class being an important organizing feature of the neighborhood school connection (Owens 2016; Candipan 2020; Cuddy et al. 2020), my research has instead found the continuing salience of race for school decisions (see also Pearman and Swain 2017; Bischoff and Tach 2018). Therefore, I undertook semi-structured interviews of 19 parents across a selection of neighborhood settings in Atlanta and across a range of racial

backgrounds. This chapter outlines my approach to this research, describes the various neighborhoods from which I pulled my sample, gives an overview of respondents, and ends with an in-depth analysis and interpretation of my data.

4.2 Background

4.2.1 School Choice and Race

Much research on school choice has specifically focused on middle-class White parents. Prior studies have established that middle and upper-class White parents opt out of their local school more often than other groups (Roda and Wells 2013; Bischoff and Tach 2020) and that White parents appear particularly sensitive to majority Black settings (Saporito 2009; Billingham and Hunt 2016). Even when White parents express a preference for diverse schools (Kimelberg and Billingham 2013; Hagerman 2014: Posey-Maddox et al. 2014), their choices on average are not reflective of this preference (Butler 2021) and are often still couched in anti-Black sentiment (Evans 2021). And when White parents do enroll in a diverse school, they use their considerable resources to reshape it to their preferences (Cucchiara and Horvat 2009; Posey-Maddox 2014; Freidus 2019).

Research on Black parents has tended to focus on socioeconomic differences, showing that lower-income and working-class Black parents make more constrained choices than middle and upper-class Black parents (Diamond and Gomez 2004; Cooper 2005; Davis and Welcher 2013; Rhodes and DeLuca 2014; Pattillo et al. 2014). However, other research has shown that even when middle and upper-class Black parents opt-out, they must still expend a good deal of energy to ensure that their child receives a good experience (Pattillo 2015; Posey-Maddox et al. 2021) and that socioeconomic resources do not always compensate for racial differences in school access (Davis and Welcher 2013; Knudson 2021).

Studies of Latino families indicate that the choice sets of Latino families tend to be smaller, they are more reliant on the media or school staff as sources of information, and after academics, concerns about safety inform their preferences (Haynes et al. 2010; Gastic and Coronado 2011; Mavrogordato and Stein 2016). Concerns about safety and discipline are often expressed in a preference for small class size, uniform policies and a school culture with an emphasis on discipline (Haynes et al. 2010; Mavrogordato and Stein 2016). Furthermore, the local public schools are often seen as low-status (Cuero et al. 2009; Mavrogordato and Stein 2016) and some Latino parents see charter or magnet schools as an acceptable alternative when they cannot afford the private education they might prefer (Haynes et al. 2010; Mavrogordato and Stein 2016).

4.2.2 School Choice and Class

Much of the relevant literature has already been discussed. In general, parents who are more advantaged (wealthier and/or with more education) are more likely to opt out of the local school (Ball et al. 1995; Saporito and Sohoni 2007; Sikkink and Emerson 2008). Parents might use their socioeconomic resources to purchase a home in a "better" school district (Holme 2002; Lareau and Goyette 2014) or to access a private education (Goldring and Phillips 2008; Saporito 2009). Since many families do not have access to those options and because of assumptions about the relevance of urban settings for this discussion, most studies of school choice and social class have looked at school choices in urban settings and across public choice offerings (Roda and Wells 2013; Posey-Maddox et al. 2016). These studies often find that when choice defines the school market, such as application based open enrollment high schools or cities with lots of charter schools, more school segregation by race and class are the result (Marcotte and Dalane 2019; Butler 2021).

4.2.3 School Choice and the City

This study is ultimately about how place informs school choice among Atlanta parents. Therefore, I summarize prior research on place and choice. Little research looks at choice in rural or suburban contexts, although given the growth and diversification happening in the suburbs this may soon change (Diamond et al. 2021). One recent study did look at choice in the larger metro context, including the urban and suburban areas and found that urban exiters often wound up in slightly higher performing schools, but suburban families who chose a school through the purchase of a home attended Whiter and better performing schools (Lenhoff et al. 2022). Research on neighborhoods and school choice have often examined the role of compositional factors of the neighborhoods or schools (Saporito 2003; Krysan et al. 2009; Hedman et al. 2011, Jargowsky 2014; Pearman and Swain 2017; Bischoff and Tach 2018, 2020; Candipan 2019; 2020) as well as contextual features such as social networks (Fong 2019; Bader et al. 2019; Burdick-Will 2018; Cuddy et al. 2020), place attachment (Reay et al. 2011; Yoon and Lubienski 2017) and identity (Cucchiara and Horvat 2014; Debs et al. 2023). A recognition that place is space imbued with social meaning (Gieryn 2000) requires that neighborhood researchers take seriously the role of place in the complex process of social psychological decision-making (Krysan and Crowder 2017). The purpose of the qualitative analysis is to assess the contribution of racial identity, class identity and place meaning in the formation of school choice sets.

4.2.4 The study site: North Atlanta, Midtown and Jackson clusters

APS has 9 catchment areas, what APS refers to as “clusters.” These clusters are geographically mutually exclusive and contiguous and are each served by a single open enrollment high school after which the cluster is named. The clusters are all currently served by a

single middle school. Each cluster contains anywhere from 4 to 7 elementary schools, although in some of the geographically larger clusters the same school may be on multiple sites. In these instances, there are separate primary (K-2) and elementary (3-5) buildings that share a name and catchment area. Most of the clusters also contain private schools, charter schools, APS partner schools and other alternative schools managed by APS.

There have been a number of prior studies of school choice in Atlanta. As Hankins and Henry document, engagement and activism around the local public schools has a long history in the Midtown cluster, dating back to the 1970s when residents began organizing to protect the neighborhoods from a new highway. This work eventually expanded into supporting the local schools (Hankins and Henry 2014). The parent advocates were so successful that the magnet program at Grady (now Midtown) became a draw for families across the city and Mary Lin and Morningside Elementary schools are continually ranked among the best in the city (Henry 2012). Work by several scholars has also traced the activism and organizing around the schools in the Grant Park and Kirkwood neighborhoods of the Jackson cluster, particularly the opening of a charter school in Grant Park (Roberts and Lakes 2016; Henry 2012; Hankins and Henry 2014).

There are several charter schools that are important to the trajectory of the Jackson cluster. Drew Charter School first opened in 2000 in the easternmost neighborhood of APS. Originally designed by a local community foundation to primarily serve the lower-income neighborhood of East Lake, the neighborhoods and the school demographics at Drew have changed over time. And while the school now serves a less socioeconomically disadvantaged population, the school remains majority Black (CCD). However, due to its reputation, the school has become harder and harder to get into. Thus, in recent years many parents who were

interested in Drew have had to look elsewhere, including their neighborhood school of Toomer Elementary (parent interviews).

At the other end of the cluster, Atlanta Neighborhood Charter School (ANCS) was founded in 2002 by middle-class gentrifier parents who wanted a community school but found the local public school unpalatable (Hankins and Henry 2014; Roberts and Lakes 2016). While the student body started out majority Black, since at least 2014 ANCS has been majority White and not-poor (Hankins and Henry 2014; CCD). ANCS also remains quite small; in 2021-2022 the elementary school served 391 students in K-5th grades while Drew elementary served 918 students K-5th grade. And unlike Drew, ANCS still draws primarily from the immediate neighborhood (https://atlncs.org).

This study is different in many regards from other qualitative studies of school choice which are often conducted in full choice districts. For example, there have been studies in Washington, DC, Brooklyn, NY, Boston, MA where families rank their choices, and in some cases, schools rank them back (Kafka 2022; Butler 2021; Fong 2019). By Georgia law, students may apply to a different school in their district if there is space available. If more applications are received than there are spots, a lottery is held (http://apsk12.org/osar/enrollment-registration). Although the district does not provide the number of transfers granted or even of applications received, the schools that have openings are often low-demand schools and thus many families that attend an APS school likely attend their neighborhood school. This is borne out in my own data where every family that was enrolled in APS was in their local school. Therefore, school choice in Atlanta is mostly between the neighborhood school, charter schools and private schools. This is significant because for parents interested in a public school option, the choice of neighborhood remains highly relevant.

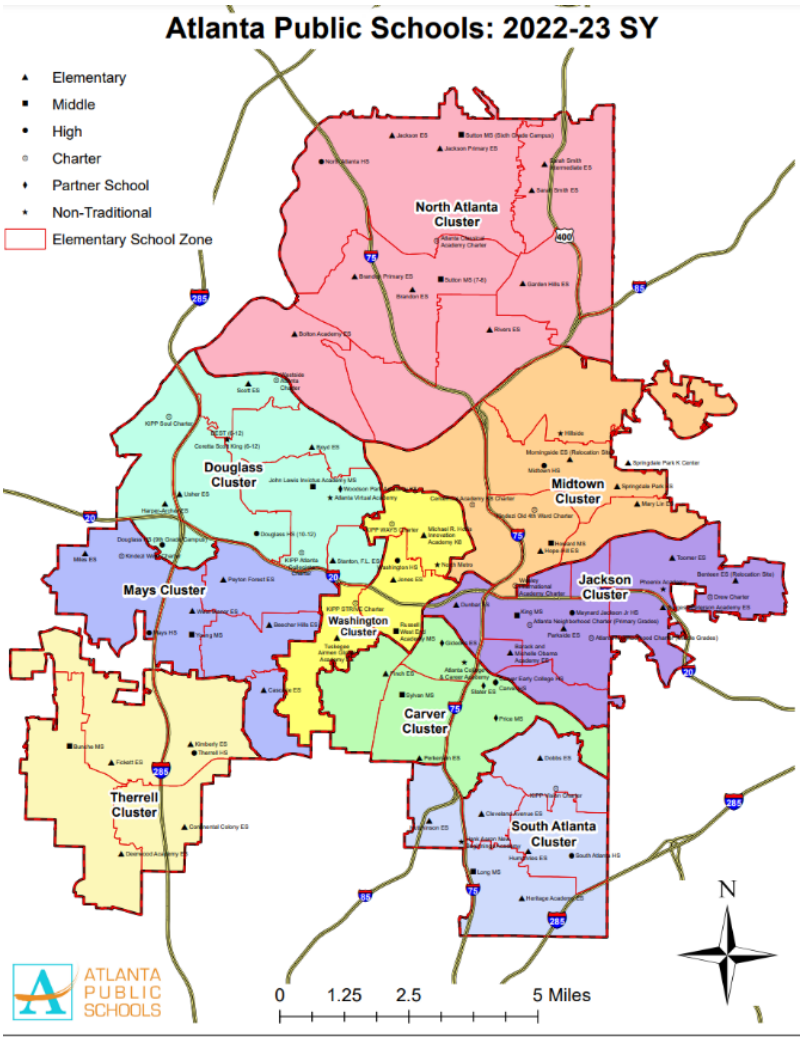


Figure 5 Map of Atlanta Public School Clusters, 2022-2023

Informed by my previous findings, I sought to recruit interviewees from the North Atlanta, Midtown (previously Grady), and Jackson clusters. These three school clusters occupy the Northern, Northeastern and Eastern areas of the APS system, as seen in Figure 6, and include a range of settings relevant to my research question. North Atlanta and Midtown High Schools are the most racially diverse High schools in APS. Yet, despite the fact that North Atlanta High School is the most racially integrated school in the district, it is significantly less White than the neighborhoods from which it draws. On the other hand, Midtown is a relatively diverse school in a part of town exemplified by spatially clustered racial segregation. And finally, Jackson High

School in East Atlanta represents an increasingly diverse neighborhood due to gentrification, however, the student body remains majority Black. See Table 7 for school enrollment by race for the most recent school year.

Table 7 Racial Composition, Select Schools 2022-2023

School	White	Black	Hispanic	Multi-Racial	API
Midtown High Total enrollment: 1588	0.48	0.34	0.09	0.06	0.03
Howard Middle Total enrollment: 1114	0.33	0.45	0.10	0.08	0.03
Jackson High Total enrollment:1434	0.16	0.73	0.08	0.02	0.00
King Middle Total enrollment: 806	0.12	0.75	0.09	0.03	0.01
North Atlanta Total enrollment: 2291	0.34	0.36	0.24	0.04	0.02
Sutton Middle Total enrollment:1555	0.29	0.36	0.27	0.05	0.02

4.3 DATA AND METHODS

The data for this study came from 19 semi-structured interviews, conducted via Zoom by the author. Some of the benefits of interviewing include the ability to develop a systematic yet detailed analysis, the ability to capture the meanings that people give their behaviors, and the ability to capture situational heterogeneity (Lamont and Swindler, 2014). Interviews are especially useful for investigations seeking to understand processes, or the why behind social phenomena. Furthermore, interviews offer the opportunity for greater detail to emerge, as well as new possibilities for theory development, potential future research questions, or new variables to test. Semi-structured interviews can help keep the interviewer focused and on topic, ensuring that the key themes and concerns of the interview receive attention throughout the course of the discussion, while also leaving room for flexibility and openness. However, for semi-structured interviews to be most effective the researcher must typically already have some understanding of

the topic and or site under investigation. My knowledge of the topic comes from my own experience as a White upper-middle class parent of school-aged children in Atlanta. The question of schools and neighborhoods and home buying and after-school activities predominates many playground conversations (Bader, Lareau and Evans 2019), including my own. My observations of the range of choices families made along with the different explanations for said choices, prompted my research question. Given the goals of this research project, to better understand the school choices of Atlanta parents, semi-structured qualitative interviewing is the preferred method.

4.3.1 Sampling and recruitment

My sampling pool is comprised of parents of school-aged children in the 4th-12th grades, who are zoned to attend North Atlanta, Midtown, or Jackson High School. My population is small and specific so for the purposes of my study a convenience sample is sufficient. Furthermore, this component of the study is looking at process rather than trends or probability, so I am less concerned with generalizability and more interested in generating new findings or theory. To recruit participants, I posted notices on the social media networks Facebook and NextDoor. I identified groups in which to post by neighborhood, school, or interest group that overlapped with my target population. This primarily consisted of parenting groups (like Decatur Area Moms Enjoying Sanity on Facebook), neighborhood groups (Candler Park and Lake Clair on NextDoor) and school PTO groups (Howard Middle School PTO on Facebook). Online recruitment was the most feasible way to reach my target population within the timeframe of my study. Additionally, as the number of households with access to the internet continues to grow, a 2018 survey found 85% of U.S. homes had a broadband connection (Martin 2021), concern about the role internet access might play in sample selection is less of an issue. Social media

platforms such as Facebook make it easy to locate and join affinity groups, such as those affiliated with a specific school. According to a 2021 Pew Research Center interview, 69% of Americans have a Facebook account and half of those check Facebook daily (https://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2021/06/01/facts-about-americans-and-facebook/). Some participants were identified through other participants, also known as snowball sampling. Participants received $15 in appreciation of their time. My target was to conduct 6-8 interviews per identified cluster for a total of between 18-24 interviews. My final sample included 6 parents from North Atlanta, 6 parents from Midtown and 7 parents from Jackson. I aimed to capture a representative picture of the Atlanta area in terms of race and class demographics and neighborhoods so as to understand how school decisions might vary by race, class and place. While I did manage to recruit a good number of White and Black families, I struggled to recruit families from the lower end of the socioeconomic spectrum as well as Hispanic families.

4.3.2 Data collection

The data collection consisted of semi-structured interviews conducted over Zoom and covering topics such as how parents chose their child's school, perceptions about local school options, as well as attitudes and beliefs regarding their neighborhood and school. Interviewing parents about decisions regarding their children requires careful consideration of both effective and ethical communication strategies, including the concerns of the population you are trying to engage (Robinson 2014). Participation in interview research is entirely voluntary and during recruitment and engagement, the researcher must be open and honest about the topic and nature of the questions. Permissions to collect, analyze and publish the data was collected from participants. To begin I conducted several pilot interviews with personal acquaintances who are parents of school-aged children. This allowed me to become comfortable with the interview

protocol and to make minor adjustments to better elicit a detailed response. I conducted all interviews over Zoom. The main drawbacks to using a videoconferencing tool such as Zoom is the potential to miss some nuance of body language or the environment, considerations of access to reliable internet, and the risk of technical difficulties. However, many participants appear to prefer conducting interviews by Zoom as it is much easier and less time-consuming than arranging a face-to-face meeting (Archibald et al. 2019). Furthermore, Zoom has additional capacities that prior technologies such as Skype or non-video conference calls did not offer that assists in both the ethics and efficacy of conducting research (Archibald et al. 2019). In particular, Zoom can record and store conversations without recourse to third-party software, greatly reducing the risks associated with recording video calls (Archibald et al. 2019).

4.3.3 Study Design

Open-ended questions. I developed an interview guide, based on generously shared materials from the Chicago Neighborhood-School Connections study at the University of Chicago (see Cuddy, Krysan and Lewis 2020). These questions touch on decision making processes, social networks, daily routines, familiarity and comfort with different parts of town and different schools, sources of information and features of the school, neighborhood and family unit (see Appendix A1).

Whiteboards. I used a new functionality in Zoom, called Whiteboards. Whiteboards can be shared and edited in real time by multiple users. They have several design features, but I primarily made use of their sticky-note feature. I created a sticky-note for each item that I wanted ranked. I then marked the board from Least to Moderate to Most, such as on a Likert scale. Participants were then able to move the sticky notes to place them in the order they felt most appropriate in response to the organizing question. I had two Whiteboards: once with only six

items in response to the prompt: “When choosing a school for my child, I mostly talked to….” And then with twenty items on a five-point scale in response to the prompt: “When choosing a school for my child, I am most likely to consider….” (see Appendices A2 and A3)

Whiteboard A2 response items were: my partner and/or child(ren), extended family, close friends, other parents, school staff, and other contacts such as from work or church. Whiteboard A3 had twenty total items, but the items were grouped into larger themes with 5 total themes, each with four items. For example, the theme of quality included 1) nice facilities, 2) good reputation, 3) program and activity offerings are of high quality, and 4) a high rate of college admissions. The theme of academics included 1) teacher preparation and credentials 2) test scores and graduation rates 3) class size and 4) specific program offerings. The theme of convenience included 1) it is our local school 2) proximity to home or work 3) there is a bus route 4) they offer aftercare. The theme of safety included 1) I have confidence in the school’s monitoring of behavior, 2) I have confidence in the school’s discipline policies 3) the school is in a safe neighborhood and 4) the campus is clean. The theme of community included 1) the school is culturally competent, 2) I feel comfortable in the buildIng and with the staff 3) parent involvement is high and 4) I know other families that have gone or are going there.

Maps. A map of the city with schools marked and labeled as well as some orienting features was used as a prompt to elicit more information from participants regarding areas of town that are familiar/unfamiliar or about their choice sets constructed during their housing and/or school search (See Appendix A4).

Several social science researchers trained in interview techniques have begun turning to new approaches and techniques that include visual cues. Most relevant to my study, visual cues have been helpful in interviews to help participants rank ideas or objects (Rowley et al. 2012)

and to build report, sustain attention, and elicit deeper answers in the interview (Rowley et al. 2012; Comi, Bischof and Eppler 2014; Glegg 2019). Thus, I hope that the Whiteboards and Map facilitate respondents moving beyond their rationalized explanations and closer to more internalized thoughts and feelings.

4.3.4 Data analysis

Interviews were transcribed by a paid professional service, which guarantees data security and protection. Additionally, human transcription is typically more accurate and complete than using transcription software and a professional transcriptionist can be just as fast, or faster when accounting for the rate of errors, than software (see Johnson 2011). My next step was to review the transcripts while listening to the recordings to check for errors and accuracy, flesh out my memos, and begin my first round of coding. This is done simply using the recorded MP3 files which I played on my laptop while reading along in the Word document. I also created an index card for each respondent with key details such as race, class, education level, school cluster, school and so forth. I often found these helpful tools as I organized my analysis.

For more advanced and detailed coding, I imported my transcripts and memos data into nVivo, a text analysis software frequently used by qualitative social scientists. I then coded the data using a combination of inductive and deductive coding schemes (Fereday and Muir-Cochrane 2006). Qualitative data analysis is typically iterative, with early investigations at the descriptive and categorical levels (LaRossa 2012). To assist in this level of analysis, I ran several text search queries based on expected findings from the literature. Since this paper seeks to extend and test theory rather than generate it, higher order coding of the data will seek to connect the in vivo concepts to a priori concepts derived from the literature (LaRossa 2012).

Initial coding resulted in 93 nodes. Nodes are collections of references that share a theme or assigned relationship in Nvivo software (Welsh 2002). As I began to consolidate my codes through elimination, merging or ordering I slowly worked my way to ten larger themes: Diversity, Race/Racism, School Choice, Social Class, Private School, Neighborhood Choice, Social Networks, Parent Involvement, Gentrification and Community.

4.4 RESULTS

4.4.1 Participant Overview

53% of the sample was White, 32% was Black, .5% Asian, .5% Latino, and 1% Multiracial. 47.5% identified as upper middle class and 26% identified as between middle to upper middle class. 1% of the sample identified as middle class and .5% identified as poor. These families were mostly dual income professional households with cis-hetero married parents. One household was a single parent, and three interviewees were divorced or in the process of divorcing. There were two stay-at-home parents and several parents who worked from home or had flexible schedules, but most households had two full-time "in the office" working parents. Respondents' ages ranged from 38-56, with most being in their 40s. Their children (including siblings) ranged in age from toddlers to college students. Most of those I spoke with were female, although I did interview two males. But in several of the interviews, the other partner walked in and out with the interviewee sometimes turning off-screen to ask a question or seek validation.

Table 8 Participant Demographics

Participant	**Race**	**Class**	**Gender**	**Years in Atlanta**
AB	White	Upper Middle	Female	~15
AW	White	Middle – Upper Middle	Female	4
BP	White	Upper Middle	Female	6
CF	Black	Middle – Upper Middle	Female	22
CK	White	Middle	Female	18
DE	Asian	Upper Middle	Female	~12

EB	White	Upper Middle	Female	20
JA	Black	Upper Middle	Male	30 total (ATL native, returned 12 years ago)
JR	White/Asian	Middle Class	Female	23
KB	White	Upper Middle	Female	~40 (ATL native, never left)
MB	White	Middle – Upper Middle	Female	14
NA	White	Middle – Upper Middle	Female	~25
SB	Black	Upper Middle	Female	ATL suburbs ~7, ATL 5
SM	White	Upper Middle	Female	~20
SS	Black	Poor	Female	~25
TC	White	Upper Middle	Male	~12
TI	White/Latina	Middle – Upper Middle	Female	40+ (ATL native, never left)
TP	Black	Upper Middle	Female	14 total (10 previously, now 4)
VR	Afro-Latina	Middle – Upper Middle	Female	ATL suburbs ~6, ATL 14

Eight of the respondents initially came to Atlanta for school or for work and have been here for 20+ years. Another four respondents also came to Atlanta for school or for work and have been here between 10-20 years. One respondent has lived in Atlanta a total of about 15 years, but not consecutively. Another two respondents came for work and have been here 4 and 6 years respectively. These interviewees came to Atlanta from places as diverse as Arkansas, Florida, Oregon, Pennsylvania, Texas, and Virginia among others. A number relocated from other large cities such Chicago, New York and Washington DC. Four respondents grew up in metro Atlanta and either never left or came back after college or having children. And three respondents grew up in small town Georgia and later migrated to the capital city for work or school.

Most of the families in the sample are attending their local public school. 18/19 had at least one child at one point in time in public school and 15 had their child/ren in the local school at the time of their interview. There are also a handful of charter devotees among the parents, although only one family has been singularly committed to a charter school. 6/19 parents had at

least one child at one point in time in a charter school. Typically, this was during elementary school, or sometimes middle school, with the families moving on to public or private for high school. 4/19 families had a child in private school at some point, although there was one parent actively considering a move to private and three other parents who were considering a private move amongst other options. No families participated in homeschool or virtual options outside of the restrictions required by Covid.

4.4.2 Framing Choices: what we need, what we want, who we are

I found that the parents in my sample typically framed their approach to school choice in one of three ways: they were interested in a school that would fit the specific needs of their child, they were interested in a school that provided a positive experience, or they were interested in a school that fit their personal values. Below I provide a more in-depth analysis of each group, but first I provide a table of the average whiteboard responses by cluster. Scores are on a 5-point scale with 1 being not very important and a 5 being very important. Within the table, scores between 4-5 are shaded green, scores between 3-4 are yellow, scores between 2-3 are orange, and scores below 2 are red. These averages are not perfect representations of the relationship between clusters and what parents value in a school, but they can provide a general picture.

Table 9 What Parents Value in a School across Clusters

		North Atlanta	**Midtown**	**Jackson**
Community/ Culture	The School is Culturally Competent	4.5	4.83	4.7
	I Feel Comfortable in the Building	3.8	3.16	4.85
	Parent Involvement is High	4.0	3.33	2.7
	I Know Other Families There	3.33	3.0	2.7
		3.91	**3.58**	**3.74**
Academics	Class Size	4.5	4.83	3.4
	Teacher Credentials	3.8	3.66	4.1
	Specific Program Offerings	3.66	3.33	3.85
	Test Scores and Graduation Rates	3.8	3.0	2.0
		3.94	**3.70**	**3.34**

Quality	Quality Activity and Program Offerings	4.16	4.66	4.4
	Good Reputation	3.66	3.8	3.3
	High College Admissions	3.8	3.0	2.4
	Nice Facilities	2.33	3.66	2.6
		3.49	**3.78**	**3.17**
Safety/ Security	The Campus is Clean	3.0	3.5	3.4
	Confidence in the Discipline Policies	2.16	3.0	3.14
	Confidence in the Monitoring of Behavior	2.83	3.0	3.14
	School is in a Safe Neighborhood	3.0	2.5	2.14
		2.75	**3.00**	**2.95**
Convenience	It is Our Local School	3.66	2.66	3.85
	Proximity to Home or Work	2.5	3.5	3.85
	There's a Bus Route	2.66	1.66	1.85
	They Offer Aftercare	2.33	2.0	2.4
		2.79	**2.45**	**2.98**

4.4.2.1 Seekers

"And so, we wanted a school that would fit those needs." – JR middle-class biracial mom to a child who is twice exceptional

One group of parents that clearly evolved are those I call "seekers." These parents made multiple school moves as they sought out a particular environment for their children whether for academic, social, or cultural reasons. Without exception these parents were raising Black or bi-racial children. For these parents their initial school decision was typically informed by a desire to balance quality with diversity. These families strongly valued a quality education for their children while also wanting their children to not be in a social environment where they were the racial minority. This accords with prior work on neighborhood choice and race. Past studies have found Black adults to be the most open to a range of racial demographics in their neighborhood (Krysan and Bader 2007) and studies on mixed-race couples have found a preference for diverse neighborhoods (Gabriel and Spring 2019) and that Black families must often choose between diversity and quality in their school search (Hastings et al. 2009). Families in my study were at

times disappointed in the academic rigor or discipline of their local schools but sometimes were also disappointed in the level of diversity across many private schools in the area.

These parents were not willing to take a chance on their child's overall experience. Therefore, they used their resources to make a move when they felt the school they initially chose was no longer serving their child. Here's what TP, an upper-middle class Black mother had to say:

> So we're on principal number four and five now in three years. And it's, I will tell you now. Last year I started looking at private schools for my kids. And this fall, I started taking them on private school tours. My daughter did a shadow day yesterday at a private high school. And we spent, we didn't go anywhere for fall break. We spent fall break going on tours. And that's the school choice I'm making. It breaks my heart, because I thought my kids would be in public schools. And maybe we might come back to them at some point. But I can't, I know for sure I can't send my son to that middle school.

This choice was particularly distressing for TP because she had chosen her home in large part because of the well-regarded public schools. She sought out a home in a neighborhood that was racially diverse but met the family's upper-middle class lifestyle including a reputation for great schools. Having to opt out had never been her plan.

Another parent went to great lengths to enroll her children in some of the best private schools around. Her daughter spent some time at a nationally recognized charter school and went on to attend a prestigious boarding school in the Northeast. Her son now attends Pace Academy, a well-regarded private college preparatory school in Buckhead. She has moved all across the city and back while putting together scholarships and other funding to get her children a quality education. A self-described poor Black mother, SS was heavily influenced by her own impoverished upbringing and said this about her efforts to find the best fit for her child:

> But the school that we were zoned to in the West End, I can't remember the name of it. But it's closed now.… But it was horrible. Horrible. What the hell. And from that moment on, my very thought was how am I going to keep her in a good school?

Sometimes parents became seekers when realizing their children needed something different; usually because their children were exceptionally gifted and/or had special needs. 7 of the 19 families I interviewed had a child with a diagnosis requiring accommodations. Two of the families remained in their public school and felt the public school system ultimately provided for their child's needs. One family was in a public charter school the entirety of their child's education and with the exception of learning loss/socialization challenges of Covid, felt positive about how their child's needs were met. The remaining four families have made changes to their child's education, moving from a public to a private setting to better meet their children's needs. And because many of these parents initially had their children in public school, their other children frequently remained in the local school. This has often involved not only the financial burden of a private education, but also increased demands on their time as they advocate for their kids or drive, sometimes multiple children, around the city.

4.4.2.2 Contented

"We couldn't pay for a better experience." – CK middle-class White mother

The next group that emerged from my data consists of families I call "contented" families. These families live in some of the most privileged areas and essentially get a private education for free. These families tend to have chosen their neighborhood based on the school's reputation and have not given much consideration to outside choices with the exception of two families who specifically mentioned feeling pressure from their social networks to make even "better" choices by moving to the suburbs of East Cobb or going private. Four of these families are in the North Atlanta cluster where some of the wealthiest and whitest enclaves within the city are located. These parents tend to work in financial services, management or sales although there is also a healthcare worker, educator and social worker in the mix. One of these families did one

year at a charter school but did not have a positive experience there and one parent went private to better meet the needs of a dyslexic child. Otherwise, these parents have been overwhelmingly happy with their school experience even as a number of them acknowledge their ability to go private should they ever choose to do so. A number of these parents also point to special curricula tracks such as gifted education, the dual language immersion program, arts programming or the International Baccalaureate program as being critical to their decision to stay. CK a middle-class White mom discusses her child's experience with the local schools:

> We didn't have kids yet. But we just really set ourselves up so we wouldn't have to move. That was what we were thinking about. . .We looked at the schools and the Grady cluster. I mean, at the time, the school where we ended up using, Springdale Park didn't even exist. So we were looking at Morningside. And that fits very nice. You know, it's a very good school. . .So we had a private school option in mind, the whole time she was in school. But the Springdale, her Springdale Park education was superlative. . . And because she was GATE[9] identified, there really wasn't any reason for us, academically, to think about moving her.

4.4.2.3 Champions

"We're just not a private school family." – SM middle-class White mother

The final group of parents that emerged from my data are "local school champions" who see attending the local school as a moral imperative or an important part of their identity. These parents tended to work in education, social work, the arts, healthcare, or government although there is a parent in tech and one in marketing. Three of the families have a parent who is a K-12 teacher. Four of these families are in the Jackson cluster, in which White students are currently the minority, although some schools and neighborhoods are undergoing intensive gentrification. Many of these families went so far as to say, the particular school did not matter – they were committed to the public schools regardless of where they wound up. AB an upper-middle class White mother has the following to say about their decision to attend the local schools:

[9] GATE stands for Gifted and Talented Education

> Yeah, [ex-husband] did a little research. I think our opinion was that all the in town schools were like probably at the same level of education advancement, parental involvement…and we felt committed to public schools. And it wasn't super important that we, you know, know every detail about it. . . You know, I have to say I think a lot of people would say I'm a risk-taking parent. . ., but I heard the principal speak. And I liked what I heard from him. And yeah. I think it wasn't really much of a choice for us. It's just what we're going to do.

These families also tend to go beyond being committed to public schools to being particularly committed to the idea of the local neighborhood school. For these interviewees, families opting out to attend a charter school or utilizing interdistrict transfer are judged similarly to those families opting out for private school. Here's CF, a middle-class Black mom on people in her neighborhood not choosing the local school:

> It is also, …some people are from, you know, New York. Really big cities or whatever. But some people are from rural parts or just other parts outside of metro Atlanta. So then they bring this, they come and they buy these houses and like you know, 'we're here!' But then it's like oh yeah, we're going to go to the private school. We're going to do the charter school, or whatever. Like okay, well, that's really a thing. Because if you don't come, things don't have their, you know, it's longer for things to be different. Or whatever you don't like. Why don't you come and help get it, get it up to what you don't like? You know, that sort of thing. So there's that part too.

These families were also very aware of their status as gentrifiers. In keeping with other literature on why some middle-class gentrifying parents enroll in the local school, these parents also had less concern about the potential risks to their children academically but were more concerned with how their children would grow as individuals. Many felt that exposure to diversity was an important aspect of their child's development as citizens while parents also acknowledged they weren't taking *that* much of a risk since there were always outside options or ways to supplement their kids' education. Middle-class White mom MB says:

> I mean, I think one way our race and class has affected our participation at Toomer or our ability to feel completely at home being, with our kids being there. Completely comfortable with the kids being there. Is because we know we can support them outside of school if we need to. You know, they both take music lessons at Guitar Shed, and we can afford that. You know, it's also like, I can, it's because of white privilege that I can

> say I know integrated schools are best for everybody. Like, I'm not living the only place in Atlanta where I can live. And having to send my kids to the only school in my neighborhood. Like, we can afford to live here, you know. So even things I feel like are sort of, are I mean, I think sending our kids to a Title I school that's majority Black is what we would do no matter what. It is also in this climate, an anti-racist opt-in for us.

4.4.3 Choosing Neighborhoods, Choosing Schools

Besides type of school choice approach, the other main pattern that emerged was a distinction across clusters in terms of what parents looked for in a school. Using the Whiteboard function, see Appendix A3, I surveyed parents on what features were most important to them in choosing a school. For the sample as a whole, the most important items were 1) the school is culturally competent, 2) there are quality activity and program offerings, 3) I feel comfortable in the building, and 4) class size. The least important items across the entire sample were 1) they offer aftercare, 2) there's a bus route, 3) nice facilities, and 4) the school is in a safe neighborhood. However, the patterns across clusters were quite varied and are covered in more detail in the tables below. Based on prior work, I expected the proximity of the school to matter more (Frankenberg 2018; Burgess et al. 2015). But perhaps the fact that most of the sample attended a school within their cluster made this less relevant for most parents.

4.4.3.1 North Atlanta

For North Atlanta parents, the schools were almost always a part of their neighborhood calculus; at least initially. A number of North Atlanta parents were considering moving and thinking through what that would mean for their children's schooling. One parent had specifically chosen their home initially for the local school, but as the family began looking for more space and looking into the future towards middle and high school, she was having to reconsider what was most important.

North Atlanta mom, DE says:

> And so we knew that a lot of people in Atlanta go the private school route. And we knew that we wanted to do public school. At least that's kind of, that was our thought process…And we wanted to have a house in a good school district. And so we did purposefully look in the Jackson [elementary] school district, which is the elementary school we're zoned for, to find a home.

But now that the family is thinking of moving, she says:

> And then we're thinking okay, then if we move, where should we move? And so we were, that was kind of why we've been debating the school system more recently, in terms of there's kind of Walton high school is in, like on the perimeter. And it's considered to be, at least by what we've read, is one of the best high schools in Georgia. And has I think it was 36 AP classes or something. It has all these resources. But then the high schools, I have a lot of friends who are doctors, because you know, I work with them. So they moved to this area for the same reason. But once their kids got into those schools, they were like oh, it's too competitive. People are just about getting into those AP classes and getting into an Ivy League college, and they just stress them out. And they didn't like it. And they'd go to school all day, then they'd come home and do all these online classes, just to stay ahead of their, just to stay on par with their friends. And so, because of that they ended up going to private school.

Another North Atlanta mom mentions that she has become very attached to her neighborhood. But again, the family would like more space. And she feels torn because her children are in two different schools. She loves the local neighborhood school that her daughter had attended and where now her son attends. But her daughter had recently gotten a dyslexia diagnosis and was going to a specialized private school some distance away.

> So we talk about moving a lot. We have for years. But it's been hard to leave. The tricky thing too is [son], his school is a block and a half down the sidewalk. [daughter], and I don't know, you may get into some of this later. But she has dyslexia and dyscalculia, and we just found that out last January. And so she is at a specialty school in Marietta. This discussion is coming back up, because it's a lot of driving for me to get her there. He doesn't want to leave his school. We like our church a lot, which is five minutes away. So. So do you move for a school? I don't know.

Overall, North Atlanta parents were content with their school experience. Since many of them had moved to the area for the schools, this fits previous literature that finds parents who choose a school tend to be more satisfied with the school (Teske and Schneider 2001). Some of

the Contented parents also had features of Seekers or Champions in the sense that they would be open to moving to a different district or going private if they felt it was necessary, but they really preferred to be in public school so long as their experience was a good one.

North Atlanta parents ranked more options as "most important" than did Midtown or Jackson parents, indicating that perhaps many more items were on their checklist for a "good" school. The top three items ranked in close succession. For these parents academics ranked highest with it being in the top category 62.5% of the time and at least moderately important 87.5% of the time. This was followed closely by school culture/sense of community which was most important 58% of the time and at least moderately important 87% of the time. Quality came next and was top ranked 42% of the time while being at least moderately important 84% of the time. Safety and convenience ranked well below the other three items with convenience being least important 42% of the time and safety least important 46% of the time.

For these parents, so many things ranked at the top of their list it may be more significant to note what was always at the bottom: convenience. On the other hand, for those parents who were Champions in this cluster, convenience was at the top of their list; it was important to them that they attend the neighborhood school, but they wanted that school to be of good quality. Overall, parents in this cluster frequently mentioned the quality of the teachers or specific programs such as AP classes, fine arts, dual language immersion (DLI) or the IB program as reasons they were happy with the school. There were no Seekers in this neighborhood.

Table 10 North Atlanta Parents on Schools

Family category	**Decision-making themes**	**Top school considerations**	**Illustrative quote(s)**
Contented (67%) 2White parents 1 Black Latina 1 South Asian	Quality of teachers and programs, school reputation, prestige, size of	Academics & school culture, quality & safety	And then she loves, loves North Atlanta. She's an artsy person, and they have a real cool fine arts and performing arts, and she does

	the school, the arts, sports, dual language immersion, diversity, socialization		orchestra and fine arts. And so, we feel great about that.
Champions (33%) 2 White parents	Diversity, school quality, neighborhood fit and amenities, socialization	Convenience, academics, school culture	And we wanted a diverse school, and we wanted a good school. And those are hard to find. And so, we needed somewhere we could afford to live… And it hit all the buttons for us, it really did. The schools, the scoring wasn't real great. But we came, we liked the area. There was affordable living. We like the socioeconomic diversity, because that's something we didn't really grow up with. . . And the diversity is just, I mean, it's just like, it's almost like the perfect little combination within the schools.

4.4.3.2 Midtown

Many of the parents who chose to live in Midtown were specifically drawn to these neighborhoods because of the urban nature of the area and the diversity. JA, a Black father in a mixed-raced marriage had this to say about why they chose to live in the area:

> We started looking around for houses and it was in part about what we could afford. I think we also wanted to be in a place where you know, we weren't tipping the scale, in terms of gentrification, where some of that had already happened for good or for bad. And we also wanted to be in a place where we thought that there would be some diversity long-term. Because my wife is White, and we wanted to be in a place where there was a mix of races and diversity. And we kind of felt like this was an area, because of the history of the neighborhood, that was never going to completely be one way or another. And that in particular, there would always be Black families who would want to make the neighborhood home.

Other parents felt the area matched their lifestyle as upper-middle class, liberal families as well as a place where their Black children would be safe.

SB, an upper-middle class Black mother said:

> So it was also my desire to have a village for them, like a true village of moms and dads who can help raise these children, especially as Black children. So that's kind of what drove me in town. And then it was a matter of where. Like I wanted an 80's-ish neighborhood where they're free range and they can ride their bikes and they can make friends. And so it was really this quest for a more diverse, for a village, a more diverse village that drove us in town…Do I wish there were more Black families? 100%. But it's more in line with my values, in that you know, it's a more liberal neighborhood. I see Stacey Abrams signs. My parents were afraid to put up an Obama sign during the 2008 election in our house. I can't live like that. And they went to Black colleges. But I am unapologetically Black. That's just how I am. So I need that, to be respected. I need my kids to feel safe riding around. Now, are they 100% safe? Do I feel 100% safe? No. But I feel much better than if we had lived in East Cobb.

For Midtown parents, quality (54% most important and 83% at least moderately important) and community (50% most important and 87.5% at least moderately important) were both rated at the top followed by academics (46% most important and 79% at least moderately important). Safety and convenience ranked somewhere in the middle; safety because it was of moderate concern to most parents and convenience because parents were rather evenly split on the significance of this item. A number of parents mentioned during our interviews how the reputation, specifically of two very White elementary schools, had been a factor in their decision but that also the diversity of the middle school had also been important. Even if parents did not state this in so many words, they were aware that middle school was a time when sense of belonging would be crucial and actively sought this sense of belonging – some parents by seeking out greater diversity in middle school and some by seeking less.

The approach to school choice in this district differed along racial lines. For Black families, the choice of neighborhood and choice of school were disconnected. They wanted a diverse, urban area with amenities and a liberal atmosphere. On the other hand, they prioritized academic excellence and were willing to look outside of the neighborhood school to get it. Although these parents also valued diversity in the school, their choice sets seemed to narrow on

quality first, and then diversity. White families in this school zone were much more motivated by stability. That is not to say that the parents of color did not desire stability, but perhaps felt they could not afford to prioritize stability. Black parents who desired a neighborhood school still opted out when they felt the child's experience was subpar. White parents were more likely to feel like they could weather any disruptions or unevenness in the school experience for the sake of continuity and thus in this instance were less likely to opt out. There were no Champions in this neighborhood.

Table 11 Midtown Parents on Schools

Family category	**Decision-making themes**	**Top school considerations**	**Illustrative quote(s)**
Seekers (67%) 3 Black parents 1 White Latina	Racial diversity, specifically not being the only Black student, test scores, discipline, children with exceptional needs	Quality/reputation, Academics, Safety/facilities	Basically, we looked at the test scores and the community, and really the house. . . So at the time, it was maybe 15-ish percent Black. Which wasn't great. But I knew the middle school became more Black, because that's what was important to me as a Black mom. And the high school, which was Grady at the time, was more Black. They're very organized. They're very disciplined. There's no chaos.
Contented (33%) 2 White parents	Stability, community, kid excelling, parent involvement	Convenience, school community	It feels like, it's a very warm and supportive community. [Son]'s done really well there. . .He tested into the gifted program. I think, like whenever it was first available to him. . . and has just really excelled academically. . . I think Mary Lin's been very supportive of [daughter]. There's been a lot of extra tutoring and different intervention programs and stuff that she's been a part

			of. So I feel like they've been really good about supporting her journey as well. And you know, we went through some pretty major family upheaval when my husband and I got divorced. And I felt like just that the teachers in the school were really supportive of us as a family as well.

4.4.3.3 Jackson

Families in the Jackson cluster had often mentioned moving to the area because it was convenient for work or close to family and friends. While maybe not an initial motivation, lots of families wound up loving the area for its character as well. Middle-class White mom, MB discusses her perception of how Kirkwood is different to the areas North of her:

> I mean, I think affluence is a big difference. I feel like Druid Hills is a very established, like sort of old money established, or new money but really big houses. . . I think that there's more space for quirkiness in Kirkwood and EAV, these neighborhoods, than there might be other places, in terms of like, you know, the appearance of your house. Our house is green, and we have colorful porch front, like we painted our kid's drawing on the mailbox and that's not an issue.

Middle-class Black mom, CF also talks about how the neighborhood has grown on her and how nice it is to be able to get downtown easily:

> I think it's pretty diverse, which is nice. It is very eclectic, which is also interesting. And then of course there are lots of new things happening. Restaurants, you know, businesses, that continue to make it attractive. It is very centrally located. You know, it's smack dab in the city, right off Moreland. . . So while we take MARTA, so we park at a station and ride it. So we don't like, get on the bus, take the train to get wherever. But that type of convenience is desirable for me. Like I'm a kind of recent, there's such and such going on in, you know, at State Farm, let's go. And we hop in the car and we're there in a matter of minutes.

Parents in the Jackson cluster were overwhelmingly motivated by a desire for diversity, and not just passively. These parents took a more active approach to diversity, by adopting anti-racist practices or promoting Diversity and Inclusion programming. Much of this activity was

mediated through the school or other local institutions such as the library. Parents in this cluster also made note of the presence of LGBTQ children that went unaddressed in discussions with parents in other clusters. There were only two parents who made explicit mention of school quality and academics as being important and both of those parents opted out of the local schools. Whereas North Atlanta parents tended to rank lots of things as most important, Jackson families were more likely to rank lots of things as least important. Overall, the Jackson parents reported looking for very different things in their schools. First of all, school culture/sense of community ranked at the top of the list by a great deal. It ranked most important 61% of the time and at least moderately important 82.5% of the time. Academics was ranked most important only 36% of the time but was at least moderately important 79% of the time. Convenience, quality and safety were all ranked moderately important.

Table 12 Jackson Parents on Schools

Family category	**Decision-making themes**	**Top school considerations**	**Illustrative quote(s)**
Champion (57%) 4 White parents	Diversity, particularly racial diversity, neighborhood school, inclusive	School culture & community, Convenience	But we just felt like we, our kids will be fine in public school. And I feel like I want my kids to go to school with their neighbors, and go to school with people who they will interact with for their whole lives. So it wasn't a big part of the decision. . . Because we kind of felt committed to public schools regardless of where we'd be.
Contented (29%) 1 Black parent 1 Asian/White biracial parent	Community, stability, diversity	School culture, academics, quality, convenience and safety were all about equally important	It was much more a focus on providing supports to all sorts of children for excellence in education. So a longer school day. A longer calendar. Connection to a YMCA to take, everyone was taking swim lessons then. Everyone was taking strings then. . . And I liked

			the idea of having the continuity of the K-8 school. So initially that was a draw. And then as time went on, it really was just our school community.
Seeker (14%) 1 Black parent	Excellence	Quality & academics, school culture	So I was just, like DeKalb didn't work. Gwinnett County didn't. Where is he going to go? So let's do what we need to do for my daughter and see what happens with him. So, he went to Whitefoord Elementary. Who knew? It ended up working for him. And . . . it was a failing, poor, low income school. But it worked for him. Of course, I still had to fight, and go to five hour IEP meetings, and demand that they put certain things in place and do this and that and this and that. But the point is, working well for my son was any school that was willing to accept my demands.

4.5 Discussion

White parents were heavily invested in the idea of the neighborhood school. How parents expressed that preference sometimes varied, but attending a neighborhood school was very important to them as a group. It often outweighed or ranked equally with concerns about academics and quality. The school as an institution was an important source of community for a number of White parents in particular. On the other hand, many Black parents expressed that their sense of community was less tied to the neighborhood or school (even if some desired such a community, they did not always feel they found it). Instead, Black parents often referred to church or Black social organizations such as sororities or service clubs as more central to their notion of community. Black parents were also more likely to state that the features of the home

more than the features of the neighborhood were important to their housing decision. Whereas White families sometimes mentioned sacrificing space in order to stay in their neighborhood. This dichotomy is not exact. There were certainly Black families who found community in their neighborhoods and schools and White families who felt no particular allegiance to their neighborhood, but there did seem to be some distinction here by race.

The social position of parents was highly relevant to their choice of neighborhoods and of schools. However, for White parents, which aspect of their social position was most salient varied across geography. Parents who were more sensitive to their class position were heavily concentrated in the North Atlanta cluster while parents who were more sensitive to their racial identity were more heavily concentrated in the Jackson cluster. Were these parents responding to signals in their choice of neighborhood or were they signaling something about themselves through their choice? I would argue both. This reciprocal nature of social and geographic positioning is what is at the heart of the concept of fit (Kafka 2022).

In essence, White parents fell into two camps based on which place of privilege they were operating from. Although parents sometimes struggled to discuss their privilege, they were obviously aware of their positionality as they often framed their choice of school in relation to their position. For example, for White parents in North Atlanta racial diversity was not a concern. When I would bring up race many parents would give very limited responses or make claims about the greater importance of class as a segregating force. For these parents, quality was more important than diversity. Parents were operating from a place of racial privilege which allowed them to largely ignore the role of race. Many of these parents utilized a color-blind framing of their neighborhood and school choices (Bonilla-Silva 2006). On the other hand, these

parents were very sensitive to class distinctions and frequently downplayed their own wealth in relation to other, richer parents.

Alternatively, in the Jackson cluster, White parents were very concerned about racial diversity and were able to speak eloquently on the subject. However, their dismissal of school quality as being significant is an example of their class privilege in action. These parents struggled to theorize about the intersection of race and class even as they acknowledged its existence. Parents pointed to the value their children would accrue through exposure to other racial groups, a form of value extraction such as racial capitalism would anticipate. And even when parents would not be so crude as to say so, many hinted at the value that their presence and involvement in the local school would bring.

The Black parents in my sample were all middle to upper-middle class. Even the one parent who labeled herself as poor recognized that she had access to middle-class social and educational capital. These parents differed from the White parents in that they were equally motivated by their desire for quality and equity. Note here I use the term equity rather than diversity. For White parents seeking diversity, most of them thought of it in terms of exposure or as a benefit for their child. However, for Black parents seeking diversity, the concern was about protecting their children from harm. They were not necessarily motivated by a desire to integrate. In fact, some of these parents had traumatic memories of their own education as the sole Black child in a White space. Rather these parents felt that the "best" schools could also be scary places for their children. As such, their desire for diversity was not a desire for exposure to people of other races, but a desire for others of the same race as a form of safety.

Black parents in this study were sensitive to both the race and class aspects of their identity, but how their race and class position informed their neighborhood and school choices

diverged. The middle-class Black parents of my sample often leveraged their class position to access nicer homes in nicer neighborhoods and/or to access private schools. On the other hand, even when Black parents embraced their racial and/or ethnic identity positively, their response to race in the context of schools was primarily one of harm reduction in primarily White spaces. There are a few contrary examples such as the Latina mother who was so pleased that her child's enrollment in the DLI program gave her a closer sense of connection to her heritage and a Black mother who had a positive experience with an Afro-centric charter school.

4.5.1 Limitations and Conclusions

One limitation of my study may include the sampling design. Although the sampling design was purposeful in the sense that I was specifically recruiting parents of school-aged children from particular school zones, within that design the actual recruitment of participants hinged on convenience and snowball sampling. The study is not generalizable to other locations outside of the specific school clusters that served as my sampling frame. However, as this study is exploratory in nature, this design is appropriate. I attempted to achieve a more purposive sample to some extent, by spending a great deal of effort up front in recruiting a geographically and demographically varied sample. Although I wanted to be more flexible in my recruitment than a strict quota approach would allow, I did have a general sense of the variation I was seeking that guided my recruitment efforts. Nevertheless, I struggled to recruit families from the lower end of the socioeconomic spectrum as well as Hispanic families, so my results mostly speak to how middle- and upper-class Black and White parents approach school choice. Furthermore, there was typically only one parent present during the interview, making it difficult to ascertain what role the parents as a unit may have played in making school decisions.

However, based on my interviews and prior work, the work of choosing a school seems to remain primarily the mother's job (Brown 2022).

The other main limitation is also somewhat inescapable given the nature of the research, and this is accounting for researcher bias both in the sense of my presence potentially skewing responses and the potential for my own biases to affect the analysis. One way to handle this is to acknowledge the various roles and values I bring to my research design, data collection, and data analysis. As a researcher, it might be considered that I am in a position of formal authority. On the other hand, as a middle-aged, middle-class White woman with children in public schools, I might be seen more as a contemporary or a peer. How my research subjects view me and how I view myself are an important part of understanding the data collection process and to framing my analysis. This is often referred to as reflexivity. Furthermore, my values and beliefs about the values of a well-integrated public school system may be operating as a background assumption in my work.

This chapter assessed the contributions of racial identity, class identity, and place meaning to notions of social fit. As parents consider neighborhoods and schools, they may exclude places that "are not for people like us" and focus on places where there might be a closer fit based on their social position. However, parents varied in terms of which identities were most salient to their choice and in their responses to reputational markers as they winnowed down their choice sets. Some parents were more attuned to notions of risk, while others framed their choices in terms of opportunities. These insights, together with my quantitative research, provide a broad overview of the role of place and identity in the continuing segregation of U.S. schools.

5 "WHERE DO YOUR KIDS GO TO SCHOOL? IT'S THE ATLANTA CONVERSATION IN SO MANY WAYS."

> And then I was in Charlotte last week for work, and talking with a person there who is from Atlanta. She grew up in Buckhead, which is like a unicorn. I've never met someone who actually grew up there. She's in her 60's I think. And she said oh, my sister taught in APS. Where do your kids go to school? And it's the Atlanta conversation in so many ways. – MB, White Middle-class Mom

This dissertation took up the question of how children are sorted across schools. Addressing a complex social issue requires acknowledging that many social processes have a structural antecedent, but that individuals and groups are also active participants in creating, changing, or challenging society. Given that most work on school segregation has focused on structural factors and most studies of school choice have examined the downstream effects of school choice, my project sought to connect the macro to the micro levels by examining the dynamics of school choice across a range of neighborhood contexts. I do this through a series of three studies: a quantitative multivariate analysis predicting enrollment in the assigned public school based on various dimensions of neighborhood change, a comparison of the racial enrollment gap between neighborhoods and schools across all nine clusters in Atlanta Public Schools, and interviews with parents of school-aged children in Atlanta on their neighborhood and school decisions.

5.1 Key Findings

My study of neighborhood context and school enrollment patterns sought to capture any compositional and contextual effects of the neighborhood on parents' school choice. This included studying various dimensions of neighborhoods including racial composition, socioeconomic composition, neighborhood stability and/or change, social networks and place reputations and identities. This study has important implications for how school segregation

persists even as neighborhoods are becoming less segregated and more diverse. Overall findings suggest that families are sensitive to the neighborhood context when it comes to choosing a school. However, various aspects of the neighborhood may carry different weights for different families and how families respond to those signals may also differ in important ways. Below I enumerate and further explain key findings and contributions of this work.

1. In families headed by married parents, parents with at least a college degree and/or parents who make more than $100,000 a year the child is less likely to attend their local public school.

Prior research has shown that wealthier and more educated families are better situated to enact their choice preferences (Ball et al. 1995; Saporito and Sohoni 2007; Sikkink and Emerson 2008). Thus, this finding is not particularly surprising, but is still worth mentioning as further evidence of this relationship. However, my study found that all else being equal Black families are no more or less likely to enroll in the local school than White families. This suggests that it is not something about the values or beliefs of White and Black families that leads to group differences in school enrollment, but rather something operating at the meso or macro level. This interpretation is further substantiated by prior research that shows even when parents express the same values or preferences around schools, which Black and White parents often do, they can wind up in very different places (Hastings et al. 2009). For instance, Kafka found that even parents who started with the same choice set initially, could wind up in vastly different schools as various influences come to bear on the winnowing of their choice sets (Kafka 2022).

2. Neighborhood stability is a significant predictor of families enrolling in the local public school.

My logistic regression models predicting enrollment in the assigned public school attempted to parse out various aspects of the neighborhood and what they might mean for school choice. I estimated four different models using family sociodemographic predictors, linear neighborhood measures, and categorical neighborhood change over time both by race and class. One finding that stood out was the consistent role of neighborhood stability across all models. Neighborhood stability was operationalized as percentage of the neighborhood comprised of new residents. New residents consisted of anyone who had moved in within the last five years. For each percentage increase in new residents at the neighborhood level, families were 40% less likely to enroll in the assigned public school, independent of economic or racial change. Also relevant to this discussion is the measure of stability used. Historically in the literature neighborhood stability is calculated either as sociocultural stability (the residential mix by race, ethnicity, class, religion, etc.) or as economic stability (the neighborhood is not declining or ascending relative to other areas). Operationalizing stability as a measure of newcomers/oldtimers is not common, despite the fact that this distinction is frequently of interest in qualitative work on neighborhoods (Saracino-Brown 2009; Osman 2011).

This is a significant finding, because there is relatively little research on neighborhood stability and residential or school preferences outside of more general work on im/mobility. What we do know is that residential stability is often linked to place attachment and social ties (Dawkins 2006; Brown and Perkins 1992). And that perceptions of stability/change are often linked to physical cues such as loss and or replacement of older buildings, homes, and retail outlets (Aitken 1990). The only other study known to examine stability and school choice found that socioeconomically stable neighborhoods had smaller white enrollment gaps in the local school than many other neighborhood types and that the white enrollment gap in

socioeconomically stable neighborhoods also changed the least over the course of a decade (Candipan 2019). Although Candipan's measure is not directly comparable to my own measure of stability, Coulton and colleagues have found that most change in a neighborhood is due to changes between incomers and leavers rather than a change among stayers (Coulton et al. 2012). This suggests that what Candipan is capturing is likely also associated with a greater number of neighborhood stayers.

3. Families in neighborhoods undergoing substantial racial/ethnic change are less likely to enroll in the local public school.

There are two possible explanations for this finding. One is the racial turnover thesis, coming out of the Chicago school of ecological change. This theory states that urban neighborhoods go through cycles and that as a new group moves into an area, their arrival further propels the leaving of the previously established group whether due to conflict, avoidance, or changes to the environment in terms of housing costs, different shops and services, and so on. This pattern can be seen both in gentrification where middle- and upper-class families replace lower-class families and in white flight, where the arrival of Black or Hispanic families in a neighborhood precipitates a wave of White families moving out. The other interpretation is simply that change itself is destabilizing. However, given the fact that my categorical measure of socioeconomic change and my linear measures of gentrification did not seem to have the same effect indicates that racial composition is directly relevant to how parents think about schools, regardless of how relevant race is to how they think about neighborhoods.

4. In the context of Atlanta, each of the three largest racial/ethnic groups show distinct spatial patterns of school enrollment.

The neighborhood school gaps further support my interpretation of finding #3. In this instance there are neighborhoods that are whiter than their school enrollment suggesting that even when White families choose a neighborhood, they may not choose the neighborhood school. On the other hand, all clusters at all levels (elementary, middle and high) with a single exception had a higher enrollment of Black students than were represented in the neighborhood. This could partially be due to fewer White students enrolling leaving behind a larger proportion of Black students but could also reflect some Black families from the six other clusters in APS, where there are concentrated pockets of Black poverty, seeking a "better" option through intradistrict transfer. Hispanic students had a distinctly different pattern where they were way overrepresented in one particular cluster. Even though this cluster already served the largest Hispanic population, it likely also drew additional Hispanic students from elsewhere in APS due to its focus on dual-language immersion programs.

5. The APS neighborhood-school enrollment gaps by race are largest for Middle schools and most extreme for Black students.

The other significant finding regarding the neighborhood-school gaps concerns when the gaps are largest and for whom. The gaps are largest in middle school and are particularly large for Black students across all levels of schooling and all clusters. Prior research has suggested that even when White and/or middle-class families are willing to take a chance on their urban public elementary school, they are less comfortable with this choice when it comes to middle and high school (Posey-Maddox 2013; Kimelberg 2014; Butler 2021). However, that does not explain why parents then return to the local school, at least in my data, for high school. There appears to be something specific to middle school that feels uncertain to parents and particularly to White parents. Black students are overrepresented in practically every cluster at every level in APS

even as the level of the White gap varies across clusters and level of schooling. This indicates more than simply a pattern of Whites opting out leaving a greater proportion of Black students in the school. This suggests there is also spatial sorting across schools happening within the Black population of Atlanta. Although this aspect of the study did not consider class, it is plausible that middle-class Black families, who are more likely to live in lower-income areas compared to their White counterparts (South et al. 2005; Reardon et al. 2015), are seeking educational mobility for their children.

6. APS parents can be categorized into three groups based on their orientation to the school search: seekers, champions, and contented. There are spatial and racial patterns to the distribution of school choice orientation.

My interviews with parents in the North Atlanta, Midtown and Jackson clusters uncovered three different ways that parents approached the school decision. Some parents were solely motivated by finding the right fit or the best option for their child. These families had often moved between a variety of school types seeking a good fit. These families were concentrated in the Midtown cluster, even though Midtown schools have a largely positive reputation. However, the middle school there had been through some difficult leadership transitions and upheaval in recent years causing some parents to reconsider their decision and other parents were dealing with either children with exceptional needs and/or the desire for a diverse yet high quality school option for their children who were of color.

Champions are parents who were singularly committed to the idea of public school and were heavily invested in their child's school. Often these parents were White and had their children in a school that was predominately Black. These parents often worked in education or related fields. Champions desired a diverse environment for their children and were less

concerned about the quality of the school or alternately they took a color-blind approach to the issue arguing that they were invested in their local school regardless of the racial makeup. To the extent they cared about reputation, their focus was on improving the school's reputation, especially among other middle to upper-class White families. These families were heavily concentrated in the Jackson cluster.

Contented parents were families for whom schools had been an important aspect of their choice of neighborhood and were pleased with the quality of the experience they had received thus far. These families were slightly more common in the North Atlanta cluster, but this group was less spatially concentrated than the others. This group was also more racially mixed whereas the seekers were predominately parents to children of color and champions were largely parents of White children. A few parents overlapped between Champions and Contented in the sense that the schools had not influenced their neighborhood selection (a Champion trait), but the parents were happy with the local school as is and did not seek to improve it per se or see their role in the school as a duty or a mission (a Contented trait).

5.2 Bringing my results into focus

To better understand my results in Chapter 2, consider what may be happening at the neighborhood level when neighborhood composition is changing. For example, while socioeconomic segregation has recently increased, it is mostly the result of growing inequality. Therefore, the residents of the neighborhoods may remain unchanged even as their fortunes collectively rise or fall. Although it would be possible to have a neighborhood that is both seeing residential turnover and socioeconomic change. On the other hand, where racial change is happening, of necessity this means in-movers and out-movers. Racial change is not only more visible, but it can also be more destabilizing because the individuals involved are also changing –

disrupting social ties and neighborhood social cohesion. One caveat to this, however, is that it is possible to have a stable racially diverse neighborhood at the population level while having individual level turnover. These examples show why distinguishing between compositional changes and contextual changes is important. If a parent's school choice is a reaction to compositional change, then that points to the enduring stigma or privilege of different social groups. However, if parents are reacting to the in and out-mobility of individuals, then this points to the disruption in their social networks and daily social routines for reducing trust in community institutions. Therefore, it seems reasonable to conclude that both social networks and group status may be relevant to how neighborhoods impact school enrollment trends.

Chapter 3 examined the neighborhood-school racial enrollment gap in the city of Atlanta. There is a clear spatial distribution to the enrollment gap that is heavily influenced by the history of race and power in the city. The White population of Atlanta grew throughout the first half of the 20th century. Early on this was perhaps partly driven by the great migration, as Black residents left behind the Jim Crow south and went north looking for work (Jewell 2007). At the time, the remaining Black population was largely clustered due West of midtown/downtown, with some smaller clusters to the South ("The Changing Face of Atlanta" 2017). By 1952 city leaders sought to annex Buckhead to the North out of concern for the growing Black political power in the city. Buckhead was finally annexed in 1954, leading to a tripling of the White population overnight (Kruse 2005). However, there was soon to be another huge shift in the racial makeup of the city when just a scant decade later, school desegregation efforts began, leading some White families to leave. At the same time, suburbanization was happening, drawing even more White families out of the city (Keating 2001). During this period the remaining White population was largely clustered in the Buckhead area, with the Western,

Southern and Eastern portions of the city remaining majority Black ("The Changing Face of Atlanta" 2017). In recent years White residents have begun to return to the city while the largest growth of Black residents has been in the suburbs. Meanwhile, these historical patterns have led to a concentration of Black poverty in the center and to the southeast of town, a concentration of White affluence to the very north of town, a cluster of Middle-class Black residences to the southwest and a smattering of neighborhoods with a demographic mix by race and class in somewhat of a semi-circle from east to west to the north of downtown ("The Changing Face of Atlanta" 2017). What does this mean for school enrollment? Enrollment gaps by race can only exist when there are at least two sizable populations. Therefore, the gaps are largest in the neighborhoods with more racial diversity. However, the gaps were also larger in the majority White as compared to the majority Black neighborhoods. Race remains an important part of the neighborhood-school story, particularly in Atlanta.

In Chapter 4, social networks were found to influence Atlanta parents' decisions about where to live. The families I spoke with were all upwardly mobile or solidly upper-middle class living on the North or Eastside of the city – in the areas with the largest racial enrollment gaps. These families largely chose the neighborhoods they did because either their family and friends were there, it was close to their work, or they liked the social mix and amenities of the area. Whether it was personal or family networks, professional networks, or neighborhood social composition that drew them there, in the end families slotted into neighborhoods where they felt a sense of belonging or comfort. Interestingly, most respondents lacked knowledge of other parts of town. Therefore, it wasn't so much that the other parts of town had a negative reputation (although they did for a handful of respondents), but that parents selected neighborhoods based on what was familiar and ignored everything else.

The parents I interviewed often sought a neighborhood and a school that felt welcoming while also offering opportunities and amenities. Because of the history of White supremacy in our country, many White, upper-middle class or otherwise more privileged parents were able to find a school of sufficient[10] quality, with sufficient diversity, in an area of town where they felt at home. But some parents felt they had to choose between quality and diversity, leading to a divergence in those who focused primarily on finding a good social fit and those who focused on finding the best educational opportunity. Parents who were greatly concerned about racial or socioeconomic inequities often found themselves considering a different set of schools. On average, these schools had a greater proportion of Black students, poor students and/or had a less impressive reputation, but importantly these schools also had a small but vocal contingent of more advantaged parents. Parents who chose to focus on diversity often found a sense of belonging by being around other families who had the same values with regards to equity and education, but who also shared a similar background in terms of education/profession. Some of these families also made a place for themselves through volunteer work where they advocated for school improvements or promoted the school in the community.

Meanwhile, parents of color who sought high quality educational opportunities for their children were faced with some challenges. Some parents left the public schools – one parent went to an Afro-centric charter school, another parent chose a small private school geared towards very bright Black children. But because these schools were so small, they also struggled. The Afro-centric charter school was not able to meet the needs of the child in question, especially during the Covid-era of online learning, and the small private school closed due to lack of funding. In other instances, parents were faced with making space for themselves and

[10] What met the criteria for sufficient quality or sufficient diversity of course varied across families.

their families, which sometimes meant letting themselves feel uncomfortable in a space in return for access for their children and sometimes meant protesting school policies that were racist, sexist or classist.

5.3 How do place and choice work together in a system of racial capitalism?

Based on the social structural sorting perspective, existing segregation patterns inform our social networks, spatial knowledge and daily activities, which in turn color our attitudes and beliefs about places such as neighborhoods and schools. However, some neighborhoods are experiencing growing polarization while other neighborhoods are experiencing rapid change. Meanwhile, the neighborhood-school connection is still strong in some places but weakening in others. What do these developments mean for how students are sorted into schools? In this dissertation I argue that parents respond to both compositional and contextual features of the neighborhood in their formation of place-reputations. For instance, in my studies I found that parents are sensitive to the number of new residents, changes in neighborhood racial makeup, the location of their social networks, and issues of school quality and diversity. As a result of this information, which is further informed by and filtered through their own experiences in our system of unchecked capitalism and white supremacy, parents begin to build a mental list of acceptable and unacceptable schools. This suggests that social networks, social fit, and social status as formulated through race and class identity may all be relevant to the decision to enroll in the local school. Parents tended to prioritize a school that was diverse and of high quality, but whether parents were able to find a local public-school option that fit their social position and social disposition varied.

5.4 Limitations and recommendations

Inspired by calls to link the macro to the micro, to investigate the heterogeneity of neighborhood effects and to better understand the divergence of residential and school segregation, I undertook a three-part study of school choice within the context of changing neighborhoods. By utilizing a range of data, methods, and analytical tools I was able to shed light on how neighborhoods affect school segregation via compositional and contextual effects. And informed by theories of racial capitalism, spatial identity, place reputation, and spatial sorting I was able to connect my findings to a broader field of study.

Despite the many contributions of this work, there are also a number of limitations. Attempting to piece together information across various scales and methodologies to paint an overall picture of school segregation today, was a challenge. Regarding my first study, working with restricted data meant that I had limited access to the data. In future studies I hope to further use the very rich NCES data to consider more closely notions of neighborhood and school choice. In particular, I would like to model interactions by race, age and length of residence to see how individual demographics may affect the impact of neighborhood change on school enrollment. Perhaps being able to access this data under my own license will ease the difficulties of working with restricted data and allow me to more fully explore all that this dataset has to offer.

In my second study, discussed in Chapter 3, I focused on the White, Black and Hispanic neighborhood school gaps. I was unable to analyze the Asian, Pacific Islander, Native, Multi-racial and Other racial categories due to issues of sample size. Furthermore, in an ideal world, racial data would be more nuanced and instructive (López and Hogan 2021). Perhaps there are ways moving forward to examine the experiences of these populations in Atlanta through other

means such as a case study, focus groups or interviews. Other methodological challenges that if overcome would prove fruitful include future analyses at the neighborhood or school level, rather than the cluster level, pulling in private and charter school data to gain a larger picture of school enrollment across the city, and following student cohorts as they transition through the school system.

Finally, my third study which makes up Chapter 4 of this dissertation, faced the usual limitations of small-scale qualitative work, such as non-probability sampling and ability to generalize the findings. In particular, this study relied heavily on self-selection and snowball sampling which informed my sample and therefore my findings. My sample was almost exclusively middle and upper-middle class and primarily consisted of White and Black families. Moving forward, I would like to explore different recruitment strategies in my efforts to reach Latino and lower-income families in Atlanta. Additionally, a study of the remaining 6 clusters in APS would open up new areas of study, particularly around the intersection of race and class. I have also considered reworking my interview guide to better access information about social networks and social capital. These aspects of relational space have been important in other theoretical and empirical work, but to date my own research has not fully explored their potential relevance.

One of the potential criticisms of my approach has been the very big and broad nature of this dissertation. While this has perhaps kept me from a more narrow and deep treatment of select variables or hypotheses, there are long-term benefits to be found. This dissertation has laid the foundation for my research agenda for the next 5-10 years, at least, and perhaps for a lifetime. By coming at the question of school segregation and neighborhood change from multiple angles, I offer a more comprehensive view of this complex social issue and of the many

questions that remain. For instance, I have only just scratched the surface of my very rich qualitative data with Atlanta parents. There is much more yet to glean about how these parents think about neighborhoods and schools. I also hope to not only expand my research to other neighborhoods in Atlanta, but also to other cities in order to conduct some comparative work. I am personally very interested in how school segregation operates in less studied locales such as the suburbs and small towns. Other potential avenues of study arising from this work include paying greater attention to how place identity, attachment and reputation is created, sustained and contested as well as how the application, as opposed to the construction, of choice sets vary. I also want to build on previous work of mine looking at social networks, social capital, race and place identity to notions of trust and risk.

5.5 Where do we go from here?

In this dissertation I found that a change in neighborhood race/ethnic makeup was negatively associated with enrollment in the local school while the level of neighborhood stability (calculated as percentage of long-term residents) was positively associated with enrollment in the local school in a nationally representative dataset. However, my in-depth analysis of Atlanta identified a great deal of heterogeneity in how, where, when and for whom these aspects of the neighborhood mattered. In a city with relatively limited public choice compared to many other contemporary urban areas of the U.S., the neighborhood-school connection remains strong, especially for parents of White children. On the other hand, for middle and upper-middle class parents of nonwhite children, the neighborhood-school connection was more tenuous, even for parents who expressed a preference for neighborhood schools. Many families of color place a great deal of value on education while also navigating school settings that are not always welcoming and sometimes downright traumatic. Attention in

the literature has often focused on keeping White families in public schools to address segregation. However, nonwhite family decisions can also impact school stratification and are worthy of study too. In the end the question is, why can't we provide a diverse and quality school experience for everyone?

This brings me to the policy implications of my work. It is my contention that while policy ought to come from a people first orientation, policy as a tool is better suited to organizing environments than behavior. As a result, the question of how people interact with their environment and the social structure at large is hugely important. To that point, when the ultimate goal of concerned policy makers has been to decrease segregation, the approaches have always been based on the movement of people, whether through choice policies, redrawn boundaries, bussing, transfers, etc. However, if the ways in which schools are organized and funded reify race as a signifier of quality, then I think a better goal is to undermine that connection through quality improvements, thus unmaking the need for desegregation or choice policies at all.

As the White population proportion continues to decline in the U.S. (Frey 2020), the number of predominately White schools will also decline, making those schools increasingly competitive and exclusive. Meanwhile, at the other end of the spectrum we have already seen what shifting demographics combined with school choice have wrought – the closure of underenrolled schools that leave large swaths of the city educational deserts (Shaw 2017; Ewing 2018). So, while there may be reasons to prefer diversity for its own sake, if we are motivated by equity then ensuring quality options across the board (and to be clear, this does mean greater investments in certain schools) is the best way to break the association between race and quality. Improvements in quality will lead to 1) racial sorting having less impact on children's outcomes

which then means 2) race becomes less salient as a feature to sort on. In other words, getting the snowball effect to move in the opposite direction. However, this paradoxically requires an explicit attention to race upfront. As cities plan for growth, they must make sustained investments in underinvested areas, areas that are often low-income and/or nonwhite. Investments will decrease stigma and open up new options that are real choices for families seeking a neighborhood or school.

REFERENCES

Abascal, Maria and Delia Baldassarri. 2015. “Love Thy Neighbor? Ethnoracial Diversity and Trust Reexamined. *American Journal of Sociology 121*(3):722-82.

Aitken, Stuart C. 1990. “Local Evaluations of Neighborhood Change.” *Annals of the Association of American Geographers 80*(2):247-267.

Allums, Coleman and Scott Markley. 2020. “The New Suburban Secession: A Postfascist Turn in Atlanta’s Cityhood Movement.” *Metropolitics.* https://www.metropolitiques.eu/The-New-Suburban-Secession-A-Postfascist-Turn-in-Atlanta-s-Cityhood-Movement.html

Archibald, Mandy M., Rachel C. Ambagtsheer, Mavourneen G. Casey, and Michael Lawless. 2019. “Using Zoom Videoconferencing for Qualitative Data Collection: Perceptions and Experiences of Researchers and Participants.” *International Journal of Qualitative Methods 18*.

“APS Insights Data Explorer.” *Atlanta Public Schools.* https://apsinsights.org/data-explorer/. Accessed 4/29/2023.

Bleakly Advisory Group, McKibben Demographic Research, and Cropper GIS Consulting. 2010. “Atlanta Public Schools Demographic Study 2010.” https://www.atlantapublicschools.us/cms/lib/GA01000924/Centricity/Domain/3789/APS%20Demographic%20Study%20100920.pdf

Bader, Michael D.M., Annette Lareau, and Shani A. Evans. 2019. “Talk on the Playground: The Neighborhood Context of School Choice.” *City & Community 18*(2):483-508.

Ball, Stephen J., Richard Bowe, and Sharon Gewirtz. 1995. “Circuits of Schooling: A Sociological Exploration of Parental Choice of School in Social Class Contexts.” *The Sociological Review 43*(1):52–78.

Battistelli, Fabrizio, and Maria Galantino. 2019. “Dangers, Risks and Threats: An Alternative Conceptualization to the Catch-all Concept of Risk.” *Current Sociology 67*(1):64-78.

Beck, Ulrich. 1992. *Risk Society: Towards a New Modernity.* Translated by M. Ritter. London: Sage.

Bell, Courtney. 2005. “All Choices Created Equal? How Good Parents Select “Failing” Schools.” *National Center for the Study of Privatization in Education.*

Bell, Courtney. 2009a. “All Choices Created Equal? The Role of Choice Sets in the Selection of School.” *Peabody Journal of Education 84*(2):191-208.

Bell, Courtney. 2009b. “Geography in Parental Choice.” *American Journal of Education 115*(4): 493-521.

Bell, Monica C. 2020. “Located Institutions: Neighborhood Frames, Residential Preferences, and the Case of Policing.” *American Journal of Sociology 125*:917-973.

Benson, Michaela. 2014. “Trajectories of Middle-class Belonging: The Dynamics of Place Attachment and Classed Identities.” *Urban Studies, 51*(14):3097–3112.

Betancour, John J. and Janet L. Smith. 2016. *Claiming Neighborhood: New Ways of Understanding Urban Change.* Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Press.

Bifulco, Robert, Casey D. Cobb, and Courtney Bell. 2009. “Can Interdistrict Choice Boost Student Achievement? The Case of Connecticut’s Interdistrict Magnet School Program.” *Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis 31*(4):323-345.

Bifulco, Robert and Helen F. Ladd. 2007. “School Choice, Racial Segregation, and Test-score Gaps: Evidence from North Carolina’s Charter School Program.” *Journal of Policy Analysis and Management 26*(1):31-56.

Billingham, Chase M., and Matthew O. Hunt. 2016. “School Racial Composition and Parental Choice: New Evidence on the Preferences of White Parents in the United States.” *Sociology of Education 89*(2):99-117.

Bischoff, Kendra, and Laura Tach. 2018. “The Racial Composition of Neighborhoods and Local Schools: The Role of Diversity, Inequality, and School Choice.” *City & Community 17*(3):675-701.

Bischoff, Kendra, and Laura Tach. 2020. “School Choice, Neighborhood Change, and Racial Imbalance Between Public Elementary Schools and Surrounding Neighborhoods.” *Sociological Science* 7:75-99.

Blagg, Kristin, and Matthew M. Chingos. 2017. “Who Could Benefit from School Choice? Mapping Access to Public and Private Schools.” *Evidence Speaks Reports, 2*(12):1-8.

Bonilla-Silva, E. 2006. *Racism without Racists: Color-blind Racism and the Persistence of Racial Inequality in the United States.* Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers.

Bowe, Richard, Stephen Ball, and Sharon Gewirtz. 1994. “‘Parental Choice’, Consumption and Social Theory: The Operation of Micro-Markets in Education.” *British Journal of Educational Studies 42*(1):38–52. https://doi.org/10.2307/3122219

Brown, Bailey A. 2022. “Intensive Mothering and the Unequal School-search Burden.” *Sociology of Education 95*(1):3-22.

Brown, Barbara B., and Douglas D. Perkins. 1992. “Disruptions in Place Attachment.” Pp. 279-304 in *Place Attachment*, edited by I. Altman and S.M. Low.

Brown-Saracino, Japonica. 2009. *A Neighborhood That Never Changes: Gentrification, Social Preservation, and the Search for Authenticity*. University of Chicago Press.

Bruch, Elizabeth, and Fred Feinberg. 2017. “Decision-Making Processes in Social Contexts.” *Annual Review of Sociology* 43:207-227.

Bruch, Elizabeth, and Robert D. Mare. 2006. “Neighborhood Choice and Neighborhood Change.” *American Journal of Sociology 112*(3):667-709.

Bruch, Elizabeth, and Joffre Swait. 2019. “Choice Set Formation in Residential Mobility and its Implications for Segregation Dynamics.” *Demography 56*(5):1665-1692.

Brummet, Quentin, and Davin Reed. 2019. “The Effects of Gentrification on the Well-Being and Opportunity of Original Resident Adults and Children.” ***FRB of Philadelphia Working Paper No. 19-30*.**

Burdick–Will, Julia. 2018. “School Location, Social Ties, and Perceived Neighborhood Boundaries.” *City & Community, 17*(2):418–437. https://doi.org/10.1111/cico.12295

Burdick-Will, Julia, Jeffrey A. Grigg, Kiara M. Nerenberg, and Faith Connolly. 2020. “Socially-structured Mobility Networks and School Segregation Dynamics: The Role of Emergent Consideration Sets.” *American Sociological Review 85*(4):675-708.

Burdick-Will, Julia, Micere Keels, and Todd Schuble. 2013. “Closing and Opening Schools: The Association Between Neighborhood Characteristics and the location of new Educational Opportunities in a Large Urban District.” *Journal of Urban Affairs* 35:59-80. https://doi.org/10.1111/juaf.12004

Burgess, Simon, Ellen Greaves, Anna Vignoles, and Deborah Wilson. 2015. “What Parents Want: School Preferences and School Choice.” *The Economic Journal 125*(587):1262-1289.

Butler, Alisha. 2022. “What’s Best for My Child, What’s Best for the City: Values and Tensions in Parent Gentrifiers’ Middle and High School Selection Processes.” *The Urban Review 54*(2):255-276.

Butler, Tim ,and Garry Robson. 2003. “Plotting the Middle Classes: Gentrification and Circuits of Education in London.” *Housing Studies 18*(1):5-28.

Candipan, Jennifer. 2019. “Neighbourhood Change and the Neighbourhood-school Gap.” *Urban Studies 56*(15):3308-3333.

Candipan, Jennifer. 2020. “Choosing Schools in Changing Places: Examining School Enrollment in Gentrifying Neighborhoods.” *Sociology of Education 93*(3):215-237.

Carnoy, Martin, and Emma García. 2017. “Five Key Trends in U.S. Student Performance.” *Economic Policy Institute* https://www.epi.org/publication/five-key-trends-in-u-s-student-performance-progress-by-blacks-and-hispanics-the-takeoff-of-asians-the-stall-of-non-english-speakers-the-persistence-of-socioeconomic-gaps-and-the-damaging-effect/

Center for State and Local Finance. 2017. “The Changing Face of Atlanta.” http://cslf.gsu.edu/changing-face-atlanta/

Champagne, Anthony M. 1973. “The Segregation Academy and the Law.” *Journal of Negro Education 42*(1):58-61.

Chang, Alvin. 2018. “We can draw school zones to make classrooms less segregated. This is how well your district does.” *Vox.com.* Retrieved from https://www.vox.com/2018/1/8/16822374/school-segregation-gerrymander-map

Chetty, Raj, Nathaniel Hendren, Patrick Kline, Emmanuel Saez, and Nicholas Turner. 2014. “Is the United States Still a Land of Opportunity? Recent Trends in Intergenerational Mobility” *American Economic Review 104* (5):141-47.

Chubb, John E. & Terry M. Moe. 1990. *Politics, Markets and America’s Schools.* Washington, DC: The Brookings Institution.

Clotfelter, Charles T. 2004. “Private Schools, Segregation, and the Southern States.” *Peabody Journal of Education 79*(2):74–97.

Comi, Alice, Nicole Bischof, and Martin J. Eppler. 2014. “Beyond Projection: Using Collaborative Visualization to Conduct Qualitative Interviews.” *Qualitative Research in Organizations and Management: An International Journal 9*(2):110-133.

Connor, Michan A. 2015. “Metropolitan Secession and the Space of Color-blind Racism in Atlanta.” *Journal of Urban Affairs 37*(4), 436-461.

Cooper, C. W. 2005. “School Choice and the Standpoint of African American Mothers: Considering the Power of Positionality.” *The Journal of Negro Education 74*(2):174-189.

Corrigan, Anne E., Frank C. Curriero, and Sabriya L. Linton. 2021. “Characterizing Clusters of Gentrification in Metro Atlanta, 2000 to 2016.” *Applied Geography 137*:1-11.

Coughlan, Ryan W. 2018. “Divergent Trends in Neighborhood and School Segregation in the Age of School Choice.” *Peabody Journal of Education 93*(4):349-366.

Coulton, Claudia, Brett Theodos, and Margery A. Turner. 2012. “Residential Mobility and Neighborhood Change: Real Neighborhoods Under the Microscope.” *Cityscape, 14*(3):55-89.

Crenshaw, Kimberle. 1989. “Demarginalizing the Intersection of Race and Sex: A Black Feminist Critique of Antidiscrimination Doctrine, Feminist Theory and Antiracist Politics.” *University of Chicago Legal Forum,* Article 8:139-167.

Crowder, Kyle, and Scott J. South. 2008. “Spatial Dynamics of White Flight: The Effects of Local and Extralocal Racial Conditions on Neighborhood Out-migration.” *American Sociological Review, 73*(5):792-812.

Cucchiara, Maia B. 2013. *Marketing Schools, Marketing Cities: Who Wins and Who Loses When Schools Become Urban Amenities.* University of Chicago Press.

Cucchiara, Maia B., and Erin M. Horvat. 2009. *Perils and Promises: Middle-class Parental Involvement in Urban Schools. American Educational Research Journal 46*(4):974–1004. https://doi.org/10.3102/0002831209345791

Cucchiara, Maia B., and Erin M. Horvat. 2014. “Choosing Selves: The Salience of Parental Identity in the School Choice Process.” *Journal of Education Policy 29*(4):486-509.

Cuddy, Maximilian, Maria Krysan, and Amanda Lewis. 2020. “Choosing Homes without Choosing Schools? How Urban Parents Navigate Decisions about Neighborhoods and School Choice.” *Journal of Urban Affairs 42*(8):1180-1201.

Cuero, Kimberley K., Jo Worthy, and Alejandra Rodríguez-Galindo. 2009. “Middle School Choices for Bilingual Latino/A Youth: When the Magnet School Represents ‘Status’ and the Neighborhood School Represents ‘Solidarity.’” *The Urban Review 41*:251-268.

Cunningham, Brooke A., and Andre S. M. Scarlato. 2018. “Ensnared by Colorblindness: Discourse on Health Care Disparities.” *Ethnicity & Disease, 28*(Suppl 1):235-240.

Cutler, David M., Edward L. Glaeser, and Jacob L. Vigdor. 1999. “The Rise and Decline of the American Ghetto.” *Journal of Political Economy 107*(3):455-506.

Davis, Tomeka M., and Deirdre Oakley. 2013. “Linking Charter School Emergence to Urban Revitalization and Gentrification: A Socio-spatial Analysis of Three Cities.” *Journal of Urban Affairs 35*(1):81-102.

Davis, Tomeka M., Deirdre Oakley, and Shanae Stover. 2019. “School Closings, Atlanta Style” Pp. 1-57 in *Shuttered Schools: Race, Community, and School Closures in American Cities*, edited by E. M. Duncan-Shippy.

Davis, Tomeka M., and Adria N. Welcher. 2013. “School Quality and the Vulnerability of the Black Middle Class: The Continuing Significance of Race as a Predictor of Disparate Schooling Environments.” *Sociological Perspectives 56*(4):467-493.

Dawkins, Casey J. 2006. “Are Social Networks the Ties that Bind Families to Neighborhoods?” *Housing Studies 21*(6):867-881.

de Brey, Cristobal, Lauren Musu, Joel McFarland, Sidney Wilkinson-Flicker, Melissa Diliberti, Anlan Zhang, Claire Branstetter, and Xiaolei Wang. 2019. “Status and Trends in the Education of Racial and Ethnic Groups 2018.” *NCES 2019-038*. National Center for Education Statistics.

Debs, Mira, Judith Kafka, Molly V. Makris, and Allison Roda. 2023. “Happiness-Oriented Parents: An Alternative Perspective on Privilege and Choosing Schools.” *American Journal of Education 129*(2):145-176.

Delmelle, Elizabeth C. 2016. “Mapping the DNA of Urban Neighborhoods: Clustering Longitudinal Sequences of Neighborhood Socioeconomic Change.” *Annals of the American Association of Geographers 106*(1):36-56.

Delmelle, Elizabeth C. 2017. “Differentiating Pathways of Neighborhood Change in 50 US Metropolitan Areas. *Environment and Planning A 49*(10):2402-2424.

Denessen, Eddie, Joep Bakker, and Marieke Gierveld. 2007. “Multi-Ethnic Schools’ Parental Involvement Policies and Practices. *School Community Journal 17*(2):27-44.

Deterding, Nicole M., and Mary C. Waters. 2021. “Flexible Coding of In-depth Interviews: A Twenty-first-century Approach. *Sociological Methods & Research 50*(2):708-739.

Diamond, John B., and Kimberley Gomez. 2004. “African American Parents’ Educational Orientations: The Importance of Social Class and Parents’ Perceptions of Schools. *Education and Urban Society 36*(4):383-427.

Diamond, John B., Linn Posey-Maddox, and Maria Velázquez. 2021. “Reframing Suburbs: Race, Place, and Opportunity in Suburban Educational Spaces.” *Educational Researcher 50*(4):249-255.

Dietz, Robert D. 2002. “The Estimation of Neighborhood Effects in the Social Sciences: An Interdisciplinary Approach.” *Social Science Research 31*(4):539-575.

Diez Roux, Ana V., and Christina Mair. 2010. “Neighborhoods and Health.” *Annals of the New York Academy of Sciences 1186*:125-45.

Downey, Douglas B., and Dennis J. Condron. 2016. “Fifty Years since the Coleman Report: Rethinking the Relationship between Schools and Inequality.” *Sociology of Education 89*(3):207–220. https://doi.org/10.1177/0038040716651676

Ellis, Mark, Richard Wright, Steven Holloway, and Lee Fiorio. 2018. “Remaking White Residential Segregation: Metropolitan Diversity and Neighborhood Change in the United States. *Urban Geography 39*(4):519-545.

Ellison, Scott, and Ariel M. Aloe. 2019. “Strategic Thinkers and Positioned Choices: Parental Decision Making in Urban School Choice.” *Educational Policy 33*(7), 1135-1170.

Erickson, Heidi Holmes. 2017. “How Do Parents Choose Schools, and What Schools Do They Choose? A Literature Review of Private School Choice Programs in the United States.” *Journal of School Choice 11*(4):491-506.

Evans, Megan, and Barrett A. Lee. 2020. “Neighborhood Reputations as Symbolic and Stratifying Mechanisms in the Urban Hierarchy.” *Sociology Compass 14*(10):1-15. https://doi.org/10.1111/soc4.12831

Evans, Shani Adia. 2021. “‘I Wanted Diversity, But Not So Much’: Middle-Class White Parents, School Choice, and the Persistence of Anti-Black Stereotypes.” *Urban Education 0*(0). https://doi.org/10.1177/00420859211031952

Ewing, Eve L. 2018. *Ghosts in the Schoolyard: Racism and School Closings on Chicago’s South Side.* University of Chicago Press.

Farley, Reynolds, and William H. Frey. 1994. “Changes in the Segregation of Whites from Blacks During the 1980s: Small Steps Toward a More Integrated Society.” *American Sociological Review 59*(1):23-45.

Feagin, Joe R. 2006. *Systemic Racism: A Theory of Oppression*. New York: Routledge/Taylor & Francis Group.

Fereday, Jennifer, and Eimear Muir-Cochrane. 2006. “Demonstrating Rigor Using Thematic Analysis: A Hybrid Approach of Inductive and Deductive Coding and Theme Development. *International Journal of Qualitative Methods 5*(1):80-92.

Fiel, Jeremy E. 2013. “Decomposing School Resegregation: Social Closure, Racial Imbalance, and Racial Isolation. *American Sociological Review 78*(5):828-848.

Firebaugh, Glenn, and Chad R. Farrell. 2016. “Still Large, but Narrowing: The Sizable Decline in Racial Neighborhood Inequality in Metropolitan America, 1980–2010. *Demography 53*(1)
:139-164.

Florida, Richard, and Patrick Adler. 2017. “The Divided City and the Patchwork Metropolis” Pp. 20-43 in *In The Post-Urban World,* edited by T. Haas and H. Westlund. London: Routledge.

Fong, Kelley. 2019. “Subject to Evaluation: How Parents Assess and Mobilize Information from Social Networks in School Choice.” *Sociological Forum 34*(1):158-180.

Foote, Nathan, and Rebecca Walter. 2017. “Neighborhood and Socioeconomic Change in Emerging Megapolitan Nodes: Tracking Shifting Social Geographies in Three Rapidly Growing United States Metropolitan Areas, 1980–2010.” *Urban Geography 38*(8):1203-1230.

Frankenberg, Erica. 2013. “The Role of Residential Segregation in Contemporary School Segregation. *Education and Urban Society 45*(5):548-570.

Frankenberg, Erica. 2018. “Preferences, Proximity, and Controlled Choice: Examining Families’ School Choices and Enrollment Decisions in Louisville, Kentucky.” *Peabody Journal of Education 93*(4):378-394.

Frankenberg, Erica, and Chungmei Lee. 2003. “Charter Schools and Race: A Lost Opportunity for Integrated Education.” *Education Policy Analysis Archives, 11*(32).

Fredriksen, Katia, and Jean Rhodes. 2004. “The Role of Teacher Relationships in the Lives of Students.” *New Directions for Youth Development* 103:45-54.

Freeman, Lance. 2009. “Neighbourhood Diversity, Metropolitan Segregation and Gentrification: What Are the Links in the US?” *Urban Studies 46*(10):2079-2101.

Freidus, Alexandra. 2019. “A Great School Benefits Us All”: Advantaged Parents and the Gentrification of an Urban Public School.” *Urban Education 54*(8):1121–1148. https://doi.org/10.1177/0042085916636656

Frey, William H. 2020. “The Nation is Diversifying Even Faster than Predicted, According to New Census Data.” *Brookings Institute*. https://www.brookings.edu/research/new-census-data-shows-the-nation-is-diversifying-even-faster-than-predicted/

Frey, William H. 2021. “Mapping America’s Diversity with the 2020 Census.” *Brookings Institute.* https://www.brookings.edu/research/mapping-americas-diversity-with-the-2020-census/).

Frost, Riordan. 2020. “Are Americans Stuck in Place? Declining Residential Mobility in the U.S.” *Joint Center for Housing Studies.* https://www.jchs.harvard.edu/sites/default/files/harvard_jchs_are_americans_stuck_in_place_frost_2020.pdf

Fuller, Bruce F., and Richard Elmore. 1996. *Who Chooses? Who Loses? Culture, Institutions and the Unequal Effects of School Choice.* New York City: Teachers College Press.

Gabriel, Ryan, and Amy Spring. 2019. "Neighborhood Diversity, Neighborhood Affluence: An Analysis of the Neighborhood Destination Choices of Mixed-race Couples with Children." *Demography 56*(3):1051-1073.

Gastic, Billie, and Diana Salas Coronado. 2011. "Latinos and School Choice." *Journal of School Choice 5*(1):139-142.

GeoLytics, Inc., Urban Institute, and U.S. Census Bureau. 2013. *Neighborhood change database (NCDB) 2010: Tract data for 1970-80-90-00-10.*

Gerstenfeld Adam, and Yueting Xu. 2020. "Where Are Charter Schools Located?" *National Alliance for Public Charter Schools.*https://data.publiccharters.org/

Gieryn, Thomas F. 2000. "A Space for Place in Sociology. *Annual Review of Sociology 26*(1):463-496.

Glaeser, Edward L., and Jesse Shapiro. 2001. "Is There a New Urbanism? The Growth of US Cities in the 1990s." *Harvard Institute of Economic Research Paper No.1925*.

Glaeser, Edward, and Jacob Vigdor. 2012. "The End of the Segregated Century: Racial Separation in America's Neighborhoods, 1890-2010." *Manhattan Institute for Policy Research Report No. 66.*

Glegg, Stephanie M. N. 2019. "Facilitating Interviews in Qualitative Research with Visual Tools: A Typology." *Qualitative Health Research 29*(2):301-310.

Goldring, Ellen B., and Kristie J.R. Phillips. 2008. “Parent Preferences and Parent Choices: The Public–Private Decision About School Choice.” *Journal of Education Policy 23*(3):209-230.

Gomez-Lopez, Iris, Min Hee Kim, Mao Li, Dominique Sylvers, Michael Esposito, Philippa Clarke, and Megan Chenoweth. “National Neighborhood Data Archive (NaNDA):Neighborhood-School Gap by Census Tract and ZIP Code Tabulation Area, United States, 2009-2010 and 2015-2016.” *Inter-university Consortium for Political and Social Research* [distributor], 2022-11-14. https://doi.org/10.3886/ICPSR38579.v2

Goyette, Kimberly. 2008. “Race, Social Background, and School Choice Options.” *Equity & Excellence in Education 41*(1):114-129.

Goyette, Kimberly. 2014. “Setting the Context” Pp. 1-24 in *Choosing Homes, Choosing Schools*, edited by A. Lareau and K. Goyette. New York, NY: Russell Sage Foundation

Green, Terrance, Emily Germain, Andrene J. Castro, Chloe Latham Sikes, Joanna Sanchez, and Jeremy Horne. 2022. “Gentrifying Neighborhoods, Gentrifying Schools? An Emerging Typology of School Changes in a Gentrifying Urban School District.” *Urban Education 57*(1):3-31.

Gurwitt, Rob. 2010. “Atlanta and the Urban Future.” *Governing Magazine*, online. Retrieved from https://www.governing.com/archive/atlanta-and-the-urban.html

Hagerman, Margaret A. 2018. *White Kids: Growing Up with Privilege in a Racially Divided America.* New York University Press.

Hailey, Chantal A. 2022. “White, Asian, Latinx, and Black Families Make Race-Based School Choices.” *UT Austin Population Research Center, Research & Policy Brief Series.*

Hankins, Katherine B. 2007. “The Final Frontier: Charter Schools as New Community Institutions of Gentrification.” *Urban Geography 28*(2):113-128.

Hankins, Katherine B., and Elizabeth Egan Henry. 2014. “School Activism and the Production of Urban Space in Atlanta, Georgia.” Pp. 227-240 in *Uprooting Urban America: Multidisciplinary Perspectives on Race, Class & Gentrification*, edited by H. Hall, C.C. Robinson and A. Kohli.

Hastings, Justine S., Thomas J. Kane, and Douglas O. Staiger. 2009. “Heterogeneous Preferences and the Efficacy of Public School Choice.” *NBER working paper No. 12145*.

Haynes, Katherine Taylor, Kristie J. R. Phillips, and Ellen B. Goldring. 2010. “Latino Parents’ Choice of Magnet School: How School Choice Differs across Racial and Ethnic Boundaries.” *Education and Urban Society 42*(6):758-789.

Hedman, Lina, Maarten van Ham, and David Manley. 2011. “Neighbourhood Choice and Neighbourhood Reproduction.” *Environment and Planning A 43*(6):1381-1399.

Henry, Elizabeth E. 2012. “Halting White Flight: Atlanta’s Second Civil Rights Movement.” *Unpublished Dissertation*, Georgia State University.

Hipp, John R., and Jae Hong Kim. 2023. “Persistent Racial Diversity in Neighborhoods: What Explains It and What Are the Long-term Consequences?” *Urban Geography 44*(4):640-667. DOI: 10.1080/02723638.2021.2014658

Hobson, Maurice J. 2017. *The Legend of the Black Mecca: Politics and Class in the Making of Modern Atlanta.* Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press.

Holme, Jennifer Jellison. 2002. “Buying Homes, Buying Schools: School Choice and the Social Construction of School Quality.” *Harvard Educational Review 72*(2):177-206.

Hwang, Jackie. 2015. “Gentrification in Changing Cities: Immigration, New Diversity, and Racial Inequality in Neighborhood Renewal.” *The ANNALS of the American Academy of Political and Social Science 660*(1):319–340. https://doi.org/10.1177/0002716215579823

Hwang, Jackie. 2016. “The Social Construction of a Gentrifying Neighborhood: Reifying and Redefining Identity and Boundaries in Inequality.” *Urban Affairs Review 52*(1):98–128. https://doi.org/10.1177/1078087415570643

Hwang, Jackie, and Tyler W. McDaniel. 2022. “Racialized Reshuffling: Urban Change and the Persistence of Segregation in the Twenty-First Century.” *Annual Review of Sociology* 48:397-419.

Iceland, John. 2004. “Beyond Black and White: Metropolitan Residential Segregation in Multi-ethnic America.” *Social Science Research 33*(2):248-271.

Iceland, John, and Gregory Sharp. 2013. “White Residential Segregation in US Metropolitan Areas: Conceptual Issues, Patterns, and Trends from the US Census, 1980 to 2010*.” Population Research and Policy Review* 32:663-686.

Iceland, John, Gregory Sharp, and Jeffrey M. Timberlake. 2013. “Sun Belt Rising: Regional Population Change and the Decline in Black Residential Segregation, 1970–2009.” *Demography 50*(1):97-123.

Immergluck, Daniel. 2022. *Red Hot City: Housing, Race, and Exclusion in Twenty-First-Century Atlanta*. Berkeley: University of California Press. https://doi.org/10.1525/9780520387652

Ispa-Landa, Simone, and Jordan Conwell. 2015. “‘Once You Go to a White School, You Kind of Adapt’: Black Adolescents and the Racial Classification of Schools.” *Sociology of Education 88*(1):1–19. https://doi.org/10.1177/0038040714555434

Jackson, Kenneth T. 1985. *Crabgrass Frontier: The Suburbanization of the United States*. New York, Oxford University Press.

Jacobs, Nicholas. 2013. "Understanding School Choice: Location as a Determinant of Charter School Racial, Economic, and Linguistic Segregation." *Education and Urban Society 45*(4):459-482.

Jaret, Charles L. 2002. "Suburban Expansion in Atlanta: The City without Limits Face Some." Pp. 165-205 in *Urban Sprawl: Causes, Consequences, and Policy Responses*, edited by G. Squires. Washington, D.C.: Urban Institute Press.

Jargowsky, Paul A. 2014. "Segregation, Neighborhoods, and Schools." Pp. 97-136 in *Choosing Homes, Choosing Schools*, edited by A. Lareau and K. Goyette. NYC: Russell Sage Foundation.

Jenkins, De Marcus A. 2020. "School Reputation as a Site of Struggle: An Investigation of the Impact of School Choice in Washington, DC on a Neighborhood Public School. *The Urban Review 52*(5):904-923.

Jewell, Joseph O. 2007. *Race, Social Reform, and the Making of a Middle Class: The American Missionary Association and Black Atlanta, 1870-1900.* Rowman & Littlefield Publishers: Lanham, MD.

Johnson, Brian Edward. 2011. "The Speed and Accuracy of Voice Recognition Software-assisted Transcription Versus the Listen-and-type Method: A Research Note." *Qualitative Research 11*(1):91-97.

Jones, Antwan, and Prentiss Dantzler. 2021. "Neighbourhood Perceptions and Residential Mobility." *Urban Studies 58*(9):1792-1810.

Kafka, Judith. 2022. “When Information Is Not Enough: School Choice, Segregation, and the Elusive Notion of Fit.” *Teachers College Record 124*(4):95–123. https://doi.org/10.1177/01614681221093021

Keating, Larry. 2001. *Atlanta: Race, Class and Urban Expansion*. Philadelphia, PA: Temple University Press.

Kimelberg, Shelley McDonough. 2014. “Middle-class Parents, Risk, and Urban Public Schools.” Pp. 207-236 in *Choosing Homes, Choosing Schools*, edited by A. Lareau and K. Goyette. New York, NY: Russell Sage Foundation

Kimelberg, Shelley McDonough, and Chase M. Billingham. 2013. “Attitudes Toward Diversity and the School Choice Process: Middle-class Parents in a Segregated Urban Public School District. *Urban Education 48*(2):198-231.

Kneebone, Elizabeth, and Natalie Holmes. 2016. “Concentrated Poverty in the Wake of the Great Recession.” *Brookings Institute Research Report*. Accessed from: https://www.brookings.edu/articles/u-s-concentrated-poverty-in-the-wake-of-the-great-recession/

Knudson, Paul. 2021. “How Institutional Context Shapes the Accounts of School Choice and Boundary-Making Among Middle Class Parents in an Urban School District.” *The Qualitative Report 26*(3):808-831.

Kotok, Stephen, Erica Frankenberg, Kai A. Schafft, Bryan A. Mann, and Edward J. Fuller. 2017. “School Choice, Racial Segregation, and Poverty Concentration: Evidence from Pennsylvania Charter School Transfers. *Educational Policy 31*(4):415-447.

Kozol, Jonathan. 1995. *Amazing Grace: The Lives of Children and the Conscience of a Nation.* Crown Publications, New York, NY

Kruse, Kevin M. 2005. *White Flight: Atlanta and the Making of Modern Conservatism.* Princeton University Press.

Krysan, Maria, and Michael Bader. 2007. "Perceiving the Metropolis: Seeing the City through a Prism of Race. *Social Forces 86*(2):699-733.

Krysan, Maria, Mick P. Couper, Reynolds Farley, and Tyrone A. Forman. 2009. "Does Race Matter in Neighborhood Preferences? Results from a Video Experiment." *American Journal of Sociology 115*(2):527-559.

Krysan, Maria, and Kyle Crowder. 2017. *Cycle of Segregation: Social Processes and Residential Stratification.* Russell Sage Foundation: NY, NY.

Lamont, Michèle, and Ann Swidler. 2014. "Methodological Pluralism and the Possibilities and Limits of Interviewing". *Qualitative Sociology 37* (2):153-171.

Lareau, Annette. 2000. *Home Advantage: Social Class and Parental Intervention in Elementary Education.* Rowman & Littlefield Publishers: Lanham, MD.

Lareau, Annette. 2003. *Unequal Childhoods: Class, Race, and Family Life.* Univ of California Press.

Lareau, Annette, and Kimberly Goyette. 2014. *Choosing Homes, Choosing Schools: Residential Segregation and the Search for a Good School.* New York: Russell Sage Foundation.

Lareau, Annette, Elliot B. Weininger, and Catharine Warner-Griffin. 2021. "Structural Constraints and the School Choice Strategies of Black American Middle-class Parents." *British Journal of Sociology of Education 42* (4):490-505.

LaRossa, Ralph. 2012. “Writing and Reviewing Manuscripts in the Multidimensional World of Qualitative Research.” *Journal of Marriage and Family 74* (4):643-659.

Lauen, Douglas Lee. 2007. “Contextual Explanations of School Choice.” *Sociology of Education 80* (3):179-209.

Lenhoff, Sarah Winchell, Jeremy Singer, Ben Pogodzinski, and Walter Cook. 2022. “Exiting Detroit for School: Inequitable Choice Sets and School Quality.” *Journal of Education Policy 37* (4):590-612.

Leventhal, Tama, and Jeanne Brooks-Gunn. 2003. “Children and Youth in Neighborhood Contexts.” *Current Directions in Psychological Science 12*(1):27–31. https://doi.org/10.1111/1467-8721.01216

Levy, Brian L. 2021. “Neighborhood Effects, the Life Course, and Educational Outcomes: Four Theoretical Models of Effect Heterogeneity.” Pp. 85-103 in *Space, Place and Educational Settings*, edited by T. Freytag, D.L. Lauen., and S.L. Robertson. Springer.

Lewis, Valerie A., Michael O. Emerson, and Stephen L. Klineberg. 2011. “Who We’ll Live With: Neighborhood Racial Composition Preferences of Whites, Blacks and Latinos.” *Social Forces 89* (4):1385-1407.

Lichter, Daniel T., Domenico Parisi, and Michael C. Taquino. 2015. “Toward a New Macro-Segregation? Decomposing Segregation within and between Metropolitan Cities and Suburbs.” *American Sociological Review 80*(4):843–873. https://doi.org/10.1177/0003122415588558

Lichter, Daniel T., Brian C. Thiede, and Matthew M. Brooks. 2023. “Racial Diversity and Segregation: Comparing Principal Cities, Inner-Ring Suburbs, Outlying Suburbs, and the

Suburban Fringe." *RSF: The Russell Sage Foundation Journal of the Social Sciences 9* (1):26-51.

Lipman, Pauline. 2011. *The New Political Economy of Urban Education: Neoliberalism, Race, and the Right to the City* (1st ed.). Routledge. https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203821800

Logan, John R. 2013. "The Persistence of Segregation in the 21st Century Metropolis." *City & Community 12* (2):160–168. https://doi.org/10.1111/cico.12021

Logan, John R., Andrew Foster, Jun Ke, and Fan Li. 2018. "The Uptick in Income Segregation: Real Trend or Random Sampling Variation?" *American Journal of Sociology 124* (1):185-222.

Logan, John R., Deirdre Oakley, and Jacob Stowell. 2006. "Resegregation in US Public Schools or White Decline? A Closer Look at Trends in the 1990s." *Children Youth and Environments 16* (1):49-68.

Loh, Tracy Hadden, Christopher Coes, and Becca Buthe. 2020. "Separate and Unequal: Persistent Residential Segregation Is Sustaining Racial and Economic Injustice in the US." *Brookings Institution Report*, Accessed from https://www.brookings.edu/articles/trend-1-separate-and-unequal-neighborhoods-are-sustaining-racial-and-economic-injustice-in-the-us/ (12/16/2022).

López, Nancy, and Howard Hogan. 2021. "What's Your Street Race? The Urgency of Critical Race Theory and Intersectionality as Lenses for Revising the US Office of Management and Budget Guidelines, Census and Administrative Data in Latinx Communities and Beyond." *Genealogy 5*(75):1-23.

Lubienski, Christopher, Charisse Gulosino, and Peter Weitzel. 2009. “School Choice and Competitive Incentives: Mapping the Distribution of Educational Opportunities across Local Education Markets.” *American Journal of Education 115* (4):601-647.

Maciag, Michael. 2015. “Gentrification in America Report.” *Governing Magazine*, online. Retrieved from https://www.governing.com/archive/gentrification-in-cities-governing-report.html

Marcotte, Dave E., and Kari Dalane. 2019. “Socioeconomic Segregation and School Choice in American Public Schools.” *Educational Researcher 48*(8):493–503. https://doi.org/10.3102/0013189X19879714

Martin, Michael. 2021. “Computer and Internet Use in the United States, 2018.” *American Community Survey Reports.* Retrieved from https://www.census.gov/library/publications/2021/acs/acs-49.html

Massey, Douglas S. 2020. “Still the Linchpin: Segregation and Stratification in the USA.” *Race and Social Problems 12*(1):1-12.

Massey, Douglas S., and Nancy A. Denton. 1988. “Suburbanization and Segregation in US Metropolitan Areas. *American Journal of Sociology 94*(3):592-626.

Massey, Douglas S., and Jacob S. Rugh, J. 2020. “America’s Unequal Metropolitan Geography: Segregation and the Spatial Concentration of Affluence and Poverty.” Pp. 161-187 in *Who Gets What?: The New Politics of Insecurity*, edited by F. Rosenbluth and M. Weir. New York: Cambridge University Press.

Mavrogordato, Madeline, and Marc Stein. 2016. “Accessing Choice: A Mixed-methods Examination of how Latino Parents Engage in the Educational Marketplace.” *Urban Education 51*(9):1031-1064.

Mayer, Susan E. 2001. “How the Growth in Income Inequality Increased Economic Segregation.” *JCPR Working Papers No. 230,* Northwestern University/University of Chicago Joint Center for Poverty Research.

McWilliams, Julia Ann. 2017. “The Neighborhood School Stigma: School Choice, Stratification, and Shame.” *Policy Futures in Education 15* (2):221-238.

Mickelson, Roslyn Arlin, Martha Bottia, and Stephanie Southworth. 2008. “School Choice and Segregation by Race, Class, and Achievement.” *National Education Policy Center*, Boulder, CO. https://nepc.colorado.edu/publication/school-choice-and-segregation-race-class-and-achievement

Miron, Gary, Jessica Urschel, William J. Mathis, and Elana Tornquist. 2010. “Schools without Diversity: Education Management Organizations, Charter Schools and the Demographic Stratification of the American School System.” *National Education Policy Center*, Boulder, CO. http://epicpolicy.org/publication/schools-without-diversity

Monarrez, Tomás, Brian Kisida, and Matthew Chingos. 2019. “When Is a School Segregated? Making Sense of Segregation 65 Years after ‘Brown v. Board of Education.’” Urban Institute Research Report. Accessed from https://www.urban.org/research/publication/when-school-segregated-making-sense-segregation-65-years-after-brown-v-board-education

Monarrez, Tomás, Brian Kisida, and Matthew Chingos. 2022. “The Effect of Charter Schools on School Segregation.” *American Economic Journal: Economic Policy 14*(1):301-340.

Mordechay, Kfir, and Jennifer B. Ayscue. 2020. “Does Neighborhood Gentrification Create School Desegregation?” *Teachers College Record 122*(5):1–34.

Nast, Julia. 2020. *Unequal Neighbourhoods, Unequal Schools: Organisational Habitus in Deprived and Privileged Local Contexts.* Springer VS, Wiesbaden.

National Center for Education Statistics. 2019. *National Household Education Survey: Parent and Family Engagement Supplement.* https://nces.ed.gov/nhes/parent_involvement.asp

National Center for Education Statistics. “Common Core of Data.” US DOE Institute of Education Sciences, Washington, DC. Accessed from https://nces.ed.gov/ccd/

Nyden, Philip W., Mike Maly, and John Lukehart. 1997. “The Emergence of Stable Racially and Ethnically Diverse Urban Communities: A Case Study of Nine US Cities.” *Housing Policy Debate 8*(2):491-534.

Orfield, Gary, and Susan E. Eaton. 1996. *Dismantling Desegregation: The Quiet Reversal of Brown V. Board of Education.* New Press: Distributed by W.W. Norton.

Orfield, Gary, and Chungmei Lee. 2007. “Historic Reversals, Accelerating Resegregation, and the Need for New Integration Strategies.” A report of the *The Civil Rights Project / Proyecto Derechos Civiles,* UCLA.

Orfield, Gary, and John T. Yun. 1999. “Resegregation in American Schools.” A report of the *The Civil Rights Project / Proyecto Derechos Civiles,* UCLA.

Osman, Suleiman. 2011. *The Invention of Brownstone Brooklyn: Gentrification and the Search for Authenticity in Postwar New York.* New York: Oxford University Press.

Owens, Ann. 2012. “Neighborhoods on the Rise: A Typology of Neighborhoods Experiencing Socioeconomic Ascent.” *City & Community 11*(4):345-369.

Owens, Ann. 2017. “Racial Residential Segregation of School-age Children and Adults: The Role of Schooling as a Segregating Force.” *RSF: The Russell Sage Foundation Journal of the Social Sciences 3*(2):63-80.

Owens, Ann, Sean F. Reardon, and Christopher Jencks. 2016. “Income Segregation Between Schools and School Districts.” *American Educational Research Journal 53* (4):1159-1197.

Parker, Jeffrey Nathaniel. 2018. “Broken Windows as Growth Machines: Who Benefits from Urban Disorder and Crime?” *City & Community 17* (4):945–971. https://doi.org/10.1111/cico.12347

Pattillo, Mary. 2013. *Black Picket Fences: Privilege & Peril Among the Black Middle Class.* University of Chicago Press.

Pattillo, Mary. 2015. “Everyday Politics of School Choice in the Black Community. *Du Bois Review: Social Science Research on Race, 12*(1):41-71.

Patillo, Mary, Lori Delale-O’Connor and Felicia Butts. 2014. “High-stakes Choosing: Race and Place in Chicago School Reform.” Pp. 237-267 in *Choosing Homes, Choosing Schools*, edited by A. Lareau and K. Goyette. New York, New York: Russell Sage Foundation.

Pearman, Francis A. 2020. “Gentrification, Geography, and the Declining Enrollment of Neighborhood Schools.” *Urban Education 55* (2):183-215.

Pearman, Francis A., and Walker Swain. 2017. “School Choice, Gentrification, and the Variable Significance of Racial Stratification in Urban Neighborhoods.” *Sociology of Education 90* (3):213-235.

Posey-Maddox, Linn. 2014. *When Middle-Class Parents Choose Urban Schools: Class, Race, and the Challenge of Equity in Public Education*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Posey-Maddox, Linn, Shelley McDonough Kimelberg, and Maia Cucchiara. 2014. “Middle-Class Parents and Urban Public Schools: Current Research and Future Directions.” *Sociology Compass 8*: 446-456. https://doi.org/10.1111/soc4.12148

Posey-Maddox, Linn, Shelley McDonough Kimelberg, and Maia Cucchiara. 2016. “Seeking a ‘Critical Mass’: Middle-class Parents’ Collective Engagement in City Public Schooling.” *British Journal of Sociology of Education 37* (7):905-927.

Posey-Maddox, Linn, Maxine McKinney de Royston, Alea R. Holman, Raquel M. Rall, and Rachel A. Johnson. 2021. “No Choice is the “Right” Choice: Black Parents’ Educational Decision-making in Their Search for a “Good” School.” *Harvard Educational Review 91* (1):38-61.

Purcell, M. 2001. “Metropolitan Political Reorganization as a Politics of Urban Growth: The Case of San Fernando Valley Secession.” *Political Geography 20* (5):613-633.

Quillian, Lincoln, and Devorah Pager. 2001. “Black Neighbors, Higher Crime? The Role of Racial Stereotypes in Evaluations of Neighborhood Crime.” *American Journal of Sociology 107* (3):717-767.

Reardon, Sean F., and Kendra Bischoff. 2011. “Income Inequality and Income Segregation.” *American Journal of Sociology 116* (4):1092-1153.

Reardon, Sean F., Kendra Bischoff, Ann Owens, and Joseph B. Townsend. 2018. “Has Income Segregation Really Increased? Bias and Bias Correction in Sample-based Segregation Estimates.” *Demography 55*(6):2129-2160.

Reardon, Sean F., Chad R. Farrell, Stephen A. Matthews, David O’Sullivan, Kendra Bischoff, and Glenn Firebaugh. 2009. “Race and Space in the 1990s: Changes in the Geographic Scale of Racial Residential Segregation, 1990–2000.” *Social Science Research 38*(1):55-70.

Reardon, Sean F., Lindsay Fox, and Joseph B. Townsend. 2015. “Neighborhood Income Composition by Household Race and Income, 1990–2009. *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science 660*(1):78-97.

Reardon, Sean F., and Ann Owens. 2014. “60 Years after Brown: Trends and Consequences of School Segregation.” *Annual Review of Sociology 40*: 199–218. https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev-soc-071913-043152

Reardon, Sean F., John T. Yun, and Tamela McNulty Eitle. 2000. “The Changing Structure of School Segregation: Measurement and Evidence of Multiracial Metropolitan-area School Segregation, 1989–1995.” *Demography 37*(3):351-364.

Reardon, Sean F., and John T. Yun. 2002. “Integrating Neighborhoods, Segregating Schools: The Retreat from School Desegregation in the South, 1990-2000.” *North Carolina Law Review 81*:1563-1596.

Reay, Diane, and Stephen J. Ball. 1998. “‘Making Their Minds up’: Family Dynamics of School Choice.” *British Educational Research Journal 24*(4):431–448. http://www.jstor.org/stable/1502012

Reay, Diane, Gill Crozier, and David James. 2011. *White Middle-class Identities and Urban Schooling.* Palgrave Macmillan London.

Renzulli, Linda A. 2006. "District Segregation, Race Legislation, and Black Enrollment in Charter Schools." *Social Science Quarterly 87*(3):618-637.

Renzulli, Linda A., and Lorraine Evans. 2005. "School Choice, Charter Schools, and White Flight." *Social Problems 52* (3):398-418.

Rhodes, Anna, and Stefanie DeLuca. 2014. "Residential Mobility and School Choice among Poor Families." Pp. 137-166 in *Choosing Homes, Choosing Schools*, edited by A. Lareau and K. Goyette. New York, NY: Russell Sage Foundation

Rich, Peter, Jennifer Candipan, and Ann Owens. 2021. "Segregated Neighborhoods, Segregated Schools: Do Charters Break a Stubborn Link?" *Demography 58*(2):471-498.

Rich, Peter, and Ann Owens. 2023. "Neighborhood–School Structures: A New Approach to the Joint Study of Social Contexts." *Annual Review of Sociology, 49*.

Richards, Meredith P. 2020. "The Racial/Ethnic and Socioeconomic Dynamics of Public School District Secession, 1995–2015." *Teachers College Record 122*(5):1-40.

Richards, Meredith P., and Kori J. Stroub. 2020. "Metropolitan Public School District Segregation by Race and Income, 2000–2011." *Teachers College Record 122*(5):1-40.

Richards, Meredith P., Kori J. Stroub, and Camila Cigarroa Kennedy. 2020. "Stasis and Change in Public School District Racial/Ethnic Segregation, 1993–2015." *AERA Open, 6*(2).

Ridgeway, Cecilia L. 2014. "Why Status Matters for Inequality." *American Sociological Review 79* (1):1-16.

Roberts, Amy, and Richard D. Lakes. 2016. “Middle-class Mothers on Urban School Selection in Gentrifying Areas.” *Education and Urban Society 48*(3):203-220.

Robinson, Oliver C. 2014. “Sampling in Interview-based Qualitative Research: A Theoretical and Practical Guide.” *Qualitative Research in Psychology 11*(1):25-41.

Robinson, Cedric J. 1983. *Black Marxism: The Making of the Black Radical Tradition.* Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press.

Roda, Allison, and Amy Stuart Wells. 2013. “School Choice Policies and Racial Segregation: Where White Parents’ Good Intentions, Anxiety, and Privilege Collide.” *American Journal of Education 119*(2):261-293.

Rothstein, Richard. 2017. *The Color of Law: A Forgotten History of How Our Government Segregated America*. New York: Liveright Publishing Corporation.

Rothwell, Jonathan T., and Douglas S. Massey. 2010. “Density Zoning and Class Segregation in US Metropolitan Areas.” *Social Science Quarterly 91*(5):1123-1143.

Rowley, Jennifer, Rosalind Jones, Magda Vassiliou, and Sonya Hanna. 2012. “Using Card-based Games to Enhance the Value of Semi-structured Interviews.” *International Journal of Market Research 54*(1):93-110.

Sampson, Robert J. 2009. “Racial Stratification and the Durable Tangle of Neighborhood Inequality.” *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science 621*(1):260-280.

Sánchez-Jankowski, Martin. 2008. *Cracks in the Pavement: Social Change and Resilience in Poor Neighbourhoods.* Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.

Saporito, Salvatore. 2003. “Private Choices, Public Consequences: Magnet School Choice and Segregation by Race and Poverty.” *Social Problems 50*(2):181-203.

Saporito, Salvatore, and Annette Lareau. 1999. “School Selection as a Process: The Multiple Dimensions of Race in Framing Educational Choice.” *Social Problems 46*(3):418-439.

Saporito, Salvatore, and Deenesh Sohoni. 2006. “Coloring Outside the Lines: Racial Segregation in Public Schools and Their Attendance Boundaries.” *Sociology of Education 79*(2):81-105.

Saporito, Salvatore and Deenesh Sohoni. 2007. “Mapping Educational Inequality: Concentrations of Poverty among Poor and Minority Students in Public Schools.” *Social Forces 85*(3):1227-1253.

Saporito, Salvatore, and David Van Riper. 2016. “Do Irregularly Shaped School Attendance Zones Contribute to Racial Segregation or Integration?” *Social Currents 3* (1):64-83.

Sassen Saskia. 2001. *The Global City*: *New York, London, Tokyo*. Princeton N.J: Princeton University Press.

Sattin-Bajaj, Carolyn, and Allison Roda. 2020. “Opportunity Hoarding in School Choice Contexts: The Role of Policy Design in Promoting Middle-class Parents’ Exclusionary Behaviors.” *Educational Policy 34*(7):992-1035.

Schindler, Sarah. 2014. “Architectural Exclusion: Discrimination and Segregation Through Physical Design of the Built Environment.” *Yale Law Journal 124*:1934-2024.

Sharkey, Patrick. 2012. “Temporary Integration, Resilient Inequality: Race and Neighborhood Change in the Transition to Adulthood.” *Demography 49* (3):889-912.

Sharkey, Patrick. 2013. *Stuck in Place: Urban Neighborhoods and the End of Progress toward Racial Equality*. The University of Chicago Press.

Sharkey, Patrick, and Jacob W. Faber. 2014. "Where, When, Why, and for Whom Do Residential Contexts Matter? Moving Away from the Dichotomous Understanding of Neighborhood Effects." *Annual Review of Sociology 40*:559–579.

Shaw, Matthew Patrick. 2017. "Creating the Urban Educational Desert Through School Closures and Dignity Taking." *Chicago-Kent Law Review 92*:1087-1113.

Short, John Rennie, and Michael Mussman. 2014. "Population Change in US Cities: Estimating and Explaining the Extent of Decline and Level of Resurgence." *The Professional Geographer 66* (1):112–123.

Sikkink, David, and Michael O. Emerson. 2008. "School Choice and Racial Segregation in US Schools: The Role of Parents' Education." *Ethnic and Racial Studies 31*(2):267-293.

Small, Mario Luis. 2011. "How to Conduct a Mixed Methods Study: Recent Trends in a Rapidly Growing Literature." *Annual Review of Sociology 37*:57-86.

Small, Mario Luis, and Jessica Feldman. 2012. "Ethnographic Evidence, Heterogeneity, and Neighbourhood Effects after Moving to Opportunity." Pp. 57-77 in *Neighbourhood Effects Research: New Perspectives*, edited by M. van Ham, D. Manley, N. Bailey, L. Simpson, and D. Maclennan.

Sohoni, Deenesh, and Salvatore Saporito. 2009. "Mapping School Segregation: Using GIS to Explore Racial Segregation Between Schools and Their Corresponding Attendance Areas." *American Journal of Education 115*(4):569-600.

South, Scott J., Kyle Crowder, and Erick Chavez. 2005. “Exiting and Entering High-poverty Neighborhoods: Latinos, Blacks and Anglos Compared. *Social Forces 84*(2):873-900.

Strier, Michal, and Hagai Katz. 2016. “Trust and Parents’ Involvement in Schools of Choice.” *Educational Management Administration & Leadership 44*(3):363-379.

Stroub, Kori J., and Meredith P. Richards. 2013. “From Resegregation to Reintegration: Trends in the Racial/Ethnic Segregation of Metropolitan Public Schools, 1993–2009.” *American Educational Research Journal 50*(3):497-531.

Swanstrom, Todd, Robb Ryan, and Katherine M. Stigers. 2007. “Measuring Concentrated Poverty: Did It Really Decline in the 1990s?” *UC Berkeley: Institute of Urban and Regional Development*. Retrieved from https://escholarship.org/uc/item/2qm2s1vq

Taylor, Paul, and Richard A. Fry. 2012. “The Rise of Residential Segregation by Income.” *Pew Research Center Report*, Washington, DC.

Temkin, Kenneth, and William M. Rohe. 1998. “Social Capital and Neighborhood Stability: An Empirical Investigation.” *Housing Policy Debate 9*:61–88.

Teske, Paul, and Mark Schneider. 2001. “What Research Can Tell Policymakers About School Choice.” *Journal of Policy Analysis and Management: The Journal of the Association for Public Policy Analysis and Management 20* (4):609-631.

Tyson, Karolyn. 2011. *Integration Interrupted: Tracking, Black Students, and Acting White after Brown.* Oxford University Press.

U.S. Census Bureau. Real Median Household Income in the United States [MEHOINUSA672N]. Retrieved from FRED, Federal Reserve Bank of St. Louis; https://fred.stlouisfed.org/series/MEHOINUSA672N, May 14, 2023.

Viteritti, Joseph P. 1999. “A Way Out: School Choice and Educational Opportunity.” *The Brookings Review 17*(4):36-39.

Walder, John C., and Allen D. Cleveland. 1971. “The South’s New Segregation Academies.” *Phi Delta Kappan 53* (4):234-239.

Wang, Ke, Amy Rathbun, and Lauren Musu. 2019. “School Choice in the United States: 2019.” *National Center for Education Statistics.* https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED598472.pdf

Wei, Fang, and Paul L. Knox. 2014. “Neighborhood Change in Metropolitan America, 1990 to 2010.” *Urban Affairs Review 50*(4):459-489.

Weiher, Gregory R., and Kent L. Tedin. 2002. “Does Choice Lead to Racially Distinctive Schools? Charter Schools and Household Preferences.” *Journal of Policy Analysis and Management: The Journal of the Association for Public Policy Analysis and Management 21*(1):79-92.

Weinstein, Jeffrey M. 2016. “The Impact of School Racial Compositions on Neighborhood Racial Compositions: Evidence from School Redistricting.” *Economic Inquiry 54* (3):1365-1382.

Wells, Amy Stuart. 2009. *Both Sides Now: The Story of School Desegregation’s Graduates.* Univ of California Press.

Wells, Amy Stuart. 2014. “Seeing Past the ‘Colorblind’ Myth of Education Policy: Why Policymakers Should Address Racial/Ethnic Inequality and Support Culturally Diverse Schools.” *National Education Policy Center*, Boulder, CO. https://nepc.colorado.edu/sites/default/files/pb-colorblind_0.pdf

Welsh, Elaine. 2002. “Dealing with Data: Using nVivo in the Qualitative Data Analysis Process.” . *Forum Qualitative Sozialforschung Forum: Qualitative Social Research* 3(2):

Wilson, William Julius. 1987. *The Truly Disadvantaged: The Inner City, the Underclass, and Public Policy.* Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Wilson, Deborah, and Gary Bridge. 2019. “School Choice and the City: Geographies of Allocation and Segregation.” *Urban Studies 56*(15):3198-3215.

Woolridge, Jeffrey M. 2000. *Introductory Econometrics: A Modern Approach*. Boston, MA: Cengage Learning.

Yoon, Ee-Seul, and Christopher Lubienski. 2017. “How Do Marginalized Families Engage School Choice in Inequitable Urban Landscapes? A Critical Geographic Approach.” *Education Policy Analysis Archives 25*(42).

Yoon, Ee-Seul, Christopher Lubienski, and Jin Lee. 2018. “The Geography of School Choice in a City with Growing Inequality: The Case of Vancouver.” *Journal of Education Policy 33*(2):279-298.

Zhang, Wenquan, and John R. Logan. 2016. “Global Neighborhoods: Beyond the Multiethnic Metropolis.” *Demography 53*(6):1933-1953.

Zwier, Dieuwke, Sara Geven, Thijs Bol, and Herman G. van de Werfhorst. 2023. “Let’s Stick Together: Peer Effects in Secondary School Choice and Variations by Student Socio-Economic Background.” *European Sociological Review 39*(1):67-84.

APPENDICES

Appendix A

Appendix A.1 Interview Guide

Atlanta Neighborhood-School Enrollment Study
Interviewer: Sarah Roche, M.A.
Georgia State University
Dissertation Research

Prior to the interview review the purpose of the interview and study. Refer to the information sheet and go over it with the participant.

"Good morning. My name is Sarah Roche and I am conducting these interviews as part of my dissertation on neighborhoods and schools in Atlanta. These interviews are confidential and I am the only one who will have access to your information. Furthermore, you do not have to respond to any question that makes you uncomfortable and we can stop the interview entirely at any time. For ease of transcription, I would like your permission to record the interview. These recordings and the transcripts will not have your name on them. Do you have any questions?"

Make sure that the respondent has an opportunity to ask any questions related to the research. Once they have had their questions answered, give them a copy of the information sheet.

I: Personal Background & Housing Search "***Thanks again for your willingness to talk with me today. Please stop me any time if you have questions and remember you can skip a question if you want to at any time. To get started, I'd like to ask you some questions first about your background, just so I can get oriented.***"	
Main Topics/Questions	**Key words/Suggestions for Probes**

1) **I'd like to start by getting a little background information on you. Can you tell me a little about where you grew up and went to school?**	City, neighborhood, kind of school (public/private, etc.)
"Great, thanks, that gives me a good idea of your background. Now I'd like to focus on your life now and hear about how you came to live here. "	
2) **Can you tell me the story of how you came to live in this neighborhood?** *(This should be a longer conversation using the probes to right as suggestions for what to cover)* *Features of the neighborhood* *Sources of information about the neighborhood*	How long have you lived in the Atlanta area? Have you lived in this neighborhood or part of town that whole time? What other parts of Atlanta have you lived in or considered living in? How is the neighborhood you selected different from the other ones you considered? What were the particular things that attracted you to this neighborhood? What did you know about it before you moved in? Who did you talk to about it? How were your [family/friends/etc.] involved in helping you make this decision? How important was their input?

	What information was most important or influential in your decision? In your search process, how much does the features of the particular home weigh in comparison to features of the neighborhood?
3) How likely is it you'll still be in this neighborhood in 3-5 years?	Tell me more about why. Is that what you would like? Would you rather be living elsewhere and why?
4) Can you describe the people in your neighborhood?	What are the predominant racial/ethnic groups represented? How do you think these different groups get along in this community? About how often do you come in contact with people of these groups in your neighborhood? Where/how? Do you like this mix? Do you wish it were different? Is it changing? Do you have a lot of interaction with people from your neighborhood either formally or informally (around the block or in community organizations)?

	Does any of this happen in the course of your daily routine, or do you have to make a particular effort to interact with neighbors?
5) [If they haven't talked about it already], How did your thinking about schools influence your housing decisions?	How old were your child(ren) when you moved here? Did you know about schools in the neighborhood before you moved?
II: School Search "Thanks. Now I have some questions about your children(s) education)	
6) Can you tell me where your kid(s) go to school and a little bit about the school?	[Probe for type (e.g., public/private, neighborhood, charter, etc.) of school and grade level].
7) Tell me the story of how she/he came to attend that school?	How long have your children gone to this school? How old were they when you moved here? Did you know anything about this school before you started looking to enroll your child? If so, what information did you have and what was the source of information? If this is a new school, where did they attend previously? If your children go to different schools, tell me about that decision.

8) [Share screen with respondent showing list from Appendix A1.] ***What factors were most important when identifying a good school for your child?***	Probe based on response. Why were [these factors you named] important to you? What trade-offs did you make when thinking about where to send your child to school?
9) [Share screen with respondent showing list from Appendix A2.] ***Which people were most important in helping you to figure out school options?***	Who did you most frequently discuss school options with? Whose opinion weighed most heavily with you in the decision making process?
10) Tell me about the school your child attends and what your experience has been there.	Given the list from earlier [Appendix A] how close does your kids school come to your priorities? (Probe mismatch). What kinds of kids attend the school (probe for school's demographics, e.g., race, language groups, etc.)? Do you feel comfortable in the school? Have you gotten to know other staff or families at the school?
11) [Show them the map of schools in their neighborhood, Appendix A3]. Looking at this map of schools in your area, what do you know about them?	[If their child is attending school outside the immediate area] Why isn't your child going to one of these other schools? How does your child's school compare to these other schools?

	Is there a school in your neighborhood you would not consider and why
III: Final Questions "Thanks. I just have a few final questions."	
12) How has your racial identity factored into your understanding of your neighborhood?	Do you have much contact with other racial/ethnic groups in neighborhood or elsewhere?
13) Do you think it is important in your children's lives? In your child(ren)'s schools?	How has your race/ethnicity shaped the kinds of opportunities and/or challenges you have experienced? Particularly when thinking about neighborhoods and schools?
14) Can you answer some demographic questions for me?	Who lives in the home with you and what are their relationships to you? What are the ages, genders and racial/ethnic background of the family members? What is the highest level of education of yourself and/or partner? How would you describe your socioeconomic status?

Those are all my "official questions." What have I forgotten to ask about? What else would you like to say?

Appendix A.2 Who Did I talk with when Choosing a School?

When choosing a school for my child, I mostly talked to….{rank in order}

1. My spouse/partner and my child(ren)
2. My parents, siblings, aunts/uncles, in-laws or other family outside the household.
3. Close friends.
4. My neighbors, people in the community, parents of other kids.
5. School staff.
6. Other contacts such as people at church, at work, or in my social networks.

Example Whiteboard

Appendix A.3 School Features to Consider in Choosing a School

When choosing a school for my child, I am most likely to consider….{indicate top 5}

Academics

1. Test scores and graduation rates
2. Specific program offering
3. Class size
4. Teacher preparation/credentials

Culture

1. I know other families that have gone or are going there.
2. I feel comfortable in the building and with the faculty/staff.
3. Parent involvement is high.
4. The environment is welcoming to all. School is culturally competent.

Convenience

1. They offer aftercare.
2. There is a bus route.
3. Proximity to home/work.
4. It is our local school.

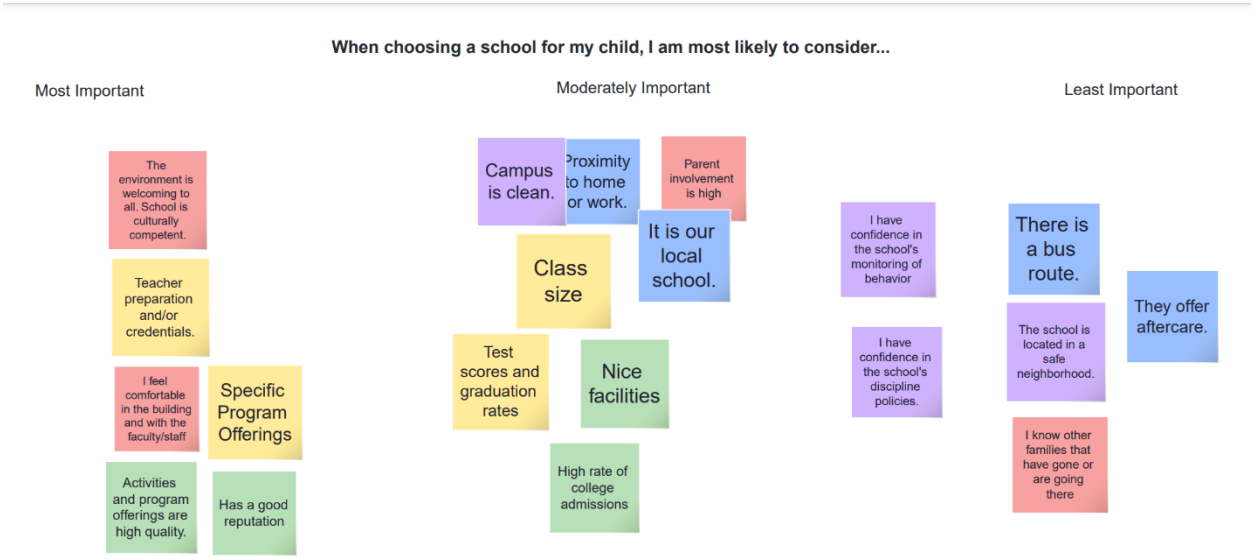
Security

1. I have confidence in the school's monitoring of behavior.
2. I have confidence in the school's discipline policies.
3. The school is located in a safe neighborhood.
4. Facilities are in good condition.

Quality

1. Nice campus/facilities
2. Activities and program offerings are top notch
3. High rate of college admissions
4. Has a good reputation

Example Whiteboard



Appendix A.4 A Map of Atlanta Area Schools

https://www.google.com/maps/d/u/0/edit?mid=1HQNInYZ9UIepSs-U8t5wa3MWHUh9sIk&usp=sharing