

8-7-2018

The Cost of Integration: Grounding the Integration Debate in Black Experience

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THE COST OF INTEGRATION: GROUNDING THE INTEGRATION DEBATE IN BLACK
EXPERIENCE

by

HANSEN BREITLING

Under the Direction of Andrew Altman, PhD

ABSTRACT

This thesis joins the dialogue in political philosophy about the potential necessity for residential integration of poor urban Black people in the U.S. into whiter neighborhoods to correct for injustices (historical and contemporary). Specifically, this thesis examines the disagreement between Tommie Shelby and Elizabeth Anderson over whether residential integration based on race is a requirement of justice. I contribute to their debate by grounding it in the lived experience of Black people, as filtered through a racially sensitive phenomenological framework. I do this by remembering and calling forth the voice of bell hooks, who was forced to shoulder the cost of school integration efforts as a child. I use Sara Ahmed's phenomenological account of whiteness to illustrate that the costs of integration which bell hooks faced decades ago remain relevant and have important implications for any contemporary residential integration efforts.

INDEX WORDS: Integration, Political theory, Social philosophy, Black experience

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

Master of Arts

in the College of Arts and Sciences

Georgia State University

2018

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July 2018

DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to my mom, Janice Breitling, and my best friend, Luke Wandling. They supported me from afar and never let me forget I had a home to return to. Without them, none of this would be possible. To them- I love you both, and we made it!

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to acknowledge and thank all the friends, faculty, and peers who made this thesis possible, but especially Dr. Lahroodi, Dr. Dwyer, Dr. Altman, and my incredible friend Shaila. They inspired, shaped, and co-created this thesis with me, and I am incredibly grateful for their generous contributions.

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1 INTRODUCTION

This thesis joins the dialogue in political philosophy about the potential necessity for residential integration of poor urban Black people in the U.S. into whiter neighborhoods to correct for injustices (historical and contemporary). Specifically, this thesis examines the disagreement between Tommie Shelby and Elizabeth Anderson over whether residential integration based on race is a requirement of justice. I contribute to their debate by grounding it in the lived experience of Black people, as filtered through a racially sensitive phenomenological framework. I do this by remembering and calling forth the voice of bell hooks, who was forced to shoulder the cost of school integration efforts as a child. I use Sara Ahmed's phenomenological account of whiteness to illustrate that the costs of integration which bell hooks faced decades ago remain relevant and have important implications for any contemporary residential integration efforts.

In the first section, I lay out Anderson's argument for seeing residential segregation as an injustice and residential integration as an instance of corrective justice. I focus on her use of what I call the "pragmatic model" as a framework of analysis and her examination of social capital as a way in which residential segregation hurts poor Black people. The second section elaborates on the alternative position Shelby develops in response to Anderson, highlighting his use of what he calls a "systematic-injustice" framework to argue that justice does not demand residential integration. The third section turns to how Shelby critiques Anderson based on the limitations of her framework, and the way her argument on social capital can be seen as an example of the susceptibility of her framework to being overly narrow. The section then considers how Anderson might pushback against Shelby's criticism. Motivated by Shelby's critique of Anderson and Anderson's potential response to Shelby, the fourth section uses a

phenomenological account of whiteness in conjunction with the actual experience of Black people to help ground the integration debate, leading to a better understanding of the potential costs and fallout of racial integration.

I proceed in this thesis from the fact that there are concentrated neighborhoods of poverty that overlap with racial segregation/clustering and metropolitan spaces such that in the U.S. we have what Shelby calls “dark ghettos”- places where most of the residents are Black and there are concentrated disadvantages including severe poverty present (2016: 41)ⁱⁱⁱ. Further, I assume that the creation and sustaining of the material and social conditions of these ghettos result from historically deep and numerous racist structures, practices, and institutions. Lastly, I narrow my focus here to Shelby and Anderson’s arguments regarding race based residential integration and leave aside related topics like solely economic driven integration efforts.

2 ANDERSON’S VIEW

Anderson argues that residential segregation along racial lines in the U.S. generates Black-white inequality due in part to Black people losing out on the bridging social capital that would advance their socioeconomic positions. Anderson diagnoses this inequality as an injustice, and she advocates for race- based residential integration as a multi-faceted process that can help eliminate the inequality residential segregation produces. Residential integration, for Anderson, thus becomes a requirement of corrective justice. Subsection one will first explain how justice and non-ideal theory are used as foundations for Anderson’s argument for integration. Then I lay out Anderson’s arguments for conceiving of segregation as an injustice and integration as a necessary solution to the injustice of segregation.

2.1 Non-ideal theory and Justice

First, the way in which Anderson conceives of non-ideal political philosophy should be established. Anderson compares non-ideal theory to the diagnosis and treatment a physician might propose for a sick patient. As she says, “Nonideal theory begins with a diagnosis of the problems and complaints in our society and investigates how to overcome these problems” (2010: 6). This framework for non-ideal theory can be seen in Anderson’s reliance on empirical data to diagnose and suggest treatments for racial segregation. Accordingly, she explains that her incorporation of empirical data is an attempt to check her analysis and test the effectiveness of her proposed solution (integration). I do not have space to go into the details of Anderson’s data analysis, nor does the objection by Shelby that I emphasize turn on interpretations of empirical data. Given this, I will leave aside questions about the soundness of Anderson’s empirical conclusions, although intriguing work is being done to defend her data analysis.ⁱⁱⁱ

We can move on to see how the idea of justice works in Anderson’s non-ideal approach to racial segregation. Anderson sees racial integration as a necessary means for discharging the duties of corrective justice. More precisely, for Anderson: “If segregation is a fundamental cause of social inequality and undemocratic practices, then integration promotes greater equality and democracy. Hence, it is an imperative of justice” (2010: 2). Later, she summarizes the role of justice in reacting to the perceived injustice of racial segregation by saying that, “Since the problem is an injustice, the remedy is an imperative of justice” (2010: 112). Importantly, Anderson sees segregation as having a causal relation to the inequality Black people face in the U.S. Segregation is not, for her, only the fallout of prevailing racist attitudes or constrained residential options for Black people. Instead, as the following subsection will show, segregation works to perpetuate and exacerbate unjust social inequality, according to Anderson.

2.2 The Cost of Segregation

Anderson argues that segregation, “isolates disadvantaged groups from access to public and private resources . . . depresses their ability to accumulate wealth . . . [and] reinforces stigmatizing stereotypes about the disadvantaged and thus causes discrimination” (2010: 2). Anderson identifies four kinds of ‘capital’ that are undermined by segregation. Capital here refers to the assets or advantages that constitute one’s socioeconomic position as well as allow for upward mobility in terms of socioeconomic status (2010: 31). The four kinds of capital Anderson identifies are financial, social, human, and cultural. I will focus here on Anderson’s arguments for social capital, as the objection by Shelby I highlight revolves around this aspect of Anderson’s work.

Social capital for Anderson denotes the “networks of people in social relationships that serve as resources for individual and collective action.” (2010: 33). Specifically, Anderson is focused on the way that social capital works as a vehicle for information that is vital to maintaining or elevating one’s socioeconomic position (2010:33). The flow of information about career, educational, or healthcare related opportunities is a function of one’s social capital. Thus, the networks of people an individual can rely on to receive and transmit information about opportunities, like a specific job opening, are what constitute their social capital.

One way Anderson develops her account of social capital is by making distinctions between *bonding* and *bridging* social capital. Bonding social capital refers to the assets one gains by making social relations with someone who has a shared social identity, for instance, the relation between two individuals who identify as country club members. Bridging social capital refers to the advantages of social relations between people with different social identities, for example, relations between people of different races who develop social bonds. Whether bonding

or bridging, Anderson also distinguishes between *strong* and *weak* social ties. The ties of strong social capital are characterized by the high levels of emotional intensity or time invested as well as reciprocity (so that the social relationship is not one-sided). The ties of weak social capital have identical characteristics to strong social bonds, but with lower levels of intensity (2010: 33).

In the case of racial segregation, Anderson is concerned by the weak bridging ties she sees Black people as missing out on by being residentially segregated from whites. She argues that segregation undermines Black people's ability to form these weak ties with whites, ties that could lead to job opportunities, better education, and other advantages. Anderson focuses on weak social ties to illustrate that an important part of what is now demanded by corrective justice is not as extreme as for Black people to be intimately connected to whites, but simply to have access to assets that do not presuppose intimacy, such as word of mouth job opportunities. While whites can do without these weak bridging ties due to historic and contemporary societal advantages, Anderson argues that Black people need these ties to advance their socioeconomic status.

Beyond the advantages of weak bridging social capital, Anderson believes that racial segregation leads to weaker bonding ties among Black people. She points to empirically observed low-levels of trust within Black communities: "Employed Black people are less likely than whites to recommend their unemployed male relatives and friends for a job because they do not trust them to do a good job" (2010: 34). I turn in the following subsection to Anderson's argument for how integration functions as a countermeasure to the injustice of race based residential segregation.

2.3 Intervening Through Integration

Anderson lays out four different stages through which integration efforts can be seen to advance, while acknowledging that any integration will happen at different rates and with different levels of resistance depending on the contexts. The four stages of integration she identifies are: “(1) formal desegregation, (2) spatial integration, (3) formal social integration, (4) informal social integration” (2010: 116). Anderson believes it is necessary to move through all four stages to attain the full benefits of integration, as well as to fully correct for the injustice of segregation. Along this line of thinking, Anderson argues that each of the above stages will offer an increase in capital to Black people, but that reaching the final stage is necessary to develop the weak bridging ties she has argued are needed. For example, in the U.S. we have seen *de jure* segregation eliminated but this has not led to the social ties Anderson seeks.

There are a number of specific policies that, Anderson argues, have moved and will continue to move integration through her four stages: “housing vouchers to promote black entry into non-black middle class neighborhoods . . . adoption of integrative programs by school districts . . . extension of discrimination-blocking and integrative affirmative action programs . . .” (2010: 189). While Anderson gives an empirical analysis that supports a number of integrative policies led by the state, she recognizes that individual citizens will have a great deal of responsibility for ensuring the success of such programs and also that any specific integrative policy may need to be adapted to fit specific circumstances. In this way, Anderson offers a defense of integration programs like Moving To Opportunity (MTO) and Gautreaux while remaining open to adapting such programs or creating new ones as driven by their empirical results.

Anderson is clear that the spirit of this integration is not to be confused with *assimilation*- she does not want only the disadvantaged social group (Black people) to change, but whites as well. By pushing for residential integration as one essential element of the four stages of integration mentioned above, Anderson believes that the current social dynamics of whites dominating and alienating Black people can be overcome (2010: 117). One consequence of Anderson's argument is that for her proposed treatment to be viable, whites have to be ready to tear down the social structures and patterns of thought which perpetuate their social advantages by dehumanizing Black people.

This section has shown how Anderson utilizes justice and non-ideal theory to identify residential segregation as an injustice and propose a correction for it in the form of integration. Next, I will discuss Shelby's alternative position on the issue of residential integration.

3 SHELBY'S VIEW

At the core of both Shelby's and Anderson's views is a framework of justice, based on Rawlsian principles. The question of what the duty of justice demands guides much of their work and arguments, even as they come to opposing conclusions. Both philosophers are explicit about their use of *non-ideal* frameworks, however they approach non-ideal political philosophy differently- Shelby rejects the pragmatic model that guides Anderson, and instead utilizes a systemic-injustice framework. This section examines the role of Rawlsian ideas about justice in Shelby's argument, in order to show how his conception of the duty of justice leads him to reject the integrationist position.

3.1 Systemic-Injustice Framework and the Demands of Justice

Shelby's project is to address the issue of what oppressed, marginalized, and disadvantaged populations of Black peoples in the U.S. owe to society and the state and vice versa. He begins by rejecting what he calls the "medical model", which I have dubbed the "pragmatic model", for addressing these issues. The pragmatic model aims "to increase the material welfare of people living in ghettos through narrowly targeted and empirically grounded interventions into their lives" (2016: 2). Similar to physicians, theorists or policy makers (like Anderson) who use the pragmatic model first attempt to diagnose and then provide treatment for social problems. Shelby rejects this model because while a pragmatic model is a useful way to treat physical illness, social problems do not have an assumed starting point like the basic physiology of the human body. Using a pragmatic model, "policymakers . . . treat the background structure of society as given and focus only on alleviating the burdens of the disadvantaged" (2016: 2). Shelby argues that this results in a status quo bias, where elements of the basic structure of society that should be examined are overlooked. With social problems, if one takes for granted the basic structure of society in order to propose treatment, then one can become numb to the way in which even these basic structures are socially constructed and vulnerable to oppressive ideologies. In Anderson's case, Shelby argues that the pragmatic model has led her to overlook the ways in which anti-Blackness can and does impact the project of race-based residential integration because it resides deep in the thought processes and social interactions of many people in the U.S.

Rejecting the pragmatic model, Shelby employs a "systemic-injustice" framework to the end that "justice questions. . . be[come] a focal point of public policy, political activism, and civic discourse concerning the future of our cities and their most disadvantaged inhabitants"

(2016: 4). By using a systemic-injustice framework, Shelby hopes to avoid the allegedly narrow point-of-view of the pragmatic model. Instead, Shelby puts his systemic-injustice framework to use by tracking broad patterns of injustices to better understand localized injustices. In the case of residential integration, Shelby wants to be careful not to lose sight of the varied ways in which anti-Blackness is tied to even the basic structures of the U.S., a fact which makes him cautious about the value of any integrationist project. Using as a starting place the injustices faced by Black people in the U.S., Shelby motivates his work by asking what is just for this marginalized population, and what justice can and should demand of them- especially with regards to state funded/driven projects like residential integration.

According to Shelby, the duty of justice “demands, most fundamentally, that each of us respect and support just institutions, particularly those that lay claim to our allegiance and from which we benefit” (2016: 57). The duty of justice is a moral mandate that binds all the citizens of a state, and Shelby’s view is that under unjust social arrangements, the duty demands that “we help to establish a just social order and . . . reform unjust institutions” (2016: 57). While the duty of justice touches all citizens in some way, Shelby argues that it falls with different weight upon citizens given their capacities to resist injustices.

The first demand of justice would be an immediate “cease and desist” order, so to speak, for those carrying out acts of injustice. These injustices could be carried out by individuals, groups, or institutions. Further, the burden of correcting these injustices should fall most heavily on those who are/were actively carrying out the injustices or primary supporters of the unjust structures. This isn’t the only group on which the duty of justice imposes requirements. Shelby also holds that the duty requires affirmative steps to correct for injustices on the part of those who were bystanders or played more passive roles but still benefitted from unjust (state and

social) structures and practices. Finally, Shelby believes the duty of justice places demands upon the oppressed. This is a potentially contentious claim, and Shelby attempts to avoid charges of victim blaming by arguing that the oppressed “. . . may bear no responsibility for the injustices they endure. Nevertheless, the oppressed do have some freedom to determine how they will *respond* to these conditions- for example, whether they will acquiesce or resist” (2016: 58). Shelby does not want to paint the picture that the oppressed are solely or even mostly responsible for their life conditions, but does argue that the duty of justice still places important demands upon them.

Shelby acknowledges that situations arise in which one cannot do much in the way of reforming or undoing unjust structures and institutions. Even in these cases, Shelby emphasizes the need for all to refuse to be complicit in unjust practices and institutions whenever possible, though he admits this can be difficult or impossible given the number of overlapping unjust structures people must navigate daily. Shelby thinks this resistance can come by way of speaking out or actions aimed at refusing to silently accept injustices. He writes, “Even if we cannot make a positive contribution to social reform and cannot entirely avoid some complicity or compromises with an unjust system, we should at least *care* about injustice” (2016: 58, emphasis added). Shelby is here referring to the lightest burden the duty of justice demands- to not be apathetic when there are injustices and unjust structures/institutions around one. This applies to all, including the oppressed, and Shelby is clear that the oppressed groups on the receiving end of society’s injustices have a duty to dissent, where dissent is broadly construed and can happen through varied means- public protest, communications to community representatives, etc.

I look next to how Shelby applies this duty of justice with regards to residential integration. We can begin to answer the following questions Shelby poses: why might Black

people choose to self-segregate in terms of residences (even if they were given a state funded alternative)? Is this legitimate or is there something objectionable at work in these residential choices for Black people? What about for whites? Further, does the duty of justice demand residential integration of Black people into white neighborhoods, given the social-political-historical circumstances of Black people in the U.S.? Shelby argues for an “egalitarian pluralist” stance which “requires desegregation, social equality, and importantly, economic fairness. It does not require residential integration. Nor does it oppose it. It does not proscribe voluntary self-segregation in neighborhoods. Nor does it call for it” (p.67). Let us turn to his argument.

3.2 Black Residential Self-Segregation

Shelby contends that at least some self-segregation by Black people is not only acceptable per the duties of justice, but also rational. The remainder of this subsection explains his view of why residential self-segregation by Black people is rational. An important note here is to recognize that Shelby is discussing the right or reasons of poor Black people to prefer staying in their own neighborhoods as opposed to accepting state incentivized alternatives- Shelby is not saying these poor Black people *have* this residential choice currently.

The most obvious reason that Black people may rationally not choose to integrate into white neighborhoods is to avoid “interpersonal discrimination, racist treatment, and hostile attitudes” as well as “interracial conflict, which can, and generally does, reflect the operation of stereotypes and implicit bias but needn’t be motivated by hostility or animus” (2016: 59). Thus, Black people in no way have to view whites as *intentionally* malevolent or vicious in order to choose to avoid racial conflict with whites.

Beyond the desire to avoid such conflict, Shelby spells out a number of reasonable grounds on which Black people might prefer to live in Black neighborhoods (or neighborhoods with a critical mass of Black people). Shelby is not here trying to say that Black people, especially those he is writing about, who are in ghettos, have perfectly free residential choices. What he argues is that even being constrained as these Black persons are by material concerns and options, group self-segregation can still be a reasonable choice in the context of the U.S. ghettos. One reason Black people may prefer to self-segregate is to “protect their shared interests in a society where they are deeply disadvantaged and vulnerable to mistreatment and political marginalization” (2016: 60). Self-segregation, in the context of racialized threats found across society and quite possibly exacerbated by residential integration, can be seen as Black people acting to protect their own basic interests. Due to the historical and contemporary facts about the U.S., whites do not have this reason: there is no racial symmetry here.

While Black self-segregation can be a response to a hostile social-political climate and unjust institutions, it does not, for Shelby, have to be an expression of resistance or dissent. Black people may prefer to live around others who simply share similar life experiences (2016: 61), in neighborhoods whose history is intertwined with their own families, or because these areas have services, opportunities, and practices that appeal to Black residents. Further, the points Shelby makes in explaining the potential advantages of self-segregation by Black people can be extended into a critique of Anderson. If Shelby is accurate in his assessment of positive reasons Black people may have to live in Black communities, we can question whether Anderson has an accurate understanding of the social benefits found in bonding ties amongst Black people in the disadvantaged communities discussed.

4 INTERROGATING THE PROJECT OF INTEGRATION

In this section, I first examine what I take to be the central objection Shelby has to Anderson's arguments for integration. Then I will consider how Anderson might respond, and whether the potential responses are sufficient as a defense of her position.

Shelby's disagreement with Anderson is not a dispute over the accuracy of her data analysis, but importantly turns on "ethical ideals and on how non-ideal theorizing about social justice should be conceived and practiced." (Shelby 2016: 67). In this way, Shelby's criticism of Anderson has a great deal to do with the framework she utilizes and its potential limitations. Given the important role social capital plays in Anderson's argument, Shelby targets her conceptualization of social capital as an example of how her pragmatic model generates objectionable dilemmas and attitudes.

The social capital argument also makes integration a particularly distasteful remedy for ghetto poverty because of its racial dimensions. Such an approach to corrective justice would reinforce the symbolic power that whites hold over Black people by encouraging whites to see their relationships with Black people not as intrinsically valuable form of interracial community but as avenues for Black people to share in (not abolish) white privilege . . . whites are free to dole out this dubious privilege to whomever they see fit . . . this puts Black people in an untenable supplicant position (2016: 70).

This passage from Shelby hits on the most unpleasant and emotionally charged element of Anderson's integrationist argument- it seems to ask the oppressed group of poor Black people to assume many of the risks, costs, and burdens, while guaranteeing little reward since whites are free to continue living with their privilege if they so choose. Without concrete and substantial evidence that many whites are willing to tear down the systems that uphold their privileges as well as work to unlearn their racial prejudices/biases (conscious or not), Shelby does not believe that justice can demand poor Black people assume the risks associated with residential

integrationist policies- even in light of the social bonding benefits for Black people that Anderson argues will be the result of integration..

As was shown in the previous section, if Anderson wishes to avoid being seen as an assimilationist then she too needs for whites to be ready to enact sweeping social changes in their interactions with and conceptions of Black people, especially poor Black people. Whether or not, or to what degree, whites are ready to enact such changes becomes an issue central to Shelby's disagreement with Anderson. Further, Shelby sees Anderson as having missed or underestimated this element of her argument due to her use of the pragmatic model. Anderson identifies an inequality between Black and white people, but, without consideration of how prevailing strains of white supremacist thought stain the basic structures of the U.S., she offers a solution that attempts to treat a symptom while leaving the disease. Her narrow focus, Shelby argues, has led her to advocate for a position that should be left up to the people who would face the greatest risk- poor Black people.

As Shelby says, "Black people, as an unjustly disadvantaged group, should be the ones to decide if forgoing the returns to social capital that integration might provide is worth it to them" (2016: 75). Shelby's point is especially powerful given that Anderson is writing as a white integrationist, which cannot be ignored in light of the myriad of decisions that white people have made on behalf of Black people in the U.S. and how it's imposed untold and unwanted financial, emotional, and psychological costs on Black people as a result. I will further question the merits of integration in section four where I discuss bell hooks' experience of past integrationist efforts, in order to highlight the potential costs of Anderson's position to Black people as well as to ground my work in Black voice and life.

Anderson can potentially rebut Shelby's critique in several ways. One tactic is to bolster her arguments with further examination of the basic structures and oppressive ideology (white supremacy) that have been left largely intact. Broader consideration of racist institutions and thought patterns may be compatible with Anderson's pragmatic model of non-ideal theory. For example, it might be that the empirical data Anderson cites has something to say about prevailing attitudes among whites, who may be expressing explicitly, or with actions, that they are ready to relinquish their social privileges. Anderson theorizes that residential integration will work to enable Black people to share in some of the social benefits that she believes come from living in close proximity to Whites. However, there is far from conclusive evidence that whites are ready to go beyond sharing a few basic social privileges and additionally are willing to undertake the project of interrogating their lives to root out anti-Black sentiment and thought. Thus, Anderson's argument becomes messy, as even if on a conscious level many whites do not desire to extend their social advantages, how can whites dismantle the ideology and structures that support their privilege regardless of their consent? Studies of unconscious or unintentional racial bias further cloud the issue^{iv}, and it remains unclear how Anderson could provide adequate evidence that whites are ready to tackle the broader facets of anti-Blackness that are present in the U.S.

A second counter argument Anderson could muster is to first concede that Shelby has both accurately highlighted racially charged dynamics of paternalism embedded in her arguments and identified how Black people *might* respond to these elements thus leading to a rejection of the integrationist position. However, Shelby has not provided evidence that this is how most (or even many, besides himself) Black people in fact feel about the integrationist position Anderson advances. Outlaw makes a similar critique in his review of Shelby's book.^v

Outlaw argues that while Shelby draws inspiration from Kenneth B. Clark's work^{vi}, he does not give much space to the voices of those actually in poor, Black, segregated neighborhoods.

Anderson can follow Outlaw in arguing that Shelby is making arguments *for* poor Black people in the U.S. instead of *with* these people. This is a powerful rebuttal that is available to Anderson, as if it should be up to poor Black people (as Shelby argues) in disadvantaged neighborhoods to determine their own way forward, they may indeed choose integration.

It is now that I wish to enter into the disagreement between Shelby and Anderson and reassert a Black voice and experience, that of bell hooks, who has experienced spatial integration via the school system in the 1960's. I argue that both Anderson and Shelby can stand to benefit from greater and grittier interaction with how Black people have, can, and do experience integration into white spaces.

5 RECONSIDERING THE COSTS OF INTEGRATION

In this section I bring together part of the framework developed by Sara Ahmed with bell hooks' account of her experiences during school integration efforts in the 60's. Ahmed's work adds an important dimension to the integration debate by helping us focus on the largely overlooked fact that space and mobility, which are at the heart of residential integration, are raced. The current debate glosses over what it is like to move through, into, and around white spaces as a Black person in the U.S. Using Ahmed's framework to examine bell hooks' experiences of integration will reveal under-appreciated potential costs of contemporary integration efforts, costs that both Shelby and Anderson should take more completely into account in developing their positions.

It may seem odd to focus on a single instance of integration; however, in this thesis, I am only attempting to *begin* to ground the contemporary integration debate in Black experience. If this project has merit, it will have to be taken up by others and more fully explored in numerous conversations and writings. I do not claim that bell hooks' experience is identical, similar, or most representative of others' experiences of integration. I explore bell hooks' writing as a starting place, to begin to think about how the integration debate might be served by listening to those marginalized voices and lives which it is often talking about (instead of with).

5.1 A Phenomenological Framework of Whiteness

Ahmed explains that she “consider[s] what ‘whiteness’ does without assuming whiteness as an ontological given, but as that which has been received, or become given, over time. Whiteness could be described as an ongoing and un- finished history, which orientates bodies in specific directions, affecting how they ‘take up’ space” (2007: 150).^{vii} On this basis, she illuminates the way in which spaces become ‘white’ and accommodate white bodies/movements. Accordingly, Ahmed describes whiteness as not only an orientation, but as habitual: “To describe whiteness as a habit, as second nature, is to suggest that whiteness is what bodies do. . . . If habits are about what bodies do, in ways that are repeated, then they might also shape what bodies can do.” (2007: 156). White spaces are thus identified by the orientation of bodies as well as the mobility available to those bodies. One can imagine the entrance of a group of Black friends into a bar filled mostly with white patrons- there is an immediate re-orientating that occurs such that the Black bodies obtrude into the white space, and their being noticed shapes and hinders their ability to move through the space. This will sound familiar, I think, to people of

color who encounter a multiplicity of such situations in everyday life- at work, in the gym, out to eat, and everywhere spaces are made white.

Moving further into Ahmed's phenomenology, whiteness is also understood as being about the body's ability to freely lag behind or move unimpeded through spaces: "In other words, the body is habitual insofar as it 'trails behind' in the performing of action, insofar as it does not pose 'a problem' or an obstacle to the action, or is not 'stressed' by 'what' the action encounters" (2007: 156). White bodies inhabit spaces through their ability to move and act without calling attention to themselves, as though the spaces were meant for them- and the spaces *become* for them through these bodily habits. "Spaces are orientated 'around' whiteness, insofar as whiteness is not seen. . . The effect of this 'around whiteness' . . . makes non-white bodies feel uncomfortable, exposed, visible, different, when they take up this space" (2007: 157). Now we can begin to see how the free movement through and shaping of spaces by white bodies molds the experiences of non-white bodies that encounter these white spaces and bodies.

Ahmed goes on to detail the phenomenological aspect of non-white bodies in white spaces, which are produced by the orientations of white bodies and their habits. "To be not white is to be not extended by the spaces you inhabit. This is an uncomfortable feeling . . . The experience of negation, of being stopped or feeling out of place, or feeling uncomfortable, does not 'stop' there. When the arrival of some bodies is noticed, when an arrival is noticeable, it generates disorientation" (2007: 163). This is the first experience for non-white bodies in white spaces: a powerful discomfort produced through disorientation. We can think again of the experience of Black people entering a predominately white bar- the ensuing stares and reorienting of white bodies such that those with Black bodies are made to be hyper-aware of their bodies and their entrance into the white space. The non-extension of Black bodies in white

spaces is precisely this disorientation manifested as the experiences of sticking out, remaining apart from, and being hyper-visible in a given space.

Specifically concerning Black bodies in white spaces, Ahmed makes the point that “To be black in ‘the white world’ is to turn back towards itself, to become an object, which means not only not being extended by the contours of the world, but being diminished as an effect of the bodily extensions of others” (2007: 161). It is hard to overestimate the discomfort and restricting of mobility a person of color can face in white spaces, as the white bodies are rendered invisible, while non-white bodies are made hyper-visible to the detriment of non-white peoples. It is through this framework of white bodies, spaces, and their disorientating and uncomfortable interactions with racially marked bodies that I draw out the cost bell hooks faced when integrating into a white school.

5.2 The Phenomenal Cost of Desegregation

Bell hooks, in her work *Teaching to Transgress* (1994)^{viii}, gives personal insight into how desegregation of schools impacted her and others in her previously segregated Black communities. Her experiences before integration helped instill the positive radical potential of schooling in her. She describes her time at an all-Black school in the 50’s and 60’s: “Attending school then was sheer joy. I loved being a student. I loved learning” (1994: 3). This is the attitude toward school which many teachers hope to inspire in their students, but which is sadly short-lived for bell hooks.

Bell hooks’ love and zeal for school would not last, and was changed when she and her Black peers were forced to attend a newly desegregated (but still, as we will see, distinctly white) school. “The classroom was no longer a place of pleasure or ecstasy. . . . We were always and only responding and reacting to white folk” (1994: 4). She underwent a “shift from beloved, all-

black schools to white schools where black students were always seen as interlopers” (1994: 4). Later in the text, she reflects further on her experience: “We had to make the journey and thus bear the responsibility of making desegregation a reality. We had to give up the familiar and enter a world that seemed cold and strange . . . [W]e had to awaken an hour early so that we could be bussed to school before the white students arrived. We were made to sit in the gymnasium and wait” (1994: 24). This is a clear instance of Black bodies being forced into white spaces. Aside from the cost to the Black students of actually *getting* to these white spaces (sleep deprivation, in this case), hooks describes the disorientating experience of entering a new school where Black bodies did not fit in and were rendered hyper-visible by virtue of their non-whiteness.

These striking passages illuminate the cost hooks was made to pay, as a child, for integration efforts. While it may be tempting to dismiss this experience as irrelevant to contemporary integration efforts (in light of presumed social changes and improved conditions for Black people in the U.S. since the mid-20th century), Ahmed’s framework resists this mistaken temptation. What bell hooks describes is eerily similar to the phenomenological description Ahmed lays out decades later. The Black bodies of hooks and her peers entered the white spaces (created by white bodies and habits) and were immediately oriented towards the white spaces- as bell hooks says, they were constantly and only responding to the whiteness around them. This experience left them disoriented and feeling like unwelcome strangers in another’s home- a “cold and strange” (1994: 24) experience, as she says. Further, while hooks’ experience of integration is through school desegregation, the common element of Black bodies being shepherded into white spaces is shared with the residential integration Shelby and Anderson are concerned about.

Notice that what has been described is not directly connected to explicitly racist remarks or policies, which she describes in other places of her work and might be regretfully expected of Black experiences in the 60's. The experience of being forced to integrate into these white spaces posed a cost for Black bodies on its own, aside from other racialized dangers or threats. Bell hooks was made to feel less than, and diminished by, her inability to extend and move freely through the new white space.

This forces us to ask if we can really dismiss the fundamental concern that stems from forcing Black bodies into white spaces created by white bodies. It is dangerous to ignore the potential costs to Black people that are created if they are to be integrated into white neighborhoods. Even the best of intentions from the white people already in those spaces would not negate the fact that they are white spaces, produced by white bodies, and these orientations and habits are learned through socialization. It is difficult (maybe impossible) to avoid all white supremacist and anti-Black thoughts and habits if one is socialized in the U.S., and that leads people to hierarchize bodies such that white ones are at the top and can move freely through most spaces; non-white and especially Black bodies are placed at the bottom of this hierarchy and are stopped, disoriented, and often made to feel uncomfortable in these white spaces. As such, we must consider further how Black bodies are stopped, immobilized, and disoriented in these spaces before pushing forward with residential integration efforts.

It is this phenomenological aspect of Black interactions with white spaces and the associated costs of disorientation and discomfort that are lacking from the debate between Shelby and Anderson. We can now pull out the implications of the phenomenological costs faced by Black people for both Shelby and Anderson's positions. It is reasonable to think that more seriously taking up the matter of lived Black experience would ultimately strengthen Shelby's

argument against Anderson, since it has been shown here to reveal previously unconsidered costs for Black people. However, this is not assured given that this project of phenomenological grounding is new and could illuminate other facets of the integration debate which have remained obscured thus far. Any philosophically strong case against Anderson's integrationist position would also need to further scrutinize the nature and implications of Black people's experiences, so I find this phenomenological grounding equally important for Shelby. The final verdict on the justifiability of an integrationist policy must await further phenomenological analysis; however the main point here is that such an analysis is necessary for a sound verdict.

As the debate currently stands, I find Shelby's argument against the imperative of integration more convincing than Anderson's arguments in support of it. As I stated, Shelby has a need to further make room for the voices and experiences of the poor Black people he is arguing on behalf of in his work- yet his argument is more respectful of the freedom and equality of Black people than Anderson's, in that while he disagrees with there being an imperative for state driven integration efforts, he has no problem with Black people themselves choosing to integrate or self-segregate. Anderson has not left much room for Black people to retain a sense of autonomy. Her argument for integration demands that it be done for the good of Black people- disregarding their willingness or desire for such change in light of what she believes to be decisive empirical evidence showing the benefits of residential integration. I am unwilling to accept that such empirical evidence can be legitimately invoked to override the self-determination of marginalized peoples and further side with Shelby in thinking that Anderson's narrow framework has left her numb to the massive costs that could be felt by the very population she is attempting to treat. In the final section, I will articulate two possible objections to the arguments I have made in this work as well as attempt to respond to them.

6 OBJECTIONS AND RESPONSES

A project of grounding philosophical debate in experience, which this work is meant to contribute to, is open to a number of challenges given the way such work cuts against the grain of contemporary Western academic philosophy- even more so when the project isn't already up and running. Here I will lay out and respond only to what I take to be the two most pressing objections to my project. The first stems from a pragmatic concern aimed at a presumably unintended implication if my arguments in this thesis have been successful: the hindering or slowing of any change in the material conditions of the poor, urban, Black communities that have been at the center of the integration debate. The second charge accuses the project of painting an overly simplified and essentialist picture of Black experiences in its discussion of Black spatiality and mobility.

Anderson, it can be argued, saw a dire situation in which people's life opportunities were being unjustly molded to a high degree by racialized social conditions- which include residential segregation. Seeing this led her to look for a point of leverage that could be used to enact sweeping change of these conditions. She found this point in the potential for residential integration. Thus, Anderson became aware of injustice and moved to remedy it- or at least moved to support a remedy through her writings. This thesis, in cautioning Anderson's integration project as one which has rushed to action without full appreciation for its consequences, could be slowing relief to the painful social conditions which Anderson and I are both concerned with.

I admit that, if my arguments were taken up in a serious manner within the integration debate, they would not present as simple a pathway toward policy proposals as Anderson's arguments for integration do. In this way, one might plausibly say that my arguments would slow

relief (by means of residential integration) of oppressive social conditions. I admit this is a possibility, and academic works are frequently dismissed in political arenas because of their perceived futility insofar as every argument is met with a counter argument and no firm conclusion is ever established.

However, I strongly suspect that rushing forward with a theoretically and pragmatically flawed project like residential integration would only result in more pain for the underserved communities in question. Leaping to action to fix injustice is a tempting move, but we must first work to uncover how such actions might only further unjust conditions or address surface level matters while leaving core injustices and the systems which perpetrate them untouched. The project of this thesis is an attempt to do this uncovering, and so, while it may temporarily slow change, it can be seen as contributing to a deeper and more holistic approach which will work against the oppressive institutions at the root of the unjust conditions observed in some poor, urban, Black neighborhoods.

Anderson, as one of the principal subjects of my critical analysis, might push back against the response I have given to the above objection. I will consider three points she could raise in response to the defense I have given of this project. First, Anderson could point to the empirical evidence that has been and continues to be collected on housing programs that directly or indirectly contribute to residential integration. After all, it is this evidence which much of her arguments for integration rest on. While I intentionally left aside any empirical analysis in order to focus on ethical and moral objections to her arguments, Anderson is under no obligation to relinquish one of her most persuasive points.

Second, Anderson could argue that my response to the objection above, which emphasizes the costliness of unintended consequences, appears very similar in structure to the

counter-arguments which political conservatives have given to any number of proposed progressive policies. An example is the argument that giving food stamps to those who face food insecurity or starvation creates a dependence on the government which ultimately harms those who take advantage of these programs. The harm is thought to be that such a reliance undermines these people's motivation and ability to be self-reliant. A more extreme example is the defense of slavery in the U.S. by arguing that giving freedom to those people who were slaves would only harm them, since it was thought by many that slaves did have the intellectual capacities to care for themselves outside of the system of slavery. The point being drawn out with these examples is that progressive policies have faced resistance in the form of the argument that unintended consequences would do more harm than good to the very groups which the policies seek to aid, and that while my project may come from a radically different political position, it utilizes this same argument structure.

The last point Anderson might make in response to the defense of my project above is that integrationist policies are (or can be) flexible and responsive to feedback. Residential integration doesn't have to ignore the consequences it brings with it- the policies can be altered or eliminated if they are found to produce significant harms to those people who are impacted by them. By asserting the potential responsiveness of residential integration policies, Anderson could acknowledge that my concern over unintended consequences is valid, but doesn't need to be seen as a reason for halting the project when it can be improved while simultaneously continuing.

To respond to the first potential rejoinder by Anderson, I borrow from Shelby. While the analysis of and implementation of housing policies based on empirical evidence is undeniably important, it does not for me outweigh the cost of failing to respect the oppressed communities in

question as people. It is this failure to respect poor Black people as people capable and uniquely qualified to speak on the project of residential integration which Shelby attributes to Anderson's argument; a pitfall which I argued Shelby also partially fell into by not giving space in his work for these people's voices. To continue to point back to the empirical data would be to speak past the work of this project as well as Shelby's- what I argue is needed is not just further data analysis, but to uncover the ways in which residential integration can and has failed to respect the human dignity of the people in question.

The second objection I suggest Anderson might raise is accurate insofar as it does point out a similarity in the abstract structure of my argument and the ones conservatives have made in the past. However, this similarity quickly fades away if one returns to the specifics of my arguments. I would reiterate here Shelby's critique of Anderson's work as blind to the way in which her arguments presuppose the larger structures (formal and informal) of the U.S. That her arguments take for granted such structures leads her position to actually be more conservative than I think is immediately obvious. Anderson takes up residential integration in a way that does little to challenge the insidious and oppressive aspects in the structures that compose the U.S.- for example, her project would not directly give the poor Black people in these urban neighborhoods the power and resources needed to self-determine their existence, something I am in favor of. Instead, Anderson's project continues the neoliberal trend of making such decisions **for** these people. So while my arguments may in the abstract bear resemblance to conservative arguments, when they are contextualized alongside Anderson's position I think it becomes evident that my arguments are in fact more progressive and radical than her own. Whether these traits of my arguments work for or against my attempt to convince the reader is of course

variable, so I will be content here just to have given good reason to understand my position as importantly dissimilar to conservative arguments of the past.

Finally, my response to the third rebuttal I suggested Anderson could raise is connected to my response to her first point. If residential integration is, as I've argued, a project which fails to respect poor, urban Black people *as* people, then the responsiveness or flexibility of any instantiated project of residential integration is not an overriding factor. I have argued in this thesis that more space needs to be given to the voices and experiences of the communities who are at the center of the integration debate, because as it stands the project of residential integration fails to respect them as fully and equally human. Until such time as the project of residential integration is being pushed for primarily or at least strongly by the people in these marginalized communities, then residential integration is not a viable option for correcting the injustices present. Instead of such support for integration though, what I have seen and read from people in these communities are more frequently demands for the giving over of resources and wealth to these communities so that they may attempt to rectify these injustices themselves without being beholden to outside interests.

The second main objection to my project stems from the impression readers may have carried away from my discussion of Ahmed's phenomenology of whiteness framework. The critical reader might object that this discussion gives the appearance that Black bodies, in their movements through and interactions with white spaces, have a determined experience of these spaces. Is this really how it feels to be in white spaces for all Black and brown people?

The answer is of course not- Ahmed and I have both given a simplified description in order to generate a general framework which can be utilized in a variety of situations. One should not take the construction of this framework as implicitly containing the assumption that

all non-white people have identical disorienting experiences of white spaces, or even that all non-whites are disoriented at all in a given situation. The full diversity of socially relevant characteristics will shape Black experiences of white spaces, including age, gender, (dis)ability, and other such perceived features. Every experience contains in it the infinite variability which is attached to such complex social interactions, and so there cannot be said to be just one experience of Black bodies in white spaces. Instead, what I borrow from Ahmed is a framework which articulates a persistent, prominent, and unfortunately common experience for those who inhabit non-white bodies and must navigate white spaces.

7 CONCLUSIONS

The debate about integration is important and urgent. Both Anderson and Shelby engage in much-needed discussion about the benefits, costs, and implications of racial integration efforts in the U.S. More work is needed on the subject, and here I argued that the consideration of Black people's lived experience needs to be given more space in discussions of integration. This is especially true of academic discussions in general and philosophical debates in particular. The experiences and life opportunities of Black people in poor, urban neighborhoods have been, and continue to be shaped by unjust and vicious structures and institutions. No matter which side of the integration debate one falls on, we cannot allow it to erase, minimize, or shut out the voices of these people. We must find ways to elevate and center even academic debates on the experiences and words of the Black people who are most impacted by these issues.

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ⁱ Shelby, Tommie. 2016. *Dark Ghettos: Injustice, Dissent, and Reform*. Belknap Press, Cambridge, MA.

ⁱⁱ I adopt Shelby's use of the word "ghetto" in this thesis. While "ghetto" is an affectively and racially charged word, Shelby here uses the term in a technical sense to distinguish specific kinds of neighborhoods in the U.S. that are burdened with issues of poverty AND race from others which may primarily face only one or the other form of societal disadvantage.

ⁱⁱⁱ Poama, Andrei. forthcoming. "Staying in or moving out? Justice and the abolition of the dark ghetto". *European Journal of Political Theory*.

^{iv} Bertrand, Marianne, and Sendhil Mullainathan .2004. "Are Emily and Greg more employable than Lakisha and Jamal? A field experiment on labor market discrimination". *American Economic Review* 94 (4): 991–1013. ; Madva, Alexander Maron. 2012. *The Hidden Mechanisms of Prejudice: Implicit Bias and Interpersonal Fluency*. Dissertation, Columbia University.

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