

*Neighborhood Change and the Neighborhood-School Gap*

Abstract

Few studies examine how school and neighborhood composition in the U.S. correspond over time, particularly in a context of neighborhood change. As neighborhoods diversify along racial and economic lines, do public schools also diversify or grow increasingly dissimilar from their surrounding areas? Drawing on novel data linking neighborhoods and schools in the U.S. in 2000 and 2010, I document: how racial composition corresponds over time between traditional public schools and the neighborhoods they serve; how the compositional gap changes when greater school choice is available; and how the compositional gap varies between neighborhoods experiencing various trajectories of socioeconomic change. I find an increasing mismatch in the white composition of public schools and their surrounding neighborhoods, specifically that schools enroll fewer white students than the composition of the neighborhood. The compositional mismatch grows the most in neighborhoods experiencing socioeconomic ascent, particularly as the number of nearby non-neighborhood schools increases.

Keywords: neighborhoods, schools, neighborhood change, segregation, urban inequality