

**The Implications of Choice as an Educational Policy:
Studying the Relationship Between Choice and School Diversity in San
Francisco Public Schools**

Jennifer Roffle
San Francisco State University
May 2007

Table of Contents

Abstract.....	1
List of Appendices.....	2
Introduction	
Statement of the Problem.....	3-4
Purpose of the Study.....	4
Literature Review.....	4-6
Historical Background.....	6-8
Methodology	
Research Design.....	8
Data Instruments and Measurements.....	8-9
Definition of Terms.....	9-10
Sample Design, Frame, and Procedures.....	10
Limitations.....	10-11
Qualitative Data.....	11
Data Analysis.....	11-12
Results	
SFUSD's Diversity Measurement Results.....	12-15
Simpson's Diversity Index Results.....	15-17
ANOVA results.....	17-18
Community Focus Group Results.....	18
Conclusion	
Discussion.....	19
Limitations.....	19-20
Implications.....	20
References.....	21

Abstract

The demographic landscape has changed tremendously in this country and the United States now has the most diverse group of students in its history. Yet, today the public schools are almost as segregated as they were in the late 1960s. Many policymakers have responded to challenges of supporting diversity in public schools by touting choice as an effective educational policy. They believe that school choice will promote diversity, increase educational achievement for poor and minority students, and increase parent satisfaction and commitment to their children's education. To date, however, there is little empirical evidence to support that choice, as an educational policy, will lead to all of these benefits. This study will focus on analyzing the relationship between choice and school diversity. It will employ an experimental design to analyze school diversity in the San Francisco Unified School District with its three student assignment phases: Optional Enrollment Period 1983-2001, Randomized Computerized Process 2001-2002, Diversity Index Lottery 2002 to present. The primary research question in this study will be: How does choice as an educational policy affect school diversity in the San Francisco Unified School District? This research project hypothesizes that choice has negatively affected school diversity in San Francisco.

Abstract

The demographic landscape has changed tremendously in this country and the United States now has the most diverse group of students in its history. Yet, today the public schools are almost as segregated as they were in the late 1960s. Many policymakers have responded to challenges of supporting diversity in public schools by touting choice as an effective educational policy. They believe that school choice will promote diversity, increase educational achievement for poor and minority students, and increase parent satisfaction and commitment to their children's education. To date, however, there is little empirical evidence to support that choice, as an educational policy, will lead to all of these benefits. This study will focus on analyzing the relationship between choice and school diversity. It will employ an experimental design to analyze school diversity in the San Francisco Unified School District with its three student assignment phases: Optional Enrollment Period 1983-2001, Randomized Computerized Process 2001-2002, Diversity Index Lottery 2002 to present. The primary research question in this study will be: How does choice as an educational policy affect school diversity in the San Francisco Unified School District? This research project hypothesizes that choice has negatively affected school diversity in San Francisco.

Introduction

Statement of the Problem

Despite this country's recent celebration of the 50th anniversary of *Brown v. Board of Education*, the Supreme Court decision that ended segregation in public schools, U.S. schools continue to grapple with integrating schools. Whether court ordered or voluntary, most school districts have desegregation plans and the U.S. Department of Education monitors school districts for racial isolation. However, research has shown that since the late 1980s, schools are becoming more segregated. Gary Orfield's "*Schools More Separate: Consequences of a Decade of Resegregation*," part of the Harvard Project on Civil Rights, found that by 1999 more than 70% of the nation's black students and 75.6 % of Latino students are now in predominately minority schools (Orfield, 2001).

The big question becomes why are schools becoming resegregated? There are no simple answers, but many people point to the decision of some school districts to abandon their voluntary desegregation plans in favor of race neutral plans and the fact that many of the court-ordered plans that forced school districts to desegregate were only temporary. Furthermore, many school districts have faced court challenges that have ended their school district's desegregation plans, like in San Francisco. In a 1999 settlement agreement with the court, San Francisco Unified School District was prohibited from using race as a factor in its student assignment process.

The elimination of race as a factor in school assignment has forced many school districts to find new methods of achieving school diversity. One educational policy that "has emerged as one of the most widely supported issues of the decade is choice - the practice of allowing parents and students to choose among a variety of schools" (Wells, 1990). The U.S. Department of Education believes that choice is important as an educational policy because it "contributes to student achievement, increases parent satisfaction and commitment, creates distinctive learning environments, allows more creativity among educators, and increases economic and racial

integration across schools” (U.S. Dept of Education, 2004). The problem with the claims of the U.S.

Department of Education is that there is little empirical evidence to support the claim that choice can lead to increased diversity in schools.

Purpose of Study

This purpose of this study is to analyze the relationship between choice and school diversity. It differs from the majority of research done on this topic in that it seeks, through empirical research, to show that there is a causal relationship between choice and school diversity. This study will examine what happened to school diversity in San Francisco public schools when race was eliminated as a factor in the student assignment process and parental choice and school capacity became the main determinants of a student’s school assignment. The primary research question in this study will be: How does choice as an educational policy affect school diversity in the San Francisco Unified School District? This research project hypothesizes that choice has negatively affected school diversity in San Francisco public schools. ✓

Literature Review

This literature review focuses on two distinct but interrelated topics that are important to this research project: diversity and choice. Most of the literature on the importance of diversity in schools centers around desegregation and the effects it has had on academic achievement, occupational outcomes, and civic outcomes. The effect of desegregation on academic achievement is widely debated and has resulted in mixed social-science evidence. George Mason University’s David J. Armor’s “*Desegregation and Academic Achievement*” concluded that, “racial composition by itself had no significant effect on black achievement. When combined with other educational improvements desegregation has improved black achievements to a limited but significant degree” (Armor, 2001). Other social scientists have found that blacks who attend schools with diverse settings have increased academic achievement, as measured by test scores. In an article published by the American Journal of Sociology, “*The Effects of Research Methodology on Desegregation Achievement Studies*,” Crain and

Mahard utilized a meta-analysis approach with 323 samples from ninety-three studies on black students in integrated settings and found that desegregation did enhance black achievement (Crain and Mahard, 1983). More importantly, they pointed out that the conflicting evidence on the effects of desegregation on student achievement is largely due to methodological approaches taken by the researcher. They concluded that what researchers were actually measuring means different things depending on how they operationalized their variables, such as the context of the school district, student assignment process, etc. Because these factors are difficult to control from a research standpoint, it does not always make sense to compare results to other studies.

Research has also been done on the effects that diversity has had on occupational and civic outcomes. "Students who attend more diverse schools have higher comfort levels with members of racial groups different from their own, an increased sense of civic engagement, and a greater desire to work in multiracial settings relative to their more segregated peers" (Yun, 2006). Maureen T. Hallinan's "*Diversity Effects on Student Outcomes*," published by the Ohio State Law Journal in 1998, found that "whites' proximity to blacks in schools, workplaces, and neighborhoods leads to their likelihood of cross-racial interactions and friendships" (Hallinan, 1985).

The idea that parents should be empowered to choose their children's school has become hugely popular. In Bruce Fuller's "*School Choice: Who Gains, Who Loses?*" he states that "many Americans are convinced they have a right to ^{choice} ~~choice~~ and that it is the best way to achieve a high-quality education for their children" (Fuller, 1996). Support for parental choice is also held very strongly by many educational policymakers and the U.S. government. In 2001, Congress passed the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) that embraced the idea that educational inequity could be resolved through choice. If a school receiving "Title I funding fails to make adequate progress for two consecutive years then parents have the option of moving their child to a public school that is meeting standards" (U.S. Department of Education, 2004).

Despite the U.S. Department of Education's support of choice as an essential educational policy, there are few empirical studies that evaluate the effectiveness of choice. One of the few studies that evaluated a choice program was the study conducted by New England Desegregation Assistance Center of Equity on Boston school district's Controlled Choice program. The study concluded that Controlled Choice guarantees student body diversity, provides increased parent satisfaction, and promotes school improvement (Wille, 1996). The study also concludes that the Controlled Choice program has shown that:

The call for mandatory neighborhood school attendance zones to be a sentimental call of the past that no longer captures the educational imagination and interest of most students and their parents. Today, they prefer high quality schools of choice rather than schools of convenience and will attend high quality schools wherever they are located in the city. (Willis, 59)

Many of the claims this study makes are problematic. First, the study does not provide any statistics on the actual school composition and, thus, it cannot make the statement that choice has led to student body diversity in Boston. Secondly, the study does not provide any conclusive evidence that parents are selecting schools with high academic track records and not just schools based upon convenience. The results from the study conducted on Boston's Controlled Choice program have left many unanswered questions about the effectiveness of choice as an educational policy. This study intends to address these unanswered questions by focusing on what happened to school diversity in San Francisco public schools when choice as an educational policy was introduced.

Historical Background

The public schools in San Francisco offered a unique opportunity to explore whether or not the current literature is correct in stating that schools are becoming less diverse. More importantly, the fact that San Francisco has implemented a choice policy in its school district allows this study to analyze what happens to school diversity when parents are given Optional, Limited, and Expanded choice. The different assignment phases are described more fully below.

Optional Enrollment Process 1983-2001 (Optional Choice)

In 1983, the U.S. District Court approved a consent decree that required that no racial/ethnic group constitute more than 45% of the student enrollment in San Francisco Public Schools. Under this consent decree, students were automatically assigned to their attendance area school unless they requested other schools through an Optional Enrollment Form (OER). OER assignments were made using a computer that randomly selected students for schools based upon grade level availability and the racial/ethnic balance of the requested school. Attempts for placements were made in the following order: siblings were placed first, designated students who were not assigned to their attendance school in the prior year were placed second, students from Bayview/Hunter's Point who had a zip code 94124 were placed third, and then all other requests.

Randomized Computerized Process 2001-2002 (Limited Choice)

Brought on the behalf of all children of Chinese descent in 1994, a lawsuit was filed against SFUSD which stated that the desegregation policies were keeping their children out of the highest-performing schools. In a 1999 settlement agreement, the court prohibited SFUSD from using race as a factor in student assignment. During the adjustment period after the settlement, SFUSD, from 2001-2002, implemented a randomized computerized process that gave parents five school choices. All 5th and 8th grade students who were in transition grades were required to complete an enrollment application. If students were not assigned to their first choice, the lottery attempted to assign them to their second, third, fourth, or fifth choice. Students who did not get their choices were designated to the school closest to their home that had space. Sibling and attendance area students received priority in the lottery as well.

Diversity Index Lottery 2002-present (Expanded Choice)

Despite the 1999 Court settlement that barred SFUSD from using race as factor in student assignment, the school district was still under the obligation to meet the goals of the 1983 consent

decreed to have “racially and ethnically diverse school enrollments, educational equity, and improved student achievement” (CACSA, 2005). To comply, SFUSD created the Diversity Index Lottery. Diversity Index is a formula that calculates the probability that, in a given grade, randomly chosen students will be different from each other based on six race neutral factors: socioeconomic status, home language, language proficiency, mother’s educational background, academic performance rank of sending school, and academic achievement status. The Diversity Index Lottery is used when there are more applicants than seats available at a school. A computer assigns students based upon choices and, if there are more applicants than seats available, the Diversity Index Lottery is used for these seats. Along with the implementation of the Diversity Index Lottery, SFUSD expanded the choice of schools from 5 to 7 on the application. Placements are made in the following manner: siblings, and students with program needs are placed first, including inclusion students; students exiting newcomer programs and requesting language programs are placed next.

Methodology

not purely experimental because there's no comparison group and no randomization

Research Design

quasi-

This study employed an experimental design to analyze school diversity in the San Francisco Unified School District from 1999-2007. The experimental group in this study was composed of public schools in San Francisco. A pre-test and post-test were used to analyze the diversity make-up of these public schools. The treatment in this study was the gradual introduction of more choices into the assignment process, as represented by the three assignment phases: Optional Choice, Limited Choice, and Expanded Choice.

Data Instruments and Measurements

Data obtained from the San Francisco Unified School District enrollment was used to analyze the research question. The unit of analysis in this study is public schools. The independent variable in the research project is choice policy. Choice policy will be measured by the three different assignment phases: Optional Choice, Limited Choice, and Expanded Choice. The dependent

variable is school diversity. School diversity will be measured by two measurements: San Francisco Unified School District's definition and Simpson's Diversity Index. San Francisco Unified School District defines schools as not diverse if they have one single ethnic group that comprises more than 45% of the total school population. The district also defines racial isolation as a school that has one single ethnic group that comprises more than 60% of the total school population. Simpson's Diversity Index defines diversity as the probability that two people taken at random from the sample are different. The index ranges from zero to one. A number close to zero means low diversity and a number close to one means high diversity. Simpson's Diversity Index formula :

$$D = \frac{\sum n(n-1)}{N(N-1)} \quad / \quad \text{define } n \text{ and } N$$

Definition of Terms

Conceptual Definition	Operational Definition
School Diversity	<p>School diversity will be analyzed with two measurements: the San Francisco Unified School District's definition and Simpson's Diversity Index.</p> <p>1) SFUSD defines schools that have a wide range of ethnicities with no single ethnic group comprises more than 45% of the total student population as diverse.</p> <p>2) Simpson's Diversity Index defines diversity as the probability that two people taken at random from the sample are different. The index ranges from zero to one. A number close to zero means low diversity and a number close to one means high diversity.</p>
Racial Isolation	Racial isolation will be defined with SFUSD's measurement. The district defines racial isolation as a school in which a single race/ethnicity comprises more than 60% of the population.
Diversity Index Lottery	Diversity Index is a formula that calculates the probability that, in a given grade, randomly chosen students will be different from each other based on six race neutral factors: socioeconomic status, home language, language proficiency, mother's educational background, academic performance, rank of sending school, and academic achievement status.
Choice	Parents have discretion in selecting the schools they want their child to attend in San Francisco. The three different assignment periods will be defined as optional, limited, and expanded choice.

Optional Choice 1999-2001	From 1983 to 1999, San Francisco public schools were under a court order that required that no racial/ethnic group constitute more than 45% of the student enrollment in a school. Students were assigned to their attendance area school unless parents requested schools through the Optional Enrollment Form (OER). This period will be called Optional Choice in this study and will represent three years, from 1999 to 2001.
Limited Choice 2001-2002	From 2001 to 2002, after being prohibited from using race as a factor, the school district implemented a randomized computerized process that gave parents five school choices. This period will be called Limited Choice in this study and will include the year 2001 to 2002.
Expanded Choice 2002-2007	From 2002 to present, the district used a Diversity Index Lottery to assign students. Parents choice was expanded from five to seven choices. This period will be called Expanded Choice in this study and will represent 2002 to 2007.

Sample Design, Frame, and Procedures

The sampling frame will consist of San Francisco Public schools that have existed from 1999 to present day. Schools eliminated from the sampling frame were schools not in existence for the duration of all three assignment phases, as well as charter schools, preschools, court schools, and continuation schools. The sample size $n=94$ consisted of all the Elementary, Middle, and High Schools from 1999 to 2007. Smaller sample sizes used for analysis in this study included: Elementary $n=64$, Middle $n=14$, and High School $n=13$. ✓

Limitations

The study seeks to show that choice as an educational policy negatively affects school diversity. Due to cost and time limitations, this research project will only be able to draw conclusions about choice as an educational policy in San Francisco Public schools. This study was unable to control for confounding variables that might also affect school diversity such as transportation, parental choice, and socioeconomic level of the neighborhood. ✓ Another limitation of this study was San Francisco Unified School District's definition of diversity. First, defining lack of diversity and racial isolation as schools that have a single ethnic group that comprises more than 45% (as not diverse) and more than 60% (as racially isolated) ignores the actual make-up of students'

ethnicity in San Francisco. According to the California Department of Education for San Francisco County, the student population is as follows: Asian (40%), Pacific Islander (1.1%), Filipino (5.5%), Hispanic (21.5%), African American (12.5%), White (9.2%), No Response (9.6%). Secondly, using San Francisco Unified School District's definition of diversity results in nominal data and restricts the types of analysis that can be conducted on the data. In order to compensate for this limitation, this study will use the Simpson's Diversity Index as a second measurement of diversity. The Simpson's Diversity Index is a weighted calculation that takes into account the number of ethnic groups present along with the abundance of each ethnic group. The Simpson's Diversity Index results in ratio level data and will enable this study to run more sophisticated tests. ✓

Qualitative Data

The San Francisco Education Fund (EdFund), the Parent Advisory Council (PAC), and San Francisco Unified School District (SFUSD) in partnership with Collaborative Communications Group, a Washington D.C. based consulting firm, conducted a six month public engagement to hear from community members about critical issues facing San Francisco Public Schools. Eighty-seven conversations of approximately one to two hours each were held with a total of 928 participants (n=928). The breakdown of the participants were as follows: 26% White, 24% Asian, 10% African American, and 4% Latino and Pacific Islander.

Community conversations were led by trained facilitators who took notes and volunteers transcribed the data. Words, sentences, and phrases were sorted by frequencies into categories and themes to determine what issues were raised and what was said about these issues. This study will focus on the responses participants made about school diversity.

Data Analysis

This research study employed both quantitative and qualitative analysis. Analyses took place in four steps. First, San Francisco Unified School District's diversity measurement was used to analyze school diversity during the three assignment periods and the results were analyzed

descriptively. Second, Simpson's Diversity Index was used to analyze school diversity during the three assignment periods and the results were analyzed descriptively. Third, an ANOVA test was conducted to determine if the differences in school diversity during the three assignment periods were statistically significant. Lastly, results from the focus group conducted on the student assignment process were juxtaposed with the earlier results. ✓

Results

San Francisco Unified School District's Diversity Measurement Results

San Francisco Unified School District's diversity measurement was used to analyze the ethnic make up of the schools during the three assignment periods: Optional, Limited, and Expanded Choice. The results were analyzed in three areas: overall, school level, and by ethnic group.

Overall Results

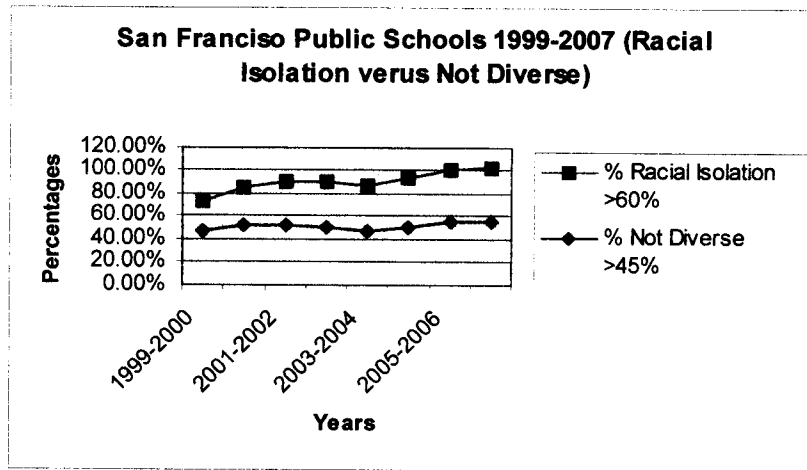
Table 1 Overall Results for Elementary, Middle, and High School Using SFUSD's Diversity Measurement

n=94		Not Diverse >45%	Racial Isolation >60%	% Not Diverse >45%	% Racial Isolation >60%
Optional Choice	1999-2000	44	24	46.81%	25.53%
	2000-2001	49	31	52.13%	32.98%
	2001-2002	49	36	52.13%	38.30%
	2002-2003	47	38	50.00%	40.43%
	2003-2004	44	38	46.81%	40.43%
	2004-2005	47	41	50.00%	43.62%
	2005-2006	52	43	55.32%	45.74%
	2006-2007	52	45	55.32%	47.87%

Based upon San Francisco Unified School District's diversity measurement, this research observes that schools considered not diverse (single ethnic group comprises >45%) remained relatively stable throughout the three assignment phases with a range of 8, minimum 44, maximum 52. This research observes an increase in racial isolation (single ethnic group comprises >60%) in schools with a range of 21, minimum 24, maximum 45. ✓ The difference in trajectory between schools

considered not diverse and schools that have racial isolation during the three assignment phases is illustrated in the graph below (see graph 1).

Graph 1: Overall Results for Elementary, Middle, High School Racial Isolation vs. Not Diverse



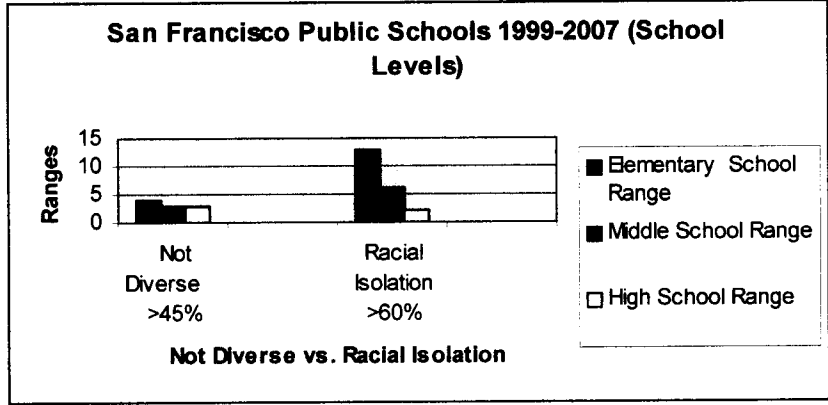
very nice graph

School Level Results

Based upon San Francisco Unified School District's diversity measurement, the results indicate that schools considered not diverse (single ethnic group comprises >45%) remained relatively stable at all school levels throughout the three assignment phases. Elementary, Middle, and High School all had similar ranges (Elementary range=4, Middle School range=3, High School range=3). The noteworthy findings were once again with racial isolation. Racial isolation for Elementary had a range of 13, Middle School had a range of 6, and High School had a range of 2. More specifically, the results show that the greatest increase in racial isolation occurred at the Elementary and Middle School levels.

Letter to measure the range as percentages because there are far more elementary schools than high schools.

Graph 2 Range Difference by School Levels (1999-2007)



Very interesting. Seems to make sense because all these isolated elementary schools combine at middle school, and they ~~combine~~ combine at high school.

Ethnic Group Results

Based upon San Francisco Unified School District's diversity measurement, the results indicate that schools in which African Americans, Chinese, and Hispanics comprised more than 45% of the population remained relatively stable throughout the three assignment phases. Similar to earlier results, this research observes an increase in racial isolation (single ethnic group comprises >60%) for African Americans and Hispanics. Schools in which African Americans exceed sixty percent of the population ranged from a low of zero during Optional Choice years and as high as six during Expanded Choice years. Hispanic students have become the most racially isolated in San Francisco public schools with a range from a low of zero schools during Optional Choice years to a high of eleven schools during Expanded Choice years. (See Table 2 and 3 below for more details).

Table 2: SFUSD's Diversity Measurement Results for African Americans

AFRICAN AMERICANS						
		Not Diverse >45%	Racial Isolation >60%	% Not Diverse >45%	% Racial Isolation >60%	
n=94	Optional Choice	1999-2000	7	0	7.45%	0.00%
		2000-2001	8	2	8.51%	2.13%
	Expanded Choice	2001-2002	7	4	7.45%	4.26%
		2002-2003	6	4	6.38%	4.26%
		2003-2004	6	6	6.38%	6.38%
		2004-2005	7	6	7.45%	6.38%
		2005-2006	8	6	8.51%	6.38%
		2006-2007	6	6	6.38%	6.38%

Table 3: SFUSD's Diversity Measurement Results for Hispanics

HISPANICS					
n=94		Not Diverse >45%	Racial Isolation >60%	% Not Diverse >45%	% Racial Isolation >60%
Optional Choice	1999-2000	13	0	13.83%	0.00%
	2000-2001	16	4	17.02%	4.26%
	2001-2002	16	6	17.02%	6.38%
	2002-2003	14	7	14.89%	7.45%
	2003-2004	14	8	14.89%	8.51%
	2004-2005	15	10	15.96%	10.64%
	2005-2006	17	10	18.09%	10.64%
	2006-2007	18	11	19.15%	11.70%

Simpson's Diversity Index Results

The Simpson's Diversity Index was used to analyze the ethnic make up of the schools by comparing the mean and standard deviation during the three assignment periods: Optional, Limited, and Expanded Choice. The results were displayed two ways: overall and school level. ✓

Overall Results

The Simpson's Diversity Index ranges from 0 to 1. The closer a school is to one, the more diverse the school is considered to be. The results of the Simpson's Diversity Index indicate that overall diversity in San Francisco Schools has been declining since 1999. The schools were more diverse when parents had Optional Choice, with a mean of the 0.687046 in 1999, and least diverse during Expanded Choice, with mean of 0.627706 in 2007. A small standard deviation existed throughout all three assignment periods, which indicates that the data is clustered around the mean. This tells us that the Simpson's Diversity Index calculation accurately reflects the range of diversity in these schools from 1999 to 2007. It's important to note that there is a slight increase in the standard deviation that started during Expanded Choice in the academic year 2003-04.

Table 4: Overall results for Elementary, Middle, High School using Simpson's Index

OVERALL			
n=94	Simpson's Diversity Index		
		mean	standard deviation
Optional Choice	1999-2000	0.687046	0.055556
	2000-2001	0.673003	0.064606
	2001-2002	0.661334	0.081997
	2002-2003	0.653469	0.092466
	2003-2004	0.643621	0.1077305
	2004-2005	0.633819	0.1174987
	2005-2006	0.628745	0.1227422
	2006-2007	0.627706	0.1253668

School Level Results

The Simpson's Diversity Index was also calculated for individual school levels. The results were similar to outcomes found using San Francisco Unified School District's measurement of diversity. The most significant changes in diversity occurred at the Elementary and Middle School Levels. During Optional Choice period, the mean diversity for Elementary schools from 1999-2000 was 0.67804 and by Expanded Choice period the mean diversity had decreased to 0.617074 in 2006-07.

Table 5: Results for Elementary Schools using Simpson's Index

ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS			
n=67	Simpson's Diversity Index		
		mean	standard deviation
Optional Choice	1999-2000	0.67804	0.058577
	2000-2001	0.667023	0.06666
	2001-2002	0.655242	0.08078
	2002-2003	0.645799	0.094343
	2003-2004	0.631687	0.112147
	2004-2005	0.6227111	0.120195
	2005-2006	0.619125	0.126566
	2006-2007	0.617074	0.132846

The diversity of Middle Schools also declined during the three assignment periods. During Optional Choice, the mean diversity for Middle Schools was at it's highest level at 0.7047149 in 1999-2000. By 2007, the mean diversity level had declined to 0.6314918 during the Expanded Choice period.

Table 6: Results for Middle School using Simpson's Index

MIDDLE SCHOOLS			
n=14	Simpson's Diversity Index		
		mean	standard deviation
Optional Choice	1999-2000	0.70471459	0.3757985
	2000-2001	0.68258229	0.5901043
	2001-2002	0.66481612	0.0927453
	2002-2003	0.66302561	0.0967164
	2003-2004	0.66116562	0.0994807
	2004-2005	0.64590097	0.12187787
	2005-2006	0.63314918	0.12627173
	2006-2007	0.63661862	0.12293606

high school?

ANOVA Results

In order to determine if the Simpson's Diversity Index mean during the three assignment periods were statistically significant, an ANOVA test was conducted. The test was run twice. The first test selected one year from each of the assignment phases and the second test selected all of the years from the assignment phases. The same null and test hypotheses were used in both ANOVAs.

Alpha level for both test was set at $\alpha = .05$.

English Version

H₀: The mean diversity levels of the three different assignment periods are equal

H₁: The mean diversity levels of the three different assignment periods are not equal

Statistical Version

H₀: $\mu_1 = \mu_2 = \mu_k$ etc...

H₁: not all μ_k are equal

Table 7: ANOVA results for one year selected from each assignment phase
Anova: Single Factor

SUMMARY

<i>Groups</i>	<i>Count</i>	<i>Sum</i>	<i>Average</i>	<i>Variance</i>
Optional Choice (1999-2000)	94	64.582316	0.68704591	0.0030865
Limited Choice (2001-2002)	94	62.165421	0.66133427	0.006593
Expanded Choice (2006-2007)	94	59.004332	0.62770565	0.0157169

ANOVA

<i>Source of Variation</i>	<i>SS</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>MS</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>P-value</i>	<i>F crit</i>
Between Groups	0.1664812		0.08324073	9.8330072	7.47E-05	3.02813419
Within Groups	2.361858279		0.00846544			
Total	2.528339281					



The results for both tests were the same. The F values always landed outside the F-critical values in the test results. Based upon these ANOVA results, with 95% confidence level, this study rejects the null hypothesis that the mean diversity levels of the three different assignment periods are equal.

There is substantial evidence to support that the diversity make up of the schools during Optional, Limited, and Expanded Choice are significantly different from each other.

Run the post-hoc tests to determine which period(s) were significantly different from the others.

Community Focus Group Results

The results of the eighty-seven community conversations showed that most of the parents believed that school diversity was important. For some parents diversity in schools meant racial and ethnic diversity. For other parents, it meant cultural or socioeconomic diversity. Despite the fact that diversity was a widely held value, most parents made it a weak priority in their decision-making. When parents were presented with a scenario that asked them to choose between two schools, one that is conveniently located where all of the students are from families similar to their own and one that is located further away from their homes with a diverse student body, most parents chose schools based upon convenience.

Conclusion

Discussion

The findings in this study are important because many of them mirror conclusions from current literature, while others dispute or enhance the existing literature. First, patterns found in this study are consistent with the current literature which states that schools are becoming resegregated. For example, this study highlights that from 1999 to 2007, public schools have become less diverse and more racially isolated. An ANOVA test conducted on the data showed that the diversity make-up of the schools during the Optional, Limited, and Expanded Choice were significantly different from each other. More specifically, the study showed that Elementary and Middle Schools have become the most racially isolated (single ethnic group >60%) during the three assignment phases. This study was not able to determine why Elementary and Middle Schools are more racially isolated, however, we hypothesize that parents feel more comfortable having young children attend neighborhood schools, even if this means the schools are not diverse. Secondly, results in this study support the current literature that African Americans and Hispanics are becoming increasingly isolated. For example, from 1999-2001, there were only four schools in San Francisco where Hispanics exceeded sixty percent of a school population. By 2007, the assignment process of allowing parents to chose their schools had been in effect for five years and there was a total of eleven schools in the city where Hispanic students exceeded sixty percent of the population.

Limitations

This study was not able to substantiate the research hypothesis that choice has negatively affected school diversity in San Francisco public schools because it's unclear if the trend toward racial segregation and isolation is the result of choice as educational policy or rather an independent social trend. One of the major limitations in this study was the lack of control for confounding variables, such as transportation, academic performance of school, parental choice, and

socioeconomic level of the neighborhood, that affect school diversity. Despite this drawback, what is evident is that the choice policy that is currently implemented in San Francisco is not enough to promote diversity or hinder patterns of increased racial isolation.

Implications

The results from the community focus groups showed that, despite parents placing a high value on diversity, when faced with decisions they select schools of convenience or schools with strong academic reputations over diversity. The implications of these findings are noteworthy because they might help to explain why schools have not become diverse in San Francisco even though parents have been given more choices over the years. It also provides another variable and hypotheses for future research on parental choice. How does parental choice affect school diversity? What choices are parents making and why are they making these choices? Does parental choice have to be constrained in order to achieve racial diversity?

The study also raises questions about the ability of an assignment process based upon socioeconomic factors to function as a proxy to achieve racial diversity. San Francisco has had a diversity lottery assignment process since 2002 that assigns students based upon socioeconomic factors and, yet, the schools have become less diverse and more racially isolated.

In conclusion, this study helps drive forward continued research on the effectiveness of choice as educational policy. As previously stated in the research problem, many people feel that choice is important as an educational policy because it “contributes to student achievement, increases parent satisfaction and commitment, creates distinctive learning environments, allows more creativity among educators, and increases economic and racial integration across schools” (U.S Dept of Education, 2004). The initial findings from this study have cast grave doubts on the ability of choice to promote diversity in schools, as evident by the lack of diversity in San Francisco public schools. Ultimately, this study hopes that the door has been opened for more empirical research to be conducted on the effectiveness of choice as an educational policy.

References

- Armor, David J. (2001). School Desegregation in the 21st Century. pp. 183-184.
- Cookson, Peter W., Schroff, Sonali M. *Recent Experience with Urban School Choice*. ERIC/CUE Digest, No. 127, Retrieved October 1, 2006, from ARC Professional Services Group (ERIC Processing and Reference Facility), ED413388.
- Community Advisory Committee on Student Assignment. (2005). Submitted to Arlene Ackerman, Superintendent on February 22, 2005. Recommendations for Student Assignment in the San Francisco Unified School District.
- Crain and Mahard. (1983). The Effect of Research Methodology on Desegregation Achievement Studies. *American Journal of Sociology*, 839-854.
- Fuller, Bruce. (1996). School Choice: Who Gains, Who Loses? *Issues in Science and Technology*, 12, 61-77.
- Kruger, Carl & Ziebarth, Todd. (2002). *School Choice: No Child Left Behind Policy Brief*. Education Commission of the States, Denver, CO.
- Hallinan, Maureen. (1998). Diversity Effects on Student Outcomes. *Ohio State Law Journal*. Retrieved December 17, 2006 from LexisNexis database.
- Hill, Paul. (Ed.). (2002). *Choice with Equity: An Assessment of the Koret Task Force on K-12 Education*. Stanford: Hoover Institution Press.
- Lee, Chungmei, & Orfield, Gary. *Why Segregation Matters: Poverty and Educational Equity*. The Civil Rights Project, Harvard University.
- Orfield, Gary. (2001). *Schools More Separate: Consequences of a Decade of Resegregation*. The Civil Rights Project, Harvard University.
- U.S Department of Education. (2004). *Innovations in Education: Creating Strong District Choice Programs*. Washington, D.C: Educational Publication Center.
- Wells, Amy. (1990). Public School Choice: Issues and Concerns for Urban Educators. *ERIC/CUE Digest*, No. 63.
- Willie, Charles V., & Alves, Michael J. (1996). Controlled Choice: A New Approach to School Desegregated Education and School Improvement. *New England Desegregation Assistance Center of Equity in Education*. Retrieved September 30, 2006 from Educational Resource Information Center (ERIC) database (ED 430265).
- Yun, John & Kurlaender, Michael. (2006). Student Assignment-Current Policy & Future Directions: A Report to the San Francisco Unified School District.