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# Relationship Between Residential Segregation and Crime

## Abstract

Despite the subject being overlooked, residential segregation is a problem that probes modern day America and with it comes with many unwanted repercussions. This paper investigates the topic of residential segregation using research from four scholarly sources. From the four sources information pertaining to opportunity to quality education, racial inequality, and housing are examined. This paper examines what is residential segregation and why it exists. In addition, the paper examines the relationship between residential segregation and limited opportunities for non-whites in education, employment, asset building, and social integration. The findings within the research enforced that “the social structure of communities has an important impact on crime” (Walker, Sphon, & Delone, pg. 128). Residential segregation maintains racial inequality by suppressing opportunities for non-whites linking the opportunity for crime rates to be higher for non-white individuals through various factors beneath the umbrella of residential segregation.

## Residential Segregation and Crime

Is there a conclusive reason why residential segregation still exist today? Perhaps there is isn't one single definitive answer but this can be explained by many factors. What can be proven conclusively is that residential segregation does lead to crime. Residential segregation can be defined as three parts of division which include “...unequal socioeconomic status, group prejudice, and housing discrimination” (Smith, pg. 470). Residential segregation historically came from early American cities being divided by “...income, ethnicity, and race” (Walker, Sophn, & Delone, pg 128). The historical context of it goes hand in hand with the definition of racial segregation. Racial segregation maintains racial inequality for non-whites by limiting opportunities in education, employment, asset building, and social integration thus leading to the influx of crime in certain residential areas.

To begin, generally speaking, residential segregation maintains racial inequality. Studies done by Smith have proven that “...concentrated incarceration in those impoverished communities has broken families, weakened the social control capacity of parents, eroded economic strength, and soured attitudes toward society...” (Smith, pg. 472). More often than not impoverished neighborhoods are non-white minorities. Having lower impoverished neighborhoods being made up of non-whites sets the residents up for racial inequality outside of their local area. The sour attitudes towards society go for those living within the impoverished neighborhoods as well as those living outside of the impoverished neighborhoods. On both sides of the fence each party believes stereotypes of one another furthering racial inequality by treating each other unfairly based on residential location and having an intolerance for one another. This stigma that creates racial inequality is further proven by Woo & Joh (2015) who state “concerns about subsidized housing from local residents are typically rooted in a negative perception of households receiving subsidies, which are often tied to attitudes toward their race/ethnicity and poverty status” (Woo & Joh, pg. 87). Racial inequality is based of biases or prejudices of residential segregation and poses a threat to the depletion of residential segregation.

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As one can imagine, someone living in section eight housing will not have the same opportunities handed to them as someone living in Beverly Hills. The limitations of opportunity for non-whites include but are not limited to education, employment, assets building, and social integration. Opportunities to sufficient education for non-whites is a major issue pertaining to residential segregation. The lower the tax bracket of an area the lower the funding that is received for schools. Low funding means, less classes offered, lack of after school activities, lack of sufficient and trained staff due to lack of proper compensation, and lack of diversity within the student body. Improper education due to socioeconomic status based of residential placement discourages pursuit of higher education nor sets the students up for it. Students attending school in white upper class neighborhoods are offered a variety of classes with properly trained staff as well as opportunities to prepare for higher education. Conjointly with education opportunities comes employment opportunities. Smith (2012) verifies this by affirming "...to obtain employment we increasingly rely on official positive credentials such as college diplomas or training certificates" (Smith, 472). Employment opportunities for those who are in impoverished residential areas becomes limited outside of the surrounding area due to the higher demand of a diploma or certificate as they cannot or have not obtained one or the other. Leaving the employment opportunity to labor intensive or undesirable jobs. Asset building or economic wellbeing is also dependent on residential location. Asset building is setting up for future and current prosperity but, that can be nearly impossible based on location in certain situations. One way asset building is compromised by residential segregation is banks and loan companies practicing "redlining". Redlining is "...banks and saving and loan companies refus[ing] to offer mortgages in poor minority neighborhoods" (Walker, Spohn, DeLone, pg.128). Redlining offers the opportunity for real estate agents to maintain residential segregation by keeping non-white buyers out of white neighborhoods. Being forced to stay in an impoverished community with no potential of economic growth deters any opportunity for asset building. As well as asset building limitations comes social integration. There has been attempts to mix schools populations by chartering busses into neighborhood below the income threshold to schools with populations above the income threshold. Despite the efforts it is unsuccessful as the population groups themselves into socioeconomic status and cultural similarities. Whites can assume they are more prosperous than non-whites discouraging interaction between races based on location. Reported by Reardon (2018) "...income segregation increased more quickly among black and Hispanic families than among white families" (Reardon, pg. 2147) furthering supporting the bias some whites posse. Coming essentially from two different worlds, rich and poor, discourages social integration as each side has cultural differences and outlooks. All these factors of racial segregation ascertain the limitations pressed onto non-whites' opportunities.

Moreover, the multitude of limitations due to residential segregation directly link to crime. Criminals are pretty much forced into staying in poor neighborhoods. Confirmed by "the concentration of low-income people in a particular neighborhoods, has a direct impact on crime by concentrating high-rate offenders in one area" (Walker, Spohn, DeLone, pg. 129). According to Woo & Joh (2015) policy makers see those in subsidized housing districts as "undesirable", which, create the attitude of those living in these subsidized neighborhoods that society does not care for them and to live life lawless. Criminals are social arranged through residential segregation to stay in low income neighborhoods. Forcing criminals around other criminals in society creates opportunity to reoffend and victimize others. With victims being associated with neighborhoods of high crime rates is makes it easy for social scrutiny from outsiders as well as the opportunity to advance in life or leave the residential area they occupy.

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More research should be done on how to diffuse negative stigmas around residential segregation by improving lower income residential areas. The presented research indicates racial segregation maintains racial inequality for non-whites by limiting opportunities in education, employment, asset building, and social integration thus leading to the influx of crime in certain residential areas. Racial inequality is created by forcing those of a certain demographic to only associate with each other. Opportunities based of finical demographic are linked to tax bracket and funding. Non-whites are not given the same opportunities within their area. Multiple factors merge together to explain why crime rates are higher in impoverished neighborhoods. Residential segregation is unfair but ultimately is how America has been set up for generations making this a racial issue due to the fact that these zones have been intentionally set up as so.

## References

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