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Statistical data are presented in four tables and four graphs. A list
of 28 references is included. (Author/DM)

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ABSTRACT

We assess trends in public school segregation using the index of dissimiliarity calculated from racial enrollment data for the period 1968-1986. We define desegregation as a cumulative decline of at least 20 points and resegregation as an increase of at least 10 points from the district's lowest score.

In 87 percent of the 960 school districts that underwent racial desegregation, the most recent segregation score was within 10 points of the lowest score observed at any prior date. Many of the 129 districts that experienced resegregation exhibited a slow drift upwards from the low score. Resegregation of more than 20 points occurred in 29 districts.

In a multivariate analysis, contextual characteristics (region, size, and racial composition) have insignificant net effects on the likelihood of resegregation. Characteristics of the district's prior desegregation experience (timing, pace, and extent) have stronger net effects, but no combination of characteristics makes resegregation likely.

RESEGREGATION OF PUBLIC SCHOOL DISTRICTS, 1968-1986

A remarkable transformation in the racial demography of schools occurred in the late 1960s and early 1970s. Hundreds of school districts implemented desegregation plans and achieved substantial reductions in levels of spatial segregation between black and white students (Farley and Taeuber 1974; Coleman, Kelly, and Moore 1975; Welch et al. 1987). Desegregation was forced upon local school districts by federal court orders and administrative sanctions. Before, during, and after this period of active desegregation, there was massive resistance by parents, school boards, school district administrators, and local, state, and federal elected representatives. Since the 1960s, racial integration has lost it central place among civil rights goals and civil rights goals have lost much political support. To what extent were the forces of resistance successful in reversing the initially attained levels of desegregation? How much resegregation has occurred in the nation's public schools?

We use data from 960 school districts that underwent desegregation to examine trends in segregation between black and white pupils in public schools. We assess the prevalence and extent of resegregation in these districts through 1986. We then analyze the association of resegregation with district background characteristics (region, size, and racial composition), and with the extent, pace and timing of the district's desegregation experience.

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BACKGROUND

The Supreme Court's 1954 *Brown* decision was intended to be the foundation for elimination of governmentally-enforced separation of white and black students in the U.S. educational system, but the Court's implementation order did not require quick action. A decade passed with little change in the racially dual educational systems. Congressional legislation on civil rights (1964) and financial aid to public elementary and secondary schooling (1965) led to federal administrative policies mandating compliance with desegregation guidelines (Orfield 1969). A series of rulings by the Supreme Court in the late 1960s and early 1970s tightened standards for desegregation and called for plans that worked effectively and promptly to eliminate all vestiges of the dual systems (e.g., *Green v. New Kent* 1968). The Court specifically authorized transportation (busing) of students to the extent necessary for effective desegregation (*Swann v. Charlotte-Mecklenburg* 1971), and extended the scope of *Brown* to include public school districts in northern and western states that used administrative actions rather than explicit dual-system law to create and sustain racial segregation (*Keyes v. Denver* 1973). For a brief time, all three branches of the federal government, many units of state and local government, and private civil rights groups were actively using carrots of aid and sticks of protest, investigation, prosecution, and court order to compel desegregation.

Beginning in 1974 (Farley and A. Taeuber) and continuing to date (e.g.,

Welch et al. 1987; Orfield, Monfort, and Aaron 1989), changes in school racial segregation have been tracked using segregation indexes and other statistical measures. During the years 1968-1976, southern districts desegregated more quickly and more thoroughly than non-southern districts. Many districts experienced one-year drops in a segregation index (dissimilarity index) of 20-50 points. Some districts eliminated virtually all variation in racial composition among schools (as indicated by a segregation index below 10). Among districts with more than token numbers of black students, nearly all implemented one or more major desegregation plans. Only a few, including several like Chicago with very large enrollments of black students, did not desegregate to a significant degree (Taeuber et al. 1981).

Desgregation was a mandate imposed upon individual public school districts. One form of resistance by white parents has been withdrawal of their children from the public schools of a desegregated district. Placement of white children in private schools led for a while to the flourishing of "segregation academies" and to stemming the decline in enrollment in long-established parochial school systems. The principal form of "white flight" from desegregated public schools has been to the public schools of a district that operated white-only schools (whether because of failure to desegregate or, more often, because few non-white families lived within the territory served by the school district.) "The emerging problem of school segregation in large cities is a problem of metropolitan area residential segregation, black central cities

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and white suburbs, brought about by a loss of whites from the central cities. This loss is intensified by extensive school desegregation...." (Coleman, Kelly, and Moore 1975:80).

Determining the magnitude of loss of enrollment of white students that can be attributed to desegregation has continued to attract social science analysis (Coleman, Kelly, and Moore 1975; Farley 1975; Rossell 1975; Pettigrew and Green 1976; Armor 1978; Rossell 1978; Giles 1978; Farley, Richards, and Wurdock 1980; Wilson 1985; Welch et al. 1987; Smock and Wilson 1989). White flight is an important topic, but in this study we are not concerned with its magnitude and causes. White flight is of interest only indirectly, as a possible cause of resegregation in the district left behind. In most desegregated or desegregating districts, there is some variation among schools in racial composition. If white parents flee selectively, at higher rates if their children are assigned to school with higher percentages of minority students, white flight will cause an increase in school segregation in the original district.

Our focus is on the individual public school districts that desegregated. The original civil rights protests and the original lawsuits challenged the actions of school districts that segregated students by race. The Brown decision found five individual school districts guilty of illegal segregation. In only a few subsequent cases have desegregation plans been implemented that include territory beyond the original domain of the guilty district (e.g. "metropolitan plans" for Louisville, Wilmington,

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Indianapolis). The organizational unit for desegregation is the school district. We ask about the behavior of these organizational units through the years since they were first compelled to desegregate. Regardless of gains or losses in enrollments of whites, blacks, or others, have public school districts sustained the levels of deseg- regation originally achieved or have they resegregated?

The Supreme Court, which achieved unanimity in *Brown* and all school cases through the 1960s, has subsequently displayed a more divided and erratic course. Since 1969, the federal executive branch, with the exception of some officials in the Carter administration, has been hostile to busing and cool to desegregation. In the mid-1980s, the Civil Rights Division of the Department of Justice began efforts to end busing in Norfolk, Savannah, Oklahoma City, Seattle, and elsewhere (National Research Council 1989). A number of Federal District Courts dismissed segregation cases long under their supervision or dissolved their initial desegregation orders (U.S. Department of Justice 1988). The Justice Department is currently supporting efforts by many school districts to end court supervision of desegregation plans (New York Times 1989). Even if districts freed of court supervision do not immediately abandon desegregation as a goal, a shift to less effective desegregation techniques could cause some resegregation.

There are reasons other than anti-desegregation policies for expecting an up- ward drift in segregation scores. Less diligence by school district officials in carrying

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out desegregative practices is likely as time goes on. New organizational practices and goals are likely to be pursued more vigorously by the original innovators than by their bureaucratic successors. The original plaintiffs and agencies that pushed for desegregation may move, die, disband, or move on to other goals.

The massive school desegregation plans of the late 1960s and early 1970s uncoupled residential segregation and school segregation (Wilson and Taeuber 1978). Over time, upward drifts in school segregation levels may be expected because desegregation plans are rarely adjusted in pace with demographic changes that alter the racial composition and residential distribution of school-age children.

Evidence on resegregation is limited and contradictory. Studies in the 1970s were conducted too soon after the major period of initial desegregation. Welch et al. (1987) emphasized the continued prevalence of desegregation through 1985. They reported that only a few districts had school segregation scores greater in the mid-1980s than in the late-1960s. This mode of analysis identifies districts that failed to desegregate rather than those that accomplished substantial desegregation and then resegregated. The most recent study (Orfield, Monfort, and Aaron 1989) did not consider resegregation explicitly, but reported evidence of increased isolation of blacks in schools in southern districts. Changes in the isolation measure, however, reflect changes in racial composition of school districts as well as changes in segregation.

Our study is the first to focus on resegregation within districts that desegregated. We are not assessing desegregation as a social policy, what happens to students within a school, educational outcomes, nor other direct and indirect consequences. We examine desegregation as a planned change undertaken by a set of public organizations—school districts—to alter the distribution of black and white students among schools. This was the manifest goal expressed in the *Brown* decision. NAACP Attorney Marshall, Chief Justice Warren, and other proponents of desegregation called for a more equal distribution of students among schools. Redistribution of students among schools has continued to be the immediate goal of desegregation plans. We ask whether public school districts have maintained or diminished the levels of desegregation attained in response to the mandate of *Brown*.

DATA AND STUDY DESIGN

Data for this study come from surveys conducted by the Office for Civil Rights (OCR), U.S. Department of Education, that provide school and district enrollment data by race for a sample of the nation's public school districts. These surveys were conducted in the fall of every year from 1967 to 1974, and every second year since. Surveyed districts report fall enrollments according to standard racial categories, for every school. The 1967 survey was a pilot; the quality of data was reported to be poor and many studies use 1968 as the beginning year.

In 1968, all public school districts that enrolled 3000 or more students were

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included, as were 75 percent of districts with enrollment 1,200-2,999, and lower percentages of smaller districts. (Some districts of special interest to OCR were added to the survey, while Hawaii and 95 districts not under OCR jurisdiction vere excluded.) Of approximately 19,000 public school districts in the U.S. in 1968, 8,491 were included in the survey.

The sampling plan has varied through the years, with the total sample size smaller in the 1980s, but all surveys have included virtually all large districts. Any district serving a city, county, or other area of 50,000 or more population is likely to qualify as a "large" district and be included consistently. Many small districts are included sufficiently often to yield useful trend data.

We restrict our analyses to even-year surveys from 1968 to 1986. School districts are included in our analysis if they meet three criteria: (1) The district was surveyed in 1968 and at that time had at least two schools and a total enrollment of at least 500 black and 500 white students. 1,252 districts meet this criterion. (2) The district was included in at least one of the three most recent surveys (1982, 1984, 1986). 1,116 districts satisfy criteria (1) and (2). (3) The district desegregated (according to a criterion discussed later in this section) prior to the last observation for that district. Because only desegregated districts are "at risk" of resegregating, we require at least one subsequent time period after desegregation during which resegregation could occur. All three criteria are satisfied by 960 districts. These 960

districts enrolled 3.7 million black students in 1968, about 56 percent of all black public school students. The coverage of white student was 9.5 million, about 25 percent.

To measure desegregation and resegregation, we use the index of dissimilarity, a distributional measure that is insensitive to variations in racial composition and has other properties useful for the study of segregation (James and Taeuber 1985; Taeuber and Taeuber 1965). This measure permits comparisons among districts that vary in racial composition, and eases interpretation of changes occurring through time in each district. The index of dissimilarity, D, is computed by the following:

$$D = \left[\frac{\sum_{i=1}^{n} T_i |P_i - P|}{2TP(1 - P)}\right] \times 100$$

where T_i and T are the total numbers of black and white students in a school and in a district, P_i and P are the proportions black of all black and white students in a school and a district. The index equals zero (no segregation) when the difference between each P_i and P is zero, and attains its maximum value of 100 when all schools are uni-racial.

Only the numbers of black students and white students were used in the index calculations. The OCR surveys cover five groups: American Indian or Alaskan Native, Asian or Pacific Islander, Hispanic, Black Not of Hispanic Origin, White Not of Hispanic Origin. (The specific wording has varied; these labels are from the fall, 1984, survey.) School districts vary greatly in how many students they have of the

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three groups other than blacks or whites. Desegregation plans vary in how these other groups are treated. Often they have not been specifically included as minority groups to be desegregated. Some plans have been designed, openly or covertly, to promote greater integration of blacks with Hispanics than with non-Hispanic whites. Because the *Brown* decision and most of the subsequent judicial, legislative, and administrative discussions and actions were focused on the segregation of blacks from whites, we retain that focus.

For each district, for each even-numbered year it appeared in the OCR survey, we calculated an index of dissimilarity. The 960 districts display a wide range of patterns when the segregation index is plotted through time. Time plots for four districts are presented in Figure 1. Norfolk, Savannah, and Little Rock had desegregated only slightly by 1968, but all three experienced sharp declines in segregation from 1968 to 1972. Norfolk displays a pattern of very slow upward drift for 12 years from the 1972 low, followed by a distinct resegregative jump from 1984 to 1986. The post-1972 period for Savannah is a steady upward drift for the entire period, resulting in a significant amount of resegregation but without any distinct jump. The post-1972 pattern for Little Rock is varied, with declines and rises, and a score in 1986 distinctly above the levels for 1974 through 1980. Douglas County displays a bumpy line with no large two-year changes throughout the period. We know that Douglas County, like all Georgia school districts and other southern districts, was

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completely segregated in 1954; it began a phased desegregation in the mid-1960s.

To permit analysis of "desegregation" and "resegregation" for 960 districts, we require summary indicators of these concepts. From consideration of the goals of our analysis and examination of many time plots like those in Figure 1, we developed operational definitions. We classify a district is regarded as having desegregated if it has experienced a decline of 20 points or more in its segregation index. Although in most cases declines of this magnitude occur because of deliberate action by a school district, we do not use any direct evidence of desegregation policies or plans. Dual-system districts have a segregation index of 100; some desegregated districts have scores below 10. A decline of 20 points is an arbitrary but not restrictive criterion of desegregation.

It is common in the white-flight literature to use a single-year drop of 20 points to determine the year in which a district desegregated. For our study it isn't necessary to specify a year of desegregation. In fact, observation of Figure 1 and other time plots of segregation scores indicates that declines are often spread over many years. As a simple indicator of the pace of desegregation, we divided the districts into three categories, based on the values of D observed for a district in 1968 and all other surveyed years except the last. (1) "Rapid desegregators" had a decline in D of 20 points or more in any two-year period. (2) "Slow desegregators" did not have a "rapid" episode (in our data series), but in some year had a value

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of D 20 points or more below the value in 1968. (3) "Early desegregators" did not qualify for categories (1) or (2), but are southern districts with a segregation score of 80 or less in 1968. Because these districts are in states that imposed racial segregation by law in 1954, we assume that at some point prior to 1968 their score was 100. In Figure 1, three districts are "rapid" and one is "early". To qualify as having desegregated, a district had to fit in one of these three categories.

The distribution of the 960 desegregating districts, by region and pace of desegregation, is presented in Table 1. Southern districts comprise 86 percent of the total. This regional concentration arises from regional differences in racial population distribution. Many southern districts of all sizes enroll students of both races, whereas most black students in the north are concentrated in a small number of large urban districts. The distribution by pace of desegregation shows that 73 percent of the districts are rapid desegregators; they experienced a two-year drop of 20 points or more in the segregation index. The other districts are split between slow pace and early pace.

To measure resegregation, we compare a district's segregation score at the most recent available date (1986, 1984, or 1982) to the lowest prior score. Subtracting the lowest prior score from the latest score gives a resegregation score. A positive value indicates that some resegregation has occurred. A negative value indicates that the latest observation set a new low segregation score and that re-

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segregation has not begun. A district's "low" score identifies the time of transition from the final phase of desegregation to resegregation. Our measure of resegregation is cumulative over all years since the low. A resegregation of, say 10 or more points, may be rapid, occurring in a single two-year period, as in Norfolk, or slow, as in Savannah. The low score may precede or follow other episodes of rise and fall in segregation, as in Little Rock and Douglas County.

FREQUENCY AND AMOUNT OF RESEGREGATION

The distribution of school districts by amount of resegregation is presented in Table 2. The categories show the amount of increase in a district's segregation index between the time it attained its lowest level and the most recent observation (1986 if available; otherwise 1984 or 1982). The category "no resegregation" indicates that the district's lowest index of dissimilarity occurred at the most recent observation.

Nearly two-thirds of the districts (65.8 percent) have undergone no resegregation or less than five points. A few of these districts may have had a prior period of resegregation followed by further desegregation; our measure of resegregation records cumulative change from the lowest attained level of segregation. Regardless of such episodes, these 631 districts all experienced a substantial desegregation, most often in the late 1960s or in the 1970s. In the mid-1980s, each of these districts retained a segregation level within five points of its lowest score.

Of the 329 districts that have a resegregation score of five or more points, 200

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have a score of 5-10. Only 129 districts (13.4 percent) have experienced a resegregation of 10 points or more. For subsequent analysis we identify these 129 districts as having resegregated and the other 831 districts as not having resegregated. Any such division of a continuous distribution is arbitrary. We selected 10 as the dividing point because we do not want to over-emphasize small fluctuations in segregation scores. Considering that we required at least a 20-point drop for a district to be chararcterized as having desegregated, that most desegregated districts underwent declines of 50-90 points, and that the time plots display many small fluctuations, we believe that specification of a 10-point increase as the criterion of resegregation is reasonably inclusive.

Two conclusions are apparent from the frequency distribution of resegregation scores: (1) In the mid-1980s, significant resegregation was an unusual occurrence among the nation's public school districts. Only 13 percent of the districts that originally desegregated had subsequently experienced significant resegregation. For 87 percent of the districts, the amount of racial desegregation in the mid-1980s was very close to the greatest amount of desegregation ever attained. (2) In only 29 districts (3 percent) has a resegregation of 20 points or more occurred, yet all of these districts experienced a desegregation of at least 20 points. In none of the 960 districts has resegregation restored the segregation index to its pre-desegregation level.

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The evidence is clear. As of the mid-1980s, episodes of resegregation have been too rare in frequency and too low in amount to have substantially affected the amount of desegregation in the nation's public school districts.

The Correlates of Resegregation: A Multivariate Model

What factors are associated with resegregation? Several characteristics of the district and its desegregation process were examined in a multivariate model. Percentage distributions of the independent variables are presented in Table 3.

Three district characteristics are included as contextual variables: region, size, and a dummy variable indicating whether the percentage of black students in the district in the year of its low is above 45 percent. Because resegregation is measured as change from the district's low segregation score, percent black and size are measured at the year of the district's low. These variables characterize the environment at the time from which we measure resegregation. We explored a variety of categorical breakdowns for both total enrollment and percentage black and use those that seem most effective. Several other variables, including the percentage of minority students other than blacks and whether the district was countywide, showed no associations with resegregation in univariate or multivariate analyses and are omitted from the analysis presented here.

The three desegregation characteristics represent the pace, extent, and timing of the district's initial desegregation plan. The pace of desegregation refers to how

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rapidly it occurred. Rapid districts (73 percent of the 960) implemented plans in a concentrated time frame, while slow districts desegregated gradually. Early districts desegregated before 1968 and the pace of their desegregation actions is unobserved, but we know that most of these experienced an episode of rapid desegregation in the mid-1960s. Only 15 percent of districts are classified as desegregating slowly.

The extent of desegregation refers to how low a level of segregation was attained by a district. In our specification, a dummy variable indicates whether a district's index of dissimilarity ever dropped below 10. A score below 10 can occur only if there is little variation in school-percentage black around the district-percentage black. More than one-third of the desegregated districts reached a score this low.

The timing of desegregation refers to the year in which a district is first "at risk" of resegregation, the year it first qualifies as having desegregated. This gives an indication of how long the district has been at risk of resegregating, and also facilitates identification of time period effects. Three-fourths of the districts had desegregated by 1972.

The three desegregation characteristics, together with the three district contextual variables, are included as explanatory variables in a multivariate model. The categories used for percentage black, size, extent, and timing are those that produced the greatest contrasts. Resegregation is the outcome variable. Districts with a reseg-

regation score of 10 points or greater are regarded as having resegregated; all other districts have not resegregated. Logit models were estimated to relate the predictor variables to the odds of resegregation. Two sets of logit estimates are presented in Table 4. The first two columns report the gross effects of each variable considered alone. The last two columns report the net effects in a multivariate model including all the variables shown. For each variable, effects are reported as logit coefficients transformed into odds relative to the omitted category (specified in parentheses). Effect coefficients above 1.0 indicate a greater likelihood of resegregation than for the omitted category; coefficients below 1.0 indicate a lesser likelihood.

Region. In the immediate post-Brown years, southern states and districts expressed great hostility and resistance to desegregation. Northern and western officials and voters were more supportive. As compulsory desegregation was brought to the north and west, hostility grew and anti-busing sentiment flourished nationwide. School desegregation has continued ever since to be a divisive issue, with strong supporters and detractors in all regions and among both blacks and whites. The empirical results indicate that region has no independent effect on the likelihood that a district has resegregated. This is shown by the net effect coefficient of approximately 1 for the comparison of South to nonsouth. Region does have an indirect effect, through its covariation with other variables in the model. The gross effect coefficient of 2.08 for South indicates that when the other variables are

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ignored, southern districts have a greater relative prevalence of resegregation than non-southern districts.

Percent Black. The ratio of black population to total population has been viewed in studies of race relations as an indicator of the salience of racial issues to whites and hence of the vigor with which whites mobilize opposition to black claims (Blalock 1967). We use the percent black among total black and white public school students as a contextual variable. Because the racial proportions in many districts have been changing, this measure is calculated at the time of the district's lowest segregation score, immediately prior to any resegregation. The empirical results for percent black are like those for region. There is a gross effect but no significant net effect. Districts with a high percentage of black student (45 percent and above) have a greater relative prevalence of resegregation, but this is an indirect effect that can't be taken as support of the racial threat hypothesis.

Total Enrollment. Size of unit is an organizational characteristic having widespread effects. We included total enrollment (at the time of the district's lowest segregation score) as a contextual variable. The gross effects are just below significance, and display a variable pattern that we choose not to interpret. The net effects are just as variable, and less significant. Exploratory analysis with other size categories did not reveal any noteworthy relation of district size to resegregation.

None of the three district characteristics included as control variables for

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likely contextual influences has a large or significant effect in the multivariate model. Although southern districts and districts with a high percentage of black students have an above-average prevalence of resegregation, this is largely an indirect effect of their covariance with desegregation characteristics. Each of the three desegregation characteristics displays gross effects that persist as net effects in the multivariate model.

Pace of Desegregation. For a rapid episode of desegregation to occur, there must be a strong commitment by the district and most of the community is likely to be aware of the issue. Quick action may help get political controversy out of the way rather than letting it fester. Rapid implementation of desegregation produces a resolution of conflict that, in light of the national pressures toward desegregation, could induce acceptance and hinder subsequent resegregation.

An alternative hypothesis about the effect of rapid rather than slow desegregation focuses on the costs of "victory" by one side in an intense struggle. Administering a sudden desegregative "shock" to a community may poison school-community relations, mobilize opposition, and render it difficult for the district to maintain its plan. A version of this hypothesis appears frequently in the literature on white flight. Desegregation that is imposed quickly without building community support could cause some whites to flee and others to stay and fight.

Pace of desegregation has a strong effect in the model (Table 4). Districts that

desegregated rapidly, compared to those that desegregated slowly, have 3.5 times the odds of resegregating. The early desegregators, most of which desegregated rapidly shortly before our time series begins, are in between, but their coefficient loses significance in the net effects model.

These results are against the main hypothesis but are consistent with the alternative hypothesis that rapid desegregation is a shock that mobilizes opposition and promotes resegregation. Caution is necessary in interpreting the high odds ratio for rapid desegregation. Recall that resegregation has not occurred in most districts, and there are few cases of the kind of substantial resegregation that might be expected if a newly mobilized opposition were to wrest control of the desegregation process. The magnitude of the effect of pace can be viewed more easily by transforming the effect coefficients into probabilities. To do this, we select the modal category for each of the other variables: southern district, less than 45 percent black, total enrollment 3,000-7,500, segregation index stayed above 10, and desegregation occurred before 1972. Evaluating the model at these levels produces probabilities of resegregation for each category of pace of desegregation: .07 for slow districts, .14 for early districts, and .22 for rapid districts. The probability is three times higher for rapid districts than for slow districts, but this probability is still small. Four-fifths of the rapid districts have not experienced significant resegregation. From this perspective, a cautious conclusion is that the results are not inconsistent with the

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alternative hypothesis and are definitely not supportive of the main hypothesis that rapid desegregation would resolve conflict and reduce the likelihood of resegregation.

Extent of Desegregation. Our main hypothesis is that the more extreme a district is in its desegregation, the less likely it is to maintain this level. Diminished administrative attention from school district officials is likely as desegregative forces recede in time and other goals emerge or re-emerge. Without continual adjustment of the plan to take account of changing demographic and residential patterns, some resegregation may occur.

An alternative hypothesis about the effect of extent of desegregation emphasizes desegregation as a deliberately induced change rather than a kind of stochastic process. For segregation in a school district to reach very low levels, a comprehensive plan must not only be drawn up but also effectively executed. Districts that are so committed and skilled may be expected to be more resistant to subsequent resegregation. In addition, comprehensive desegregation plans are claimed by many desegregation planners to have the best chance of overcoming controversy and resistance because all parents are invol·ed, perceptions of inequity are minimal, and there are no unaffected schools to serve as the nucleus for resegregative enrollment shifts.

Extent of desegregation is associated with resegregation in both single-variable and multivariate analyses. Districts that desegregated as completely as possible

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(bringing all schools to a uniform racial composition) experienced less resegregation than districts that accomplished less desegregation. The odds coefficients may be expressed as probabilities by evaluating the model at the modal levels of other variables. Probabilities of resegregation are .12 for districts that desegregated to an index below 10 and .22 for districts that desegregated less completely. Resegregation is an unlikely outcome for both sets of districts. These results are consistent with the view that thorough desegregation offered a district some protection against resegregation. They are inconsistent with the view, common in the white-flight literature, that comprehensive desegregation provokes the greatest non-compliance and can't be sustained.

Timing of Desegregation. The main hypothesis about timing is that the longer a district has been exposed to the risk of resegregation, the more likely that resegregation will occur. Desegregation was never popular and has always been resisted. The more time that has elapsed since desegregation, the more likely it is that opposing forces will have gained some successes. Districts that desegregated prior to 1972 should have experienced more resegregation than those that desegregated later. An alternative hypothesis is that districts that managed to delay desegregation the longest are most hostile to desegregation and most skilled at resisting the pressures from external sources. These districts, more than those that desegregated earlier, might be expected to seize upon any easing of pressures that would allow

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them to resegregate.

Timing of desegregation is associated with resegregation in both single-variable and multivariate anaylses. Districts that desegregated before 1976 are more likely to have experienced significant resegregation. The net effect coefficients for the timing variables are larger than for other variables. These odds coefficients may be expressed as probabilities by evaluating the model at the modal levels of other variables. Probabilities of resegregation are .22 for districts that desegregated prior to 1972, .25 for 1972-74, and .05 for 1976 or later. These results are consistent with the main hypothesis that resegregation is more likely the longer a district has been exposed to the risk of resegregation. The difference between the two pre-1976 categories, however, is small and inconsistent. Examination of trend data as displayed in Figure 1 reveals that resegregation often occurs as a slow upward drift in the segregation index. Districts that did not desegregate until 1976 or later have not had much time for upward drift to produce a 10-point rise in segregation, especially if the most recent observation in the data series is 1984 or 1982 rather than 1986. Additional time must elapse before we can test this exposure-to-risk interpretation. Unless this interpretation can be rejected, the evidence for other plausible interpretations will remain inconclusive. The findings are strong enough to cast doubt on the hypothesis that a district's ability to delay initial desegregation is an indicator of its ability to promote resegregation.

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DISCUSSION

Separating young children by race in the public schools is one of the most pointed examples of what Myrdal (1944) called the American dilemma. Mobilizing the nation to attack school segregation was an arduous task, and the Supreme Court's decision in *Brown* was only one landmark along the way. The desegregation that finally occurred, beginning in the late 1960s and continuing through the 1970s, engendered a massive transformation in the distribution of students among schools. Public opposition and institutional resistance were never completely overcome. During most of the last twenty years, the executive branch of the federal government has been hostile to desegregation, and new appointees to the Supreme Court have reduced its commitment to eliminating segregation "root and branch" (e.g., *Dayton v. Brinkman* 1977). What has happened to desegregation? Have the changes been short-lived? Has the transformation been undone by resegregation, creeping along year by year or surging with abandonment of desegregation plans?

Our analysis of trends in segregation includes 960 public school districts that underwent substantial desegregation. We tracked segregation index scores beginning with the year 1968 and continuing through the mid-1980s; the most recent observation was 1986 for many districts, and 1984 or 1982 for others. Our findings are clear. Resegregation has been rare in frequency and low in amount. The counter-revolution against desegregation has failed to undo the massive desegregations of

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the preceding decades.

Our measure of resegregation is quite modest: a gain of 10 points or more on a segregation index. Desegregation typically brought index scores from near-100 to well below 50, and often below 20 or 10. A resegregation of 10 points or even 15 or 20 points is not nearly enough to restore a racially dual system or to bring a district up to its original level of segregation.

The remarkable persistence of desegregation is evident in our analyses of factors affecting the probability that a district experienced resegregation (defined as a cumulative increase of 10 points or more above the lowest segregation score attained during desegregation). A district's regional location, its enrollment size, and its percentage of black students had no independent significant effect on whether it experienced resegregation. The probability of experiencing resegregation has been affected by aspects of the district's desegregation. Districts are more likely to have experienced resegregation if they underwent a rapid desegregation, if they desegregated before 1976, and if their desegregation was never sufficiently complete to bring their segregation score below 10. Yet none of these characteristics is sufficient make resegregation likely. The highest probability of resegregation we observed for any combination of district characteristics is .25.

Our analysis has used a specific definition of resegregation. We have looked only at the "mechanical" or "first-generation" issue of redistributing students among

schools so that there is an increased mixing of blacks and whites and a reduction in the prevalence of schools that are overwhelmingly uniracial. We have not looked at the "second-generation" issues of what happens in the racially mixed schools: Has education improved? Has tolerance increased? Has within-school tracking and segregation replaced between-school segregation? No single study can explore all of these issues.

We defined desegregation and resegregation in a statistical manner that is not influenced by changes in the racial composition of districts. If there is a large decrease in white enrollment, often called white flight, the segregation index need not be affected. Only white (or black) enrollment change that reduces the ratio of whites to blacks in some schools but not in others will cause a change in the measures of desegregation and resegregation. Large declines in numbers of white students have occurred in many school districts. If these were mainly a result of flight of white students from assignment to disproportionately black schools, the segregation scores would have increased and resegregation (as we define it) would have resulted.

School districts are the units of our analysis, not metropolitan areas or other clusters of districts. Consider a simple model in which there is a central city school district in a metropolitan area that also includes two county-wide school districts. Each of the three districts may be completely desegregated, yet an index calculated

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for the aggregate of all students and all public schools in all three districts could indicate a high degree of metropolitan racial segregation. Through time, a loss of white students in the city and an increase of white students in the suburban counties could produce an increase in metropolitan segregation even though each of the three individual districts remained completely desegregated. Analysis of this phenomenon is beyond our goal here. We began with a set of school districts that existed in 1968 and could be followed for 14 to 18 years. We looked for evidence of resegregation after desegregation. Districts that did not desegregate did not come into our study universe.

The school desegregation process is an example of massive social change that occurred because a vigorous protest movement prompted strong federal intervention in the operation of local governmental agencies (school districts). Public education is not as centrally organized and controlled as the U.S. military services which also experienced an imposed desegregation, nor as decentralized as private businesses and housing markets, may of which continue to evade desegregation.

The school desegregation process began in conflict and continually engendered new conflict. School desegregation occurs in an administrative context that allows external forces to mandate action, but the context allow affected individuals some choice of response. It is also open to collective political responses. Resegregative forces have been strong since the early years of massive desegregation, and

seemed to be flourishing in the mid to late-1980s. Consider the trend of civil rights decisions by the Supreme Court, recent efforts by the federal executive branch to intervene with the judiciary in pursuit of termination of desegregation orders, continued public hostility to busing and other effective desegregation techniques, a shift of integration away from the main focus of most civil rights groups, and a reduced priority given by school boards and school administrators to desegregation.

Recent social trends seem to augur sharp increases in resegregation. The paucity of resegregation that we observed as of the early to mid-1980s may be a poor basis for expecting the persistence of desegregation through the late 1980s and into the 1990s. Yet a forecast made in the mid-1970s would have found nearly as much reason to expect substantial resegregation in the next 10 years. It didn't happen. The basic desegregation process, occurring within individual public school districts, has proven unexpectedly persistent. Desegregation needs investigation as a social movement in addition to continued tracking of how well it meets its original formal goal of a racially equitable distribution of students among schools.

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TABLE 1--Distribution of School Districts by Region and Pace of Desegregation.

PACE OF DESEGREGATION		SOUTH	NON-SOUTH	TOTAL	
				Number	Percent
RAPID	Index declined at least 20 points between 2 years	649	48	697	72.6
SLOW	Index declined at least 20 points over more than 2 years	57	86	143	14.9
EARLY	No drop observed, but district is southern with an index less than 80 in 1968	120	0	120	12.5
TOTAL		826	134	960	100.0

TABLE 2--Distribution of School Districts by Amount of Resegregation.

AMOUNT OF RESEGREGATION	SCHOOL DISTRICTS	
	Number	Percent
20+	29	3.0
15-20	35	3.6
10-15	65	6.8
5-10	200	20.8
0-5	421	43.9
NO RESEGREGATION	210	21.9
TOTAL	960	100.0

TABLE 3--Percentage Distribution of Independent Variables.

District Characteristics:

Region
```
        South.............................................86.0
        Nonsouth..........................................14.0
```

Percentage Black of Total Enrollment
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        <45 Percent.......................................67.0
        45 Percent and Above..............................33.0
```

Size (Total Enrollment at Low)
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        <3000 Students....................................23.2
        3000-7500.........................................37.5
        7500-20000........................................24.1
        20000+............................................15.2
```

Desegregation Characteristics:

Pace of Desegregation
```
        Slow..............................................14.9
        Early.............................................12.5
        Rapid.............................................72.6
```

Extent of Desegregation
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        Index never dropped below 10......................63.1
        Index dropped below 10............................36.9
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Timing of Desegregation
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        Desegregated prior to 1972........................75.1
        Desegregated 1972-1974............................12.0
        Desegregated 1976 or later........................12.9
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Number of Observations   960

TABLE 4--Effects of selected district and desegregation characteristics[a]
on resegregation.

| Independent Variables	GROSS EFFECT		NET EFFECT	
	Effect	Coef./S.E.	Effect	Coef./S.E.
District Characteristics:				
Region (nonsouth)				
South	2.08*	(2.1)	0.96	(-0.1)
Percent Black at Low (0-45%)				
45% and Above	1.55*	(2.3)	1.22	(0.9)
Total Enrollment at Low (<3000)				
3000-7500	1.65	(1.9)	1.35	(1.0)
7500-20000	.74	(0.9)	.63	(-1.2)
20000+	1.80	(1.9)	1.79	(1.4)
Desegregation Characteristics:				
Pace of Desegregation (Slow)				
Early	3.06*	(2.1)	2.01	(1.1)
Rapid	5.28*	(3.6)	3.51*	(2.3)
Extent of Desegregation (Stayed > 10)				
Index of Dissim. Dropped below 10	.57*	(-2.6)	.46*	(-2.9)
Timing of Desegregation (1976 or later)				
1972-1974	8.44*	(3.5)	5.93*	(2.6)
Pre-1972	6.91*	(3.4)	5.02*	(2.3)
Number of Observations	960		960	

a Effects are logit coefficients transformed into odds.
* Significant at the .05 level.

FIGURE 1--Time Plots of Racial Segregation Scores, Four Public School Districts, 1968-1986.
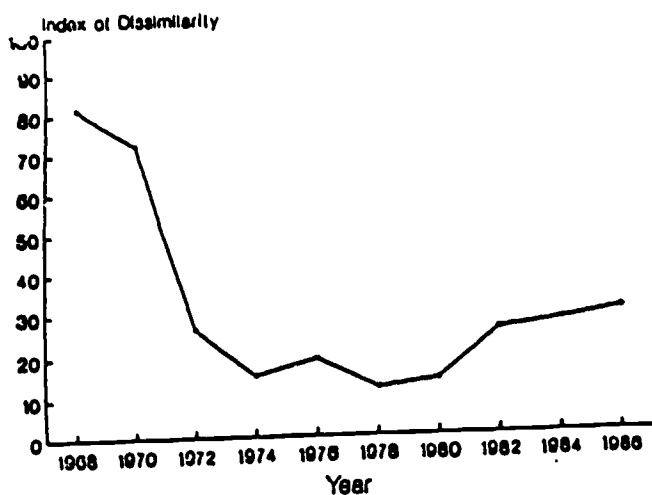

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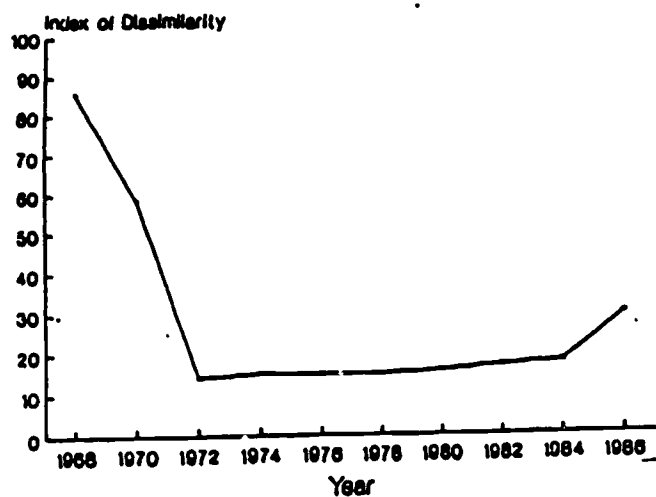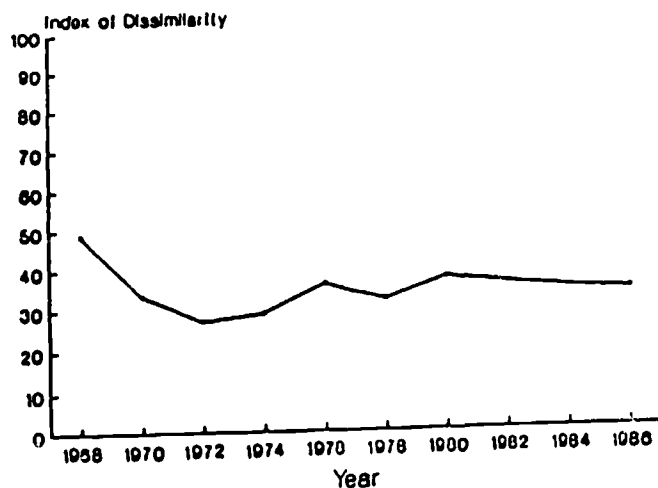

Savannah-Chatham Co., GA
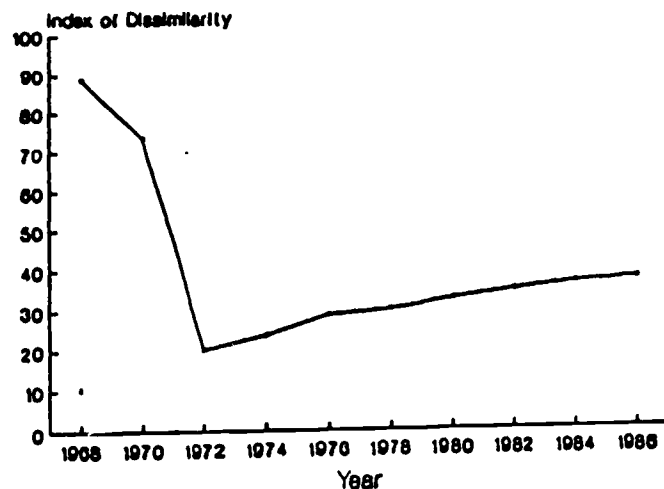
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