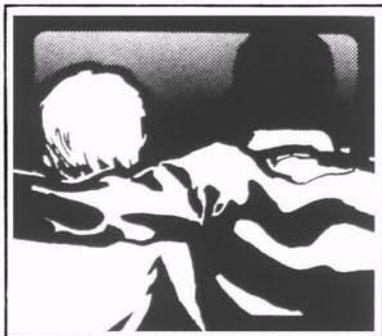


# The Emergent Patterns of Integration



Victor R. Miller

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*School desegregation does not improve the achievement of minority students. There was never any real evidence that it would. A new strategy is needed.*

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Social scientists hailed the decision of *Brown vs. Board of Education*; integrated educational facilities and opportunities would replace separate but equal facilities. The minority child would sit with his/her white counterpart in the same classroom. This new academic environment would raise the academic achievement and improve the self-concept of the black youngster.

## Before Brown

Before this landmark decision, Kenneth Clark, a leading social scientist and now a regent in New York State, wrote that school integration alone would raise black childrens' self-concept and academic performance to match those of whites.<sup>1</sup> Clark was reflecting the views of many social scientists at that time, but he and others in his field were unable to provide a scientific basis for their opinions. Young and Bress further

declared that available studies prior to 1954 had failed to single out segregated schools from the total social complexity of racial prejudice, discrimination, and segregation. It was, therefore, impossible for social scientists to testify on the psychologically damaging effects of segregated schools alone.<sup>2</sup>

David K. Cohen supported this view by saying that prior to *Brown vs. Board of Education* there had been no hard evidence collected on the educational impact of segregation.<sup>3</sup> David Armor held that integration policy came first, and social scientists filled in pro-integration evidence "after

<sup>1</sup> Kenneth B. Clark. *Prejudice and Your Child*. Boston: Beacon Press, 1955.

<sup>2</sup> Beloise Young and Grace Bress. "A New Educational Decision: Is Detroit the End of the Bus Line?" *Phi Delta Kappan*, April 1975.

<sup>3</sup> David Cohen. "Desegregation and Brown." *Society*, November-December 1974.

the fact."<sup>4</sup> Thomas Sowell of Stanford University, a black economist, suggested that segregated schools did not mean inferior education for the black child. He cited the many parochial schools established to educate Catholic, Jewish, and Greek children as illustrative that segregated education is a part of education in the United States. Schools such as the Dunbar High School in Washington, D.C. were mentioned by Sowell as offering quality education to blacks for many years prior to *Brown*.<sup>5</sup>

### After Brown

Educational and social research since *Brown* has not supported Clark's statement that school integration alone would raise black children's self-concept and academic performance to match those of white children. Nathan Glazer, professor of education and social structure at Harvard University, recommended a re-evaluation of all research which led to the opinion that busing would raise the educational achievement of black children.<sup>6</sup> Jeffrey Leech, writing for the *Indiana Law Journal*, surveyed a number of longitudinal studies on the effect of integration on school achievement. He recommended that the federal judiciary examine the recent push toward massive busing in light of evidence that indicates busing may in fact produce no educational gains, and may hinder the psychological development of black children and intensify racial misunderstanding.<sup>7</sup> David Cohen put it more strongly by saying that school desegregation never came close to eliminating achievement differences between black and white children.<sup>8</sup>

Tom Wicker, a syndicated columnist for *The New York Times*, is well known for his positive civil liberties views. He wrote that there was "little evidence to show that educational test scores of minority children have been improved in those districts that have been integrated."<sup>9</sup> Joseph Featherstone said it had been "unsound to rest the case for school desegregation on the shifting sands of social research—research that is faddish and profoundly political."<sup>10</sup>

Longitudinal studies conducted over the last few years on achievement and self-concept of blacks and whites in integrated schools suggest that actual lowering of scores is the trend, or at very best, there is no statistical evidence of



growth. Prewitt's study on racial integration in the elementary schools of Lufkin, Texas, showed that desegregation of classrooms had negative effects on achievement of third-, fourth-, and fifth-graders. As a matter of fact, in the sixth grade, both black and white students achieved significantly more in segregated classrooms than did their peers in desegregated classrooms.<sup>11</sup>

<sup>4</sup> David Armor. "The Evidence of Busing." *The Public Interest*, Summer 1972.

<sup>5</sup> Thomas Sowell. "A Black Conservative Dissents." *The New York Times*, August 8, 1972.

<sup>6</sup> Nathan Glazer. "Is Busing Necessary?" *Commentary*, March 1972.

<sup>7</sup> Jeffrey J. Leech. "Busing as a Judicial Remedy: A Socio-Legal Reappraisal." *Indiana Law Review*, May 1973.

<sup>8</sup> Cohen, *op. cit.*

<sup>9</sup> Tom Wicker. *The New York Times*, April 1974.

<sup>10</sup> Joseph Featherstone. "Busing the Powerless." *The New Republic*, January 24, 1974.

<sup>11</sup> Hugh D. Prewitt. "The Influence of Racial Integration in the Elementary Schools of Lufkin, Texas." College Station: Texas A & M University, 1971.



Charles Evans studied the academic effects of integration on black children. In terms of academic growth, newly integrated black students failed to exceed the growth of matched students attending *de facto* segregated classes on the Iowa Test of Basic Skills.<sup>12</sup>

### Research on Busing

An evaluation was made of court-ordered busing in Waco, Texas. The longitudinal, three-year study measured the variables of IQ, parental authority, educational expectation, self-concept, racial prejudice, and busing attitudes. The study concluded that:

1. Achievement performances declined significantly between bused blacks and nonbused blacks.

2. All minority children had lower achievement scores after two years of busing.

3. Attitudes of self-concept of bused students were significantly lower on tests than nonbused students.<sup>13</sup>

Schellenberg and Halteman, writing for the periodical *Urban Education*, gave the results of their two-year longitudinal study of bused children and those who stayed in the inner-city schools. They concluded that elementary school children who are bused do no better academically than those who remain in inner-city schools.<sup>14</sup> Frank Barrows disclosed that after three years of extensive busing in Charlotte, North Carolina, results were difficult, if not impossible, to assess.<sup>15</sup> Jencks and Brown, in a reanalysis of the 1966 Equality of Educational Opportunity Survey, found that test performance of blacks declined in classrooms with a high percentage of whites.<sup>16</sup>

In a study commissioned by the Office of Education in 1972, an attempt was made to evaluate formal and informal relationships between black and white students. The following two criteria guided the schools selected: (1) they have been racially mixed for some time; and (2) they have had past records of racial discord.

The conclusions of the study were:

1. Informal interracial interaction was virtually nonexistent.

<sup>12</sup> Kenneth E. Cyfert. "The Immediate Effect of Classroom Integration on the Academic Process, Self-Concept and Racial Attitudes of Elementary White Students." Denton: North Texas State University, 1971.

<sup>13</sup> ———. "The Effects of School Desegregation on Minority Students' Achievement and Self-Concepts: An Evaluation of Court-Ordered Busing in Waco, Texas." The National Center for Educational Research and Development, June 1974.

<sup>14</sup> James Schellenberg and John Halteman. "Busing and Academic Achievement: A Two Year Follow-Up." *Urban Education*, January 1, 1976.

<sup>15</sup> Frank Barrows. "School Busing: Charlotte, N.C." *Atlantic*, November 1972.

<sup>16</sup> Christopher Jencks and Marsha Brown. "The Effects of Desegregation on Student Achievement: Some New Evidence from the Equality of Educational Opportunity Survey." *Sociology of Education* 48(1); 1975.

2. Formal interaction occurred only in highly structured situations.

3. Attempts at integration were discouraged by forces within the school.

4. Attempts to reduce potential race conflict consumed enormous amounts of organizational energy.<sup>17</sup>

In an interim evaluation of a busing plan sponsored by the Department of Research, Minneapolis Board of Education, 59 white children who volunteered for one-way busing were studied. The study concluded that:

1. Bused students were a less cohesive group than nonbused students.

2. Bused students felt more friction than nonbused students.

3. Bused students were less satisfied than nonbused students.<sup>18</sup>

The following question was posed by the authors of an article on desegregation that appeared in the *Phi Delta Kappan* of April 1975: Would a properly implemented plan for reducing the number of students attending inner-city schools really help substantially to improve their academic achievement?

"There is no existing proper study," the authors said, "that confirms or denies this. Little has been accomplished in identifying schools and students' variables consistently associated with development of positive interpersonal attitudes in integrated schools."<sup>19</sup>

### Is Integration Working?

Twenty-five years after *Brown*, universities, social scientists, and many governmental agencies are still asking questions that the courts tried to resolve in *Brown*. Research gives dimension to fallacies of integration plans either ordered by the courts, voluntarily entered into, or administratively ordered by governmental agencies. School integration, alone, does not raise black children's self-concept or academic achievement. There are other factors that must be recognized and dealt with.

Thirteen years after the famous "Coleman report," its major author says the policy of assigning children to a school outside their neighbor-

hood in order to bring about racial integration has failed.<sup>20</sup> "White flight," the ability of financially able white families to flee to the nearby suburbs,

<sup>17</sup> Phillip Cuseck and Richard J. Ayling. "An Exploratory Study of Formal and Informal Relationships Between White and Black Students in a Racially-Mixed Urban Secondary School." East Lansing: Michigan State University, February 28, 1973.

<sup>18</sup> Leatta Hough and Lowell Hellewick. "An Interim Evaluation of Burroughs-Clinton Busing Program." Board of Education, Minneapolis Public Schools, April 1972.

<sup>19</sup> Eugene E. Eubanks and Daniel Levine. "Big City Desegregation Since Detroit." *Phi Delta Kappan*, April 1975.

<sup>20</sup> "Desegregation Discounted." *The Washington Post*, September 18, 1978.



has made integration impossible. There are fewer and fewer whites to integrate with black children in many large urban school districts.

According to James Coleman, it is illusory to suggest that progress can be made toward achieving a truly integrated society unless some way is found to attract the middle class—both blacks and whites—back into the urban schools across the nation.<sup>21</sup> Nancy St. John has written extensively and objectively on racial integration. She reminds her readers that “we tend to forget that integration, however important, is only one component of quality education and not necessarily for all children, at all stages, the most important component.”<sup>22</sup>

### Should We Bus?

The question is not whether we should integrate our schools. The question is whether forced busing to achieve integration works. Is a quanti-

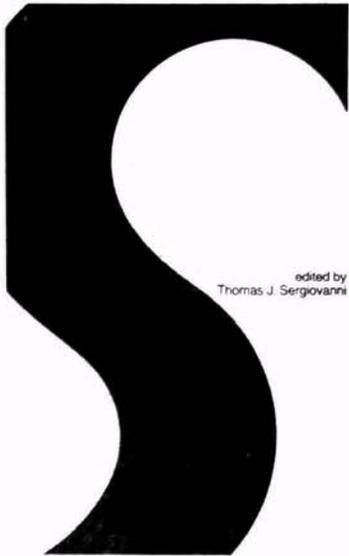
tative number of blacks and whites that is arbitrarily decided on the best way to remedy the low academic achievement of many children, regardless of race? Is increasing minority concentration in cities across the land too high a price to pay for the current integration policy based on numbers?

*The New York Times* of December 21, 1975, illustrates the paradox of the *Brown* decision. The decision was supposed to outlaw pupil assignment on the grounds of race, but it has become the rationale for requiring assignments on the basis of race.<sup>23</sup> It can thus be argued, with merit, that the implementation of *Brown* contravenes the Court's thinking.

*Brown* and the subsequent court decisions have raised more questions than they have answered. The achievement level of black children has failed to match the achievement level of white children. White flight has occurred, and the urban cities are experiencing dynamic changes both in racial populations and falling tax resources. The cities, to implement court-ordered and administratively ordered integration plans, are going bankrupt. The question now to be asked, in the face of proven failure of the implementation of *Brown*, is whether there is another way to raise the educational level of inner-city children and to improve their self-concepts. The time has come for the entire issue of integration to be reviewed. The criterion of the review should be how to implement a policy that affords the best educational environment for each child, regardless of race or where he/she lives in our country.

<sup>21</sup> James Coleman. Report II, “Busing and White Flight.” *Nation*, July 5, 1975.

<sup>22</sup> Nancy St. John. “Desegregation: Voluntary or Mandatory?” *Integrated Education*, January-February 1972.



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