THE POLITICS OF RACIAL INTEGRATION IN THE SEATTLE PUBLIC

SCHOOLS: DISCOURSE, POLICY, AND POLITICAL CHANGE,

1954-1991

by

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Gerald Berk

This study examines the role of narrative in racial integration politics in the

Seattle Public Schools between 1954 and 1991. In 1978, the Seattle School District in

coalition with civic actors implemented a mandatory student assignment desegregation

policy, "The Seattle Plan," without a court order. A decade later, another similar

coalition of actors came together to shift desegregation policy towards a "controlled

choice" method of student movement. In 1991, with the support of the newly elected

Democratic mayor, the foundation of desegregation was dismantled.

In Seattle, the shifts in desegregation conflicts can be explained as the

transposition of certain arrangements of ideas into policy and the concurrent shift in the

arrangement produced by new alignments of actors able to find enough common ground

to coalesce and make policy. This dissertation explores the complexity of ideas about

racial equality and the oftentimes-surprising arrangements actors created. I analyze the

way elected, elite, and non-elite actors at the local level talked about, interpreted, and re-

interpreted questions of racial segregation, equality, and the role of the public schools and explore the amalgamations of ideas about race and schools that explain the unique development of policy in Seattle with a way to account for change relying on micro-political developments. I examine the discursive arrangements generated within these conflicts, the coalitions built around these ideas, and how the ideas were implemented as policy. I analyze a broad range of archival materials, newspaper accounts, and interviews with actors who were involved in these events.

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For my family

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

In the winter of 1977, the Seattle School Board enacted a remarkable blend of creativity, compromise, and perseverance with the approval of a district-wide desegregation policy that included mandatory student assignment and busing. The "Seattle Plan" gained local and national commendation as a surprising success where a coalition of school district and civic actors clutched the reins of local control and arranged an innovative desegregation policy without a court order. At every step, parents in fear of having their children forcibly bused fought the policy development. However, a growing group of parents, civic actors, and the School Board arranged a policy that reflected a sincere investment in creating a multi-cultural and racially integrated school system.

Fourteen years later, the Seattle School Board unanimously voted to eliminate mandatory busing to desegregate within the next four years, essentially dismantling the foundation of student movement for racial integration purposes. The discourse of school choice had re-cast the debate over racial equality in Seattle and the nation and allowed for a shift in policy priorities away from integration towards alternate mechanisms to achieve equality in student performance. By 1995, the only vestige of racial integration was the use of a child's race as a third factor in assigning students to schools if the school chosen

by the parent was over-capacity.[1] In 1997, the community group called Parents Involved in Community Schools (PICS) filed suit against the Board over the use of this race-conscious policy. *Parents Involved in Community Schools v. Seattle School District No. 1* landed in the Supreme Court for decision in 2007. In a 5-4 decision, the Supreme Court ruled in favor of PICS, denying the use of race-conscious policies in student assignment.

In a candid interview with former Seattle School Board member Dorothy Hollingsworth, six months after the *PICS* ruling, she relayed her interpretation of the history of Seattle's desegregation efforts, "I felt that we desegregated, but we never integrated."[2] Hollingsworth was the second black School Board member in Seattle School District history, serving between 1975 and 1981. She was on the Board that voted for the first voluntarily adopted desegregation policy by a city of its size in 1977, *The Seattle Plan for Quality Integrated Education.*[3] Hollingsworth saw successes in the District's desegregation policies and failures originating in the policy that never let it fully mature. On a similar note, Board Member in 1977, Suzanne Hittman said "I think we've changed behavior of people so they won't shun a person of color. But their

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[1] The first two factors that took precedence over race were: if a sibling attended the school chosen, and proximity of the school to the child's home.

[2] Dorothy Hollingsworth, interview by author, Seattle, Wash., 2 December 2007.

[3] "Three Cities That Are Making Desegregation Work," (Washington, D.C.: National Education Association Special Study, 1984).

attitude, I don't know about the attitude."[4] Former Superintendent Dr. David Moberly described the Seattle Plan, "it was a great social experiment that didn't pan out."[5]

These former school district actors spoke to the perceived successes and failures of Seattle's experiment with racial desegregation, which sandwiched a mandatory desegregation policy between efforts to induce voluntary racial transfers (1964 and 1991). What explains these shifts and perceptions of success (desegregation, behavior), and of failure (integration, attitude)? For some, the answer lies in people's attitudes, whether prejudice or desires for control. "People don't like change," lamented school board member Linda Harris.[6] Former school board member Patt Sutton looked back on Seattle's attempt, "I think we may have as a society enormously naïve."[7] She hypothesized that desegregation continually ran into resistance because people were afraid of busing their children, "most of all it is fear of the unknown and the removal of the illusion of control."[8] Former school board member Don Nielson said busing came to and end because "it didn't make any sense... spending a lot of time on integrating schools takes the eye off the focus of what we really need to be doing."[9] Amy Hagopian, school board member in the early 1990s, blamed unclear goals; "What were we trying to achieve, so we'd know whether or not we achieved that? Was the goal simply

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[4] Suzanne Hittman, interview with author, Seattle, Wash., 30 November 2007.

[5] David Moberly, phone interview with author, Eugene, OR, tape recording, 5 September 2007.

[6] Linda Harris, interview with author, Seattle, Wash., 6 September 2007

[7] Patt Sutton, phone interview with author, Eugene, OR., tape recording, 19 November 2007.

[8] Ibid.

[9] Don Nielson, interview with author, Seattle, Wash., 25 July 2007.

desegregation of the schools [to move bodies]? Was it to eliminate the achievement gap?"[10]

These former actors involved in the desegregation debates noted important factors running up against a policy that challenged not only white privilege, but also the accepted foundation of schooling: the neighborhood. People were resistant and fearful of busing, desegregation warranted a large amount of resources, and the goals were often ambiguous or unclear. With all these factors running up against the possibility for desegregation, it could appear that civic actors pushed through the Seattle Plan simply to quell the threat of court order. However, the Seattle Plan arranged a complex policy to not simply avoid court order, but to pursue a different vision for the future of racial equity. Additionally, the policy lasted through multiple anti-busing movements and national-level shifts towards relaxed civil rights enforcement. It was not until 1991 that the school board voted to end mandatory busing, which did not happen for four years.

One could hypothesize Seattle's history then may simply reflect a cyclical trend of liberal progress and conservative backlash. Maybe racially conservative ideology came to dominate the discussion of racial equality in a way that gathered enough frustration with busing to disband the progressive coalition and for federal institutions to relax enforcement. However, both liberals and conservatives in Seattle took part in the emergence and end of desegregation policy, as well as the shifts in the way people talked about racial equality, the schools, and desegregation. Additionally, many policy ideas do not clearly reflect strict divisions in racial "progressivism" and "conservatism." For

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[10] Amy Hagopian, interview with author, Seattle, Wash., 6 September 2007.

example, which camp do you put a policy to provide more resources for minority schools? What if these resources replaced desegregation? What if these resources were taken from majority schools? How or what does this policy mean in different contexts?

Within this complexity, how do we explain the intersecting dynamic of policy and idea change? Given that intention did not generally become reality in terms of policy development in Seattle, an explanation focusing on actors, intentions, and interest group conflict does not explain the specific ideas that came to dominate desegregation conflicts, the coalitions of actors who arranged policy, and the policy arrangement that included variant and often competing ideas. Therefore, this project takes seriously the production of meaning in idea creation, coalitional arrangement, and policy development. Dvora Yanow describes this problematic of "how does a policy *mean*" as one that seeks to identify "the specific meanings, intended and made, of specific policies and how those meanings are communicated and variously interpreted."[11] This approaches politics as made up of "shared as well as incommensurable meanings," that allows "the possibility of multiple meanings in policy and organizational actions" and policies as "expressive and not only as instrumental solutions to problems."[12] This project utilizes an interpretive framework that organizes the political development of desegregation in Seattle into an analysis of ideas and their institutional reception; a search into their intricate meanings, interpretations, re-combinations, deployments, and the way ideas can

[11] Dvora Yanow, *How Does a Policy Mean? Interpreting Policy and Organizational Actions* (Washington, D.C.: Georgetown University Press, 1996).

[12] Ibid.

organize actors into unlikely coalitions that serve to change the terrains of conflict and the possibilities for articulations of equality.

In Seattle, local actors activated desegregation conflicts through the creation, articulation, or arrangement of ideas about racial equality, segregation, and the role of the schools. The path of development in Seattle can be seen as actors framed, re-framed, interpreted, and re-interpreted the relationships between ideas like equality, race, diversity, choice, neighborhoods, and busing. As actors filled these concepts with meaning over time, different groups of actors came together with their interpretations and explanations, finding enough in common to arrange policy from both compatible and antithetical ideas. Actors formed policy from the transposition of certain narrative associations and the concurrent acts of prioritization, emphasis and alignment of ideas into a policy with specific and contextual meaning. With close attention to the local fights, deliberations, and policy processes, this analysis foregrounds the actions and discussions of the people who were trying to work out the complexity of racial politics on the ground.

Why the Seattle Public Schools?

The public school arena has often been the center of strong and even violent sentiments against race-conscious policies, such as mandatory busing. By the mid-1990s, most of the nation's racial integration policies had been dismantled. Public schools are local sites where racial hierarchies and their manifestations have been negotiated and

contested over time.[13] The Seattle Public Schools provide a lens into these locally contested interpretations of race, equality, and the role of the public in the interpretations of race and equality.

Seattle was ripe with opportunity for desegregation in 1977: it was a city proud of its liberal image; it was in the jurisdiction of a judge sympathetic to desegregation; and a coalition of elite civic actors from diverse ideological backgrounds worked together to develop a policy in order to avoid court order. Seattle also displayed a history of overt and subtle racial discrimination: housing discrimination remained legal through the 1960s; federal housing projects enacted during WWII turned into racial an ethnic ghettos; the city establishment and schools resisted admittance of segregation until the late 1960s; and the public schools both manifested past historical discrimination and sustained racial segregation between schools.

Studies of local politics, especially concerning race, show a particularly distinct politics in terms of actors, coalitions, and idea formation.[14] When examining the contextual politics of schools and race, local politics provides a lens into idea formation that is not always captured at the national level. For example, an analysis of culture and language as it intersects with macro-level institutional change may conclude that desegregation policy succumbed to the inherent push-pull between entrenched cultural

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[13] Amanda E. and Maria Krysan Lewis, Sharon M. Collins, Korie Edwards and Geoff Ward, "Institutional Patterns and Transformations: Race and Ethnicity in Housing, Education, Labor Markets, Religion, and Criminal Justice," in *The Changing Terrain of Race and Ethnicity*, ed. Maria Krysan and Amanda E. Lewis (New York: Russell Sage Foundation, 2004).

[14] Ronald P. Formisano, *Boston against Busing: Race, Class, and Ethnicity in the 1960s and 1970s* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1991), Mathew Lassiter, *The Silent Majority: Suburban Politics in the Sunbelt South* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2006).

battles between egalitarian liberal ideologies and anti-transformative racist ideologies.[15]

But a peek into the local development of desegregation politics reveals a deep problem

with the macro-level view- how does one explain a Seattle liberal who is also anti-

busing? Or, how does one explain a member of an anti-busing grassroots movement who

supports a form of racial integration? After initial investigation into the local politics of

schools and race, I concluded that the research and analysis of this specific intersection

between a "liberal" northern city and school politics would need a very close look into

ideas, how ideas become received in policy, and what accounts for shifts in ideas and

their users.

Seattle is also a window into broader trends in U.S. racial politics. For one, the

West has a specific and different racial and desegregation culture and political

development. Western civil rights activity began in the 19th century as many black

parents fought desegregation in California, Colorado, Kansas, and Montana. Quintard

Taylor (1998) claims that there is a "striking ambiguity" about race in the West, much of

it stemming from the presence of at least four minority groups who have had varied

interactions with whites and each other.[16] Additionally, Washington reflects similar

trends in the shifted tone of racial politics in the post-*Brown* era. For example,

California, Washington, Michigan, and Nebraska's citizens voted to end affirmative

action or race preferences in public institutions.[17] Today, Seattle schools' resegregation

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[15] Desmond S. and Rogers M. Smith King, "Racial Orders in American Political Development," *American Political Science Review* 99, no. 1 (2005).

[16] Quintard Taylor, *In Search of a Racial Frontier: African Americans in the American West, 1528-1990* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1998).

reflects the general national trend. Despite the growing diversity in the population, most white students in the US attend school with few minority peers.[18] Gary Orfield reports that the national trend reflects the trend in the South, where schools became desegregated and now are resegregating to previous levels.[19] Today, one of the most significant features of the public schools is not their level of integration and equality, but the taken-for-granted acceptance of another system of separate and (not-so-) equal schooling and assumption that all kids are institutionally treated equally. The curtain drawn to separate race from the public sphere of schooling has limited avenues to address persistent levels of racial inequality that continue to reproduce racial hierarchies within the public schools and society.[20]

Analytic Foils and Focus

I began to approach the racial politics of Seattle schools like many other scholars who approach desegregation policy in terms of a failed trajectory. Various analyses pose the problems of desegregation policy as: uncommitted actors or flawed policy design;[21]

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[17] California's Prop 209 (1996); Washington's Initiative 2000; Michigan Civil Rights Initiative (2006); Nebraska Civil Rights Initiative (2008). In June 2009, the Arizona state legislature cleared the way to place a constitutional amendment on the 2010 ballot to ban racial and gender preferences.

[18] Amanda A. Lewis, "Some Are More Equal Than Others," in *White Out: The Continuing Significance of Race*, ed. Woody and Eduardo Bonilla-Silva Doane (New York: Routledge, 2003).

[19] Gary Orfield, "Gary Orfield Documents the Resegregation of America's Public Schools," *The Journal of Negro Education*, no. 24 (Summer 1999).

[20] While not drawing the specific conclusion from Victoria Hattam, *In the Shadow of Race: Jews, Latinos, and Immigrant Politics in the United States* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2007)., this association was influenced by her description of the trend away from "race" to "ethnicity," pg 13.

[21] Luis Ricardo Fraga, Nick Rodriguez, Bari Anhalt Erlichson, "Desegregation and School Board Politics: The Limits of Court-Imposed Policy Change," in *Besieged: School Boards and the Future of Education*

white flight and its subsequent flight of resources and/or its symbol of white aversion to redistributive policy;[22] conservative Court appointees of the Nixon and Reagan administration who marred progress and enforcement;[23] or the difficulty of sustaining the civic capacity of a school reform coalition.[24]

I began to find that these analytic lenses did not allow me to flesh out the most intriguing aspects of the story that developed out of my research. Many of these explanations relied on static visions of interests, white reaction, or coalition building that did not map on to the developments in Seattle or would hide the political dynamics that seemed to matter most. For example, many studies bring up the importance of social capital, civic mobilization and political arrangements geared toward progressive education politics.[25] These theories add a basic concern for understanding how to organize an enduring set of relationships between the community and political

Politics, ed. William G. Howell (Washington, D.C.: Brookings Institution Press, 2005), Jennifer L. Hochschild, *The New American Dilemma: Liberal Democracy and School Desegregation* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1984), Gary Orfield, "Toward a Strategy for Urban Integration: Lessons in School and Housing Policy from Twelve Cities," (New York: Ford Foundation, 1981).

[22] Charles T. Clotfelter, *After Brown: The Rise and Retreat of School Desegregation* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2004), Thomas F. Pettigrew, "The Case for Metropolitian Approaches to Public-School Desegregation," in *Race and Schooling in the City*, ed. Adam Yarmolinsky, Lance Liebman, Corinne S. Schelling (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1981).

[23] Thomas M. Keck, *The Most Activist Supreme Court in History: The Road to Modern Judicial Conservatism* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2004), Gerald N. Rosenberg, *The Hollow Hope: Can Courts Bring About Social Change?* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1991).

[24] Marion Orr, *Black Social Capital: The Politics of School Reform in Baltimore, 1986-1998* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 1999), John Portz, Lana Stein, Robin R. Jones, *City Schools and City Politics: Institutions and Leadership in Pittsburgh, Boston, and St. Louis* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 1999), Clarence Stone, Jeffrey R. Henig, Bryan D. Jones, Carol Pierannunzi, *Building Civic Capacity: The Politics of Reforming Urban Schools* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2001).

[25] Ibid.

institutions that will help facilitate local goals.[26] This research shows that the most

successful education reform plans endure where there is a level of "civic capacity"

maintained by the district. Clarence Stone applies "regime theory" to the public

education context and defines "civic capacity" in terms of the central role of partnerships

and cross-sector alliances that create the institutional resources to develop and implement

key policies and programs in the education arena.[27] Therefore, the most important

variable in determining school reform success is the specific alignment of resources

generated outside the school districts to support the new school policy.

While resources are undoubtedly integral to pushing through complex and

contentious school policy, these theoretical lenses offered a limited view of the dynamics

of school policy and development. Within Seattle's school politics, the cross-sector

alliances were key in the acceptance and design of the Seattle Plan and the end of the

desegregation, but their institutional resources did not solely define their roles. The roles

of the business community, or city, or civic organizations more closely aligned with the

ideas they brought to the decision-making circles and the ways they interacted.

Therefore, I sought a way to include a direct focus on ideas about desegregation and

school policy that could allow a vision of stakeholders and coalitions as more than pre-

political interests or the sum of their parts. The actors who took part in the politics of

desegregation and who shaped into coalitions crafted creative policies from ideas

generated within their interactions.

[26] Stephen Smith, *Boom for Whom? Education, Desegregation, and Development in Charlotte* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2004).

[27] Portz, *City Schools and City Politics: Institutions and Leadership in Pittsburgh, Boston, and St. Louis*, Stone, *Building Civic Capacity: The Politics of Reforming Urban Schools*.

While not directly analyzing desegregation policy, studies of ideology also further an understanding of the failure of race-conscious policy or endurance of systems that reproduce white privilege. These studies explore the ideological advent and success of colorblindness discourse, which includes mechanisms and practices that produce and reproduce racial inequality through apparently non-racists ways.[28] Many terms have been used to describe this phenomenon of subtle post-Civil rights racism such as "colorblind conservatism,"[29] "ideological colorblindness,"[30] "colorblind universalism,"[31] colorblind racism,"[32] "racial backlash,"[33] "colorblindness discourse" or "formal-race talk,"[34] or "colorblind ideology."[35] These ideas include many of the same basic arguments: that

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[28] Lawrence D. Bobo, "Inequalities That Endure? Racial Ideology, American Politics, and the Peculiar Role of the Social Sciences," in *The Changing Terrain of Race and Ethnicity*, ed. Maria and Amanda e. Lewis Krysan (New York: Russell Sage Foundation, 2004), Eduardo Bonilla-Silva, *Racism without Racists: Color-Blind Racism and the Persistence of Racial Inequality in the United States* (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc., 2003), Ashely "Woody" and Eduardo Bonilla-Silva Doane, ed., *White Out: The Continuing Signifcance of Racism* (New York: Routledge, 2003), Reva B. Siegel, "Discrimination in the Eyes of the Law: How "Colorblindness" Discourse Disrupts and Rationalizes Social Stratification," *California Law Review* 77 (2000).

[29] Michael K. Brown, Martin Carnoy, Elliot Currie, Troy Duster, David B. Oppenheimer, Marjorie M. Shultz, David Wellman, *Whitewashing Race: The Myth of a Color-Blind Society* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2003).

[30] Lani Guinier and Gerald Torres, *The Miner's Canary: Enlisting Race, Resisting Power, Transforming Democracy* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2002).

[31] Nikhil Pal Singh, *Black Is a Country: Race and the Unfinished Struggle for Democracy* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2004).

[32] Lewis, "Institutional Patterns and Transformations: Race and Ethnicity in Housing, Education, Labor Markets, Religion, and Criminal Justice."

[33] Stephen Steinberg, *Turning Back: The Retreat from Racial Justice in American Thought and Policy* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1995).

[34] Siegel, "Discrimination in the Eyes of the Law: How "Colorblindness" Discourse Disrupts and Rationalizes Social Stratification."

[35] Bonilla-Silva, *Racism without Racists: Color-Blind Racism and the Persistence of Racial Inequality in the United States.*

"Jim Crow" racism is less pertinent in the racial hierarchy of today and that colorblind discourse works in the name of a liberal rights-based version of equality, the forgetting of past discrimination, and the co-optation of civil rights language to normalize practices that sustain racial stratification and group inequality. This discourse asserts colorblindness as a reality as opposed to an aspiration and gains its discursive and normative power through the "race-neutral" frames it uses and its normalization and mainstreaming of whiteness or "white racial invisibility."[36]

These projects have provided invaluable analysis of the policy pitfalls and ideological walls that racial equality policy runs up against. However, utilizing this theoretical tool also narrowed the lens in a way that made many key features of my story invisible. The colorblind conservative theories posit both a static vision of race and actors. The discussion of colorblind ideology, for example, is not irrelevant, but it should be nested in a discussion of the dynamics, rather than an endpoint, of change. In addition, these explanations tend to place change or identity outside of politics: in pre-political ideas, pre-political assumptions or interests, or larger institutional structures that define local politics. While utilizing this lens, I found that my attention was directed towards ideas about race as "racism," and the new ways racism could be formulated in policy. Therefore, I was distracted from actors who apparently played key roles in the processes of school politics but did not fit into "conservative" or "liberal" categories.

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[36] Ibid, Woody Doane, "Rethinking Whiteness Studies," in *White Out: The Continuing Significance of Racism*, ed. Woody Doane and Eduardo Bonilla-Silva (New York: Routledge, 2003), Lewis, "Some Are More Equal Than Others."

Consider a key actor who does not fit the categories of "conservative" or "liberal." Michael Preston, a school board member who served in the 1980s and 1990s began to find ways to incrementally lessen the amount of busing and the legitimacy of busing beginning around 1983. He was one of three black board members. He prioritized minority children's education. He focused not only on "excellence" in education, but economic opportunity as the end result of education for minority children. Preston was integral in pushing the District towards "controlled choice," and the end of mandatory busing. How could these tools explain this creative and important Board member? It is impossible to make sense of his complex role in framing new ways to talk about schools, race, and equality that became ways that ultimately made sense to Seattleites from a broad spectrum of interests, roles, or places.

Or consider a second example. I interviewed a school board member who served in the early 1990s who forced a shift in the analytic focus of colorblind conservatism, for example, because of the apparent contradictions she displayed. Dr. Amy Hagopian, still active in school politics today, talked about the plight of minorities, the resources allotted by white PTA board members, and the difficulties of desegregation. She had decided, mid-tenure, that busing made no sense after always voting for the "deseg" plans when she began serving with the Board. She had not switched parties. She had not decided that her kids should not be involved in desegregation. She simply understood the relationship between the role of the schools and racial equity in a different way.

Therefore, my driving question is not "why did desegregation fail or succeed," or whether or not conservative or liberal ideas were driving policy? This project revolves

around not simply questions of policy failure or ideological domination, but the foundational questions of formation of ideas, coalitions, and policy as well as change, and meaning. It explains the development of desegregation policies in Seattle, the changes in how people talked about race and equality, how (rather than just what) ideas were written into policy, and how actors were able to substantially change policy trajectory over time. Therefore the question of this project is how did certain understandings of race and equality gain authority over school policy and how did these accepted understandings shift?

Discourse and Policy Change

Guiding this project in these terms opens up questions beyond timing, structure, interest, power, and ideology towards questions of ideas, actors, policy processes, and contextualized coalitional politics. How did Seattle actors arrive upon a vision of racial equity for its public schools that included not only efforts to end discrimination but to encourage multi-culturalism and integration that went beyond legal necessity? How did a coalition of actors from diverse ideological standpoints come together to implement this specific policy? Subsequently, how did the School District with a similar coalition of actors begin to dismantle their desegregation efforts by the late 1980s and replace cross-town busing with a choice-based student assignment policy? *How* was desegregation dismantled, that is, what arrangement of ideas was able to deconstruct one policy for another? This necessitates a focus on the empirical storyline: on the arrangements of ideas that either sustain or dismantle a policy, where these ideas came from, how actors

put them together, what ideas and actors were left behind, and how certain assumptions and ways of talking about desegregation become influential within culture and policy.

In Seattle, the terrain of conflict was not simply defined by anti-busing and pro-integration forces between 1954 and 1991. A peek into the local development of desegregation politics in Seattle uncovers a question like, how does one explain a Seattle liberal who is also anti-busing? Or, how does one explain a member of an anti-busing grassroots movement who supports racial integration? In order to provide a complex account of change, I turn to theories of policy discourse and language that constitute the political processes.[37]

This project assumes conflicts or policy problems are social constructs characterized by narrative or discourse, given that conflicts mean nothing without the words and actors who create them.[38] Policy controversies characterized within the highly charged realm of racial politics can be best understood in terms of narrative battles between multiple conflicting visions of racial equality and inequality and prescriptions seldom resolved in response to evidence, facts, or interest group bargaining. Rein and Schon (1993) argue "stubborn policy controversies…cannot be understood in terms of the of questions of value from questions of fact, for the participants construct the problems of their problematic policy situations through *frames* in which facts, values,

[37] See R. Cover (1983), Fischer and Forester (1993), M. Hajer (1993), V. Hattam (2007), D. Howarth, et al (2000), A. Norval (1996, 2000),S. Skowronek (2008), D. Stone (2002), D.Yanow (1996).

[38] Maarten A. Hajer, "Discourse Coalitions and the Institutionalization of Practice: The Case of Acid Rain in Britain," in *The Argumentative Turn in Policy Analysis and Planning*, ed. Frank Fischer and John Forester (Durham: Duke University Press, 1993).

theories, and interests are integrated."[39] Robert Cover (1983) writes, "No set of legal institutions or prescriptions exist apart from the narrative that locate it and give it meaning."[40] Stephen Skowronek (2008) echoes this point that it is not the endorsement of a particular ideal that invokes meaning, "but the way in which [it is] reworked and redeployed."[41] Utilizing these analytic foundations makes it possible to look beyond static ideas or interests towards the arrangements of these ideas and how they became stories about the social reality within which Seattle actors worked.

This project also assumes that discourse takes on causal power on its own. Ideas take on meaning by the way actors construct meaning for them by arranging ideas into stories about their situations and visions for the future. Actors generate and give meaning to ideas within politics. Ideas are not pre-defined as essential characteristics or natures of identities and therefore politics as contingent, contradictory, partial, and incomplete. As ideas are built and linked through political debate, ideas gain form and potential power by the way they are joined, prioritized and comparatively opposed. Seattle school and racial politics displayed a vast amount of contingency, contradiction, and change in how ideas were used, which were able to sit comfortably together, and which actors were able to shift debates. I take care to maintain the focus not on the battle between competing ideas, but on the contests between and within ideas (especially when ideas are used by multiple

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[39] Martin and Donald Schon Rein, "Reframing Policy Discourse," in *The Argumentative Turn in Policy Analysis and Planning*, ed. Frank Fisher and John Forester (Durham: Duke University Press, 1993).

[40] Robert M. Cover, "The Supreme Court 1982 Term: Forword: Nomos and Narrative," *Harvard Law Review* 97, no. 4 (1983). Pg 4

[41] Stephen Skowronek, "The Reassociation of Ideas and Purposes: Racism, Liberalism, and the American Political Tradition," *The American Political Science Review* 100, no. 3 (2008), 392.

actors), constructed priorities and emphases, and the shifting conflicts resulting from actors combining and re-associating ideas in new ways to produce policy.[42] Restated, I look at both the array of ideas and their associated meanings and the multiple meanings associated within one idea. Meanings can be found in the connections between ideas, such as race and equality, and in the signification of one idea, such as busing.

Ultimately then, I analyze which claims or combinations of ideas or concepts became institutionally received in policy and how they were arranged. Victoria Hattam argues, "Most of the new recombinations [of ideas] fall flat, failing to resonate with others. But occasionally, political elites crystallize nascent changes at hand, forging previously disparate elements into new political formations, bringing the emergent into being."[43] In the production of narrative, actors use ideas in combination with others for distinct purposes. The interpretation of this use is not an avenue to discover "objective interests" or and "essence" to the ideas.[44] The purpose of the narrative analysis is to uncover the multiplicity of ideas that actors use and create, how certain ideas gain meaning, their histories, their antagonisms, and their meanings in a context. For some, this has meant locating patterns within the ways people use ideas. For example, Hattam uses the terms "linguistic associations" or "associative chains" in order to convey the contingent connections associated with constructed sets of ideas. She writes, "we do not choose the words we use one at a time; they come linked together in patterns or

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[42] Ibid., 386.

[43] Hattam, *In the Shadow of Race: Jews, Latinos, and Immigrant Politics in the United States.*

[44] Aletta J. Norval, "The Things We Do with Words- Contemporary Approaches to the Analysis of Ideology," *British Journal of Political Science* 30, no. 2 (2000).

associative chains. The connections are neither fixed nor logically derived, but are forged through culture, practice, and time."[45]

This analysis highlights the genealogies of the institutionally received ideas: where they came from, what they were reacting to, how they were placed in relation to one another within policy outcomes. But by framing this exploration as genealogical investigation, I do not assume that an idea has a specific origin or one specific development, or that the character of its travel is over time. Ideas are used in combination with other ideas, and therefore develop within politics to gain specific meaning within a context. Tracing the processes of development, deferral, and re-arrangement assumes the question of interest cannot always preclude the question of action; ideas are not simply reflections of people's manipulations and uses of specific ideas for specific purposes. This is not to say that actors do not try to convey or manipulate specific ideas or invoke previous associations. The assumption that ideas are created within politics and that discourse takes a part in creating identities only assumes the active nature of conflict, as Deborah Stone argues, "the interaction between ideas and alliances is ever-changing and never-ending."[46] To understand their meaning in the new arrangement, an idea's previous associations must be accounted. To analyze the histories of ideas is to search for the ways actors filled concepts with meaning, associated them with other concepts, and discarded certain potential meanings.

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[45] Hattam, *In the Shadow of Race: Jews, Latinos, and Immigrant Politics in the United States*, 2-3.

[46] Deborah Stone, *Policy Paradox: The Art of Political Decision Making* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 2002), 34.

Narrative Constellations, Discursive Coalitions, and Policy

Following these assumptions, this project initiates analysis by exploring the arrangements of ideas used in the political debates. The way people talk about ideas, such as individual choice and racial equality can shift dramatically over time. This analysis seeks to unpack these arrangements of ideas that have acquired a level of commonsense understanding that signaled a shift in what ideas actors in Seattle took for granted and what ideas they discarded.

I follow the work of scholars interested in framing, language and narrative processes. Benford and Snow define framing in terms of meaning construction. For Benford and Snow (2000), frames "'locate, perceive, identify, and label' occurrences" and "help to render events or occurrences meaningful and thereby function to organize experience and guide action."[47] Rein and Schon (1993) argue frames integrate "facts, values, theories and interests" and provide a way for people to "construct the problems of their problematic policy situations. Robert Cover (1983) defines narratives as "the codes that relate our normative system to our social constructions of reality and to our visions of what the world might be."[48] Victoria Hattam (2006) uses the concept of "associative chains" to describe the patterns of ideas that "are neither fixed nor logically derived, but are forged through culture, practice, and time."[49] Hajer defines discourse "as an

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[47] Robert D. and David A. Snow Benford, "Framing Processes and Social Movements: An Overview and Assessment"," *Annual Review of Sociology* 26 (2000).

[48] Cover, "The Supreme Court 1982 Term, Forward: Nomos and Narrative," 10.

[49] Victoria Hattam, Joseph Lowndes, "Changes beneath Our Feet: Language, Culture and Political Change," in *Formative Acts*, ed. Stephen Skowronek and Mathew Glassmen (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2006).

ensemble of ideas, concepts, and categories through which meaning is given to a phenomena."[50]

I use the concepts of "narrative constellation" and "discursive coalition" as tools to explicate both the linguistic associations drawn together into narrative and the dynamic policy activity that occurs when actors create something out of varying constellations. I intervene with the concept of "meta-concept" in order to describe a mechanism through which people with disparate goals are able to come together to muddle through policy in a way that significantly shifts the political terrain of conflict. The meta-concept holds together the overlay of various narrative constellations in ways that "re-wire" connections and therefore meanings.[51] To be clear, these tools are not variables that work separately or causally. I insert these analytic tools as a way to describe the active nature of this political development and to allow the analysis to highlight the essentially dynamic character of ideas, actors, and coalition building.

Narrative Constellations

Within each period of this specific policy history, I explicate the "narrative constellations" built by actors in their attempts to explicate the meanings of racial segregation, the role of the schools, and equality. While not trying to compete with similar concepts, I use the term "narrative constellation" for multiple reasons. Of course, this is a presumptuous leap to describe ideas in terms of physical manifestations.

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[50] Hajer, "Discourse Coalitions and the Institutionalization of Practice: The Case of Acid Rain in Britain."

[51] Chris Ansell, "Institutional Change as Constitutional Process, Conference Paper, Unstructuring Politics Workshop," (Eugene, OR: 2009).

However, the idea of constellation seems appropriate because not only does it reflect connections, story, agency, and construction, but also the myth of permanence. Constellations are stories, crafted by people out of disparate and not naturally associated elements (stars), in ways that subsequently mythologize permanence because of their acceptance. The constructed connections are the elements that define constellations; without stories of connections, stars remain stars. The visual representation of constellations highlights the non-linear connections between ideas. I explore the connections within narrative constellations in order to understand the emergence of an idea, what an idea has been crafted to mean in relationship to another, how ideas are prioritized or emphasized, and what ideas have been left out in relationship to history and context. This concept is especially useful when similar ideas have very different meanings for different actors.

For example, actors can construct very different connections between race, busing, inequality, academic achievement, equity, multiculturalism, segregation, and white isolation. If we map these ideas as stars with no necessary connections, we can picture an arrangement of ideas with infinite connection potentials. Figure 1 displays two potential arrangements of connections between the same ideas, thus crafting very different meanings for the same arrangements of ideas.

The story in Constellation 1 can be seen in the connections: equality is associated with race, multiculturalism, academic achievement, and busing; inequality is associated with segregation, white isolation, and academic achievement. The interrelated character of all the elements also associates busing, for example, to racial inequality that means

both minority segregation and white isolation. Therefore, one can envision a policy

constructed to create equity in terms of both multiculturalism and academic achievement

and to integrate for the purposes of ending racial isolation of all groups.
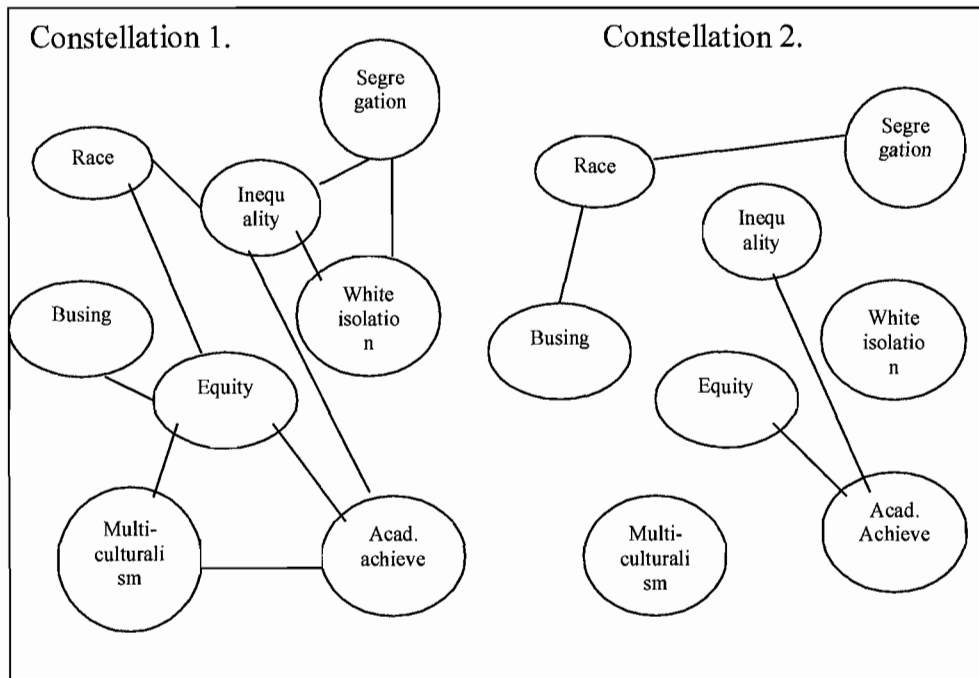
Figure 1. Narrative Constellations

Constellation 2 could imply a story with a different policy goal. In this constellation,

both the connections and lack of connections are integral to the story. Equity is

associated with academic achievement and disassociated with race, multiculturalism,

white isolation and segregation. Inequality is associated with academic achievement

only. Race, busing, multiculturalism, segregation and white isolation have no connection

to inequality or equity or academic achievement. Therefore, a policy could be aimed to

improve academic achievement for all groups with no goal to integrate racial groups.

In addition, the constellation incorporates the story about each concept in relationship to the other concepts. Hattam describes an important aspect of the logic of associate chains as their constitutive relationship at work. She argues the "comparative dynamic" at play between associative chains as "enormously consequential" because it "secures the meaning of both terms."[52] For example, the meaning of race in Constellation 2 is established by its connections to segregation and busing and its disconnections between equity, academic achievement and even multiculturalism. Additionally, if we take these two constellations as representing two policy arrangements (say in 1977 and 1991), we can also explain the differences in policy in terms of the comparison between connections.

Discursive Coalitions

In Seattle, political change happened when actors and their constitutive narrative constellations were drawn together in the "constitutional process" of policymaking.[53] Within the arenas of policymaking, the actors and constellations interacted and aligned to create and legitimize policy. Rather than examining the successful coalitions as groups of actors with pre-defined interests, this analysis discovered that the meaning of the coalitions was most fruitfully examined in terms of the ideas combined within the temporary coalition of actors. Therefore, I use the term "discursive coalition" to describe the actively working group of actors that were able to find something in common to

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[52] Hattam, "Changes beneath Our Feet: Language, Culture and Political Change."

[53] Chris Ansell, "Institutional Change as Constitutional Process, Conference Paper, Unstructuring Politics Workshop," (Eugene, OR: 2009).

institutionalize significant policy changes. Maarten Hajer (1993) describes a "discourse coalition" as "the ensemble of a set of story lines, the actors that utter these story lines, and the practices that conform to these story lines, all organized around a discourse."[54] Story lines, Hajer defines, are "the medium through which actors try to impose their view of reality on others, suggest certain social positions and practices, and criticize alternative social arrangements."[55] The analysis of the discursive coalition is central to understanding the meaning of the policy and change because the examination does not merely analyze words, or even sets of words, but the "argumentative meaning." For Hajer, "the real challenge for argumentative analysis is to find ways of combining the analysis of the discursive production of reality with the analysis of the (extradicursive) social practices from which social constructs emerge and in which the actors that make these statements engage."[56]

Within the discursive coalitions, actors re-arranged pieces of the narrative constellations and gave new meaning to the arrangement through processes of prioritization, emphasis, and deferral. In these dynamics, actors mobilized certain ideas over others, shifted relationships between ideas, and de-emphasized other ideas. Shifts in idea structures and policy occurred when these discursive coalitions brought together narrative constellations, sometimes re-connecting for partially different purposes. By articulating the resulting policy in terms of these overlays of ideas, we can envision

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[54] Hajer, "Discourse Coalitions and the Institutionalization of Practice: The Case of Acid Rain in Britain."

[55] Ibid., 47.

[56] Ibid.

interesting and unexpected outcomes if two entirely different constellations of ideas are grafted together in order to solve a complex policy problem in one moment. These small actions serve to have far-reaching consequences for future debates and paths of ideas. The discursive coalitions that arrived at different points in Seattle's desegregation history were wrought with tensions, disjuncture and contradictions. These new, and sometimes tenuous, coalitions served to temporarily settle pieces of the conflict and defer, or even displace, other pieces.

Meta-concepts and Coalitional Politics

How does a discursive coalition come together? Chris Ansell argues that institutional evolution contours around a "meta-concept or meta-concepts."[57] In Seattle, two examples of meta-concepts are "multiculturalism" and "school choice," which were both able to catalyze the coming together of a coalition of widely disparate actors. Ansell argues that meta-concepts are powerful because they "create audiences and induce relationships between more basic concepts and practices." They entail ambiguity and polyvalence, but are but grounded in contextualized practices. Most significantly, meta-concepts are able to re-arrange familiar concepts in a way that joins people with disparate viewpoints. Ansell calls this dynamic "re-wiring," which "suggests that many of the nodes of the network remain the same, but that the connection between them are changed." They become "highly multivocal," or polyvalent, because different people can fill the concepts with different meaning or different arrangements of priority. For

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[57] Ansell, "Institutional Change as Constitutional Process, Conference Paper, Unstructuring Politics Workshop."

example, "school choice" created a bridge between people interested in racial equity and racial privilege, which shifted the meaning of school desegregation for all groups.

Meta-concepts do more than "re-wire" the connections between and among ideas. Meta-concepts are themselves evidence of re-wired connections between ideas, they represent the displacement of the previous guiding argumentations. Ansell argues they create "new discursive publics." They provide groundwork for a different way to talk about equality, for example that both produces new grounds for conflict and displaces old and thereby engages and creates different people and identities.

In Seattle, new "publics", or "discursive coalitions" were able to coalesce under the meta-concepts of *multiculturalism* and *school choice* at different times, acts that combined, re-prioritized, and re-arranged previously arranged ideas about racial segregation, equality, and the role of the schools that signified a level of commonsense understanding. These two concepts specifically brought together activated constituencies and relationships between disparate groups that represented associations that made sense for people, and also activated changes in following developments. Hattam and Lowndes argue, "Significant political change [...] is achieved through circulation and the taken-for-grantedness of the discursive linkages that follow."[58] Narrative shifts acquire permanence when they re-define the arrangement of conflict presumed to naturally orient political debate.

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[58] Hattam, "Changes beneath Our Feet: Language, Culture and Political Change," 204.

Method and Outline of Chapters

In order to explore the narrative processes of political change, I examined

extensive documentary evidence, newspaper and media accounts, and personal interviews

with school board members and one superintendent. To analyze these texts, I utilized

interpretive methodology in order to investigate the meaning of ideas within their

contextualized histories and explore their movement and use across time by different

actors. In order to gain personal perspective on the history and experience of school

desegregation conflict, I conducted thirteen semi-structured interviews with former

Seattle school board members and one superintendent. In order to provide context,

history, personal perspective, and continuity, I analyzed secondary source accounts of

Seattle's desegregation history. The primary source of evidence came from archival

sources, which included policy documents, school board records, memos, and public and

drafted policy reports or reviews.

In each chapter, I outline national and legal context that serve as partial mirrors

and boundary conditions for the local debates. I also use these to show the importance of

local analysis because the unique changes in Seattle do not necessarily match with

national or legal developments. I then outline the narrative constellations built to address

the terrains of conflict. Following, I examine developments that saw certain actors create

policy out of these various constellations. I discuss the development of discursive

coalitions that came to change policy with newly arranged sets of ideas. I explore the

ways ideas were put together in both the narrative constellations and in the discursive

coalitions that crafted policy, in order to show how re-alignment, prioritization, and

emphases constituted meaning for the policy and the way it shifted the terrains of conflict, and therefore the new narrative constellations and future debates.

In Seattle, desegregation conflicts extending from 1954 to 1991 can be explained as the transposition of certain narrative constellations into policy and the concurrent displacement of conflict based on the arrangement of these ideas illustrated by prioritization, emphasis, and new alignments of actors and ideas. Significant policy change resulted in the displacement of conflict in Seattle and took the form of shifts in emphasis within questions surrounding policy decisions. For instance, the debates of the 1960s (Chapter II) displaced the conflict over whether the schools should address racial separation in the schools, with a new conflict over how the schools would address racial separation. This chapter explores the formulation of debates around questions of what to do about racial separation in a city that doesn't purposefully segregate? Between 1954 and 1971, actors within Seattle created wide ranges of ideas in order to push agendas related to racial equality. By the end of this period, a surprising coalition developed and pursued a policy, called Continuous Progress, that entailed a radical restructuring of the physical and philosophical nature of the public schools, an idea initiated by the Superintendent and approved (though in various increments) by the School Board. The idea challenged the very structure of neighborhood schooling, as the status quo philosophical position about schooling, and the assumption that Seattle, as a liberal city, needed to address racial inequality. While the initiation of Continuous Progress was a far cry from the conflict over whether or not racial segregation even existed in Seattle, the fundamental conflict about the role of the schools was not settled. The decision to

implement this policy, along with the character of its failure, changed the terrains of conflict in Seattle. After 1971, the conflicts over desegregation turned towards a debate over whether or not the policy should be mandatory or voluntary, again a question about the definitive role of the schools.

Chapter III examines the period between 1971 and 1977, which ends with the Board approving the Seattle Plan. The years between 1971 and 1977 saw Seattle actors struggling to deal with the intersection of racial inequality, neighborhood attachments, and imminent court order. In Seattle, the battle over desegregation can be best understood as a struggle within and between three predominant narrative constellations developed by actors to frame a story about racial segregation, the role of the schools, and the contours of legitimate policy. The resulting mandatory desegregation policy, The Seattle Plan, resulted from the coming together of a discursive coalition of actors who were able to draw together and re-arrange the competing narrative constellations under the meta-concept of "multiculturalism." The concept of "multiculturalism" served as a force of discursive realignment that joined previously antithetical actors and their divergent interests. By becoming a point of reference that could re-associate linkages within narrative constellations, this concept proved to realign the relationship between actors as well as their ideas so that those invested in integration could agree upon the same policy as those interested in avoiding a court order. The final debate settled a new set of narrative claims within the Seattle Plan: desegregation was not merely a legal necessity but an educational necessity in an increasingly diverse world; schools had a role in promoting social change important for a multi-racial society; and individual rights could

not trump the need to ameliorate historical discrimination. The combination of these assumptions re-grounded the desegregation debate as it settled the schools' role in addressing "racial imbalance."

The period between 1978 and 1991 (Chapter IV) witnessed the incredible steadfastness of the Seattle Plan along with the rise in discursive power of a narrative constellation that brought together a new set of ideas, held together by the concept of school choice. This resulted from interrelated developments that re-cast the role of the schools, the meaning of racial equality, and subsequently the possibilities for conversation about desegregation. This period begins in 1978 with the implementation of the Seattle Plan and ends with the reconfiguration of the Seattle Plan's unsteady discursive coalition and constitutive narrative constellation with a new arrangement of ideas, held together by a narrative frame oriented around *school choice*. Within these policy actions and interpretations, actors initiated significant change as they re-cast alternatives to school equity with new narrative constellations, that both frayed, cut, amplified, and retained elements of the Seattle Plan's narrative constellation. The implementation battles ended up narrowing the discursive field of debate and the range of competing ideas that actors could reconcile within policy.

The endpoint for the chapter signaled the arrival and power of this new discursive coalition and concurrent re-arrangement of narrative constellations with power over school policy that revolved around school choice. Reflective of this arrival, the Seattle Times reported a few years later, "Today, the overriding issue for Seattle is not

desegregation."[59] The overriding issue was academic achievement, and the means,

through which board policy could accomplish this, while appearing equally invested in

equality of academic achievement, was school choice. After this period, the Board took

steps to eliminate busing with "surprisingly non-confrontational" votes, according to

former school board member Don Nielson.[60] In 1991, the Board voted unanimously to

eliminate mandatory busing within the next five years. The District moved towards this

goal "with remarkably little comment from city residents and civil-rights groups," a lack

of resistance that surprised many Board members and administrators.[61]

School choice and its narrative partner, academic excellence, gained prominence

by the end of this period as the vocabulary through which equity would be interpreted,

performed, and measured within the public schools. The discourse of choice displaced the

previously dominant discourse of multiculturalism by replacing its frame of questions,

alternatives, and debates with new accepted points of reference. This discursive coalition

that convened under the idea of school choice provided the legitimacy necessary to begin

the process of dismantling desegregation policies because it articulated a relationship

between the role of the schools and the individual in ways that made *choice* more

commonsense than *integration*.

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[59] "Choice, not busing, for Seattle's schools," *Seattle Times,* 25 September 1996, B4.

[60] Don Nielson, interview with author, Seattle, Wash., 25 July 2007.

[61] "Little response to desegregation plan- school board's hearing draws only seven speakers," *Seattle Times* 7 May 1992, E1; "Busing's end means choice will begin," *Seattle Times,* 16 April 1992, A8.

CHAPTER II

RACIAL SEGREGATION AND THE PUBLIC SCHOOLS, 1954-1972

This chapter explores the construction and interaction of interpretations of racial segregation between 1954 and 1972 in order to analyze the way actors in Seattle temporarily settled a specific arrangement of ideas about how to meet the needs of racial equality after *Brown v. Board of Education* and the Civil Rights Act (1964). In these early struggles, invested actors in Seattle generated a spectrum of political commitments concerning racial segregation in the schools that interacted to define what racial segregation meant in Seattle and how school district actors should respond. Between 1954 and 1972, national and local arenas struggled with the meaning of central concepts in the desegregation debates: segregation, racial inequality, racial equality, individual rights, neighborhood schools, and the role of the schools. With the decision in *Brown v. Board of Education,* Seattle actors slowly began to directly address the racial situation of their neighborhoods, employment opportunities, and public schools, and interpreted the event of racial segregation in multiple and competing ways. The public schools served as a particularly potent source of racial tension, as they were the public institution without an overt history of racial discrimination.

In a period when no answer readily trumped another to solve the various problems of racial segregation in the public schools, actors developed sets of ideas, or narrative

constellations, to work through these questions and react to others' processes of interpretation and meaning-making. The constructed narrative constellations became the language through which Seattle actors conversed about boundaries between public action to rectify racial disparities and preserving individual rights symbolized by the neighborhood school student assignment that re-enacted segregated housing patterns. Though both the interpretation of problems as well as solutions were highly contested in this period, the constellations remained tied together in conversation over three central questions that comprised the central interpretive terrain of conflict. What is "segregation," that is, how to describe racially divided schools when the division was not legally mandated? What is "public" when it comes to racial disparities? How do actors negotiate the intersection of private individual rights and public's role in ensuring racial equity?

The resulting debates did not reveal a dualistic power struggle between competing interests, but a dynamic process where actors attempted to meet policy and public needs by generating and combining ideas in ways that were not previously defined by competing interests. Eventually, a coalition formed between a central civil rights group and the school district, which attempted to implement a school integration policy. This discursive coalition, drawn together by the debate between integration and black power, brought multiple interpretations of racial segregation to bear on policy action. However, they held the social construct of integration in common enough to join and form a specific integration policy to desegregate middle schools.

The resulting policy reflected a new understanding of the role of the schools and what racial imbalance meant in Seattle, which denied the problem of racial school segregation until 1964. After a decade of struggle, the District attempted to implement an integration plan that included mandatory busing between 1968 and 1970, which was delayed by court injunction until 1972. In the face of court delay initiated by a powerful grassroots anti-busing group, the District voted to further delay the mandatory aspects of the plan and initiated a weakly-implemented, voluntary racial transfer policy in 1972. On the surface, this period ended with basically the same institutional policy stance as it did in 1964, when the District first implemented a voluntary racial transfer program. Nevertheless, the institutional story cannot elaborate the meaning for this historical moment. The new policy expressed a different meaning for racial segregation in Seattle.

This chapter begins with an exploration of the national and legal context that served as both boundaries for Seattle politics and also show the national character of these unsettled debates. Next, the chapter explores the initial city establishment and civil rights reactions to *Brown* and the following narrative constellations these actors established to address the meaning of racial segregation in Seattle and the role of the public schools. As actors struggled within developing civil rights conflicts, they responded to one another's narrative constellations. Certain actors found ways to disrupt narrative connections that provided space for new ways to orient the central concepts of debate. Following, I describe the discursive coalition that combined competing narrative constellations and how institutional actors challenged, re-combined, and added ideas

from the multiple competing narratives in response to political needs and to concurrent narrative development.

Overall, this chapter will explore the changes in meaning expressed within new discursive political claims as they became temporarily validated in policy. First, *de facto segregation existed in Seattle.* Second, *integration was a valuable goal that the school district should pursue because it encouraged equity and mutual respect, but not a necessary role.* This distinction leads to the third new claim; *the most important organizing factor for student assignment remained the neighborhood as a traditional community stronghold.* That is, the neighborhood represented community values, a social network, and a necessary element of a child's rearing, but not necessarily a physical location or an entrenched site of inalienable rights. The end of the chapter explores the concurrent failure of a mandatory integration policy and a new character of interpretations of the political terrain, which shifted the grounds for debates after 1972.

National and Legal Context

As Seattleites wrestled with the idea of segregation in their own schools, they were influenced by how specific ideas were linked together at the national level to create specific claims about racial segregation caused by housing patterns. For northern, or northwestern, school districts, the national debate over *Brown* was marked by ambiguities in terms of the State's reach.[1] Seattle actors had not yet determined whether or not the kind of segregation that existed in Seattle was actually implicated by *Brown* or the Civil

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[1] Ronald P. Formisano, *Boston against Busing: Race, Class, and Ethnicity in the 1960s and 1970s* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1991).

Rights Act of 1964. However, when Seattle understood that their segregation was indeed legally culpable under *Brown,* the major questions addressed at the national level developed towards an undetermined institutional space for the amelioration of segregation.

Anti-Discrimination and The Courts

The Supreme Court began to deal with questions about *de facto* segregated schools in terms of "what harms could the Court legitimately have considered in deciding *Brown?*"[2] Courts wrestled with questions of remedy in southern schools, and questions of liability for school districts when segregation occurred under "formally race-neutral assignment policies" in northern schools.[3] The general character of the Courts at this time was ambiguous, but emphasized formal anti-discrimination as well as a notion of color awareness that had potential to expand desegregation justification beyond ameliorating discriminatory intent to benefiting society as a whole.

The Supreme Court did not formally rule on *de facto* segregated schools until 1973, and provided an ambiguous stance on "race-neutral" policies that resulted in school segregation. In an implicit affirmation of a Seventh Circuit Court decision of *Bell v. School Board, City of Gary* (1964) upheld neighborhood-based systems of student assignment when the "racial imbalance" resulted from housing patterns rather than

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[2] Reva B. Siegel, "Equality Talk: Antisubordination and Anticlassification Values in Constitutional Struggles over Brown," *Harvard Law Review* 117 (2003-2004).

[3] Ibid., 1513

official policy.[4] In contrast, when the Court ruled on districts with histories of official

discrimination, as with *Green County* (1968), they ruled freedom of choice plans did not

automatically pass muster given that they did not end patterns of segregation. *Swann v.*

Charlotte-Mecklenberg Board of Education (402 U.S. 1 (1971)) opened the doors to

policies that included busing to ameliorate segregated systems. However, none of these

decisions directly dealt with "northern" or "de facto" districts.[5]

In the early 1960s, federal courts routinely began to uphold the right of state and

local governments to implement race-conscious policies intended to address *de facto*

schools.[6] Siegel describes these actions as a "central cleavage in the law," where federal

courts could not intervene, but could allow state and local governments to step in and

rectify racial imbalance.[7] Therefore, race-conscious state action was permissible at this

time, and even deemed valuable for a "pluralist" society. For example, Chief Justice

Burger's observed in *Swann* that school authorities could include policy "to prepare

students to live in a pluralistic society each school should have a prescribed ratio of

Negro to white students reflecting the proportion for the district as a whole."[8] In

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[4] Doris Pieroth, "Desegregating the Public Schools: Seattle, Washington 1954-1968" (University of Washington, 1968). Also see Joseph Crespino, "The Best Defense Is a Good Offense: The Stennis Amendment and the Fracturing of Liberal School Desegregation Policy, 1964-1972," *The Journal of Policy History* 18, no. 3 (2006).

[5] Gerald N. Rosenberg, *The Hollow Hope: Can Courts Bring About Social Change?* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1991).

[6] Siegel, "Equality Talk: Antisubordination and Anticlassification Values in Constitutional Struggles over Brown," 1514.

[7] Ibid.

[8] Ibid., 1517.

response, white plaintiffs began to argue against race-conscious measures to achieve "racial balance" through the language of colorblindness, or anti-classification.[9] However, the courts denied these arguments, as one judge explained in 1966, "the Constitution is both color blind and color conscious. To avoid conflict with the equal protection clause, a classification that denies a benefit, causes harm, or imposes a burden must not be based on race."[10] Federal courts routinely argued race-conscious efforts to rectify segregation did not violate white parents' right to equal protection.[11] Race-based state action gained a level of legitimacy if used to redress past discrimination.

Federal Institutions

The Civil Rights Act (CRA) of 1964 also provided an ambiguous space for racial equality concerns. Title VI of the CRA authorized the Justice Department to sue school districts out of compliance with court-ordered desegregation orders and gave the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare (HEW) the power to withhold funds for schools excluding students on the basis of race.[12] Following the CRA, Congress also secured federal funding for schools that agreed to eliminate segregation through the

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[9] Ibid., 1519.

[10] Judge Wisdom, in *United States v. Jefferson County Board of Education, 372* F.2d at 876, (5th Cir. 1966).

[11] Siegel, "Equality Talk: Antisubordination and Anticlassification Values in Constitutional Struggles over Brown," Footnote 162, 1517.

[12] Rosenberg, *The Hollow Hope: Can Courts Bring About Social Change?*, 47.

Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) of 1965.[13] The ESEA also provided

funds for school districts with large percentages of low-income students.[14]

As it seemed to represent a solidification of a liberal school desegregation policy,

the national debate over what to do with *de facto* schools was far from solved.[15] Despite

ambiguous enforcement, the CRA proved to ameliorate racial isolation in the South

considerably.[16] The CRA also included language that limited its reach in correcting

"racial imbalance," meaning *de facto* segregated districts.[17] The Senate limited the

CRA's reach to districts where racial imbalances resulted from housing patterns and its

enforcement philosophy in the distinction made between *de jure* and "racially

imbalanced" districts.[18] Robert C. Lieberman (2002) argues that CRA "adopted an

explicitly color-blind approach to prohibiting racial discrimination."[19] By focusing on

individual anti-discrimination, Lieberman argues that the act therefore refused to, but did

not "lock-in" an approach to discrimination through a race- or group-conscious approach,

which determined specifically limited enforcement mechanisms.

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[13] Charles T. Clotfelter, *After Brown: The Rise and Retreat of School Desegregation* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2004).

[14] Rosenberg, *The Hollow Hope: Can Courts Bring About Social Change?*, 47.

[15] Crespino, "The Best Defense Is a Good Offense: The Stennis Amendment and the Fracturing of Liberal School Desegregation Policy, 1964-1972."

[16] Jennifer L. Hochschild, *The New American Dilemma: Liberal Democracy and School Desegregation* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1984).

[17] Crespino, "The Best Defense Is a Good Offense: The Stennis Amendment and the Fracturing of Liberal School Desegregation Policy, 1964-1972," 305.

[18] Ibid., 309.

[19] Robert C. Lieberman, "Ideas, Institutions, and Political Order: Explaining Political Change," *American Political Science Review* 96, no. 4 (2002).

These national and legal developments specifically and ambiguously defined the role of state institutions concerning desegregation in legal and national institutions. Legally, school districts were only responsible for desegregation when they had actively discriminated. Legal developments revealed a space for race-conscious ameliorative sentiments that extended to de facto segregated schooling patterns.

Constructing Narrative Constellations

The post-war era in Seattle saw a large rise in the minority population and a tentative confrontation with the growing problem of "racial separation." Though the City of Seattle had a history of interest in equal opportunity and minority issue awareness, Seattle handled these issues much the same as many northern *de facto* school districts around the nation, by denying that racial segregation existed and foregoing responsibility by blaming housing patterns.[20] This institutional position represented a discursive and institutional disjuncture and served to allow for a wide range of ideas to confront long-held values within the public schools. Actors in Seattle began to answer the questions of the meaning of racial separation and *Brown* for Seattle, and a northwestern *de facto* district's role in addressing racial separation.

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[20] Seattle had been publicly committed to equal education since 1889, when the Territorial Legislature passed the "Enabling Act," which stated, "It is the paramount duty of the state to make ample provision for the education of all children residing in its borders, without distinction or preference on account of race, color, caste or sex." (Quintard Taylor, *The Forging of a Black Community: Seattle's Central District from 1870 through the Civil Rights Era* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1994).

After World War II, the black population in the Western states grew by 443,000, or thirty-three percent.[21] In Seattle, the black population grew by 413 percent between 1940 and 1950. In the expanding defense industry, post-war worker shortages as well as President Roosevelt's 1941 Executive Order 8802 (prohibiting employment discrimination in firms with government contracts) opened many previously closed workplaces to African Americans.[22] Black families generally settled in the city's neighborhood referred to as the Central District or Central Area, which was a largely segregated community by the 1950s.[23] The schools began to reflect these segregated communities.

Though Seattle was the only major city in the Pacific Northwest that did not segregate blacks in public housing projects, racially restrictive covenants became commonplace after 1926 in Seattle.[24] Despite the 1948 Supreme Court ruling against racial restrictions in *Shelley v. Kramer*, these restrictive deeds were legal (though unenforceable) in Seattle until 1968. In hundreds of neighborhoods and subdivisions, racially restricted covenants denied property by restricting the neighborhood to only "whites" or "caucasians," or by specifically prohibiting specific racial, ethnic, or religious

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[21] Quintard Taylor, *In Search of a Racial Frontier: African Americans in the American West, 1528-1990* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1998).

[22] Taylor, *The Forging of a Black Community: Seattle's Central District from 1870 through the Civil Rights Era.*

[23] Mindy Cameron, "Building for Learning: How Seattle Is Reinventing Its Public Schools," (Seattle: Alliance for Education, 1999).

[24] This is when the Supreme Court validated their use (Taylor, *The Forging of a Black Community: Seattle's Central District from 1870 through the Civil Rights Era.*, 179).

groups.[25] The Lake Washington Ship Canal became the "*de facto* racial dividing line" that basically divided Seattle into a northern (white) section and larger southern section that represented a highly segregated, primarily African American, "central district" surrounded by majority white neighborhoods.[26] In 1950, Seattle blacks lived within ten (out of 118) census tracks in the Central District. By 1960, as the black population increased by 11,000, 78 percent now lived in these same ten tracks. Figure 2 demonstrates the extent to which African Americans were isolated in the Central District, or Central Area, in 1960.

Racial Tension and Racial Separation

Seattle projected a self-image of racial progressivism, as a city that took pride in meeting the needs of a diverse and growing population without legally having to do so. As early as 1938, a committee of teachers working with the Urban League developed a bibliography of materials on race relations. In December 1944, a group called Seattle Civic Unity Committee (Civic Unity) was formed from a cross-section of city actors interested in addressing racial issues in Seattle, and endorsed a voluntary exchange program between high schools, to promote greater racial understanding. The district

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[25] *The Seattle Civil Rights and Labor History Project*, "Racial Restrictive Covenants," available from http://depts.washington.edu/civilr/segregated.htm; accessed 8 September 2008.

[26] *HistoryLink.org.* "Essay 3939: Busing: A Well-Intentioned Failure," available from http://www.historylink.org/index.cfm?DisplayPage=output.cfm&File_Id=3939; accessed 12 September 2008.

assured the public that they made "every effort to assure absolutely equal educational
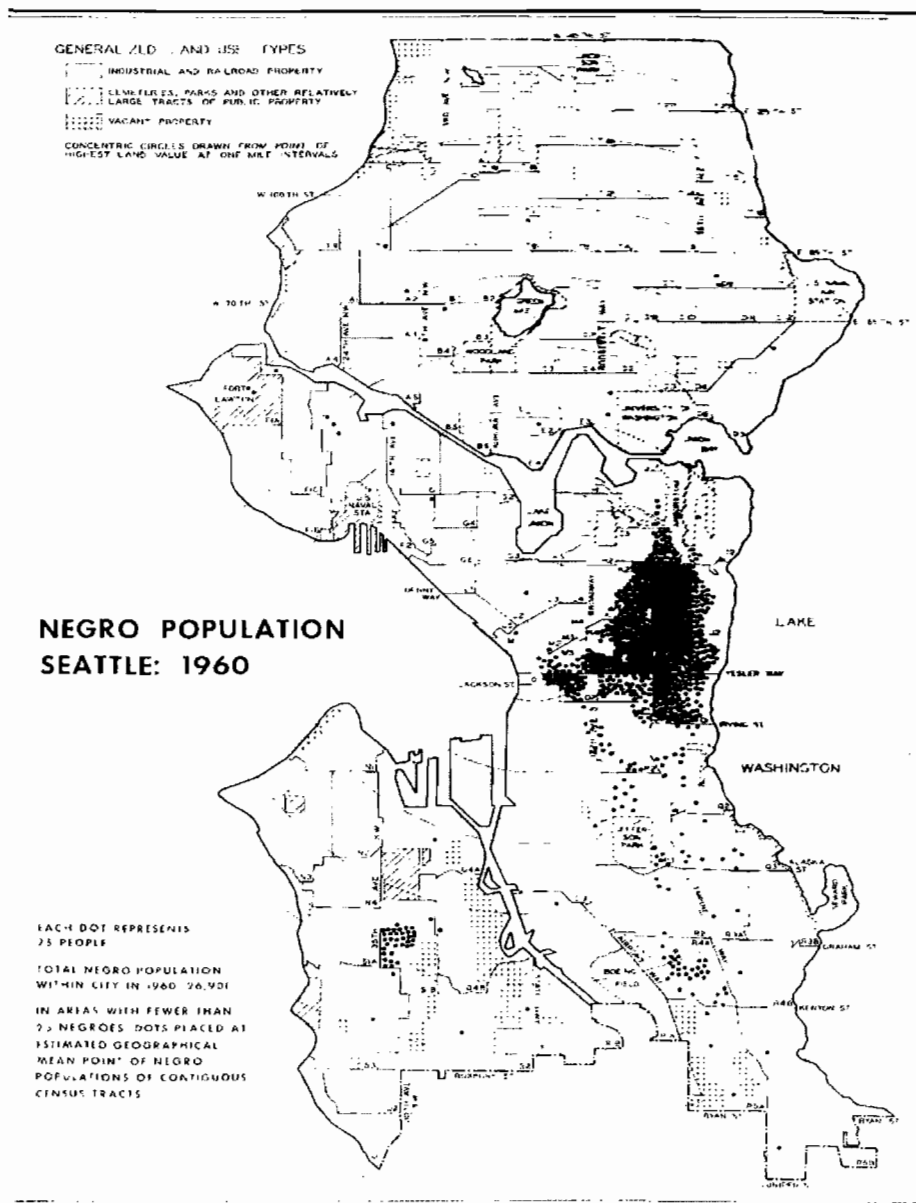
opportunities for all races and creeds."[27]

Figure 2. "Negro Population in Seattle: 1960." Obtained from The Seattle Civil Rights and Labor History Project available from http://depts.washington.edu/civilr/segregated.htm; accessed 8 September 2008.

[27] Pieroth, "Desegregating the Public Schools: Seattle, Washington 1954-1968".

In contrast, between the initiation of *Brown* and 1963, the city establishment disconnected education and social change by denying responsibility for school segregation, claiming the schools were not *de jure* segregated; if anything, housing was to blame. The Seattle city establishment included the School District, Mayor's office, Chamber of Commerce, and two daily newspapers. At the Board meeting immediately following the *Brown* decision, board members did not mention the case or desegregation.[28] When the Board did discuss *Brown,* they argued that despite Seattle's heavy concentration of African-American students in six elementary schools and three secondary schools, segregation defined in *Brown* did not implicate Seattle because there it was not *legally mandated* separation and therefore irrelevant.[29] As Board Member Dr. Edward Palmason reasoned about the Board's position at this time, "the Brown decision was a race decision - not necessarily an education decision and that it dealt with segregation by law and it didn't affect us […] our segregation was caused by housing patterns and we're not guilty."[30] Dr. Palmason demonstrated an initial distinction between the role of the public schools in racial matters and the role of the schools in educational matters, by separating the meanings of "race" and "education." Around the

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[28] Seattle School District Record No. 51, Fiscal Year 1954-1955, pg 155, Archives and Records Management Center for the Seattle School District No. 1(hereafter and for succeeding Records with appropriate number: Record 51 (SSR)).

[29] Though private real estate companies overtly discriminated, the city establishment stated publicly that Seattle did not discriminate.

[30] Dr. Palmason quoted in Pieroth, "Desegregating the Public Schools: Seattle, Washington 1954-1968".

nation, this is how *de facto* segregated schools handled the *Brown* decision.[31] Outside of

the South, the primary (but not only) institutional cause of school segregation was

housing segregation.

While the District denied responsibility for any "race" problem in Seattle,

inequality in schooling in the segregated neighborhoods and a palpable rise in racial

tensions prevailed. By the 1960s, it became increasingly more difficult to mask the fact

that schools in the Central and South areas were unequal. They had overcrowded

facilities, lower achievement rates among minorities, less parental involvement, racially

insensitive in teachers and administrators, inadequate or improper teaching techniques,

and inequality in minority hiring.[32] Despite the evidence, the District continually denied

these problems were racial problems. If there were any problems associated with race

within the schools themselves, institutional actors often defined it as a "social" or

"cultural" problem for the community to address. For example, the City of Seattle

Planning Commission and Seattle School District commissioned a report in 1962, "A

Guide for School Planning." The broad objective was comprehensive planning to decide

where to place new schools by assessing the quality of current schools according to

certain criteria.[33] While the report addressed traffic features, playfields and major arterial

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[31] The courts did not use the term *de facto* until *Swann v. Charlotte-Mecklenberg Board of Education* (1971), but I utilize this term to describe Seattle's situation as schools separated by race by practice because district actors began to use the term prior to *Swann* (see following section).

[32] Taylor, *The Forging of a Black Community: Seattle's Central District from 1870 through the Civil Rights Era*.

[33] "A Guide for School Planning: Part II," City of Seattle Planning Commission and Seattle School District Number One, Seattle, 1962, Accession A1998-13, no box, no folder, Litigation Case Files, Archive and Records Management Center for Seattle School District No. 1 (hereafter LCF).

highways, nowhere did the report mention racial segregation in determining a rating of permanent school facilities.[34]

Racial tensions surrounding housing, employment, and education issues began to grow in response to these unequal developments and the to advent of civil rights activity. In the early 1960s, multiple city groups began to formulate ways to address the growing racial tensions in Seattle and pursue agendas through the Seattle School Board. For example, the Municipal League resolved that the school board should "adopt a policy of promoting a more balanced racial representation in all the elementary and secondary schools."[35] Civic Unity formulated an early acknowledgment of racial tension that included the first kernel of policy that included the schools' role in racial integration.

The District continued to interpret their role in segregation by blaming housing and naturalized racial problems as something out of the realm of the schools. It was Board policy "...not to initiate or promote ordinances and legislation on matters not primarily the responsibility of the public schools."[36] The district rejected early calls for busing students to different schools because there was "little sense in transporting pupils to so-called advantaged schools only to return them daily to the same deprived environment."[37] This rejection silently defined the "deprived environment" of black

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[34] The rating system included points for teaching stations and circulation, central facilities, service and sanitary, size, location, and improvements. On a 200-point scale and out of 109 schools, 25 schools scored over 180 points and 12 schools scored below 100 points (with a low of 62). Nowhere did it mention that these 12 schools represented racially segregated neighborhoods. Ibid., p. 35.

[35] Municipal League, *"Minutes,"* 1961, quoted in Pieroth, "Desegregating the Public Schools: Seattle, Washington 1954-1968".

[36] Ibid., 103.

[37] Ibid., 88.

students as not only an inappropriate realm for the public schools' attention, but as a social location that could not be helped.

With a push from Civic Unity, the District tentatively pursued compensatory education programs and a voluntary racial student exchange. Compensatory education programs addressed academic deficiencies and allowed the district to directly help disadvantaged children, based on the assumption that these programs sought "to improve the quality of education for the disadvantaged children...often predicated on the assumption that deficiencies in a child's background are the main deterrent to learning."[38] The *Seattle Times* applauded the District for "approaching the issues solely from the standpoint of providing such [disadvantaged] schools with educational tools...not dealing with social, economic, or cultural forces."[39] Furthermore, in 1964, Civic Unity and the Urban League separately pushed the District to agree to a voluntary exchange between Ballard and Garfield High Schools, in any early effort "to promote sportsmanship and mutual respect".[40] This policy move did not challenge the established narrative because it maintained the separation of the schools from social problems by crafting a completely voluntary or suggested policy to appeal to those interested in easing racial tensions and promoting a vision of Seattle as a progressive city.

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[38] U.S. Commission on Civil Rights, *Racial Isolation in the Public Schools*, CCR Clearinghouse Publication No. 7, (Washington D.C., March 1967).

[39] Pieroth, "Desegregating the Public Schools: Seattle, Washington 1954-1968".

[40] Ibid.,70.

Assessing the City Establishment Narrative Constellation

Actors within the school district and city groups crafted a narrative that divided racial segregation into two categories: "segregation" and "racial separation." By narrating segregation as something the school district should confront when it resulted from intentional discrimination, the District defined the event in Seattle as "racial separation," a situation outside the school district's control. The district specifically defined the role of the public schools as education, defined as *academic skills* gained through classroom curriculum and measured by academic performance. This was accomplished by defining school issues in terms of academic categories like curriculum or sub-standard performance and then by packaging the fear of racial tension as solvable by policies addressed to enhance "democratic" behavior and "inter-group relations." For example, the Municipal League "shelved" its interest in desegregation in 1961, investing itself in things like reading and juvenile delinquency.[41]

The school and city actors defined *a* role of the schools as promoting inter-group understanding, easing tensions, and endorsing mutual respect. Thus, the narrative defined public institutions' role as one of easing the public waves of racial tension, without addressing segregated schooling. Therefore, a state institution interested in equal education focused on tools to enhance the education of those students falling behind (through compensatory education programs) because it is not schools' role to make up for a child's "socially" deprived environment.

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[41] Ibid., 137.

In combination, these narrative connections rested on an unsettling contradiction that would haunt the district in upcoming years. The District built the "race" problem upon a fundamental and highly contested assumption that only intentional discrimination was a public problem. Therefore, while housing discrimination was a public problem, the results of housing segregation, as entirely separate from the public schools, then affected the schools' realm and role only in terms of its by-products: lower academic quality and racial tensions. In effect, this public narrative publicly bolstered *and* destabilized the District's attempt to maintain a distinction between social (tension) or economic (housing) problems and the public realm of the schools. The District directly acknowledged and created a space for the district to address racial tensions and problems associated with racial inequality when the effects of these "social" factors caused tension or lower achievement within the public realm of the schools. Therefore, they could publicize a concern with "racial tension," but defer the idea that segregation was a public problem that had dimensions other than merely racial tension.

The Civil Rights Challenge: Desegregation is a Fact

The city establishment's public face of progress did little to please the civil rights groups in town and pressure mounted quickly in the early 1960s.[42] Seattle civil rights

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[42] Quintard Taylor argues that Seattle "proved to be the crucible for '"black and red' coalition politics," with the city's strong traditions of labor radicalism and the more recently organized civil rights groups intersected. These groups decided that organization and direct action was necessary to fight discrimination and segregation in Seattle. As time went on, Quintard Taylor argues, black Seattle was "unquestionably affected by the massive southern civil disobedience campaigns in the early 1960s." By 1963, the established civil rights organizations began to seek more formal and regular contact with the District to confront the problems of de facto segregation. Civil rights leaders in Seattle formed the Central Area Civil Rights Committee (CACRC).

activist Reverend John Adams recalled, "'by 1963 the Civil Rights Movement had finally leaped the Cascade Mountains.'"[43] Civil rights groups, unified under the Central Area Civil Rights Committee (CACRC), began to challenge the multi-layered system of segregated education, employment, and housing. "Normal" school issues like what to do with old buildings, for example, turned into debates about racial segregation and became spaces through which political identifications and meanings were built. As the civil rights interests in town heightened their local activism, they specifically articulated their definition of the segregation problem in response to the city establishment's lack of action and narrative separation of schools from economic or social discrimination.

The formation of the CACRC resulted from the first organized protests in Seattle.[44] Reverend Mance Jackson of Mt. Zion Baptist Church initially convened the CACRC in 1962 to address job discrimination. *The Oregonian* reported that the CACRC was unique on the West coast for creating such a unified front.[45] John Adams became the leader of CACRC after Reverend Jackson was transferred to Atlanta shortly after it convened. Adams was considered "the most persistent and forceful of the civil rights leaders who came before the school board in the early sixties."[46] Under Adams, the CACRC became a "'consolidated front and got the ball rolling'" on desegregation by

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[43] John Adams, quoted in Quintard Taylor, "The Civil Rights Movement in Seattle, 1960-1970," All-Student Assembly for the Martin Luther King Holiday Observance, Lakeside School, Seattle, Washington, January, 2003.

[44] Larry S. Richardson, "Civil Rights in Seattle: A Rhetorical Analysis of a Social Movement" (Washington State University, 1975).

[45] Ibid., 96

[46] Pieroth, "Desegregating the Public Schools: Seattle, Washington 1954-1968".

linking Seattle civil rights groups.[47] Alongside CACRC, the local chapter of the

Congress on Racial Equality (CORE) also became a prominent organizing force, led by

two individuals, Walter Hundley and Jean Adams. Hundley would later join Adams as

leader in the CACRC.[48] While guided by direction from the national chapter, CORE

provided a prominent organizing force for civil rights demands and basically initiated the

thrust of CORE's national campaign to integrate retail establishments in Seattle.[49]

Together, these groups utilized demonstrations, picketing, pamphleteering, boycotts,

agitation, and negotiations.

These groups along with the Urban League defined segregation as a fact in Seattle

with every social institution responsible for solving segregation. The Urban League

continued to put greater pressure on the District to first admit that *de facto* segregation

existed in the schools. The Urban League's Education Committee Chairman Leonard

Schroeter commented upon the necessity of admission, acknowledging that the District

had taken steps in the area of "culturally deprived students,"

> However, neither the School Board nor the Administration, as such, have yet
> given recognition to the fact of growing de facto segregation, per se, in the public
> schools in our city. Until this is done, any program designed to meet the problem
> of de facto segregation will be inadequate, simply because the problem must be
> posed or isolated before the problem-solving can be applied and become
> effective.[50]

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[47] John Adams quoted in Richardson, "Civil Rights in Seattle: A Rhetorical Analysis of a Social Movement".

[48] Ibid., 77.

[49] Ibid., 80-81.

[50] Schroeter quoted in Pieroth, "Desegregating the Public Schools: Seattle, Washington 1954-1968".

For Schroeter, symptoms of segregated schooling, such as sub-standard performance, could not be solved without addressing the foundational problem as *de facto* segregation. Compensatory education or vocational training to solve the dropout problem would prove inadequate until the fundamental problem of segregation was solved.[51]

Despite the initial focus on job discrimination and redlining, representatives from the CACRC maintained a close watch on school district activities and attended every school board meeting in 1963.[52] The local chapters of CORE and the NAACP along with clergymen of Seattle organized a demonstration march on June 15, 1963 specifically targeting school and housing segregation. The same groups organized an interracial rally the following week at the Municipal Building to show a unified stance against both housing and school segregation. Prior to significant school segregation debates, the battle over open housing fomented in Seattle in the early 1960s. The district's reliance on housing patterns as the phenomenon to blame for racial separation made the district's response to the open housing debate closely watched.

The School Board faced a problematic hitch when they decided not to publicly endorse an open housing ordinance. In early June 1963, the Urban League pressed the district for a public statement against discrimination in housing because and wanted the district to submit a formal resolution and petition to the Mayor and City Council to implement an ordinance prohibiting discrimination in housing, given their previous

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[51] This view did not represent all civil rights actors in these early debates, as various parent groups in the Central Area initially focused on incorporating more vocational training to rectify the educational deficiencies of black students. However, this difference reconciled initially under a unique unification of civil rights groups in Seattle.

[52] Richardson, "Civil Rights in Seattle: A Rhetorical Analysis of a Social Movement".

acknowledgments that segregation was a housing, not a school, problem. The board responded that they believed "that it should not inject itself at this point into a matter which is the proper concern of other governmental bodies" and did not immediately make a public resolution.[53]

In response to this citywide pressure, the school board called a meeting on June 18, 1963 "'to discuss equal educational opportunity'" in front of a crowd of one hundred and ninety individuals.[54] The civil rights actors used the space to publicly articulate the meaning of racial segregation as harmful to all students in the school, black and white. The Seattle NAACP presented a formal statement extending the logic of segregated schooling beyond the black community, "'Segregated public schools deliberate, de facto, or a combination of both are psychologically and educationally harmful to Negro and white children...While school officials are not responsible for segregated housing, they are responsible for segregated public schools whatever the cause may be.'"[55] The Urban League furthered the narrative by arguing the district must "'remedy this situation which has detrimental effects on both white and non-white students.'"[56] This was a significant narrative move, linking racial segregation to all, not just black, children's well being.[57]

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[53] Ibid. For discussion on the fair housing movement see Richardson, "Civil Rights in Seattle: A Rhetorical Analysis of a Social Movement", Taylor, *The Forging of a Black Community: Seattle's Central District from 1870 through the Civil Rights Era.*

[54] Pieroth, "Desegregating the Public Schools: Seattle, Washington 1954-1968," 108.

[55] NAACP quoted in Ibid., 109.

[56] Ibid., 109.

[57] The NAACP argued that it was the schools' responsibility to provide compensatory education to meet the deficiencies of minority students, and suggested the District redraw "gerrymandered" school zones to integrate all schools.

Assessing the Civil Rights Narrative Constellation

These sentiments show the construction of a narrative of irrelevance between intention and segregation by arguing that the public schools must take affirmative action to end segregated schooling no matter their prior intentions. The civil rights groups, namely the institutionalized bodies like the NAACP and Urban League, often organized these early discursive sentiments around principles constructed as fundamental links. For example, 'segregation *will* have detrimental effects on students,' framed segregation as directly associated with either educational or psychological harm to segregated students. Therefore, desegregation took priority over other courses of action, such as compensatory education or vocational training. Furthermore, by linking segregation to both white and non-white students, this narrative further created a societal necessity for integration, rather than only compensatory education or vocational programs, which target only minority students. Programs addressed at the plight of minority students do not take into account the detrimental effect of segregation for society as a whole.

The Schools Voluntarily "face the race issue"[58]

In response to pressure from the CACRC, the Board admitted the schools were segregated, without any official action. This public response did little to alter their narrative constellation because their recognition of *de facto* segregation was not connected to a role for the schools in its amelioration. This led to increased resistance by civil rights groups, including direct actions tactics that increased their visibility

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[58] Pieroth, "Desegregating the Public Schools: Seattle, Washington 1954-1968," 135.

throughout Seattle. In response, the District formed an advisory committee that led the formation of a voluntary racial transfer policy.

After much debate at the June 18, 1963 meeting, which included a decision whether or not to back an open housing ordinance, the Board officially recognized "gross racial imbalance" in certain Central Area schools, and that "discrimination in housing is a major cause of these situations of racial imbalance."[59] The Board also officially recognized that *de facto* segregation *did* in fact exist in their schools. Board Member Frances Owen qualified the admission, "'we must be careful to differentiate between legislative segregation and *de facto* segregation. De facto segregation has been a matter over which we have had no control.'"[60] The *Seattle Times* reported that this was the first official recognition of *de facto* segregation in the schools and the first time a governmental body had produced a public airing of grievances. These statements came with the continued resistance by the Board to broach specific plans or initiate solutions to these problems.

The CACRC began threatening "direct action" that included school "study-ins," and School Board "sit-ins." In response to these heightened demonstrations, the decided to establish the Citizens' Advisory Committee for Equal Educational Opportunity (CAC) in July that would report directly to the Board "to work with it on the problems of equal educational opportunities, with particular reference to the Central Area, and to review the

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[59] Ibid.,110.

[60] Ibid., 110.

many diverse recommendations calling for specific actions."[61] The Board gave the CAC

free rein to take initiative in framing potential programs of action.[62] The CAC delivered

their first report to a crowd of 300 people during a two-hour meeting on July 25, 1963.

The CAC did not hide their intentions, even in front of a crowd reported to be majority

white. They had found ten schools segregated with enrollments of at least forty percent

black students, and presented a resolution asking the Board to "'adopt a policy of ending

segregation immediately by whatever workable solutions are available.'"[63] After

recommending thirteen general policy changes, including student transfer, neighborhood

realignment, boundary changes, pre-vocational education, and a full-time interracial

coordinator, the CAC officially presented the idea of voluntary transfers in a special order

of business meeting in August 1963.[64]

The School Board approved the Voluntary Racial Transfer (VRT) plan at a

meeting held on August 28, 1963. The form of their approval reinforced their narrative

links between the role of the schools and racial equality. For example, the Board

implemented the VRT in order to lessen "racial imbalance" and provide "the opportunity

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[61] CAC quoted in Ibid., 117. This committee represented a marked change in normal school district politics with the institutional incorporation of a citizen body through which policy could be developed. This set a trend for citizen advisory committees to have direct involvement with the school district that would continue throughout desegregation battles for the next two decades.

[62] Ibid., 120-122. The CAC sub-committees studied methods of changing the enrollment patterns at neighborhood schools to achieve integration, the feasibility of transporting students out of their neighborhood schools, and re-drawing attendance boundaries to prevent segregation.

[63] CAC quoted in Ibid., 123.

[64] Ibid., 124.

for students to have the benefit of knowing members of other races."[65] The VRT was basically an open-enrollment plan that allowed junior high and high school students to transfer to other schools for any of three stated reasons and allowed elementary students in certain areas to transfer to other designated areas for stated reasons as well.[66]

Most city groups approved of the VRT, including the Municipal League, the Urban League, and the CACRC. There was no immediate organized opposition among citizens or parents, though the public received the VRT with varying degrees of enthusiasm. Most likely a reason for approval among such a diverse array of groups and people was the fact the VRT allowed the district to "adhere to the neighborhood school concept" and put no demands on any parents to send their children to another school.[67] In the end, the Board did not necessarily act "as a pace-setter for reform," by maintaining a separation from segregation's cause. District policy changes were constructed to aid the *social* benefits of desegregation, without assigning a definitive role of the schools as ameliorating segregation. This embedded the assumption that without discriminatory intent, racial "problems" were merely social, cultural, or economic problems. Therefore, despite admittance of *de facto* segregation, the District did not take on the role to solve anything but its symptoms.

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[65] Ibid., 132.

[66] Through this policy, the voluntary transfers were permitted from designated "leaving schools" based on space available at "receiving schools." At the elementary level, there were eight "leaving schools," and seventeen "receiving schools" with space available. At the secondary level, students could transfer for three reasons: "to enroll in the pre-vocational courses previously announced;" "to take advantage of specialized programs not available in his home school;""if the transfer will reduce the racial imbalance in the school he leaves and in the school to which he transfers to, if the school which he wishes to go has room for additional students." Ibid, Richardson, "Civil Rights in Seattle: A Rhetorical Analysis of a Social Movement".

[67] Pieroth, "Desegregating the Public Schools: Seattle, Washington 1954-1968," 132.

In a special order of business, Board member Owen took time to reaffirm the

district's faith in neighborhood schools, even with their desire to promote racial

understanding: "'The School Board wishes to emphasize that no parents—Negro or

white—will be required by this policy change to send their children to any schools

outside their regular attendance area.'"[68] The *Seattle Times* also emphasized its support

of "the neighborhood school concept as fundamental to American education."[69] In the

spring of 1964, the *Times* also "hailed" the U.S. Supreme Court's refusal to review a

lower court ruling on racial imbalance, caused by "'factors outside the province of

education'" as a "'victory for the usual concept of the neighborhood school.'"[70]

In response, groups in the Central Area actively promoted the VRT in the short

time period before school was to start on September 4, 1963 through a variety of

neighborhood meetings to explain and publicize the transfer program. The NAACP

launched a transportation fund raising drive along with a campaign to raise awareness.[71]

Civil rights groups were pleased that the district admitted to segregation, but were

unsatisfied with the lack of "teeth" involved in the VRT. For one, the policy enacted a

unique burden on black students. The Northwest Area President of the NAACP in 1964,

Jack Tanner, called the transfer policy "'terrible'" and said, "'it has shifted the burden

[68] Record 60, p. 59 (SSR) (Underline in original).

[69] Pieroth, "Desegregating the Public Schools: Seattle, Washington 1954-1968".

[70] *Seattle Times,* February 4, 1964 p. 8 quoted in Ibid., 164.

[71] Despite the late-summer school board decision, 238 of the city's 7,000 black students participated, along with seven white students who transferred to Garfield High because of its academic reputation. (Richardson, "Civil Rights in Seattle: A Rhetorical Analysis of a Social Movement".; Taylor, *The Forging of a Black Community: Seattle's Central District from 1870 through the Civil Rights Era.*)

from the School Board to the parents of Negro children, who are not equipped to cope with the problem.'"[72] Most were often too poor to pay for the discounted bus tokens, plus "'so many of the open schools are so far from the Negro residences that attending them is next to impossible.'"[73] John Adams articulated this burden, "'if the school district intends to provide actual, rather than token educational equality for all students, I believe it is obligated to pay for transporting some students away from racially imbalanced schools.'"[74]

Neighborhood Rights Challenge

As a side note, but one that helps explain the broader significance of the narrative of neighborhood schools, the initiation of the VRT happened at the same time as the approval Seattle's first open housing ordinance. This new law made discrimination in public or private housing a misdemeanor punishable by a fine. Immediately after, open housing opponents initiated a successful petition campaign to place the measure on the ballot for the March 10, 1964 citywide election, upon which they rejected the ordinance 112,000 to 53,000.[75] Much like opposition to changes in school attendance policy that did not adhere to neighborhood zones, white homeowners framed the open-housing

[72] Pieroth, "Desegregating the Public Schools: Seattle, Washington 1954-1968".

[73] Adams, quoted in Richardson, "Civil Rights in Seattle: A Rhetorical Analysis of a Social Movement," 97.

[74] Ibid.

[75] Quintard Taylor, "The Civil Rights Movement in Seattle, 1960-1970," All-Student Assembly for the Martin Luther King Holiday Observance, Lakeside School, Seattle, Wa, 7 January 2003.

ordinance as threatening to their individual rights. In the weekly *Argus,* reporter Philip

Bailey editorialized,

> 'In America for the first time in history…almost every man can own his own
> home…Suddenly these homeowners are asked to surrender part of this gain that
> has been centuries in the making for something called open housing…For this
> surrender the voter gains nothing but the feeling that he may be helping oppressed
> negroes. The homeowner today is not willing to weaken his right to privacy and
> freedom of choice FOR NEGROES.'[76]

In this narrative, home owning was naturalized as an individual right in opposition to

rights of others, namely black citizens, to choose their own home.

The relationship the majority of Seattle's white citizens had to their property was

equivalent to the relationship to the neighborhood schools. Both were symbols of rights

guaranteed to them because they believed they, individually, did not actively

discriminate. Suleiman Osman argues that this non-ideologically based discourse

developed in response to New Deal liberalism; "the neighborhood reflected a new spirit

of localism that was neither exclusively Left nor Right."[77] This was not a necessary but a

generated connection, forged within debates over housing and school segregation.

Especially in Seattle, where the notion of intentional discrimination had not yet been

accepted, white oppositional narrative held tightly to rights associated with home owning

while also orienting neighborhood as a "safe enclave" or symbol of community values.

The narrative that arose within white oppositional discourse combined the notion

of "traditional neighborhoods" with attachments to rights in opposition to the loss of

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[76] Bailey, quoted in Quintard Taylor, "The Civil Rights Movement in Seattle, 1960-1970," All-Student
Assembly for the Martin Luther King Holiday Observance, Lakeside School, Seattle, Wa., 7 January 2003.

[77] Suleiman Osman, "The Decade of the Neighborhood," in *Rightward Bound: Making America
Conservative in the 1970s*, ed. Bruce J. Schulman and Julien E. Zelizer (Cambridge: Harvard University
Press, 2008).

rights symbolized by open housing or desegregation. In this way, the notion of "neighborhood school" was implicitly racialized because its increased use in oppositional narrative reflected an awareness and attachment to privilege embedded within the segregated institutions of housing and schooling. Again, these attachments did not arise from natural predispositions, but were created and used to address a context where these people understood their political identifications founded upon their reactionary positions as homeowners or parents. Simply being a homeowner did not engage the predisposition. For example, many people in Seattle who owned homes in predominantly black neighborhoods also discursively associated their desires for "neighborhoods," yet in terms of community activism, safe havens, and local power. For many in the black power movement, neighborhoods meant local control and community, a space for black citizens to govern their own communities in response to perceptions of outside governance that did not reflect their goals. Likewise, the white parents who volunteered their children for racial transfers also did not understand their identities as "rights-filled homeowners." For white opposition to open housing and desegregation, "neighborhoods" were crafted as oppositional symbols of individual rights that "naturally" rebutted challenges to historical privilege.

Assessing the Interacting Narrative Constellations

The interaction between the developing narrative constellations shows the solidification of distinct interpretations of the role of the schools and the meaning of racial inequality. The alterations in policy did not activate alternative connections the

District made between their role and racial inequality. The District extended little effort

to address the civil rights claims that desegregation was necessary for all society (white

and black), regardless of the District's intentionality. For example, the District had only

sent transfer policy announcement to schools with "substantial Negro enrollment and

[not] to Caucasian schools"[78] and did not mandate transfers for anyone. In the end,

Board member Palmason noted the Board felt the new policy "kind of let us off the hook

a little bit. This was a positive thing that people could accept…[people] felt good inside--

-we were doing something."[79] In an attempt to appeal to civil rights interests, the VRT

program institutionalized an offering, per se, to aid the *social* problem of racial

imbalance, while maintaining institutional distance from strict responsibility through its

voluntary nature.

The District solidified its connection between *de facto* segregation and "racial

separation," thus securing the admission without taking responsibility for the situation.

The endorsement of the open housing ordinance also further secured the admission of *de

facto* racial imbalance as something that further separated the school from other realms

such as economics (housing) in this case. The voluntary transfer policy also put

emphasis on the value, not the necessity, of integration. Otherwise, the district might pay

for transportation or create mandatory transfers. The school district's role was *not* one of

social reform but of addressing educational concerns in the community, potentially

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[78] Pieroth, "Desegregating the Public Schools: Seattle, Washington 1954-1968," 144.

[79] Dr. Palmason quoted in Ibid., 144.

opening access to better educational programs than one would have in their neighborhood school without securing means to get there.

Lastly, by implicitly affirming neighborhood schools the District also defined neighborhoods as private, natural sites of pre-defined rights wholly separate from educational questions. That is, the District maintained its separation from the private, "social" realm of both segregated black and white neighborhoods. According to this narrative, the situation of the home or segregated neighborhood from which a student may come did not require the public schools attention, except to provide appropriate education for all students. However, this act performed different functions for minority and white segregated neighborhoods. The district did not take responsibility for social, cultural, or economic disadvantages in minority segregated neighborhoods, but implicitly validated the social, cultural, and economic advantages situated in white neighborhoods as "private" issues that did not have a connection to schooling. However, the act of admitting to *de facto* segregation opened space for continued civil rights demands to connect this kind of segregation to racial inequality that demanded ameliorating efforts.

Narrative Expansion and Reaction

In the ambiguous space created by the VRT policy, civil rights groups expanded their efforts to exacerbate the issues of school segregation. This section explores the radical school-restructuring plan proposed by the Seattle Urban League ("The Triad Plan," 1965) and subsequent development of reactionary narrative constellations expressed within both grassroots black and white community. The Urban League

fundamentally challenged school board policies such as compensatory education and voluntary transfers with the Triad Plan with an entirely new vision for the schools centered on the necessity of racial integration. The Triad Plan was met with fierce grassroots white opposition, District rejection, and a subsequent increase in civil rights activity, which included a rise in black power activity. The combination of these interactions revealed irresolvable tensions within the District's narrative constellation that allowed for re-connections between previously linked ideas about the schools role and racial integration. The District attempted to secure its voluntary policy by sustaining their narrative links, but the subsequent interactions signaled the collapse of the legitimacy of their specific narrative constellation to define the role of the schools in racial segregation.

Challenging the Establishment Narrative: The Triad Plan

In contrast with the relatively quiet public response to the VRT, the Urban League lit a political fire with their proposal in 1965, titled "The Triad Plan," or "A Proposal for Re-Organization of the Elementary Division of the Seattle Public Schools." Pieroth argues that this proposal "succeeded in jarring the city from complacency and in evoking greater public opposition and outcry than any other issue with which the District had yet be involved."[80] The Triad Plan brought the issues of compensatory education, voluntary integration, and the neighborhood school into clear focus and demanded the district's immediate role in social change. The policy idea challenged the entire structure of

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[80] Ibid.,193.

schooling that they saw as constitutive of a segregated system.[81] The new battle over the proposal activated a furor over the destruction of the "neighborhood school."

The Triad Plan developed a direct critique and remediation of the neighborhood school concept, arguing, "we must take a long, hard look at our traditional, neighborhood concept of elementary education and be prepared to make any fundamental structural changes found necessary."[82] Maybe the most fundamental aspect of the Triad Plan was a new way to think about the geography of schooling, specifically the neighborhood basis of student assignment. In order to challenge the naturalization of neighborhood, the Triad Plan referred to the Central Area neighborhood in a way to re-envision the idea of "neighborhood" as an "enclave of poverty," evoking the idea that a neighborhood is not a naturally valuable entity.[83] The Triad Plan broadened the idea of what a neighborhood school should look like by re-organizing schools to ensure racial integration.[84]

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[81] The plan gained the support of the black community as well as the Asian community (Ann LeGrelius Siqueland, *Without a Court Order: The Desegregation of Seattle's Schools* (Seattle: Madrona Publishers, 1981).

[82] The Seattle Urban League, "A Proposal for Re-Organization of the Elementary Division of the Seattle Public Schools: To Promote: Quality, Economy, Equality" Autumn, 1964, pp. 3-5, Accession A2005-15, Box 10, Folder "Desegregation- Urban League," Administrative Working Files, Archive and Records Management Center for Seattle School District No. 1 (hereafter cited as AWF.)

[83] Ibid., 6.

[84] Each triad organized schools into a "community elementary unit," comprised of three schools. Each triad included a presently economically disadvantaged school, one in the middle, and one very advantaged. The three schools would house different grade levels: one for first and second graders, one for third and fourth graders, and one for fifth and sixth graders. The entire group would travel together into a larger educational park, which assured a level of integration traditional neighborhood enclaves could not. (Ibid,, 37.)

The "Triad Plan" linked urban social problems to education problems in a "'simultaneous attack on cultural deprivation and social segregation...'"[85] In this narrative, social change was primarily and essentially linked to the role of the schools. The president of the Urban League James Kimbrough argued, "obviously, *social change is the over-riding purpose of education*...social change always involves some discomfort, some pain, some controversy."[86] In contrast to the separation between public and private issues maintained by the District, the Triad Plan argued, "schools were originally organized and now exist for the very purpose of providing training which is not or cannot be supplied by the home and other institutions of society."[87]

The Triad Plan embodied a collapse of the constructed division between academics, social conditions, and economics. Its underlying philosophy expressed social, economic, and academic goals as one: the purpose of education is " (1) the enrichment of the ongoing life of the student, (2) preparation for adult work and citizenship roles, and (3) promotion of democracy through equalization of opportunity."[88] Therefore, the entire school system *must* play a role in solving social and economic disadvantages because segregation affects *all* parts of society. Equal opportunity results from eradication of racism *and* a commitment to economic opportunity.[89] According to the Triad Plan,

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[85] Pieroth, "Desegregating the Public Schools: Seattle, Washington 1954-1968," 194.

[86] Ibid., 203 (emphasis added).

[87] The Seattle Urban League, "A Proposal for Re-Organization of the Elementary Division of the Seattle Public Schools: To Promote: Quality, Economy, Equality" Autumn, 1964, pp. 3-5, A2005-15, Box 10, Folder "Desegregation- Urban League," (AWF).

[88] Ibid., p.2.

[89] Ibid.

programs that did not fall in line with these principles could not fundamentally alter the situation of unequal schooling. For example, the document berated compensatory education programs for ignoring essential social factors related to poor academic performance and not understanding "the factors of deprivation, discrimination, and discouragement combine to handicap any rule-of-thumb application of education procedures."[90] "All too often," the Triad Plan continues, "proposals for meeting the very special needs of disadvantaged pupils are prematurely disqualified because of... artificial separation of the problem of social segregation and under-achievement..."[91]

Furthermore, the Urban League did not separate economic as private matters either. The designers founded the multi-layered attack on segregation on a socioeconomic approach that incorporated a strategy of student movement that moved entire neighborhoods of students together. The Triad Plan pushed for a concrete vision of opportunity founded upon economic opportunity, again fundamentally linking the economic realm as public. The structure sought to rectify the economic disadvantages assured and sustained through segregated education. Deputy director of the Urban League, Jerome Page, explained, "If you get black people talking about desegregation, it is basically a socioeconomic issue; for whites it is a racial issue. The Triad Plan was built on socioeconomic desegregation."[92] Socioeconomic integration expanded the frontiers of desegregation beyond ameliorating illegal segregation and towards creating equal opportunity structures

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[90] Ibid., 2.

[91] Ibid., 2.

[92] Siqueland, *Without a Court Order: The Desegregation of Seattle's School,* 16.

Grassroots Opposition

The Triad Plan garnered vociferous opposition in comparison with the relatively non-threatening VRT plans. The possibility for the Triad Plan to be adopted was obviously unlikely, given the reticence of the city to accept even the notion that their schools were segregated. Despite this, Pieroth argues the Triad Plan concept led to a "furor, which erupted over the contemplation of creating triads from neighborhood schools."[93] The Triad Plan's new arrangement of "neighborhood" threatened many parents in Seattle. Though the Triad Plan received little press and was never seriously considered by the District, the District received more phone calls after the presentation of this plan than at any other time and 3,497 letters of opposition, which ranged in sentiment from "rational, philosophical, and legalistic to hateful, vitriolic, and racist,"[94]

The first rash of public response tried to re-assert the segmentation of private and public matters in response to the narrative collapse between "social" and "public" hoped for within the Triad Plan. The combination of explicit elitism and specific individual rights narratives attempted to naturalize the distinction between the public and social realms for the benefit of those to which the distinction privileged. The narrative re-emphasized three contingently related ideas. First, the schools' primary role is to provide academic excellence. For example, with "The Triad Plan" one parent argued, "'individual excellence will be vilified.'"[95] Some argued with a level of classist elitism,

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[93] Pieroth, "Desegregating the Public Schools: Seattle, Washington 1954-1968," 195.

[94] Doris Pieroth, "With All Deliberate Caution: School Integration in Seattle, 1954-1968," *Pacific Northwest Quarterly* 73, no. 2 (1982), 54.

[95] Pieroth, "Desegregating the Public Schools: Seattle, Washington 1954-1968," 207.

arguing there was "'little merit in throwing together children from different races and backgrounds…every community and every nation still needs an aristocracy of brains, breeding.'"[96] Second, home and school choice is a parent's right. According to one concerned citizen, the Triad Plan represented a "'direct violation of the traditional right of a parent to choose the school his child will attend.'"[97] When not explicitly elitist, the combination of these two elements allowed the opposition to hide its naturalization of difference by assuming equal opportunity.

But this combination needed a third association in order to jump from individual rights to the assumption of neighborhood schools: neighborhoods are the natural foundations for communities and schools. This assumption disassociated differences in race and economic background from geography and therefore neighborhoods. For example, the PTA expressed concern with the Triad Plan in terms of how it was not educationally relevant, not because they cared if their kids went to school with kids of "'different races or economic backgrounds, but because transferring children out of different neighborhoods would not improve education.'"[98] This speaker disavowed both racism and elitism by separating class and race from the idea of neighborhood, so as to naturalize the neighborhood without pointing to its inherent privileges or resulting inequalities. Home owning was therefore framed as completely separate from race and even class when associated with school attendance because of its traditional association with community schools. The privilege of the home area was translated as a community

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[96] Ibid., 206.

[97] Ibid., 207.

[98] Richardson, "Civil Rights in Seattle: A Rhetorical Analysis of a Social Movement," 161.

value because little children should be going to their community's neighborhood schools. The narrative of economic individualism inherent in home-owning rights needed the school context to associate these rights with the naturalized community benefits of sending kids to neighborhood schools.

"Compulsory, Costly, and Clumsy"

The Board responded to the Triad Plan and public response by emphasizing the "irrationality" of taking on this role, revealing an unsteady link in their narrative connection, as they argued against the plan for reasons of complexity and also fear of citizen rejection. In May 1965, Board President Swain read a unanimous decision to the press that the Triad Plan was unacceptable (followed by applause) with an argument based on the role of the schools as not desegregation; "'desegregation as an end in itself is not an objective of the schools.'"[99] Other board members stated they rejected the proposal because it was too complex, too hard for the public to understand, and was of "unproven educational value that could weaken a good public school program."[100] The *Times* reported that the district should reject the plan because it was "'compulsory, clumsy, and costly.'"[101] The Board also feared the alienation of white voters. Board Member Palmason said, "It just seemed too far-reaching for us at that time...we always

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[99] Pieroth, "Desegregating the Public Schools: Seattle, Washington 1954-1968".

[100] Ibid., 198.

[101] *Seattle Times*, April 18, 1965, quoted in Ibid., 206.

had this incubus of annual levy hanging around our necks."[102] The media implicitly

framed the Triad Plan as "irrational" in comparison to "'rational steps to provide equality

in job opportunities, housing, education—the abolition of barriers that discriminate

against all minorities.'"[103]

The District remained insistent their role was "educational" and not as agents of

social reform, while at the same time assuring the community that their rejection did not

"'close the door' to continued study of other proposals aimed at improving racial

imbalance.'"[104] Board member Campbell noted, "'the elimination of segregated schools

is a goal, as a part of the community's genuine acceptance of integration in its major

aspects, not as a unilateral compulsory regulation of the School Board.'"[105]

The CACRC was quick to respond to the District's noncommittal stance. They

blasted the district for not understanding the long-term consequences for the segregated

areas, or the "'penned up portion of the city.'"[106] The CACRC, like the Urban League,

saw the lynchpin holding the District's narrative together as the naturalization of the

neighborhood schools, or "'the common law marriage of the Seattle Public Schools to the

neighborhood school concept.'"[107] Representatives of CORE and the NAACP released a

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[102] Dr. Palmason, quoted in Pieroth, "With All Deliberate Caution: School Integration in Seattle, 1954-1968," 55.

[103] Pieroth, "Desegregating the Public Schools: Seattle, Washington 1954-1968".Quoted in Pieroth, 216.

[104] Philip Swain quoted in Ibid.,218.

[105] Campbell quoted in Ibid., 202.

[106] Richardson, "Civil Rights in Seattle: A Rhetorical Analysis of a Social Movement," 163.

[107] CACRC quoted in Ibid., 166.

statement to indicate their expectations that the Board accomplish integration. They

wrote, "'On Wednesday [May, 1965], the Seattle School Board in coalition with

community resisters of progress, continued to perpetuate the illusion that all is well in

Seattle...adherence to the neighborhood concept is a façade to maintain segregated

schools.'"[108] The CACRC and civil rights leadership continued to promote racial

transfers, but also expanded their demands to require the mandatory bussing and

increased the number of threats of direct action against the district.[109]

The CACRC called for a school boycott in the spring of 1966 to fight the refusal

of the Board to admit they perpetuated segregation and develop sufficient long-range

plans for desegregation.[110] Seattle leaders were no doubt influenced by the success of the

Chicago school boycott, signaling the beginning of the Chicago Freedom Movement, just

a year before when civil rights leaders led 100,000 African-American students to

participate in a school boycott and violate an injunction filed by the Chicago Board of

Education to prevent the boycott.[111] Alongside the direct action tactics in Seattle, the

NAACP also filed suit against the district and sought a federal court order that required

the district to submit a desegregation plan among other things, such as ending alleged

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[108] Pieroth, "Desegregating the Public Schools: Seattle, Washington 1954-1968," 214.

[109] Ibid, Taylor, *The Forging of a Black Community: Seattle's Central District from 1870 through the Civil Rights Era.*

[110] Richardson, "Civil Rights in Seattle: A Rhetorical Analysis of a Social Movement".

[111] The National Archives- Archives.gov. "Education Resources on School Desegregation," available from http://www.archives.gov/midatlantic/education/desegregation/chicago.html; accessed July 13, 2009.

practices such as gerrymandering school boundaries.[112] The boycott gathered support from local churches, clergy, and the Church Council of Greater Seattle and took place on March 31 and April 1, 1966. Nearly 4,000 students, about 55 percent of the overall black enrollment of the district, participated. These students reported to various "Freedom Schools" set up in the Central District, and attended classes on black history, the meaning of the school boycott, music, crafts, and Native American culture.[113] The boycott proved a strong message of political will and solidarity of the Central Area.

Subsequently, Seattle gained attention from the growing black power movement with a powerful visit from Stokely Carmichael in 1967, the establishment of the Black Panther Party in 1968, and a shift towards black power within the local chapter of CORE.[114] With the increase in black power, the unifying power of the CACRC began to erode in the Central Area.[115] The growing black power movement began to challenge the CACRC's narrative connection between racial equality with integration. As a reflection of the national black power movement, activists in Seattle gained much prominence during 1967. Between November 1967 and December 1972, the *Afro America Journal* was published in Seattle and was considered the "most militant daily newspaper to serve

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[112] Pieroth, "Desegregating the Public Schools: Seattle, Washington 1954-1968", Richardson, "Civil Rights in Seattle: A Rhetorical Analysis of a Social Movement".

[113] Taylor, *The Forging of a Black Community: Seattle's Central District from 1870 through the Civil Rights Era,* 213.

[114] Richardson, "Civil Rights in Seattle: A Rhetorical Analysis of a Social Movement".

[115] Ibid., 239.

the black community."[116] While most perspectives published were local voices, national

contributions included CORE.

Seattle black power groups forged their own segregation attack through a

narrative of separatism. By attaching black power principles to educational issues, actors

such as Stokely Carmichael challenged the very notion of desegregation as the primary

path to educational equity. At his visit to Garfield High School in April 1967,

Carmichael advocated black control of black schools.[117] He attacked the integrationists

represented in the CACRC for destroying the black community, "What must be abolished

is not the black community but the dependent, colonial status forced upon it… White

people assume they can give freedom, but nobody gives freedom."[118] Another local

activist, Lee McIntosh, speaking at a black power forum at Mt. Zion Baptist church in

May, 1967, directly challenged the philosophy of integrated education, "'the issue of the

school boycott last year was integration, moving Negro children out of the black schools

of the central area. It's a new ball game now.'"[119] In the *Afro American Journal*, Cliff

Hooper (an "outspoken member of the [Seattle] black community"[120]), challenged

integration in favor of self-determination, "'the black community MUST make decisions

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[116] Doug Blair, "Black Power and Education in the *Afro American Journal*, 1968-1969," Seattle Civil Rights and Labor History Project, available from http://depts.washington.edu/civilr/news_blair.htm; accessed July 13, 2009.

[117] Richardson, "Civil Rights in Seattle: A Rhetorical Analysis of a Social Movement," 261.

[118] Stokely Carmichael quoted in Quintard Taylor, "The Civil Rights Movement in Seattle, 1960-1970," All-Student Assembly for the Martin Luther King Holiday Observance, Lakeside School, Seattle, Washington, January, 2003, 12.

[119] McInotsh quoted in Richardson, "Civil Rights in Seattle: A Rhetorical Analysis of a Social Movement".

[120] Doug Blair, "Black Power and Education in the *Afro American Journal*, 1968-1969," 3.

in the education of its 11,000 sons and daughters at <u>every</u> <u>level</u>.'"[121]   Armed with a

distrust of the school system that had been ignoring civil rights demands for over a

decade, black power groups solidified support in the Central Area of those desiring

control of their own schools rather than an integration program they felt burdened black

students significantly more than white students.

The Emergence of an Integration Emphasis

In this series of interactions between the civil rights groups and the District, the

District stuck to the narrative constellation of ideas it had used to implement the VRT. In

response to the District's lack of movement, the civil rights groups arranged a narrative

constellation that further implicated the District's role in segregation. The Urban League

defined segregation as a societal problem that caused harm for minority and white

students. Therefore, any school plan to address the effects of segregation needed to be

reoriented to first address the fact of segregation that included unequal resources and

opportunities, as well as social and psychological harm for all students. The plan's total

restructuring of the geography and philosophy was based on the assumption that the

entire structure of schooling was constitutive of a segregated system.

In comparison, black power narratives displayed similar narrative associations

drawn between segregation to unequal resources and psychological harm for black and

white students. They accepted the primary assumption that segregated schooling was a

fundamental societal problem. However, they detached segregation's solution as

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[121] Cooper quoted in Ibid., 3.

integration and framed segregation as a structural problem because of the misallocation of power over their schools. With control over schools, these groups hoped to destroy the vestiges of white discrimination that were revealed in unequal resources, white-oriented curricula, and racist teachers.

The CACRC responded to the black power narrative in the spring of 1967 after the Carmichael visit with a distinct emphasis on "multi-racial" education and integration in response to black power self-determination. For example, the CACRC promised to continue to address problems of segregation with an integrationist approach, highlighting the symbol of "multi-racial" as a symbol of the universalism central to their narrative constellation. They threatened another school boycott on May 18, 1967 and directly addressed the concerns from the black power movement by asking the district to address the treatment of students who actually partake in transfers and also "'to retrain teachers for a multi-racial and multi-cultural society.'"[122] The CACRC made it clear that, "'we are reaffirming our commitment to quality, integrated education because it is essential to the multiracial world in which we live.'"[123] In these statements, the CACRC deployed the universal language of "multiracial" and "integration" more often to emphasize their priorities within their narrative. In contrast, nationally CORE voted to drop the phrase "multi-racial" from its constitutional goals for membership when black power activists assumed control in 1967. Therefore, a new groundwork of conflict set up a clash

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[122] Richardson, "Civil Rights in Seattle: A Rhetorical Analysis of a Social Movement".

[123] Ibid.

between integrationists and black power ideas about what to do about segregated and unequal schooling.

A Discursive Coalition: The City Establishment and the CACRC

In 1967, the Board shifted its public discourse and began responding more concretely to CACRC demands in light of the growing concerns of effective direct action tactics in Seattle, such as the threat of another school boycott, which had embarrassed the District.[124] For the 1967-68 school year, the Board added numerous enrichment programs for the central area schools and a long-range commitment to integrated educational parks, or "continuous progress centers."[125] Guided both by concerns with integration as well as continued fears of white backlash, the District arranged a relatively radical policy that attempted to bridge support from the CACRC to the city establishment, in opposition to black power. After the public upheaval caused by the Triad Plan, new superintendent Dr. Forbes Bottomly forged another radical idea that attempted to utilize the narrative that arose from the Urban League and CACRC while arranging different emphases in order to incorporate the narrative identities attached to neighborhood schools and academic quality while also distancing the District from the black power interests. Therefore, this priority shift for the District both reflected and re-directed the discursive changes happening within Seattle pertaining to school segregation.

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[124] Ibid.,185.

[125] Ibid.

This section explores the interaction of these new ideas, policy, and actors that brought together a discursive coalition that implemented, albeit unsuccessfully, a desegregation proposal that included busing. In the most immediate sense, the idea served to galvanize the city and actually led to a lull in desegregation efforts, which practically lasted until 1976. However, the new arrangement of concepts and constitutive politics significantly altered points of emphasis in District narrative and brought an unlikely coalition of characters under an umbrella of policy change.

At this time, the discursive coalition and its subsequent alterations in emphasis and prioritization into policy served to settle new grounds for debate that fundamentally shifted the future debate onto a newly arranged terrain of ideas for the greater part of the 1970s. This radical concept of "continuous progress" altered the arrangement of actors as well as ideas in Seattle. Without implementing any aspects of the plan, the city became embroiled in debate over *CP*, which was essentially a debate over mandatory bussing and the destruction of the neighborhood school. The debate exposed the entire city to desegregation dialogue established by actors already involved in desegregation, but now to vocal and organized opposition from both the white and black communities.

"Continuous Progress" Towards Integration

During the upswing in civil rights activity, the Board appointed a new Superintendent, Dr. Forbes Bottomly. Bottomly demonstrated greater concern than previous superintendents with the Central Area and developed his own vision of a re-structured school system, "Continuous Progress" (*CP*). Bottomly became a creative

agent in these coalitional and policy developments as he grafted together ideas from competing narrative constellations about integration, neighborhoods, and social change into a new problematic and solution by way of a combination of alternate, or even competing, narratives.

Similar to the Triad Plan, Bottomly's Continuous Progress concept re-envisioned the neighborhood, but restructured the schools in order to meet the imminent needs of a new era without specifically defining the new era as founded upon segregation. To respond to the dire condition of the Central Area schools and seek approval from the spectrum of commitments, Bottomly forged a radical restructuring plan similar to the Triad Plan without the central problem defined as segregation.[126] More than a decade prior to the implementation of mandatory desegregation, Dr. Bottomly, designed the comprehensive plan to confront educational needs, new structural pressures within the city, and segregation as a byproduct, which represented a re-combination of a variety of political ideas and values brought together into a creative and destabilizing policy proposal.[127] Structurally, the underlying idea of *CP* was the necessity to restructure the geography of schooling because traditional neighborhoods in Seattle did not align with the needs of expanding and diversifying populations. Bottomly challenged neighborhoods not through their inherent inequality, but because neighborhoods as a basis for student assignment in such a different era was becoming anachronistic. The

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[126] The idea envisioned middle and high schools more like university campuses than neighborhood buildings. Continuous progress centers, basically city-wide middle schools, would naturally integrate students because they were not based in neighborhoods.

[127] "Continuous Progress Final Report," Seattle Citizens School Progress Planning Committee, April 9, 1967, Accession A1998-13, Box 9 (LCF).

artful associations are seen in how Bottomly both used and extended ideas from competing narratives, to include academic excellence, diversity, and social goals as public goals.

CP attempted to re-envision the role of the schools as academic, but "academic" as including social ideas like diversity, morality, and citizenship. Bottomly carefully framed *CP* to reflect interest in quality education as the primary role of the schools. In 1968, a citizen advisory committee reported that *CP* "'offers an opportunity to significantly improve the quality of education available to every Seattle Public School student.'"[128] In response to grassroots white opposition to the Triad Plan, Bottomly carefully located individual excellence and achievement as centerpieces of a restructured system. Yet, *CP* extended the idea of individual achievement beyond the traditional notion of intellectual development, the accepted role of the schools, to include the "the development of moral and spiritual values, of high standards of citizenship, of a high sense of self-discipline, and of a desire to work within the legal framework of a democratic society."[129] The vision of education aimed to remain within the "American ethic," or individualism, and to produce "the urban man who has retained and refined his dignity of individual spirit."[130] Within this idea, Bottomly incorporated the fundamental assumption that the public schools have a role in "maturing social attitudes" and promoting diversity because of the new era, for example. The role of the public school

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[128] Pieroth, "Desegregating the Public Schools: Seattle, Washington 1954-1968," 360.

[129] "Continuous Progress Final Report," Seattle Citizens School Progress Planning Committee, April 9, 1967, Section 1 (2), Accession A1998-13, Box 9 (LCF).

[130] Ibid., Section 2, (4).

was not to protect individual rights, but to play a part in teaching individual dignity, democratic citizenry, excellence and achievement.

CP also included the idea that racial separation caused damage to the entire school system. Bottomly articulated the needs of a new era that included, but did not hinge on segregation (like in the Triad Plan) *or* discriminatory intent, as the District narrative had previously. For both the CACRC and the Urban League, current discriminatory intent was irrelevant in the face of clearly unequal conditions resulting from historical discrimination. For the District, discriminatory intent was necessary to change schooling patterns. Bottomly's narrative substituted a commitment to educational restructuring to meet the needs of a new era. For example, Bottomly formulated the policy in terms of new needs for a new era in which "freeways and arterials have carved through traditional neighborhoods… shopping centers, high-rise apartments [and] have affected old habits of living."[131] The idea retained the concept of neighborhoods as "traditional" and therefore side-stepped their "destruction" by showing how the broad structures of the city, specifically located in majority white areas, were changing.

The concept secondarily incorporated the need to ameliorate *de facto* segregation as a mere symptom of the broad structural forces affecting Seattle as a whole, because of "new problems resulting from concentration of minority groups, poverty and urban decay."[132] Carefully, Bottomly did not associate attempts to eliminate segregated schools with attempts to disrupt neighborhoods. In one section, *CP* argues, "the reduction of the

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[131] Ibid.

[132] Ibid.

severe racial isolation which now exists in most Seattle schools is of vital importance at

all grade levels."[133] However, Bottomly linked segregation in a chain of association

instead of orienting it as a first and fundamental principle, as the Triad Plan did, a key

mechanism through which the concept could maintain a commitment to the "integrity" of

the neighborhood school concept and the centrality of the individual.[134]

For example, this proposal envisioned the progress from grade schools to middle

schools to high schools to effectively act like a feeder system that would "naturally"

integrate children and schools.[135] The arena to solve these problems was the "Continuous

Progress Centers" that would serve as large middle schools. Bottomly took care to insist,

"The purpose of the center is not to bring about integration. It will do this only as an

added benefit."[136] The plan sought to confront segregation as a byproduct of the larger

structural changes and reminded everyone the voluntary transfer program was the only

policy employed specifically to desegregate the schools. [137] In effect, the framework of

this plan admitted problems of segregation, but to avoid backlash, abstractly dealt with

racial imbalance only in the large middle school centers where "cross-bussing and forced

mixing" could be avoided, or at least relegated to the middle school age students instead

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[133] Pieroth, "Desegregating the Public Schools: Seattle, Washington 1954-1968".

[134] "Continuous Progress Final Report," Seattle Citizens School Progress Planning Committee, April 9, 1967, Section 2 (3-4), Accession A1998-13, Box 9, (LCF).

[135] Pieroth, "Desegregating the Public Schools: Seattle, Washington 1954-1968," 295.

[136] Bottomly quoted in Ibid., 353.

[137] "Continuous Progress Final Report," Seattle Citizens School Progress Planning Committee, April 9, 1967, Accession A1998-13, Box 9, (LCF).

of kindergartners.[138] If the district could achieve a sort of desegregation maintaining a neighborhood concept, they believed integration could be acceptable.

The final narrative extension was the re-appropriation of neighborhood to mean something beyond physical geography while also retaining its value for the community. Bottomly reasoned that continuous progress should "'be essentially neighborhood schools with a voluntary program built in'" because of "'the concern of parents, regardless of race, about where their little children were assigned.'"[139] *CP* included a redesign of grades, locations, and curricula that both incorporated and challenged the traditional notion of neighborhood schools. *CP* organized the configuration of schools, "with the conscientious attention to the integrity of home-school contacts."[140] Therefore, children from kindergarten through grades three or four would remain in their neighborhood schools. *CP* relied on the value-laden assumption about the integrity of the neighborhood school, by keeping neighborhood school assignment in tact for young children. Grades four through seven would attend new continuous progress centers of 4,000-6,000 students. After grade seven, students would be grouped onto one campus for grades 8-11, and 12-14. With gradual shifts towards larger educational complexes for older students, Bottomly defined neighborhoods as appropriate for younger children and different structural school mechanisms appropriate for the needs, and socialization, of older students.

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[138] Pieroth, "Desegregating the Public Schools: Seattle, Washington 1954-1968".

[139] Bottomly quoted in Ibid., 431 (emphasis in original).

[140] "Continuous Progress Final Report," Seattle Citizens School Progress Planning Committee, April 9, 1967, Section 2 (4), Accession A1998-13, Box 9, (LCF).

In sum, Bottomly attempted to re-narrate both the story of the new era as well as the value of the neighborhood school in relation to both the civil rights and grassroots white oppositional narratives. The new era was different, but not because of racial segregation. Neighborhood schools were not appropriate for the new era, but not because they represented social and structural inequalities. School restructuring could meet structural and economic needs of the late 1960s and also desegregate the schools as a byproduct.

Opposition Response

Despite support from the CACRC and city actors, Continuous Progress received its own rash of opposition before any policy actions were taken. While much debate after the Triad Plan proposal focused on the destruction of "individual excellence," the predominant white oppositional narrative to *CP* focused on opposition to busing and changes to the neighborhood assignment structure. In a sentiment representative of the general consensus among opposed white parents, "we are against the center and unnecessary bussing, but we are not against integration. [We do] not feel that the school district should be assigned the responsibility of social reform when it is a community problem requiring all of [its] resources."[141] Again, this opposition specifically separated the public and social realms in order to oppose changes to the neighborhood concept.

This narrative avoided the overt classism or racism of previous opposition but continued to assert that economic (home owning) rights are pre-public, or social.

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[141] Pieroth, "Desegregating the Public Schools: Seattle, Washington 1954-1968".

Following, the narrative then could highlight the misconstrued destruction of the neighborhood school structure because it violated the sanctity of economic rights as pre-public. A group called Save Our Neighborhood Schools (SOS) surfaced and contested *CP* at every juncture.[142] SOS was a powerful group that articulated the public's fears over the destruction of the neighborhood schools and the movement of children within the District as one of a violation of control, or "rights" to control their own children's lives. For example, one SOS member, Howard Schmidt, called the centers a threat "'to the integrity of teachers and the sanctity of classrooms,'" though he added the real issue was "'state control of our lives.'"[143] At a different meeting, Schmidt framed his opposition in terms of "pride" and "self-improvement" and urged the emphasis of policy should not be put on ""'arbitrary programs which reduce proud individuals into bus-weary, uprooted numbers in centralized schools.'""[144] By expressing concern for the "pride" of not only white students (because his reference was to Garfield High School), the narrative could avoid overt racism by highlighting concern for black students' pride and achievement.

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[142] Originally, the group included black families from the Central Area interested in local control and angry with the School Board for continuing to focus on moving only black children out of neighborhoods. Soon after, these families realized that the other folks within SOS were also against moving black kids into "their neighborhoods," and they broke from SOS.

[143] Schmidt ran for the School Board in 1967 to oppose the centers. (Schmidt quoted in Pieroth, "Desegregating the Public Schools: Seattle, Washington 1954-1968," 364-373).

[144] Ibid., 366.

Policy Development

In 1967, the school board decided to implement the idea of "Continuous Progress Centers" in a piece-meal effort, with the support of major city interests who aligned with the CACRC. An emerging pattern of alliance developed between the Board, Bottomly, mainline churches, liberal city actors, and the CACRC in Seattle. The proposal created a growing number of integrationist allies of the CACRC, including the Chamber of Commerce, the League of Women Voters, various white parents, and numerous churches. On March 11, 1968 the *Seattle Post-Intelligencer* also expressed pleasure with Bottomly's holistic picture of Seattle's problems with racial imbalance and urged the public to accept some of the basic changes in the proposed system. Though various actors had differing ideas about integration, one key idea that joined them was integration *in response* to the black separatist section of the Central Area activists. The Chamber of Commerce, as a traditionally conservative element of the city establishment, ended up supporting the Middle School plan in a move to show support for the integrationists and against the separatists.[145]

The discursive coalition was able to push through a partial integration agenda that the CACRC alone could not have implemented. Despite opposition, the board also gained approval for the centers in many public meetings. At every meeting, public statements in support of the centers outnumbered statements against.[146] The Board proceeded with small-scale proposals, and initially presented a plan on February 14, 1968

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[145] Richardson, "Civil Rights in Seattle: A Rhetorical Analysis of a Social Movement".

[146] Pieroth, "Desegregating the Public Schools: Seattle, Washington 1954-1968".

for desegregated middle schools at the same time as a proposal to open a pilot

"continuous progress center," the Southeast Pilot Educational Center in the vicinity of

Rainier Beach Junior-Senior High. This proposal was a significant catalyst for the

broadening of support for integration within the city establishment, and the polarization

of the previous Central Area consensus of the CACRC.[147]

City establishment actors interested in Seattle's desegregation formed the Citizens

for Quality Education (CQE), "'to generate public enthusiasm about advancing

contemporary concepts of education' in Seattle.'"[148] After studying the problem, CQE

supported efforts to "move forward with a program of community wide, two-way

bussing."[149] They remained convinced that there was enough support in Seattle for the

CP concept and went on to evaluate versions of the plan and to also support school board

candidates in the upcoming election who supported the concept.

In contrast and in reaction to this growing alliance, the recommendation for the

continuous progress pilot further polarized the Central Area community. The proposal

definitively split the black power groups and the CACRC. The CACRC commended the

Board on its actions. The NAACP agreed to drop a suit filed in 1966 because they

believed the Rainier Beach Center would reduce racial imbalance. Reverend John

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[147] The proposal included the closure of Mann elementary school and Washington Junior High School, and the reduction of enrollment at Garfield. The plan was to bus black students from these schools to predominantly white schools. The proposal shifted Madrona Elementary to a Head Start to fourth grade school, and transferred the fifth and sixth graders from Madrona to another school. The plan established a feeder pattern between three schools (elementary, middle school center, and high school) in line with the continuous progress concept. The projected enrollment for the Rainier Beach Center was 3500 students, with the goal of no more than 25% black students. The Board ambiguously acknowledged that busing "may be involved." (Board quoted in Ibid., 393)

[148] CQE quoted in Ibid., 354.

[149] CQE quoted in Ibid., 418.

Adams spoke up in favor of Continuous Progress Centers at a community hearing

sponsored by the League of Women Voters in 1967. Adams urged the District to move

"'on continuous progress centers not as soon as possible and not with all deliberate speed,

but, if I may borrow the next line, "with majestic instancy.""""[150]

Nevertheless, growing sentiment in the Central Area's "grassroots" movement

turned against the proposal in favor of self-determination and local control. As time went

on, black power narratives gained more influence in Seattle as Central Area groups began

pushing for more local control, their own school board, and increased resources for the

central area. When the school board announced the first continuous progress center

would be at Rainier Beach, the CACRC held a meeting at the East Madison YMCA on

March 6, 1968 in order to promote the project.[151] For Adams, this meeting represented a

serious setback to a unified support and "'a real crisis in the community.'"[152] At this

meeting, the polarization over black power emerged and showed that the CACRC could

no longer claim to speak for the entire black community. Quintard Taylor observed,

"The meeting, organized to rally support for integrated education, quickly became a

referendum on the Committee [CACRC] and its vision for the future."[153] Opposition

came from CORE and the Central Seattle Community Council (CSCC), said to be closest

to the "grassroots" sentiment of the Central Area.

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[150] Ibid., 366.

[151] Richardson, "Civil Rights in Seattle: A Rhetorical Analysis of a Social Movement".

[152] Adams quoted in Ibid., 265.

[153] Quintard Taylor, "The Civil Rights Movement in Seattle, 1960-1970," All-Student Assembly for the Martin Luther King Holiday Observance, Lakeside School, Seattle, Washington, January, 2003, 13.

The division solidified between the narratives of integration and local control. Ed Banks, chairman of the Garfield Advisory Committee, recalled that before 1968 the majority of the black community would have been more receptive to these proposed changes, but they were no longer willing to let their children be the only ones participating in desegregation efforts. Following John Adams presentation at the YMCA meeting, black separatists, including members of the Nation of Islam, the Black Panther Party, and the newly formed Black Student Union at the University of Washington, challenged integration. A member of the CACRC, Roberta Byrd Barr recalled that after John Adams presented his proposal, "'they [the separatists] swept him right off the platform.'"[154] In effect, the influence of Adams and the CACRC had been effectively diluted. Local power and increased quality for Central Area schools began to trump CACRC calls for multi-racial integrated education. The CACRC opposed a proposal for a Central Area sub-district: "'we continue to believe firmly in a multi-racial society and its positive reflection in quality, integrated education. A sub-district school board for the central area may tend to polarize positions and further isolate the area from the total school system.'"[155]

Given the stark lack of consensus on the Rainier Beach Proposal, on April 10, 1968 the Board approved of the pilot middle school program to convert Washington,

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[154] Roberty Byrd Barr quoted in Pieroth, "Desegregating the Public Schools: Seattle, Washington 1954-1968," 350.

[155] Pratt, quoted in Richardson, "Civil Rights in Seattle: A Rhetorical Analysis of a Social Movement". Richardson said this was the last public statement that could be attributed to the CACRC. By January of 1969, the four leaders of the CACRC had left the committee. Others tried to maintain the committee, with less success. Therefore, Seattle continued after 1969 without the cohesion presented by these leaders. Adams, Hundley, and Charles V. Johnson moved on to other arenas (careers or otherwise) and Edwin Pratt was murdered in January 1969.

Meany, and Hamilton schools into desegregated middle school centers and Garfield into a magnet school. With this proposal, Bottomly attempted to bridge the narrative constellations of all invested actors. Though the CACRC warned Bottomly that he would see no consensus in the black community, he continued to try building a broad based coalition, by offering the Central Area with more local control.[156] He tried to incorporate the "'growing sense of self-determination in the Negro community...which was manifested in a resistance to being manipulated by the ""'establishment" [...] who search for identity and a value system which give dignity to that identity.'"[157] Carefully, he did not call this group either separatists or integrationists, but one community. The Board eventually approved of a separate administrative planning unit for the Central Area, the Central Area School Council (CASC).

In what John Adams called a "'craven failure of nerve'" and a capitulation to the demands of the black militants, Bottomly avoided the issue of busing and far-reaching integration goals with these demands for black local control as well as white opposition to forced busing.[158] Therefore, the white community and city establishment had no problems with this plan, likely because it did not directly affect any white students. The *P-I,* as a reflection of the city establishment position, commended this move as "reasonable" and "thoughtful."

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[156] Pieroth, "Desegregating the Public Schools: Seattle, Washington 1954-1968".

[157] Dr. Forbes Bottomly, quoted in Ibid., 420.

[158] Adams quoted in Ibid., 426.

Given this ambiguity on such an important concern for the Central Area and the CACRC, they displayed caution at first, then outright backlash when the Board announced they would still further delay the decision to include busing white children *into* the Central Area centers. This omission tore both CACRC and remaining Central Area support away from the District. John Adams lashed out at the Board, emphasizing the "'futile impossibility of gaining white citizen consensus on the steps necessary to end de facto segregation.'"[159] Parents in the Central Area further chided the District for imposing the full burden of busing of black families and the lack of commitment to promise curriculum changes that would include minority history and culture. The initiation of Garfield as merely a magnet school did not assure them that white students would voluntarily transfer to Garfield in enough numbers to equalize movement.

The CASC led the final policy push. The CASC chose a highly respected school principal in the Central Area, Dr. Roland Patterson, as their chief administrator. Dr. Patterson was Principal of Meany Junior High and an advocate of community control. The CASC and Patterson developed a proposal for desegregation in the fall of 1970, known as the 4-4-4 Plan. The Board approved the new plan, which reconfigured the Central Area schools into elementary, middle and high schools in order to promote a multi-racial middle school that became known as Meany-Madrona. Not long after this announcement, the Board began to make plans to convert Hamilton, Wilson, and Eckstein Junior Highs into middle schools that would be included in a mandatory racial

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[159] Adams quoted in Ibid., 426.

transfer program with Meany-Madrona.[160] Both daily papers began extensive coverage

on this "Middle School Plan" in September 1970. It was publicized as the first of three-

phases in a citywide effort to desegregate.[161]

Reaction

The Middle School Plan had major repercussions for Seattle School Board

members and the District as they faced vocal and organized opposition to mandatory

racial desegregation. Public reaction to the "middle school busing" plan was "immediate

and stormy."[162] Hostile crowds filled public meetings called by the school board and a

group of citizens formed Citizens Against Mandatory Busing (CAMB) to challenge the

plan. CAMB was a well-organized and funded opposition that initiated legal action that

delayed implementation of the plan one year after its start date of September 1971.[163]

A court battle saw white opposition try to re-connect the neighborhood school

again as something akin to property rights and succeeded in delaying the attempted

desegregation policy. After the court battle failed, the Board weakly implemented a two-

way busing plan in 1972 that involved only 624 students chosen at random by computer.

Despite this small number, vandals slashed tires of seventy busses to show their

opposition. By 1973, only 312 (almost all black) students participated in mandatory

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[160] Ibid., 462.

[161] Siqueland, *Without a Court Order: The Desegregation of Seattle's Schools*.

[162] Pieroth, "Desegregating the Public Schools: Seattle, Washington 1954-1968".

[163] Ibid., 463.

busing assignments.[164] For most involved, the Middle School Plan demonstrated a massive political failure.[165]

The case of *C.A.M.B. v. Palmason* (1972) displayed the shift in acceptable narratives used to fight against desegregation, despite its success in delaying the implementation of mandatory busing.[166] This case was an example of some of the loudest voices in opposition to the District's actions being white parents who "have fought any effort of the District to assign their children to anything other than their "neighborhood" school.[167] CAMB insisted they had a right similar to a vested property right to send their children to the neighborhood schools.[168] This "right" could not be taken away from them by ordering reassignment of their students. CAMB argued that the Middle School busing plan was "arbitrary and capricious…in that it will have a psychological impact on primary school children because of the long bus rides."[169]

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[164] Quintard Taylor, "The Civil Rights Movement in Seattle, 1960-1970," All-Student Assembly for the Martin Luther King Holiday Observance, Lakeside School, Seattle, Wa., 7 January, 2003.

[165] Siqueland, *Without a Court Order: The Desegregation of Seattle's Schools.*

[166] *C.A.M.B.* v. Palmason, 80 W.2d 445, 495 P.2d 657 (1972).

[167] "Index to Defendants' Memorandum in support of motions for summary judgment on the pleadings and motion to strike," Gary Roe vs. Seattle School District No.1, June 8, 1978, In the superior court of the State of Washington for King County, 10, Accession A98-13 in Box 9, (LCF).

[168] Amicus Curiae Brief of Church Council of Greater Seattle. 1978, Gary Roe v. Board of Directors of Settle School District No. 1, Accession 1358-007 in Box 38, Folder 10, Church Council of Greater Seattle Records, University of Washington Libraries (hereafter cited as CCS).

[169] "Index to Defendants' Memorandum in support of motions for summary judgment on the pleadings and motion to strike," Gary Roe vs. Seattle School District No.1, June 8, 1978, In the superior court of the State of Washington for King County, 6, Accession A98-13 in Box 9, (LCF).

Property rights as well as their own children's psychological state were "private" matters, that the school had the obligation to leave separate from policy matters.[170]

There was at least four other court cases in this period that also involved transfer policies and racial problems in the Seattle School District, which were terminated fairly quickly, but give a sense of the opposition's narrative orientation.[171] The similar current running through all was fear of control lost with District policies to improve racial balance. In other cases within the 1970s, individuals tried to challenge various "restrictive" policies the district had established to attempt to establish racial balance. Two such challenged the District's policy denying white children the option of transferring out of the Garfield attendance area, a policy designed to promote the desegregation of Garfield.[172] The issue here became the parent's lost "right" to transfer their kid out of the Garfield area. This is a control issue, not a neighborhood issue.

The conclusion of the *C.A.M.B.* case resulted in a ruling in favor of the School District to implement a reasonable desegregation policy. The Court challenged the "vested right in any general rule of law or policy of legislation which entitles him or her to insist that it remain unchanged for his or her benefit," and surmised that it was not the distance to school that parents really feared, given "at least 39% of America's school children are bussed to school, that in some remote areas of the state children were bussed

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[170] Ibid., 6.

[171] List of these cases and others in Ibid. Also cited on page 10 is the definition of "neighborhood school" as: that school which geographically is close to your house, in your general living area, shopping area. When I say neighborhood, X number of miles or blocks to school is not the issue particularly but that is the most reasonable school geographically to attend"- cited in Mr. Krauss' deposition, who he is, I don't know.

[172] Ibid., 2.

as much as 25 miles daily."[173] It was more likely a "fear that the child would be in a hostile environment or that the teachers or the program would be inferior to that which the child would expect to find in his or her own neighborhood."[174] The court defined the right of the right of a parent as a "limited right, since all parents in the state were required to send their children to school," and ruled that the District had been conscientious with the assignment plan and agreed that integration of the schools would not be possible given residential segregation, without "some modification of the neighborhood school formula."[175]

Despite the positive ruling for the bussing plan, the school board had little political will to proceed with any plan that went beyond voluntary assignment. The board implemented the Middle School Plan in the fall of 1972, involving only four schools. In January 1973, citizens initiated a recall election of the four remaining board members who had voted for the Middle School plan. Though this failed, this took a political toll on the Board; three of the four either resigned or did not seek re-election.[176] Bottomly also resigned in 1973 in the wake of these decisions, leaving the school board to implement his vision with little direction and popularity.

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[173] Amicus Curiae Brief of Church Council of Greater Seattle. 1978, Gary Roe v. Board of Directors of Settle School District No. 1, p. 4-6, 1358-007 in Box 38, Folder 10, (CCS).

[174] Ibid.

[175] Ibid.

[176] Pieroth, "Desegregating the Public Schools: Seattle, Washington 1954-1968".

Conclusion

By 1967, the School Board and major civic actors went on record in favor of a potential future that included mandatory busing to desegregate the public schools. This was a large commitment step given just four years earlier the Board was reticent to admit that racial segregation existed in the Seattle Public Schools. Though the mandatory busing effort fell to the wayside in the face of powerful grassroots white opposition and a burgeoning black power movement in the Central Area, this shift signaled a significant change in meaning of race for Seattle actors, as well as a return to the status quo. No longer was it legitimate to deny racial segregation existed or affected the public schools. Yet, the denial of intention retained the District's ability to admit "racial imbalance" existed without forcing the white community to partake in desegregation efforts. However, in the midst of these commitments, District actors came close to implementing a desegregation policy based through the narrative of integration and the promotion of a multi-racial society.

Within these political developments, ideas like integration, education, neighborhood schools, and racial segregation were activated in specific and interactive ways to address the situation of "racial imbalance" in Seattle. Seattle actors debated within a national context that left open a range of possible ways for districts to interpret their role in addressing racial *de facto* segregation. Seattle establishment actors began this period by denying the existence of racial segregation in the schools by relying on a specific narrative that limited the role of the schools as one of solely academic training. When pressed by civil rights groups, the District initially extended their narrative

constellation to include "race" by way of "intergroup" relations, or "mutual respect" between racial groups, and compensatory education for segregated students who had fallen behind. This arrangement allowed for the District to address race through a non-threatening lens that showed they were concerned with all students and respected and encouraged differences in the community. The meaning of racial inequality within this constellation remained connected to the idea that "race" is equivalent to discrimination or intent, and therefore not a mandatory role for the schools. The schools had a role in ensuring equal educational opportunity, and "education" was interpreted as academic training.

In contrast, civil rights actors in town challenged these connections between race, respect, and education built by the District by hinging their narrative constellation on the fundamental assumption that racial segregation was harmful for not only minority children's education, but also the society as a whole. For groups like the Urban League, NAACP, and grassroots organizations like the CACRC, the schools as public institutions had a definitive role in ameliorating segregation, whether or not it was a direct result of intentional discrimination. These groups began to challenge the foundation of student assignment, the neighborhood, as a concept that maintains racial inequality despite intention. The Urban League and CACRC defined race in structural terms without relying on discriminatory intent, defined the schools' role as also ensuring equal educational opportunity, but broadened "education" to mean far more than academic training; education included social training, economic opportunity, and citizenship.

How did these two different visions coalesce under a coalition that pushed an integration policy? In light of powerful direct action civil rights tactics, the District and city establishment understood action to appease civil rights demands was necessary. However, analysis does not observe simple appeasement for these complex demands. At this juncture, Dr. Forbes Bottomly arranged a new vision of the public schools to both challenge the neighborhood basis for school segregation, but in a way that attempted to bridge ideas coming from civil rights, civic, and grassroots white opposition. This idea was not manifested in actual policy, but became a guiding conceptual arrangement where the central way of talking about racial desegregation was in terms of "integration." The idea of integration brought the city, District, and CACRC into an unlikely coalition because of its oppositional dynamic with the black separatist narrative.

Through narratives that challenged the neighborhood as a fundamental right and built the neighborhood as a community value that could extend beyond physical location, this expansion of ideas added a new layer to competing narrative constellations that clarified and extended their own lines of logic and also triggered a much stronger oppositional wave of argumentation that built upon these very extensions. Both the Triad Plan and Continuous Progress showed the limits of new articulations about the neighborhood, and therefore the strength of that attachment. White opposition framed their resistance in terms of the centrality of the neighborhood school, where white property-owners often mobilized "racially innocent" individual rights discourse to secure the naturalization of neighborhood schools. Meanwhile, black power groups rose to the challenge of white resistance and began to gain legitimacy with narratives expressing the

problem as fundamentally segregated schools and concurrent privilege structures, but the solution as local control of their schools direction.

Around the same time as the national chapter of CORE shifted towards black power with a vote to drop the phrase "multi-racial" from its constitutional goals, the District, city and CACRC highlighted the goal of multi-racial integration. This coalition developed and pursued desegregation, but also tried to quell separatist action in the Central Area and white fears of busing. This period ended with a multi-layered and tenuous set of commitments: a vision of integrated education, the maintenance of neighborhood schools, and commitment to incorporate the voice of the Central Area. Though the policy appearance in 1971 did not differ much from 1964's voluntary racial transfer policy, the narrative universe of ideas and commitments represented a significant shift with a new set of emphases relating to racial segregation in Seattle. By 1971, policy actions had legitimated claims about the status of racial segregation in Seattle: *de facto segregation existed in Seattle;* and *integration was more than a valuable goal that the school district should pursue because it encouraged equity and mutual respect, it was a necessary role.* The attempts to challenge the neighborhood structure proved difficult to secure as a legitimate narrative association. Policy inaction institutionally maintained the claims that *the most important organizing factor for student assignment remained the neighborhood as a traditional community stronghold.*

This shift represented a collapse in the District's narrative constellation that had attempted to incorporate ideas of integration, mutual respect, neighborhood value, and black power. The coalition between the District, city establishment and CACRC became

possible, yet short-lived. The fundamental conflict about the role of the public schools was not settled, but its narrative groundwork had shifted.

CHAPTER III

INTEGRATING THE PUBLIC SCHOOLS, 1971-1977

The years between 1971 and 1977 saw Seattle actors struggling to re-engage the questions of racial imbalance and racial equality in the public school arena. These years saw significant developments in the national arena, most notably with the Supreme Court's decision in *Keyes v. School District No. 1* (1974), which ruled that a northern *de facto* school district could be ordered to desegregate. Discussions at the federal level also turned 'north,' acknowledging and opening up funding for desegregating *de facto* districts, while also limiting this funding to voluntary methods as opposed to busing. These developments signaled an ambiguity at the federal level with respect to methods and interpretations of the public's role in racial equality. In Seattle, the battle over desegregation can be best understood as a struggle within and between three predominant narrative constellations developed by actors to frame a story about racial segregation, the role of the schools, and the contours of legitimate policy. The resulting mandatory desegregation policy, The Seattle Plan, institutionalized an innovative and extensive policy to ameliorate segregation, provide equal educational opportunity, and encourage a multicultural society for both minority and white students. This remarkable policy achievement was brought together by an extensive coalition, which included the School

District, City of Seattle, Chamber of Commerce, Urban League, ACLU, and various local civic groups in town.

The fact that this varied coalition could agree on a policy could be seen as a remarkable generation of civic capacity to undertake a complex and contentious policy event. However, understanding the policy arrangement as working because of the development of enough civic capacity within Seattle also lacks an explanation of the specificity of the Seattle Plan. Yes, the Seattle Plan was built in a way that pleased a variety of groups, groups necessary for the District to implement the Seattle Plan without a court order. However, the meaning of the Seattle Plan and its reflection of interpretations of racial equality and the role of the public are uncovered by analyzing the discourse embedded and constructed within the policy. Likewise, understanding the processes leading up to the Seattle Plan in terms of interest group politics fails to incorporate the moments when interests were created, shifted, and when ideas were born. For example, the idea of moving neighborhoods rather than individual students arose within politics, not as a pre-defined interest or position and not something to discard analytically. Finally, analyzing the way elite actors arranged the Seattle Plan to "fit" necessary interests also hides the dynamic interaction of creative actors who worked for months in order to develop a policy of meaningful impact to address racial inequality in the schools.

The Seattle Plan was crafted by the coming together of a discursive coalition of actors who were able to draw together and re-arrange the competing narrative constellations by way of the concept of multiculturalism. The result of the hours of

discussion, committee work, debating, and muddling through policy details was both a layering of different understandings of race, desegregation, and equality and a creation of new connections and new interpretations of these concepts. In the previous period, a coalition began to develop by connecting to the idea of integration as not black separatism, but could not turn the coalition into lasting policy. In this period, the concept of "multiculturalism" served as a force of discursive realignment that joined previously antithetical actors and their divergent interests. By becoming a point of reference that could re-associate linkages within narrative constellations, this concept proved to realign the relationship between actors as well as their ideas so that those invested in integration could agree upon the same policy as those interested in avoiding a court order.

The new arrangement of ideas settled a new set of narrative claims: *desegregation was not merely a legal necessity but an educational necessity in an increasingly diverse world; schools had a role in promoting social change important for a multi-racial society; and individual rights could not trump the need to ameliorate historical discrimination.* In this way, multiculturalism can be seen as the meta-concept that became the basis for policymaking that allowed people to agree on policy details in ways they could not before. The ambiguity and multivocality expressed within multiculturalism facilitated communication between groups of people that a concept like "socioeconomic integration" could not do at this time. Therefore, under its guise, actors could institutionalize policy ideas surrounding multiculturalism that could mean many different things. The polyvalence of multiculturalism in this period is analytically

significant because it provides a light into understanding how people understood their own and others' connections between race, equality, and the public schools.

It is difficult to convey the feelings of actors who were involved in the Seattle plan, who saw its creation as such a surprising, creative, and momentous moment. This analysis attempts to demonstrate this policy-making feat as a contingent and constructed moment that arrived when actors were able to come together around certain ideas that reconfigured their own identifications with respect to desegregation. This chapter begins with a brief discussion of the national and legal developments that represented continued ambiguity about racial politics on the national front. Following, I detail the narrative constellations actors created that organized similar concepts into variant arrangements. This period witnessed a relative flurry of ideas struggling with the questions: How to define segregation? Why should the district desegregate? How will the district desegregate? I follow by analyzing how the narrative constellations were mobilized into the Seattle Plan in an unforeseen and creative way by the wide coalition of actors. These debates filtered into a reconfiguration of the political terrain in such a way that actors interested in individual choice, neighborhood schooling, quality education, and multiple forms of integration became discursive partners in the task of desegregating Seattle. The Seattle Plan's idea arrangement shifted the grounds of debate by both solidifying and destabilizing certain ways to think about race and education as it came to embody multiple and competing principles tenuously defining the public schools' role in racial integration.

National and Legal Context

At the national level, debates over desegregation increasingly hinged on the distinction between *de jure* and *de facto* segregation and the debates over mandatory bussing. The combination of national reports, Supreme Court decisions, and federal level actions can be interpreted as an ambiguous development attempting to settle similar questions as outlined locally. The question of "why desegregate?" came down to an argument between formal-legal and social justifications for ending segregation. The question of tradeoffs made between private rights and ensuring educational equity was seen in the bussing debates and settled differently in the federal desegregation requirements represented by HEW, additions to the Civil Rights Act, and in the Supreme Court. By 1977, actors in Seattle felt confident that their district could end up with a court-ordered desegregation plan. Yet the questions of how or why or who it would desegregate was up for much debate.

The Court Rules on De Facto Denver

One of the most significant developments was the Supreme Court decision on the *de facto* segregated Denver Public Schools. In 1973, the Supreme Court dealt with a Northern desegregation for the first time, in *Keyes v. School District No. 1,* 413 U.S. 189 (1973). This case settled the question, "was Denver's school system segregated? If so, was the segregated system caused by state action?"[1] For Denver and multiple other cases, the Court ruled in favor of desegregation if residential patterns created segregated

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[1] "Desegregation: Brief Outline of Legal Parameters," Seattle Public Schools, General Counsel Gary Little, n.d. probably March 1977, Accession A98-13, Box 12 (LCF).

schools. In decisions issued in Texas, Nebraska, Wisconsin and New York, the cities had

patterns of residential segregation, the schools assigned students "pursuant to a

neighborhood school assignment policy," and though the boards had not deliberately

intended to discriminate, "board action or inaction… caused what appear[ed] to be de

facto segregation to become de jure segregation."[2]

The Seattle School District took these developments as signs that they would

almost certainly be court-ordered to desegregate. According to the brief prepared by the

Seattle School District's legal counsel, "the lesson to be learned from [Keyes] is

strikingly plain: given the definition of purpose or intent established by the Supreme

Court in the Keyes case, it is nearly impossible for a district with a segregated

educational system to show that it was not the district's purpose or intent to segregate."[3]

The significance for districts like Seattle that did not have a history of *de jure*

school segregation was in the specific definition of discriminatory purpose in "so-called

de facto segregation."[4] According to the *Keyes* decision, discriminatory intent meant,

"that the probable, reasonable, foreseeable, natural consequences of the board's actions or

omissions to act resulted in a segregated school system."[5] Essentially, the Court ruled

that *de facto* segregation was a constitutional violation and it was up to the Board in

question to prove that segregative purpose was not its motivation if the district has a

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[2] Ibid., 3.

[3] Ibid., 2.

[4] Ibid.

[5] Ibid.

segregated educational system.[6] Districts would not pass this test with "racially neutral" "open enrollment" or "freedom of choice" plans because these assignment policies could be interpreted as resulting from intentional action.[7]

Despite this shift in the Supreme Court, another decision signaled another legal layer and ambiguity in the legal stance on desegregation. *Millikin v. Bradley* 418 U.S. 417 (1974) signaled the first major defeat for desegregation supporters since Brown I. Charles Russo (2004) argues this case signaled a fundamental shift in the Supreme Court's perspective. In Detroit, a federal trial court ordered a multi-district, area-wide desegregation program because the remedies proposed by the district would have exacerbated the segregation of the schools. The divided Supreme Court ruled that an inter-district remedy was constitutionally impermissible unless the state or surrounding school system were involved in discriminatory actions.[8] This regional limitation severely narrowed remedies to address increasing levels of segregation with the growth of isolated white suburbs. *Millikin* limited the state to remedies aimed at individual districts, therefore separating the arguably state-aided white movement to suburban regions, which

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[6] *Keyes supra at 210* quoted in Ibid. See also Erwin Chemerinsky, "The Segregation and Resegregation of American Public Education: The Court's Role," in *School Resegregation: Must the South Turn Back?*, ed. John Charles Boger, Gary Orfield (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2005).

[7] Ibid.

[8] Charles J Russo, J. John Harris III, Rosetta F. Sandidge, "Brown V. Board of Education at 40: A Legal History of Equal Educational Opportunities in American Public Education," *The Journal of Negro Education* 63, no. 3 (1994).

then were able to declare autonomy from problems of racial segregation to which the

movement contributed.[9]

Federal Enforcement and De Facto Districts

The Seattle School District began to deal with elements of the Civil Rights Act of

1964 (CRA) in the early 1970s to secure federal funding for desegregation. The CRA

granted the Attorney General power and authority to bring suits on behalf of black

plaintiffs in school districts and also gave the US Secretary of Education the power to

collect data to document implementation of desegregation in school districts and also to

provide grants to help with implementation efforts. The Department of Health, Education,

and Welfare (HEW) was charged with monitoring compliance with Title VI and the

CRA. Title VI allowed school districts to secure funds to aid desegregation planning and

operations, and prohibited discrimination on the basis of race in any program receiving

federal financial assistance.[10] At the same time, Title IV barred the federal government

from correcting racial imbalance resulting solely from housing patterns and forbade

federal funds for bussing.[11]

Congress enacted the Emergency School Aid Act (ESAA) in 1972 to provide

funds to encourage the reduction of "minority group isolation" through voluntary

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[9] See Ira Katznelson, *When Affirmative Action Was White: An Untold History of Racial Inequality in Twentieth-Century America* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 2005).

[10] "Desegregation: Brief Outline of Legal Parameters," Seattle Public Schools, General Counsel Gary Little, n.d. probably March 1977, 3, Accession A98-13, Box 12 (LCF)

[11] "Report of the Superintendent's Task Force on Desegregation Planning," Planning and Evaluation Department, Seattle Public Schools, February 23, 1972, 330.037.c2, Seattle School District Published Material, Archives and Records Management Center for Seattle School District No. 1 (Hereafter cited as Task Force in SSD).

means.[12] The funds were contingent upon district assurance to "adopt and implement, a plan for the complete elimination of minority group isolation" in all schools with minority group majorities.[13] HEW was directed to give equal consideration to districts voluntarily undertaking desegregation efforts and those legally required.

An analysis of federal level discourse adds an ambiguous layer to the meaning of the ESAA for school districts. President Nixon proposed the ESAA in May 1970 in a Special Message to Congress, to address the "urgent" situation of both northern and southern desegregation.[14] He wanted to encourage federal assistance for *de jure* districts currently under court order to desegregate, and *voluntary* efforts to overcome the adverse effects of segregation on minority groups. While not meant to "punish or reward," ESAA directly targeted " the adverse effects of racial isolation" and to "attain the positive benefits of integrated education."[15] Nixon stated, "Our goal is a system in which education throughout the nation is both equal and excellent, and in which racial barriers cease to exist."

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[12] Quoted in Brief of Amicus Curiae, *Parents Involved in Community Schools v. Seattle School District No. 1*, Alliance for Education, Municipal League of King County, Mayor and Former Mayors of Seattle and Former Seattle School Board Members in support of Respondents, No. 05-908, On Writ of Certiorari to the United States Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit Court, available from http://www.naacpldf.org/content/pdf/voluntary/both_parties/Alliance_for_Education,_Former_Mayors_Sea ttle.pdf; accessed on November 21, 2008.

[13] Ibid., 11.

[14] President Nixon, "Special Message to the Congress Proposing the Emergency School Aid Act of 1970, "May 21, 1970, available from http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/index.php?pid=2509; accessed 21 November 2008.

[15] Ibid.

While notable because Nixon directly stated that funds should be available to any segregated district, "whether deliberate or not," he also directly limited the funds to non-mandatory efforts, not methods of "imposing an arbitrary 'racial balance' throughout the nation's school systems."[16] Furthermore, without a level of punishment or reward, this narrative clearly associates the public's role as one of aid rather than enforcement when it came to attaining the positive benefits of integration. The narrative implies an affirmative public role in distinguishing non-voluntary methods (busing) as inappropriate for federal funding. Within these statements, Nixon specifically defined racial equity to limit its association to "educational" opportunity in a move to associate "busing" as a "new evil of disrupting communities and imposing hardship on children."[17] In a Special Message to Congress in 1972, Nixon called for a moratorium on busing orders by the Courts and the protection of neighborhood schools, both in the name of equal educational opportunity. He wrote, "In the furor over busing, it has become all too easy to forget what busing is supposed to be designed to achieve: equality of educational opportunity. For all Americans."[18] Nixon naturalized the sanctity of neighborhoods busing a non-essential, "disruptive," action. The neighborhood community is essential, bussing is "evil."

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[16] Ibid.

[17] Nixon, Richard, "Special Message to the Congress on Equal Educational Opportunities and School Bussing," available from http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/index.php?pid=3776&st=Nixon&st1=desegregation; accessed 1 December 2008.

[18] Ibid.

National developments allowed ambiguity about *de jure*, *de facto*, and racially imbalanced school districts. While *Keyes* warned the district of impending court order, Nixon declared an end to busing to ameliorate segregation. While the ESAA provided funds to encourage desegregation, it also denied funds for the "arbitrary" imposition of racial balance in the schools. The most consistent item was the reliance on discriminatory intent to determine the method of desegregation. The boundaries between public and private remained unsettled at the national level. The District would have to define its role as a public institution that could settle the private or public character of racial segregation, neighborhoods, and bussing.

Constructing Narrative Constellations

This section examines the narrative arrangements developed within the District and city regarding what to do about segregated schools after the failure of the Middle School Plan. In the early 1970s, the school district, civic organizations, and citizen groups within Seattle established alternative constellations of ideas about segregation, desegregation, and the role of public education. This section focuses on three narrative constellations revealed within District administrative reports and documents and in responses by the civil rights groups in town.

Document analysis shows District administration narrative both mirrored and fundamentally challenged federal level discourse. For one, the District's public stance was minimally integrationist if taken from public School Board resolutions only. For example, in response to pressure from groups established in the Middle School days to pursue desegregation, the District decided to draft a public resolution on desegregation in

1974, Resolution 1974-14.[19] It resolved, again, that Garfield High School would be desegregated and "that every school that is de facto segregated shall, during the 1974-75 school year, be paired with a school without a significant minority enrollment."[20] The resolution limited the district to voluntary means to accomplish both, with encouragement to establish "frequent informal contacts" between staffs at paired schools and to further study student assignment to enhance ethnic balance. In the end, Board member Patt Sutton described the resolution as little more than an effort "'to keep the wolf, in the form of the civil rights groups in Seattle, from the door.'"[21] The District did not follow up with many of the provisions.[22]

Behind this public position, two strands of narrative developed interpretations of segregation and the role of the schools. I label these structural/cultural integrationist and voluntary integrationist narratives. The third strand, represented by the Urban League and the Central Area School Council (CASC), included a new rendition of the Triad Plan with the same set of narrative assumptions and associations as the previous period and a shift in CASC commitments away from its 1960s emphasis on local control. Roughly, the structural/cultural constellation mapped onto the ideas within the Urban League's Triad Plan narrative constellation and Bottomly's original Continuous Progress narrative. The voluntary integrationist constellation contained many integral ideas from those

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[19] Ann LeGrelius Siqueland, *Without a Court Order: The Desegregation of Seattle's Schools* (Seattle: Madrona Publishers, 1981).

[20] "School Board Resolution 1974-14," reprinted in Ibid.

[21] Patt Sutton quoted in Ibid., 41.

[22] Ibid., 42.

opposed to mandatory desegregation in the late 1960s, yet significantly shifted the emphasis away from individual rights to voluntary integration. I explore these ideas as narrative constellations to establish the relational and political nature of apparently opposing ideas combined into the Seattle Plan in unexpected or unintended ways.

District Structural/Cultural Integrationist Reports

Between 1971 and 1974, the Seattle School District published multiple unofficial reports to convey their positions on racial desegregation. These discursive configurations set out a partial field of ideas from which The Seattle Plan was arranged. Most of these went far beyond the public stance in Resolution 1974-14 and provide a deeper discursive layer to the institutional reliance on voluntary racial change. Taken as a whole, the narrative of this piece of the published record of the district reveals four points: 1) racial segregation was detrimental to society, 2) the definitive role of the public schools was to end segregated schooling, 3) the role of the public schools was a social role because schooling affected social, cultural, and economic opportunity structures, and 4) individual property rights could not block remedies to segregated schooling.

These documents built a narrative with elements from the "mutual respect" narrative of the 1960s school board and the structural/economic justification for desegregation of the Seattle Urban League and Central Area voices. The narrative connected the schools' public role to ameliorating segregation despite intent. In reports published between 1971 and 1974, the district established their schools were segregated or racially isolated, which had an academically, socially, and economically detrimental

effect on *all* students. To begin, publications began distancing segregation from the idea that "this is a housing, not a school problem."[23] To paraphrase, reports argued that housing segregation was irrelevant because the schools also had segregative effects on children and their life chances.

The 1971 report "Why Desegregation in the Seattle Public Schools" rebutted such "myths" that blame housing as fundamentally misleading. Intentionally and unintentionally, the schools "have caused or permitted changes in attendance patterns which create, compound, and reinforce racial isolation."[24] Boundaries, school construction, and changing attendance patterns were just a few direct ways schools played a definitive role in segregating its students. The report defined these actions as producing discriminatory effects, but it did not use these effects to define the schools' role. *Despite* intention, the school had a role to play in ending racial isolation. Even if housing was an original cause of segregated schooling, residential desegregation in terms of fair housing laws could not succeed in solving school segregation because "only a small proportion of urban Negroes could afford the housing thus open to their occupancy."[25] That is, neutral fair housing laws would most likely perpetuate racial isolation without more directed public action. This established the schools' role in race as one that went beyond simple amelioration of discrimination.

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[23] Dale Goss,"Why Desegregation in the Seattle Public Schools," Planning and Evaluation Department, Seattle Public Schols, March 1971, 330.014.c2, (SSD).

[24] Ibid., 30.

[25] Ibid., 31.

Following these arguments, district publications articulated a role for the public schools that extended into "private" realm of economic opportunity. These justifications linked desegregation to black students' future wellbeing by pushing the discourse of equality of opportunity toward a vision of equality of results. For example, the "Why Desegregation" report linked desegregation to academic and economic opportunity for black children. The report went beyond received arguments that social class composition had a negative effect on black children's academic performance and added significant narrative about the effects of racial isolation on black children's future economic opportunities. Economically, "one of the effects of racially isolated schooling for Negroes is the reduction of their adult occupational and economic achievement."[26] The report cites the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights "Racial Isolation" report, which showed, "Negro adults who attended segregated schools are less likely to hold white collar jobs or to have substantial incomes than those who attended desegregated schools.[27] Therefore, reports challenged the separation of the public and economic arenas.

Furthermore, reports consistently associated the structural event of racial isolation to social and attitudinal consequences for *both* black and white children. The perpetuation of black and white racial isolation was not merely an academic problem for disadvantaged (black) students, but was fundamentally assumed to increase racism and misunderstanding as well as levels of segregation. For example, the 1972 "Report of the

[26] Ibid., 30-31.

[27] Ibid.

Superintendent's Task Force on Desegregation Planning" argued, "Majority and minority

students... forced by geographic, cultural and socioeconomic circumstances to live, to

learn, and to develop apart, are not able to experience consistent and effective

contacts..."[28] In another example from the report, "Why Desegregation," students

attending racially isolated schools develop harmful attitudes with long-term

consequences because they,

> [...] are likely to express fear, distrust, and hostility towards members of the other race. White students who attended racially isolated schools are likely to oppose measures designed to secure equal opportunity for Negroes. They are likely to live in segregated neighborhoods, and to express a desire to continue living in such neighborhoods...Negroes who attended segregated schools are likewise likely to fear and distrust whites. These Negroes are not likely to live in desegregated neighborhoods and they are likely to hesitate about sending their children to desegregated schools.[29]

The report argued school segregation sustains racism beyond the school setting because

racially isolated schools "will shape racist attitudes on the basis of which housing will

remain segregated for more generations."[30] With this fundamental premise, the report

concluded that policies aimed to ameliorate segregation's effects (like compensatory

education or improving minority schools) could not suffice given the structural extent of

the problem.

Again, these linkages associate racial desegregation as necessary not simply to

ameliorate discrimination, but to change behavior in society. District reports articulated

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[28] "Report of the Superintendent's Task Force on Desegregation Planning," Planning and Evaluation Department, Seattle Public Schools, February 23, 1972, 9, 330.037.c2 (SSD).

[29] Dale Goss,"Why Desegregation in the Seattle Public Schools," Planning and Evaluation Department, Seattle Public Schols, March 1971, 31, 330.014.c2, (SSD).

[30] Ibid.

definitions of segregation and desegregation in ways that prompt future visions of what

desegregation should look and how one could foresee measurements of "success." The

Citizens Committee for Quality Education (CCQE)[31] developed the most persistent

articulation combining these ideas surrounding segregation, desegregation, and the role of

the public schools. The CCQE "Final Report" included definitions of desegregation and

integration used in the final Seattle Plan in 1977 and arranged an important distinction

between desegregation and integration. CCQE incorporated definitions of desegregation,

cultural integration, and structural integration that invoked the role of the public schools

as deeper than initial amelioration of segregation. They defined *desegregation* as,

"eliminating defacto segregated schools.[32] Next the report defined "cultural integration"

with an extension of mutual respect discourse as an essential component of equal

opportunity. *Cultural integration,*

> Refers to a situation in a school in which all staff and students acquire an
> understanding and respect for the history, cultural heritage and contributions of all
> ethnic groups so that there is mutual respect and cultural sharing. A culturally
> integrated school is one in which children of all ethnic groups not only have an
> equal opportunity to acquire knowledge, skills, attitudes and behaviors necessary
> to be effective persons but are, in fact, demonstrating these characteristics.[33]

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[31] The CCQE was formed by representatives of many Seattle civil organizations in 1971 and granted school board sanction to examine all aspects of desegregation and present alternative plans to the Board. The Board gave sanction to CCQE to develop as set of recommendations to promote cultural and structural integration of the Seattle Public Schools by September 1973. (Citizen's Committee for Quality Education, "Final Report: Planning.Recommendations for Cultural and Structural Integration," June 23, 1971, in Accession A1979-01, A.A4.48, Box 19, Folder 3 (AWF)).

[32] Ibid., 1.

[33] Ibid.

Cultural integration is measured when all students and staff demonstrated mutual respect and mutual understanding of one another. This definition asserted the role of the public as one of assuring, not simply encouraging, mutual and cultural respect.

Lastly, the report included "structural integration" as a key component in ending segregation. The definition made a critical leap extending equality of opportunity beyond legal elimination of segregation. *Structural integration*, "Refers to a situation in a school in which the staff members, students and parents of all ethnic groups hold statuses and roles in the social structure of the school which are equivalent to those statuses occupied by members of other ethnic groups.[34] This definition suggests that the elimination of segregation could be concluded when students and staff, minority and majority, held equal levels of power in the schools. The report offered limited discussion of percentage goals and movement patterns, but highlighted the principles of community involvement, the need for minority students to retain a clear sense of identity and community, the importance of affirmative action and human relations training, and the need for intensive support from both public and private entities.

The structural/cultural narrative incorporated and extended mutual respect narratives in combination with fundamental visions of desegregation as essential for ameliorating racism, harmful social attitudes, and to provide economic opportunity for black students. Thus, the narrative assumed segregation as harmful despite intention, desegregation as fundamental for social and academic reasons, and the schools as situated to rectify these inequalities and provide opportunity for future citizens.

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[34] Ibid.

District Voluntary Integration Proponents

Actors within the school district also formulated an alternative narrative

constellation in terms of opposition to mandatory student assignment and busing in

reaction to the formulation of integration proposed above. This constellation represented

the District's public stance in board resolutions and the national voluntary integrationist

perspective. The voluntary integrationist narrative specifically placed aspects of a child's

upbringing into two realms: the public realm of academic training and the private realm

of "social" development, which included economic opportunity, multi-racial awareness,

and cultural attitudes. The distinct division left the role of the schools open for

desegregation only if the schools actively discriminated. Without intention, racial

inequalities merely represented the result of private choices, either social or economic.

The narrative constellation of this perspective incorporated five key points: 1)

racial integration was a valuable social goal; 2) segregation was a result of housing

patterns, and therefore not a role of the public schools to definitively solve; 3) the role of

the schools as a public institution was to provide quality education; and 4) the

neighborhood was the fundamental organizing factor student assignment because it

represented community values; 5) economics, behavior, attitudes, and culture are not

public roles of the schools. This narrative constellation is most clearly displayed in the

"Minority Report" to the CCQE's Final Report of 1971. This document serves as an

important discursive site to analyze because it provides a glimpse into the contextualized

and interactive character of idea construction because we can see which ideas were

purposefully included or excluded by comparing their recommendations for inclusion and omission for the Final Report.

The key shift from the desegregation opposition of the 1960s was that these actors expressed desires for racial integration when it came about "naturally," that is by individual choice. Individual choice in this case meant neighborhood location, assumed as freely chosen. They did not directly oppose the idea that the Seattle schools were segregated, but proposed integration as a valuable social goal not an educational legal requirement. This argument was secured through two associations: the schools as a public institution provide academic training and neighborhoods are fundamentally and privately necessary entities.

In contrast to the structural/cultural integrationist assumptions, academic training meant "intellectual development," confined to the '3 Rs,' per se. The Minority Report states, "It needs to be borne in mind that the primary responsibility of the school, at all times, is to provide for the intellectual development of all students."[35] Academic training did not extend to "social" aspects as attitudes, socialization, mutual respect, and economic position. The Minority Report recommended eliminating all paragraphs from the Final Report that included the "structural" and "cultural" integration of minority students and parents: the integration of minority educators, the promotion of multi-racial awareness, socio-economic issues, white-impacted schools, and changes in curriculum related to ethnic pride or heritage.[36] For example, it directly suggested the district

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[35] "Minority Report," in Ibid.

[36] Ibid., 2.

"should only deal with racial desegregation and not with socio-economic considerations."[37] The Minority report also eliminated elaborate discussions of white impacted schools and the necessity for all students "to experience and participate in programs designed to initiate and expand multi-racial awareness."[38] Furthermore, the report eliminated all sections on human relations training, and included the statement, emphasized with underline in text: "Human Relations should be a living experience and should not have to be taught to students as a subject."[39]

The private sphere (that is the home, family, church, community) was responsible for these socialization goals, this "living experience." "The home, the church, and the community have a shared responsibility to teach and develop moral and spiritual values and to demonstrate standards of citizenship and principles of democracy."[40] Quality education (academic 3 Rs) gained specific meaning as a public endeavor *because* the neighborhood school, while intact, provided the other necessary components of preparing youth for adulthood. In this way, neighborhood was not necessarily the place where rights are constituted (as it was in C.A.M.B.'s arguments in 1970), but the place where socialization and development are constituted. Presumably then, the home, church, and community provide the tools to create democratic citizens. According to the Minority Report, "the home has the first and best opportunity as well as the first and greatest

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[37] "Minority Report," in Ibid., 2.

[38] Ibid., 4.

[39] "Minority Report" in Ibid., 5.

[40] "Minority Report" in Ibid., 1.

responsibility for this development."[41] Therefore, the *loss* of the neighborhood school, associated with desegregation, was antithetical to the values provided by the home and community rather than antithetical to individual rights. The narrative associated goals beyond academics with "social engineering," and disruptive to "natural" forms of integration and the social strongholds of the home and church, aspects of the neighborhood. As one citizen wrote in an op-ed, "artificial integration... maybe actually harm(s) natural patterns of integration."[42] This distinction solidified the neighborhood as the essential representation and distributor of community values, as a location that housed the home, church, and welcoming neighbors.

This narrative could not rely simply on the separation of public and private goals, but had to develop specific equality goals as well. The voluntary integrationist narrative asserted the role of the schools as treating all students equally in order to assure quality education for all. To do this, the "Minority Report," for example, recommended uniform standards of achievement, vocational training, attendance requirements, and enforcement of discipline.[43] They felt that the only way to fairly distribute the necessity for desegregation was through voluntary methods; these would provide equal opportunities for any student to transfer as well as the opportunity for all students to decline to participate.

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[41] "Minority Report" in Ibid., 1.

[42] "Muir P.T.A. wants school taken out of bussing plan," *Seattle Times*, 2 March 1978, C4.

[43] "Minority Report," in Citizen's Committee for Quality Education, "Final Report: Planning Recommendations for Cultural and Structural Integration," June 23, 1971, 4, in A1979-01, A.A4.48, Box 19, Folder 3 (AWF).

Civil Rights Narrative Constellation

Generally, the civil rights narrative constellation maps onto the Urban League and CACRC's positions from the 1960s. After the Middle School debacle, the civil rights groups coalesced under the broad leadership of the Central Area School Council (CASC), the NAACP, and the Church Council of Greater Seattle.[44] While the Urban League remained an integral player in crafting desegregation policy, the CASC, NAACP, and Church Council became the most active voices pushing this integrationist agenda. Though the debate between the black separatists and integrationists remained throughout the 1970s, the differences did not surface between 1975 and 1977.[45] The shift in this narrative took on an emphasis of "pluralism" and "multiculturalism" as an extension of the multi-racial integrationist focus of the CACRC in the 1960s.

Essentially, the fundamental difference between this narrative and the voluntary integrationist narrative is that integration, not equal chance, is the foundation of equal education. Services to rectify previous disadvantages, such as compensatory education, bilingual education, or after-school programs, are pieces of an integration policy but not the foundation. These groups built the narrative as a vision of an integrated, or "pluralistic," society, promoted and ensured through an integrated educational system. While there were differences in emphasis between the Church Council, CASC, and NAACP, these groups shared the assumption that an integration policy was not a

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[44] See Appendix B for description of groups.

[45] Siqueland, *Without a Court Order: The Desegregation of Seattle's Schools.*

temporary policy, but one based on a vision that fundamentally desired diversity and pluralism to become components of an education system for all students.

These actors primarily contested the voluntary integrationist narrative by emphasizing equalizing the burden of desegregation and challenging the "neutrality" of choice. Exceptions, foundational in voluntary programs, promoted inequity in movement, different treatment for minority and white youth, and the idea that white youth do not need an integration plan. The CASC argued the "wishy washy voluntary programs" did not work and forced an unequal burden on minority children.[46] The Church Council also contested voluntary and "magnet" programs to show that these led to inequality in educational opportunities and a burden on minority students. Voluntary programs relied upon attraction and choice that inherently created inequality. For example, the Church Council argued that plans that relying "heavily on 'Magnet-like' programs to 'draw' student movement have the disadvantage of creating educational inequality in the District...[under these plan] a superior education would be provided for about 20,000 students; an inferior education to 43,000 students."[47] The NAACP challenged voluntary policies that both disregarded the integrity of diversity and put the burden on black students. Integrated education was necessary for all students, not simply minority students. For example, the NAACP argued no area should be exempt from a desegregation plan because an exemption of students and regions contradicts the basic

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[46] "Memo to Mr. Don Olson, President; and Members Seattle School Board, from Central Area School Council" in "Desegregation: What is best for all of our children," by Ann Siqueland, Task Force on Racial Justice in Education, Church Council of Greater Seattle," 63, 330.155.c3 (SSD).

[47] "Action of the Board of Directors Church Council of Greater Seattle Regarding the Desegregation of the Seattle Public Schools," in Ibid., 65.

foundation of desegregation as necessary "for the general health of the youth in Seattle."[48]

The Urban League retained its focus on socio-economic integration while groups like the Church Council shifted to an emphasis of multiculturalism. For example, almost every time a representative of the Church Council spoke at school board meetings, they affirmed their philosophy of pluralism, "The Church Council further affirms the belief that, in this rich and diverse world, each child deserves to grow up in a setting that will increase his/her knowledge and appreciation of varied cultural traditions."[49] This multi-cultural philosophy of pluralism remained the foundation of their desegregation proposals and attracted multiple other groups under their coalition including the Black United Clergy for Action, and the Asian-American Education Association.

Assessing the Narratives

The three competing narrative constellations organized distinct, yet interacting, sets of concepts about what racial segregation meant in Seattle, the role of the schools, and the meaning of racial equality. Within the assumptions and recommendations related to each of these issues, the narrative constellations expressed primary cleavages within expressions of what racial inequality and ending racial inequality meant in the public schools. One common thread that signified the changing terrain of conflict in Seattle was the emphasis given to integration, whether voluntary or mandatory.

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[48] Ibid .

[49] Record 73, 22 December 1976, 233 (SSR). Observed in Records between 1975 and 1977.

Both the structural/cultural integrationist and civil rights narrative constellations associated the concepts together in ways that collapsed any divisions between the public schools and social or economic realms. The connections relied on assumptions that segregation existed and caused lack of opportunity and unequal education for minority students while also perpetuating societal racism. Furthermore, segregation was unrealistic for society because of the growing diversity. Desegregation, then, was a social and fundamental necessity for both white and black to end past and future racism and promote equal life opportunities. The foundational role of the schools remains academic training, yet the idea of academic training was connected to cultural equality and awareness (multiculturalism, mutual respect) for all students, and economic opportunity for black children in adulthood. The central difference between the District's structural/cultural integrationists and the civil rights civic actors can be pictured as differences in the strength of bonds between similar ideas. Civil rights actors began with a stronger focus on alleviating the burden of desegregation from black students and therefore primarily emphasized the necessity of integration for all students. While they also placed a great emphasis on multiculturalism and pluralism as the foundation for the necessity for societal integration, they also placed more specific focus on the socio-economic role of desegregation. Again, the Urban League's new version of the Triad Plan developed in 1977, retained socio-economic integration as of equal importance with racial integration. Following the logic of economic inequality, civil rights actors assigned the neighborhood as a source of inequality, directly revealing its socially defined nature as essentially problematic for the public endeavor of schooling.

The voluntary integrationist narrative constellation relied upon assigning the "private" realm to include economic opportunity, cultural awareness, and social learning. Essentially their entire narrative constellation rested on the connection between racial segregation and discriminatory intent. Given school segregation was a result of housing segregation, school integration was beyond the role of the schools. The assumption that housing segregation should only be addressed through amelioration of discriminatory real estate practices further relied upon the concurrent articulation of the neighborhood as a naturalized social good. As the claim of neighborhoods as a site of rights had already lost legitimacy, the security of the neighborhood as *the* organizing factor for the schools depended upon a re-assignment of its value. For the voluntary integrationist narrative, the fundamentality of the neighborhood was based in its vision as *the* realm for socialization. Therefore, disruptions of the neighborhood then would disrupt the foundational place of social training for children. The character of this move became a pervasive paradox. The public affirmation and naturalization of the boundary between neighborhoods and schools hid its constructed character and also showed the power of its taken-for-grantedness that allowed actors to frame the neighborhood as a naturally "private" entity out of the reach of public meddling.

Building a Discursive Coalition

This section explores how Seattle actors mobilized these narrative constellations in policy debates to address the situation of racial segregation in Seattle. Key developments provided the impetus for the School Board and city actors to coalesce and

formulate a legitimate desegregation plan in 1977. The District initially responded to the reports analyzed above with no immediate action. Yet, after Seattle citizens dealt a severe blow to the District's budget with a double-levy defeat in 1975, the Board had to seek other avenues of funding.[50] The District applied for Emergency School Aid Act (ESAA) funds in order to meet the deficit caused by the double-levy loss. This action led to a HEW investigation of various aspects of segregation within Seattle's schools, after which the District and city establishment anticipated the probability of court intervention if they did not take direct actions to solve segregation. With the fear of court order, invested actors began to coalesce into various groups and task forces in order to solve segregation before the courts intervened. This section explores the events and the way central actors interpreted and responded to the events.

Therefore, the Seattle Plan resulted from concrete imperatives that forced city actors to address segregation in ways they previously had not. However, the meaning of the Seattle Plan resulted from their intense interactions. Actors came to the table with specific interpretations and expressions of race and desegregation, their narrative constellations. When the actors deliberated within multiple committee meetings, school board meetings, public forums and personal communications, we can see how certain connections developed within the narrative constellations were activated and others de-

[50] The only other double levy loss happened in 1959. Levies are submitted twice to the voters if necessary, and in these cases were defeated twice (Siqueland 31). At this time, Seattle relied on voter-approved levies to cover at least half of the cost of running schools (Cameron, 10). The district's enrollment had also been in decline since 1969, another source of lost revenue. In 1962, District enrollment peaked at over 100,000 and by 1977 fell below 60,000 for the first time since the late 1940s, Cameron 11. Between 1973 and 1974, District enrollment declined by 6.3%, which included a 2.4% decline in black student enrollment ("Racial Distribution of Seattle School District Students," in James F. Page, "The Plan for the Reduction and Elimination of Minority Group Isolation in Seattle Public Schools." Prepared for purposes of Documenting Eligibility to Apply Under Title VII of the Emergency School Aid Act, 16 May 1975. Seattle School District Published Material, 330.212 (SSD)).

emphasized. We can also see how some connections could bring together actors who appeared to have different goals.

The Reality of Court Intervention

The reality of court intervention appeared possible because of the District's negotiations with the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare (HEW). These events led to concerns over the city's reception of court-ordered intervention. Would this please the black community, who had borne the burden of desegregation up until now? Would the white community lash out against busing? In response to these fears, the District articulated their reticence to wait for a court order with a specific narrative focused on the "uniqueness" of Seattle and its multicultural character.

The District applied for Emergency School Aid Act (Title VII) funds in the spring of 1975.[51] Despite the lack of political will to further desegregation, they sent an application to HEW for funding to extend their voluntary efforts. They received funds pending HEW investigation. In 1975, a HEW investigation found the District out of compliance with the civil rights assurances the District had agreed to in order to receive Emergency School Aid Act funds, related to bi-lingual education and minority-staff desegregation.[52] HEW withdrew the funds until the District complied with the provisions to transfer minority teachers out of inner-city schools (primarily in the Southeast area of

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[51] James Page, "The Plan for the Reduction and Elimination of Minority Group Isolation in Seattle Public Schools, Prepared for purposes of documenting eligibility to apply under Title VII of the Emergency School Aid Act, 16 May 1975, 2, in 330.212 (SSD).

[52] Siqueland, *Without a Court Order: The Desegregation of Seattle's Schools.*

Seattle). Specifically, HEW demanded 16% minority teachers in each school. The

district decided to redistribute the relatively small number of minority teachers

throughout the district, rather than hiring additional minority teachers. At the end of

these negotiations, HEW indicated it would be looking at student-assignment policy next.

In May 1976, the *Seattle Times* reported that the Office of Civil Rights might pursue a

full-scale civil rights investigation in the fall. If HEW found the District out of

compliance in the area of student assignment, the doors would be open to initiate

complaints that most likely could result with a court order to desegregate.[53]

Many District and city actors watched the violence in Boston and other cities

under court order and decided this was something to avoid in Seattle. Court order meant

a loss of local control over their schools and over specific desegregation plans. Their

negotiations with HEW left the District worried about the likelihood of federal mandates

garnering full support from Seattle's vast array of interests. Richard Andrews, chair of

the new District-Wide Advisory Committee (DWAC), warned of a court ordered or HEW

determined desegregation plan, "It is not enough to simply desegregate the Seattle Public

Schools but rather the plan in Seattle must be tailor made to accommodate the uniqueness

of Seattle."[54] Andrews was concerned because of the process by which HEW decided the

district had to comply with federal regulations. He referred to assigning 16% minority

teachers at each school as an "archaic melting pot theory."[55] District legal counsel, Gary

[53] Ibid., Chapters 4-5.

[54] Richard Andrews quoted in Ibid.

[55] Ibid.

Little, warned the Board, "'what we have gone through on bilingual and staff transfers is a curtain raiser to what we will go through in the fall.'"[56]

Another concern reflected the language at both federal and court level that limited desegregation to the "reduction of minority group isolation." If followed exactly, federal requirements would lead Seattle to revisit the division created between the integrationists and separatists in the late 1960s because the focus on minority student movement produced a burden on black students. Significantly as well, the focus on minority student movement and the melting pot theory of redistribution did not incorporate a multi-cultural philosophy of integration and the assurance of cultural identification. The lack of attention to these assurances endangered public support and heightened the likelihood that Seattle could be Boston.[57]

In 1976, the ACLU, aligned with the NAACP, Urban League, and the Church Council of Greater Seattle, began discussion to pursue a lawsuit against the District in 1976. At this point, it became clear to the ACLU that Superintendent Moberly would be uncooperative and pursued litigation. David Harrison, the Executive Director recalled, "'I don't think anyone could maintain that without that threat the Board would have adopted a mandatory desegregation plan.'"[58] Therefore, they prepared for the lawsuit and

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[56] Little, quoted in Ibid.,32, 63. For example, if the District implemented desegregation according to strict redistribution of percentages (as staff desegregation had to happen), the schools in Seattle would end up with 17% black students, 9% Asian students, and 3% each Native American and Hispanic students.

[57] Ibid., Chapter 4.

[58] Harrison quoted in Ibid., 89.

communicated extensively with all city groups to keep everyone possible informed of the potential action.

Overall, these fears fed into a sense of urgency for local control rather than having either HEW or the courts decide what Seattle's desegregation would look like.[59] This urgency could be seen in quick formation of many committees and task forces within the interested civic groups in town. The Church Council of Greater Seattle formed a Task Force on Racial Justice. The ACLU formed a Desegregation Task Force. Seattle Mayor Wes Uhlman formed his own committees within the planning department to research and review what was happening throughout the country. The non-profit corporation, the Coalition for Quality Integrated Education (CQIE) and the Voluntary Racial Transfer Steering Committee also worked with the school administration and community to assist desegregation efforts and recruit voluntary transfers. In addition to DWAC, new Superintendent Dr. David Moberly also set up an office of desegregation planning upon appointment in 1976, though at this time the committee was to embark only on voluntary plans.

Eventually, the Chamber of Commerce and the Municipal League also set up their own task forces to explore desegregation strategies and to ensure their voice in decision-making. These city organizations developed committees to address desegregation issues to "catch up" with the groups like the NAACP and ACLU. The most prominent desegregation representative of the Chamber, Shan Mullin, contacted the members of these groups as well as the Church Council in 1976 asking them to postpone the suit

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[59] See Ibid., 87.

because, "'I felt that we should not assume that the only way to desegregate was to have the school district fight it out in court,'" Mullin recalled.[60] Mullin helped to delay court order and bought more time for the Chamber and Municipal League to enter the decision-making processes in the District. With this time, they were able to establish communication networks to build trust among the active city groups and to prevent potential adversaries from misunderstanding each other.[61]

This citywide network of people working on desegregation gathered a sort of momentum that pushed desegregation along. At this time, David Harrison recalled, "'every conceivable item that was happening in the city on desegregation was open for discussion.'"[62] Each group had a semi-stated orientation towards desegregation, for example the Chamber did not desire mandatory busing from the outset. However, these committees did not represent fixed positions but ended up as spaces where interpretations and understandings about desegregation developed continually within the city.

Institutional Space for a Discursive Coalition

The most central group composed of city-based, citizen, and school district actors was the District-Wide Advisory Committee (DWAC), which was formed in 1975 and reported to the Superintendent. DWAC began as a group of highly committed integrationists who challenged the District to actively seek an end to segregation and developed into a common forum for widespread views on desegregation. DWAC had

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[60] Mullin, quoted in Ibid., 106.

[61] Ibid., 130. The most significant of these groups was the No-Name Committee

[62] Harrison quoted in Ibid., 91.

tried to challenge the District continuously since 1974, but Moberly's first act towards

desegregation was another voluntary plan in 1976, the Magnet Plan. The District created

DWAC with the application for ESAA, with its charter revised in 1975 to expand

responsibilities to advising School Board and Superintendent.[63] Members were recruited

city-wide, from over sixty organizations representing education, ethnic, and community

groups. Active membership included people from the NAACP, CQIE, ACLU, CASC,

Church Council, League of Women Voters, Asian-American Education Association, and

the Parent-Teacher-Student Association (PTSA). In the final throes of desegregation

planning, the Municipal League and Chamber of Commerce also sent representatives to

DWAC. They became a very uniquely committed group with a high level of expertise.[64]

DWAC's research between 1974 and 1976 did not cause immediate action on the

part of the District, but it began "to construct a framework of ideas within which a unified

community approach to desegregation could be developed."[65] The unique space allowed

actors to trouble the assumptions and concepts used by the District to avoid serious

desegregation talks and united actors of widely different original interests. Dan Levant

was elected its first chairperson and took it upon himself to make numerous appearances

before the School Board. Levant describes the early actions of DWAC in an atmosphere

driven by an unsupportive Superintendent and their administrations, "'we were blasting

the school district out of its comfort zone, into a very uncomfortable area. The intention

was to make the school district do something it didn't want to do, and you could only do

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[63] Ibid., 43.

[64] Ibid., 44.

[65] Ibid., 44.

that by making it too uncomfortable for the district to stay where it was.'"[66] Levant met with Dr. Moberly immediately after he was appointed superintendent, and quickly realized that Moberly would not pursue desegregation any more quickly than Superintendent Troxel had. Levant saw the role of DWAC as there to force the District, with the backing of a city-wide group of actors, to face the problem of desegregation, the likelihood of court order, and the necessity to develop a policy prior to lawsuit.

At this time, DWAC met regularly and brought one issue after another to the attention of the School Board. Despite this, Moberly directed DWAC and the District's Desegregation/Integration Committee to consider only voluntary desegregation strategies for the 1977-1978 school year after DWAC had put together report after report demonstrating the ineffectiveness of voluntary-only measures. Despite the growing number of citywide advisory committees, Dr. Moberly's first act on desegregation came from within his small circle of decision-makers within the administration.

The chair of the Desegregation/Integration Committee, William Maynard, produced a four-page "Magnet Plan" to the Board and DWAC in February 1977.[67] It emphasized choice and control, as it offered educational options to encourage students to enroll in Magnet schools "because they want to, not because they have to."[68] The Magnet Plan reflected the voluntary integrationist narrative. It posed mandatory assignment against quality education in statements like "Seattle Public Schools would

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[66] Levant quoted in Ibid., 43.

[67] Ibid., 49.

[68] "Seattle Public Schools 1977-78 MAGNET PROGRAMS and Voluntary Racial Transfer Program: Information and Application," 4, in 330.005 (SSD).

prefer to accomplish desegregation through educationally sound voluntary programs rather than mandatory assignment."[69] By associating voluntary methods with "educationally sound" methods, the statement separated mandatory assignment from quality education. The Magnet Plan included an emphasis on pluralism and diversity, but connected these values as a parental choice. They lamented the fact that Seattle had several racially segregated neighborhoods "where students cannot establish relationships that reflect the multi-ethnic world in which they must function as adults," then did not assume a role to play other than providing a choice for students "of all ethnic groups to learn together."[70] Again, this association noted the benefits of diversity without taking on the urgent responsibility to end segregation.

The Board approved the Magnet Plan's implementation for the fall of 1977. Some on the Board expressed hope. Bleakney stated her belief that it had "the potential for one of the soundest educational advantages which could be offered to children of Seattle."[71] Ellen Roe lauded magnet schools as representing "options that will give ALL parents and students educational choices." The Chamber of Commerce and Municipal League publicly supported the plan. But the support ended there. DWAC as well as many on the Desegregation/Integration committee opposed the magnet plan for a variety of reasons discussed below. The idea ignited a fire of debate and reconsideration within committees citywide, where they began to seriously consider a new arrangement of ideas

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[69] Ibid., 5.

[70] Ibid., 5.

[71] Record 73, 11 May 1977 (SSR).

in order to meet federal guidelines and implement a locally supported desegregation policy.

Many responded to the Magnet Plan with ferocity. Groups such as the Central Area School Council and the Urban League took issue with the values embedded in the concept that assumed that white parents should be enticed in order to participate to end racial segregation. Bleakney noted that some thought of the Magnet program as an "escape routes for whites."[72] The Central Area School Council blasted the District for the plan with a conclusion, "Magnets sound like advertising,"[73] For the Urban League, "programs such as the 'magnet plan' approach the problem backwards" with the "premise is that people should be enticed into integration under the guise of special education opportunities"[74] Others went so far as to call the program inherently racist. One sentiment came from a concerned parent at a Board meeting who was against magnet schools because they reinforced racist attitudes and increased educational inequality.[75] The Joint Advisory Commission on Education even said magnets "smacked of stereotyping," calling "the very idea that there are such things as 'Black-oriented options' and 'White-oriented options' is...inherently racist."[76] Similarly, DWAC saw that "as a concept it is not inherently racist, but rather has been operationalized in racist ways (viz.,

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[72] "Memo from Bleakney to School Board," May 17, 1977, in A98-13, Box 9 (LCF).

[73] Central Area School Council to Seattle School District, July 1977 in A2005-15, Box 9 (AWF).

[74] "Seattle Urban League: Triad Plan Summary," 7, Accession 607-7, Box 42, Folder #25, Seattle Urban League Records, University of Washington Libraries (Herafter cited as SUL).

[75] Record 73, 18 January 1977 (SSR).

[76] Letter to School Board President Don Olson from Tod A. Daniels, Chairman JACE 16 February 1977, Accession A2005-15, Box 10, Folder "Desegregation JACE," (AWF).

closing a Black school and giving Black children options in white schools)."[77]

Furthermore, voluntary plans put the burden on black students once again. In this sense, voluntary programs were "one-way" programs where black students tended to transfer out of the Central Area, with the number of white students transferring in decreased since the peak year of 1968-70.[78] DWAC explained one of the "particularly deleterious effects" was putting the burden on black student movement.[79]

This independent act alienated many on DWAC who felt Moberly disregarded the public process. The particularly fiery Levant used this opportunity to publicly resign as a powerful political statement against the Magnet Plan. "'I can't say I was surprised,' recalled Levant, 'but…I was outraged by the brutality of the superintendent imposing the Magnet Plan in defiance of everybody else who was working on desegregation.'"[80] While Levant half-expected the rest of DWAC to resign, they remained and were able to recruit a new chair in 1977, Dr. Richard Andrews, who proved a politically savvy organizer. Andrews was a professor of educational administration at University of Washington and had chaired the Urban League's education committee. Andrews had been active in public school issues as a citizen advocate and understood the necessity of

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[77] "Desegregation Plan Criteria," developed by the Desegregation Advisory Committee, February 28, 1977, in memo from Richard L. Andrews to Cheryl Bleakney, in memo from Bleakney to Board Members, March 7, 1977, Accession A98-13, Box 9 (LCF).

[78] Memo from Robert L. Williams, RE: report on the Status of the voluntary racial transfer program," January 6, 1976, Accession 1358-007, Box 38, Folder #20, University of Washington Libraries, Church Council of Greater Seattle (Hereafter cited as CCS).

[79] "Desegregation Plan Criteria," developed by the Desegregation Advisory Committee, February 28, 1977, in memo from Richard L. Andrews to Cheryl Bleakney, in memo from Bleakney to Board Members, March 7, 1977, Accession A98-13, Box 9 (LCF).

[80] Levant, quoted in Siqueland, *Without a Court Order: The Desegregation of Seattle's Schools.*

working with the administration as well as the School Board if DWAC wanted to pass a stronger desegregation proposal. Under Andrews, DWAC slowly developed a better working relationship with Moberly and then a strong reputation in the city when the Chamber and Municipal League sent representatives to meetings. When DWAC included members from the Chamber of Commerce, Municipal League, proposals that were not supported were not legitimate proposals.

This voluntary strategy prompted both the ACLU and the Seattle NAACP to expand its group of plaintiffs. The ACLU did not consider the Magnet Plan, sufficient in any way. They filed an official complaint with HEW on May 10, 1977 alleging there was racial imbalance and the District had "taken action which it knew, or should have known, would have segregative results in continuing or intensifying racial segregation in the Seattle Public Schools."[81] The action they referred to included school policies relating to boundary construction, school staffing, and issues associated with the Magnet Plan.

Political Organizing for a Discursive Coalition

After the Magnet vote in February 1977, the Board continued to dance around the topic of definitive planning and could not agree on a timetable and definition of what it was they wanted to eliminate. The groups demanding explicit timetables and definitions were DWAC, NAACP, ACLU, Church Council, CASC, and three board members (Bleakney, Suzanne Hittman, and Dorothy Hollingsworth). Generally, the Chamber of

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[81] Letter from Marlaina Kiner, Department of Health, Education, and Welfare to Dr. Moberly, May 10. 1977, Acession A98-13, Box 9 (LCF).

Commerce and "Downtown" group and the rest of the Board did not want to commit to a timetable and definition because, as board member Richard Alexander said he "could not agree to giving a time table if that time table literally rips this city apart so that massive White flight out of this city is created and all that is left are minorities."[82] Ellen Roe also felt "that adopting [a definition and timetable] is a threat to the public and while not all parts of the city were involved in past experiences with mandatory assignments, repeatedly they have been threatened with such methods."[83]

The imminent court order was not the only reason for the upswing of support of the major civic groups. Three actors played integral roles in building a citywide coalition that could support the public's will to initiate desegregation that could even included busing. In addition to the idea generation and organizational leadership provided by Dr. Richard Andrews and DWAC and various civic organizations, Superintendent David Moberly, Seattle Mayor Wes Uhlman, and Board member Cheryl Bleakney were critical political entrepreneurs who organized the most powerful interests in town- the business community. All understood that the involvement and support of the Chamber and Municipal League was necessary to guarantee the support of the civic and business leaders in Seattle. Though these four figures began with different predispositions, their work to organize the city bolstered a supportive coalition.

By February 1977, Mayor Uhlman had decided that the only way for Seattle to desegregate would be with mandatory student assignment. Uhlman was seen as a

[82] Alexander in Record 73, May 11, 1977, 551 (SSR).

[83] Roe in Record 73, May 11, 1977, 553 (SSR).

uniquely liberal mayor when he was elected in 1969. He had been a member of the Washington State Legislature in the late 1960s and had proposed an inter-district desegregation plan in 1967 that included busing. His two sons had both participated in the voluntary racial transfer program. School Board Member Cheryl Bleakney recalled the crucial role Uhlman played in a volatile time, "the city hall, at least the mayor, were extremely helpful. I think they were the ones who helped pull along others. Our fear was of course public reaction and we have elections every couple years. I was scared to death when we first decided to do it."[84] Through research and contacts with other school districts, in early February 1977 Uhlman decided that a voluntary plan would not solve the problem, and would certainly not satisfy the groups considering the lawsuit.[85] Uhlman had been noticing, "History shows in other cities where you had some outside entity, other than the community, running the school system, you had a problem."[86] Uhlman went to Moberly and Mullin of the Chamber and said, "If we don't do anything, if you don't get involved, we can expect destruction of property."[87]

Moberly always assumed that the District would go to court, "and that the voluntary magnet programs were only buying the district time."[88] Nevertheless, Moberly's most celebrated move was how he gathered the support of the business community, despite his personal commitment, for the eventual Seattle Plan that

[84] Cheryl Bleakney, interview with author, Eugene, OR., tape recording 23 September 2008.

[85] Siqueland, *Without a Court Order: The Desegregation of Seattle's Schools.*

[86] Uhlman quoted in Ibid., 96.

[87] Uhlman quoted in Ibid., 102.

[88] "School Board expected to OK milestone Seattle Plan," *Seattle Times,* 11 December 1977, A7.

incorporated mandatory busing. Moberly cultivated a significant relationship with the Chamber and the Municipal League from the get-go, so "'they would not be in the mode of reacting somewhere down the pike.'"[89] Many School Board Members retrospectively commended Moberly's role in bringing the city together. Patt Sutton recalled, "He certainly did a great job of putting everything together. It was a combination of religious groups, business people…a lot of behind-the-scenes work was necessary."[90] Bleakney also noted Moberly's leadership role, "we were lucky to have him. I don't think he wanted to go into desegregation. He took over and did it in a very conscientious way." When asked why the Chamber supported the plan when they did, Bleakney explained the surprising nature of their support, "I don't know why the Chamber came along. I know they liked Dave Moberly, maybe he brought them along. It's not something I would have expected ahead of time."[91] In an interview with David Moberly, he noted his part as well: "I think the role I had was I was able to pull together various groups, including the Chamber, and the City, and the Mayor's office, and to be a part of the planning and overview and [get them] willing to come out publicly and accept [desegregation]."[92] He doubted the Board would have voted without the support of the Chamber, "because three

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[89] Moberly quoted in Siqueland, *Without a Court Order: The Desegregation of Seattle's Schools.*

[90] Patt Sutton, phone interview with author, Eugene, OR., tape recording, 18 November 2007.

[91] Cheryl Bleakney, phone interview with author, Eugene, OR., tape recording, 23 September 2008.

[92] David Moberly, phone interview with author, Eugene, OR., tape recording, 5 September 2007.

members of that board [Don Olson, Patt Sutton, and Richard Alexander] were swayed by the city and by the Chamber."[93]

Without the Chamber and Municipal League firmly committing their political resources to the District, the Board remained reticent to advocate for specific policies. Andrews and Bleakney also played critical roles in opening space for these actors to interact together. In a personal interview, Dr. Moberly noted the work of Dick Andrews, "He played a very key role and was very good at working with the advisory group. Even though he tended to be on the liberal end of the spectrum, he could relate to the Downtown group. He could come in, and close the door, and let his hair down, and I could do the same."[94] In an act of frustration in late May 1977, Board member Cheryl Bleakney provided an impetus for the city and District to initiate clear proposals. Bleakney, a long-time supporter of desegregation who volunteered her own children for the Voluntary Racial Transfer plan in the 1970s, made her strongest push for more immediate action and wrote a proposal to be published in the newspaper that would call for a definition of racial imbalance and a timetable to eliminate it. Bleakney decided to write this letter to the paper after the multiple sessions the Board had with the NAACP and ACLU about the impending lawsuit (filed May 10, 1977). In a memo written to the Board on May 17, Bleakney expressed her purpose in sending this letter to the press: "to give the Board one last chance to express a strong enough commitment to desegregation

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[93] Ibid.

[94] Ibid.

to avoid litigation."[95] She knew it would cause ripples, "I knew what I was doing and I was scared stiff."[96]

Bleakney's news column was the first significant public stride since 1970 to blatantly demonstrate the inevitability of a mandatory framework for desegregation. Up to this point, it was likely that the public's relative calm resulted from the lack of definitive stance, timetable and definition. However, Bleakney could not sit satisfied with the lack of steps needed to accomplish desegregation, simply for fear of levy loss or public backlash. In memo to the school board following this column, Bleakney expressed frustration with the years of sidestepping desegregation from fear of future levy losses and public confrontation.[97] Sarcastically, she lamented their unwillingness to listen to Suzanne Hittman's warnings in 1976 about the more immediate need for long-term desegregation planning, when the rest of the Board would responded-- "mustn't hurt the levy!" They had all feared the potential levy loss and confrontation with Moberly, "We were in that box, and it would have taken a major confrontation with the Superintendent to get out of it."[98]

At the Board meeting the day after the press release, May 18, 1977, Bleakney's motion for a definition and timetable was tabled, yet again. Other Board members, including Board president Don Olson, were upset about her brazen press release and did

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[95] "Memo from Cheryl Bleakney to School Board Members, May 17, 1977, Accession A98-13, Box 9 (LCF).

[96] Bleakney quoted in Siqueland, *Without a Court Order: The Desegregation of Seattle's Schools.*

[97] "Memo from Cheryl Bleakney to School Board Members," May 17, 1977, Accession A98-13, Box 9 (LCF).

[98] Ibid.

not think the Board should pursue mandatory measures as of yet. Olson and

Superintendent Moberly continued to push for purely voluntary measures, such as the

Magnet Plan. Both assumed the District would go to court and deal with mandatory

assignment after that. Olson felt they could "'have a plan in place that would be good

enough that it would be defensible in the courts, and that we could term it

"voluntary.""[99]

With a lack of responsiveness from Moberly and the Board, Bleakney directly

asked for help from the city, specifically the sympathetic Mayor Uhlman's office, and

heard about a letter of joint support being written to the Board from the City of Seattle,

Chamber of Commerce, Municipal League, and Urban League. This letter of support for

arrived for the Board May 20, 1977. Two days prior to the joint letter (one day after

Bleakney's memo was published) the *Seattle Post-Intelligencer* publicly endorsed

desegregation planning through civic engagement and city leadership, "to get

desegregation started- and finished." The *P-I* specifically asked the civic and

government officials, including the Chamber of Commerce, churches, and news media to

cooperate and support school officials. The editorial board framed their position as

needing to avoid court order, but also to act as a "progressive and enlightened city" to

join together to end segregation, an "evil to the children segregated."[100]

In a letter from the key actors of the "Downtown Group," the City, Chamber,

Municipal League and Urban League declared, "united support for your adoption of a

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[99] Don Olson quoted in Siqueland, *Without a Court Order: The Desegregation of Seattle's Schools.*

[100] "City Must Guarantee Quality Education," *Seattle Post-Intelligencer*, 18 May 1977.

definition of racial isolation and measurable goals leading to the elimination of racial isolation in the Seattle Public Schools, prior to a Court ordered and mandated desegregation remedy."[101] The Chamber of Commerce and the Municipal League had endorsed the Magnet Plan, but also understood the legal vulnerability of the school district. Their work with DWAC and their own committees' research provided them grounds for pushing desegregation towards a specific vision with a timetable and definition. The letter stressed the "importance and preferability" of locally derived solutions.[102] The media reported the letter as "pressure…to act to get a desegregation plan of its own underway before one is forced on it by a federal court."[103]

In the Downtown group's letter, they expressed a sense of inevitability of desegregation and the need for community cooperation to ensure a smooth transition. According to Jerry Skutt of the Municipal League, the primary intent of the letter was to avoid possible lawsuit, and "In no case, to my knowledge, did we discuss the how-tos."[104] Shan Mullin (Chamber) and Mark Cooper (Municipal League) also expected the final plan to be voluntary with the possibility of mandatory back-up measures.[105]

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[101] "Joint letter to Mr. Don Olson, from: The Municipal League, The Chamber of Commerce, The City of Seattle, and The Urban League," 20 May 1977, Accession A2005-15, Box 9 (AWF).

[102] "Weekly newsletter," *Seattle Business*, 30 May 1977, Vol. 62, No. 21

[103] Ibid., "Civic Leaders Aid Desegregation Effort," *Seattle Post-Intelligencer*, 25 May 1977.

[104] Jerry Skutt quoted in Siqueland, *Without a Court Order: The Desegregation of Seattle's Schools.*

[105] Ibid., 111.

Nevertheless, the news reported only five days later that "forced integration" was an almost certainty.[106]

The Coalition is Built

These organizing acts helped to establish grounds for a discursive coalition to join around certain points of emphasis: visions of local control and city pride in solving segregation. This provided a bridge between the Downtown group and strict integrationist proponents like the Urban League and Church Council. If it were not for the public support of the "Downtown" elites, the Board would not have had the political will to implement a desegregation plan beyond voluntary methods. The Board was able to produce a majority vote on June 8, 1977 in favor of defining racial imbalance and a timetable for elimination. The letter was the deciding factor for Olson who said that without the threat of lawsuit, there would not have been the letter, which caused him to change his vote. He recalled,

> 'Here's a letter signed by some of the more conservative people in town, namely the Municipal League and the Chamber of Commerce. They're not claiming to be liberals by any definition. Here we have these two organizations saying, "Do more." So we were being pushed at that point. I wasn't going to take them on and say, "You're wrong, and I'm right."'[107]

This support reflected a shift in citywide support not for anything specific yet, but to deliberate about the shape desegregation was to take. Olson noticed, "people's attitudes toward desegregation have changed... a critical point has been reached where the

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[106] *Seattle Post-Intelligencer*, 25 May 1977, "Forced Integration Probably –Moberly"

[107] Don Olson quoted in Siqueland, *Without a Court Order: The Desegregation of Seattle's Schools.*

majority of people are supportive of desegregation efforts."[108] In the same meeting, Hittman reflected "that the Seattle School District is in an enviable position with regard to most school districts," given this amount of citywide support without being in court.[109]

One could argue that the threat of court order allowed the more conservative institutions to bow to the liberal groups like the ACLU and NAACP in order to maintain city pride and enact a plan without the courts. However, this cannot explain the particular character of coalition and the desegregation policy and its points of emphasis, prioritizations, and narrative constructions of the elements of desegregation. The coalition was a political paradox that revealed multiple levels of deep contradictions brought together by an array of conservative and liberal city groups that joined disparate ideas, at times in seemingly complementary ways, into one policy.

In sum, these events, spaces, and organizing acts built the foundation for a possible coalition of actors to deliberate on what Seattle should do about segregated schools. The coalition of actors began to settle, but at this point their differences outweighed their possible connections. While they sat in committees separately and together discussing desegregation, these actors had not yet activated connections between them in ways to arrange policy.

These organizing actions established a citywide commitment to at least think about desegregation under the assumption that the schools had to take some type of definitive action. They established the groundwork for the various narrative

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[108] Don Olson in Record 73, May 25, 1977, 565 (SSR).

[109] Suzanne Hittman in Record 73, May 25, 1977, 565 (SSR).

constellations to be used in relationship to each other, to articulate policy solutions directly in response to other articulations. In this way, the development of civic capacity to implement a desegregation policy was the development of narrative demand to articulate ideas with the understanding that policy had to be developed. At first, the city committees developed policies with little reference or collaboration with other committees. But, after further political organizing actions in the late spring of 1977, the city and District began the process of narrative coalescing within the institutional space of DWAC.

Discursive Coalescing through Deliberation

With little institutionalized connection between city institutions and the District and such disagreement, the coalition was far from expected. This discursive coalition's power and meaning for policy can be most accurately depicted in terms of how actors combined ideas in a way that produced narrative unity from multiple and competing narrative constructions of the problems associated with segregation. The School Board and the citywide coalition of actors spent the entire summer and fall of 1977 piecing together a desegregation plan that was approved in December 1977. The debates over definitions, prioritizations, reasons, and policy goals displayed policy creation that utilized the decades of narrative constellations, piecing them together in new ways in order to create an acceptable policy for all Seattle. Through committee work, school board meetings, deliberation and frustration, these actors were able to together to enact a specific vision for the future.

Richard Andrews' first line of business within DWAC was to develop criteria to judge any desegregation proposal. Through the deliberation and interpretation of criteria, the central actors began to build bridges between their separate narrative constellations. The connections began to link groups in terms of common agreement that the negotiations revolved around certain concepts without fundamental agreement on what the concepts meant.[110] This dynamic forged the path towards establishing the discursive coalition as they eventually found enough in common with respect to the concepts to support an overarching policy.

Andrews established a Steering Committee in response to the Magnet Plan vote in February 1977 that identified thirteen criteria to frame the necessity for and definition of successful desegregation.[111] These thirteen criteria were endorsed by many community organizations and taken to the School Board to assess the Magnet Plan when it was proposed in February 1977. Andrews believed the criteria had a crucial effect on further desegregation planning because with them, DWAC established specific guidelines many community organizations agreed to. Andrews recalled, "'I really believe that the committee's thirteen-point criteria is what predetermined what happened thereafter.'"[112] Within the criteria, Andrews' committee framed the necessity and definition of successful desegregation that could undercut the Magnet plan. Whether or not Andrews was correct in his assessment, the criteria allowed for a broader base of support because they allowed

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[110] See Chris Ansell, "Institutional Change as Constitutional Process, Conference Paper, Unstructuring Politics Workshop," (Eugene, OR: 2009). Citation approved by author.

[111] Siqueland, *Without a Court Order: The Desegregation of Seattle's Schools.*

[112] Richard Andrews quoted in Ibid., 49.

for multiple interpretations and meanings to develop around consistently accepted concepts.

Moberly thought of the criteria as useful only to examine the Magnet Plan and its components, but Board members (namely Cheryl Bleakney) thought they needed to develop criteria in order to further a full-fledged desegregation pan. The Board and Moberly allowed only two "threshold" criteria to guide desegregation planning: that the Board "would place no greater burden on minority than majority students;" and that the Board "recognizes the need for ethnic identity of different minority students, and is sensitive to ethnic heritage."[113] After DWAC reviewed various planning models, the District accepted the following additional criteria: predictability, stability, consistent feeder patters and keeping neighborhoods of students together.[114]

In sum, the guiding criteria for the Seattle Plan originated from the structural/cultural integrationist and voluntary integrationist constellations and displayed the central guiding concepts for deliberation. The first two reflected the structural/cultural integrationists in terms of assuring equity for black students in terms of burden and assuring multiculturalism. But these ideas could also reflect the voluntary integrationist narrative because lessening the burden on black students was connected with intentional racism and multiculturalism can also be connected to "mutual respect" discourse as a hopeful goal. The additional set of criteria assigned priorities articulated

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[113] Ibid., 120.

[114] Ibid., 121.

within the voluntary integrationist, which emphasized the value of the neighborhood by assuming students should move together in a stable and predictable fashion.

As ambiguous criteria, they became important as new sites of interpretation and debate where actors developed very different ways to achieve these criteria. The largest differences basically came down to *how* to achieve these criteria: mandatory or voluntary desegregation. The Board conducted numerous community forums and reviewed public opinions in order to incorporate public concerns and allow for a sense of transparency in the process.[115] Given the impetus coming from the city and news media to cooperate and decide on desegregation as a city, the Board worked closely with DWAC to filter through these public stances and the decades worth of information documented by District committees.

On the surface, this short time period saw the development of more models, plans, definitions, timetables, and compromises. In historical context, this development meant the contestation over a decade's worth of ideas developed by many actors. The discursive coalition displayed a highly interactive dynamic that saw actors re-arranging narrative constellations in ways that re-combined ideas through processes of prioritization and emphases. Within these processes, the discursive coalition of actors and ideas was able to forge a new narrative about Seattle desegregation that could reach a level of institutional reception by creating an arrangement of ideas that proved polyvalent, as they provided nodes of attachment for multiple and apparently contradictory meanings.

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[115] Between June and August 1977, individual letters came from the Asian-American Education Association, the American Constitutional Liberties Association, the ACLU, Central Area School Council, Chamber of Commerce, Church Council of Greater Seattle, City of Seattle, Municipal League, Committee for Southeast Schools, DWAC, League of Women Voters, NAACP, the Seattle Council PTSA, and the Urban League. The Board held a series of community meetings between October 13 and November 14.

Policymaking: The Seattle Plan

In this section, I examine how similar and disparate ideas were re-arranged and re-shaped into a concrete desegregation policy. I explore the contradictory character of the Seattle Plan that incorporated antithetical ends and cross-purposes, and how these discursive moves shaped the meaning of racial inequality and desegregation in Seattle: how it was to look, how it would be measured, what elements gained priority. Analysis shows the District debated a decade's worth of desegregation ideas through the expansion of questions relating to the definition of segregation and the role of the public schools: 1) what is the definition of racial imbalance? 2) Why is the district desegregating- for legal or educational reasons? 3) What combination of mandatory or voluntary methods would the District use to desegregate? In the subsets of questions and answers, the District's attempt to incorporate a wide array of ideas led to a policy that partially resolved many of the concerns from the past decade through quietly relegating some ideas to the background and overtly mixing some with competing claims that appeared as sensible compromises at the time.

The following sub-sections examine the Seattle Plan's central components. The analysis examines the ideas that were embedded in the Seattle Plan, their narrative histories, and deferments that accounted for the specific arrangement of ideas. The multivocal language of multiculturalism provided shape and legitimacy for this policy. Within each Seattle Plan category, we can see how the language of multiculturalism could bridge division between competing constellations because as a concept, it could be

mobilized and meaningful in very different ways. The idea of multiculturalism could "re-wire" connections between ideas and become an accepted point of reference, as actors could interpret the concept in multiple ways.[116] The multiple meanings able to coalesce into one concept allowed very different assumptions about the role of the schools and racial equality to temporarily unite. At the same time, the multiplicity of meaning did not deter actors from prioritizing certain meanings over others.

Summary of the Seattle Plan

Analysis of the language in the Seattle Plan shows that the founding principles relied primarily on establishing the role of the schools as ameliorating segregation and promoting a multicultural setting for children's education without wholly disrupting the assumption that the neighborhood was a valuable community entity. On December 14, 1977, the Seattle School Board voted on the adoption of the comprehensive Seattle Plan. The final policy included components of five planning models resulting from joint efforts of staff and community planners and one model developed by the Urban League.[117]

School Board Resolution 1977-28 defined School Board's goals and philosophical guidelines, highlighting two guiding philosophies in the preamble. First, the Board resolved, "that the best interests of the students of Seattle School District No. 1 will be served by providing all students with the opportunity for a quality education in a

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[116] Ansell, "Institutional Change as Constitutional Process, Conference Paper, Unstructuring Politics Workshop."

[117] Seattle Public Schools, "The Seattle Plan for the Eliminating Racial Imbalance by the 1979-80 School Year," Desegregation Planning Office, Revised Edition, 13 December 1977, 4, 330.002 (SSD).

multi-racial setting." Second, the Board resolved, "that it is in the best interests of the District to eliminate racial imbalance [...] in District schools so as to better prepare students to live in a pluralistic society."[118] Actors crafting the Seattle Plan emphasized these philosophic goals that asserted the primacy of not only equal education, but also preparing students in and for a multi-racial or pluralistic society.

The Seattle Plan divided Seattle schools into three zones that established feeder patterns between elementary, junior high and high schools. These student assignment features aimed to ensure classmates remained together as they progressed from school to school.[119] Zones combined existing majority and minority schools to achieve racial balance in a way that provided "optimal transportation efficiency" and "a sense of geographic identity among students in the desegregation process."[120] The zones were aimed to allow predictability in student movement during their school careers and to assure children were only supposed to be away from their home attendance area for portions of their careers.

Within these broad goals, the District elaborated their role as a public institution by incorporating both mandatory and voluntary measures. These included affirmative action to desegregate the schools, the provision of multicultural respect and opportunity, the provision of voluntary choices, and the affirmation of the integrity of neighborhoods as an idea because of how they moved students. The Seattle Plan then prioritized

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[118] Record 75, December 14, 1977, 278 (SSR).

[119] Seattle Public Schools, "The Seattle Plan for the Eliminating Racial Imbalance by the 1979-80 School Year," Desegregation Planning Office, Revised Edition, 13 December 1977, 8, 330.002 (SSD).

[120] Ibid.

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stability, equal and quality education, neighborhoods as community values, parent choice,

and desegregation as necessary for minority students only. The following elaborates

these pieces of the policy and the ideas within established narrative constellations

incorporated and dismissed within the Seattle Plan.

Defining Racial Imbalance

The definition of "racial imbalance" determined who was to be segregated and

how to measure a situation that is desegregated. Inherently, this then embodied the

discussions of segregation and the role of the schools and the development of priorities.

On June 8, 1977, the Board passed Resolution 1977-8 that decided upon the definition of

"racial imbalance," as

> The situation that exists when the combined minority student enrollment in a
> school exceeds the district-wide combined minority average by 20 percentage
> points, provided that the single minority enrollment (as defined by current federal
> categories) of no school will exceed 50 percent of the student body.[121]

The District combined minority percentage was 34% in 1977 therefore 54% or less

combined minority at one school would be considered racially balanced.[122] The

definition did not include a threshold for majority (white) student enrollment.

The Board wrestled with the definition for almost a month because it had to

balance many issues such as student enrollment changes, stability in movement, and

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[121] "Resolution 1977-8" in Record 73, 1 June 1977, 589 (SSR).

[122] "School Board expected to OK milestone Seattle Plan," *Seattle Times*, 11 December 1977, A7.

Seattle's multiple ethnic groups.[123] This definition incorporated the three competing

narrative constellations. From the voluntary integrationists, the Board focused on the

desegregation of minority students and as much "stability," (or as little neighborhood

movement) as possible. From all interested in multiculturalism, the definition included

"combined minority" in order to account for their multi-racial population. For example,

Cheryl Bleakney addressed both concerns in a memo to the Board, describing her

struggle to define imbalance to "retain flexibility to serve the long-term interests of the

kids of Seattle - a definition which will offer a measure of stability and recognize our

uniquely rich mixture of ethnic minorities."[124]

First, the Board chose the term 'racial imbalance' over 'racial isolation' or

'segregation.' As shown before, this term had been used by the Board and by the CRA in

the 1960s to describe the situation of *de facto* segregated schooling. District legal

counsel Gary Little suggested they avoid the term "segregation" because it had "come to

have so many meanings as defined by different courts and governmental agencies."[125]

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[123] This definition was a complicated issue because several definitions existed, including those by the State of Washington and the ESAA. The State of Washington defined *segregation* as a situation when the population of a school building includes forty percent or more of a single racial minority group. The ESAA defined *racial imbalance* as a situation when the combined racial minority percentage in a single school exceeds fifty percent, a goal the District implicitly agreed to for funding (Record 73, 11 May 1977 (SSR)).

[124] Memo from Cheryl Bleakney to School Board Members, 6 June 1977, Accession A98-13, Box 9 (LCF).

[125] Record 73, 25 May 1977, 563 (SSR). Many community groups had developed their own definitions. The Church Council defined racial balance in "pluralist" terms, where students should be assigned to schools on the basis of numerical equality that could include a multi-racial (rather than bi-racial) setting.[125] The Urban League recommended a "plus-or-minus fifty percent of the average minority population" in their 1964 Triad Plan.[125] The NAACP offered a guideline for full integration as equal racial percentages at each school. Furthermore, there had been only two Supreme Court cases dealing with "tri-racial populations," both ending up looking at the minority population as a whole.[125] DWAC adopted a definition termed a "dual definition" to meet the needs of Seattle's multi-racial community. They defined racial balance in "tri-racial school" as a situation where the combined minority population would not exceed seventy percent, with no more than forty percent of a single minority. In schools with a single "ethnic

The tool used to measure "racial balance" inserted connections made by the voluntary integrationists about the role of the schools and ameliorating segregation while also maintaining links to the structural/cultural and civil rights integrationists with provisions of "multiracial balance." The District defined the situation of racial balance as one of formal (or numeric) equality rather than cultural or structural integration, and therefore measured racial balance numerically. In hopes of addressing their unique tri-racial population, they arrived at a "dual definition" to measure numerical equality, because it could "provide a multi-ethnic balance in the schools" and could "work toward a multi-ethnic educational system."[126] The policy idea hoped to encourage mutual respect for Seattle's diversity and to incorporate flexibility for changes in student population, with the expectation of a continual rise in minority enrollment. Also by incorporating flexibility, rather than a strict definition of desegregation as equal percentages of white/black/Asian, the definition hoped not to revisit the backlash from the minority community concerned with equalizing student movement.

Beyond the asserted flexibility, the definition did not include measures to account for cultural integration beyond numerical diversity and therefore embedded a voluntary yet beneficial vision of cultural integration as something that should be encouraged but not mandated. While the policy included human relations training, the implementation of multicultural curricula, and affirmative action in employment to encourage cultural

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minority," the minority percentage would not exceed twenty percent plus the district-wide minority average (Siqueland, *Without a Court Order: The Desegregation of Seattle's Schools.*)

[126] Record 73, 1 June 1977, 589 (SSR).

integration, the definition did not include ways to measure this.[127] Therefore, while accounting for the goals of multiculturalism, the definition prioritized numerical desegregation and therefore the vision for the role of the schools as ending minority segregation, with ambiguity about promoting societal integration.

The approval of this definition further deferred significant aspects fundamentally associated with "segregation" within the narrative constellations of the Urban League, Church Council, DWAC, and the CASC: socioeconomic integration and white isolation. Socio-economic factors were completely relegated outside the boundaries of these final definitions even as they remained important factors to many actors deep into the fall of 1977. In June 1977, the School Board was working under the assumption that they would seek "a broad socio-economic mix as well as racial mix in our schools."[128] Board members and DWAC included socioeconomic indicators for desegregation up until final revisions of the plan were made 1977. This was partially because of the District's renewed interest in the Urban League's Triad Plan, re-written in 1977. Socioeconomic integration was, like 1965, integral to the Urban League's Triad Plan of 1977. The final plan drawn up in November 1977 by DWAC also included socioeconomic factors as instrumental in achieving equity in student movement and assuring that children would not be desegregated only to be socio-economically isolated.

In one of the final Board meetings before approval, DWAC advised that dismissing socioeconomic isolation would be "detrimental to assurances of educational

[127] Seattle Public Schools, "The Seattle Plan for the Eliminating Racial Imbalance by the 1979-80 School Year," Desegregation Planning Office, Revised Edition, 13 December 1977, 20, 330.002 (SSD).

[128] Memo from Cheryl Bleakney to School Board Members, 6 June 1977, Accession A98-13, Box 9 (LCF).

success."[129] To the dismay of Richard Andrews and DWAC, Moberly's staff with the help of Shan Mullin and Don Olson cut out any mention of socioeconomic integration and within-building segregation, leaving the final plan to address racial imbalance only. According to Andrews, Moberly directed staff to cut out "'Sociology 101 words,'" which included socio-economic integration.[130] Andrews expressed disgust with the "cut-and-paste" version of DWAC's plan and demanded that Moberly include these elements in the final plan.

Moberly, Olsen, and Mullin insisted on leaving out socio-economic integration, though they left in "'all the historical stuff, the bilingual stuff, multiethnic curriculum, staff training, in-building segregation...'"[131] By including "bilingual stuff," multi-ethnic curricula, human relations training, and acknowledgment of avoiding in-building segregation, the District specifically drew the line around what could be incorporated in the meaning of racial equality available to the public schools. This interaction led to an agreement that the schools could address, if not solve, cultural issues associated with historical discrimination while dismissing economic issues associated with discrimination. The division appears to associate cultural issues with potentially discriminatory situations that could result from the first time many students would go to school with students of different ethnic or racial backgrounds. The inclusion of cultural awareness components and the deferral of socio-economic integration further embedded

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[129] Record 75, 30 November 1977, 226 (SSR).

[130] Andrews quoted in Siqueland, *Without a Court Order: The Desegregation of Seattle's Schools.*

[131] Ibid.

the notion of the role of the schools as ameliorating historical discrimination *within* the schools and encouraging multi-cultural awareness or mutual respect.

Discussions of white isolation also ended in early June after being integral to the narrative frameworks of multiple groups, including the District. One problem was the Board lacked guidelines to address definitions of racial imbalance for school with more than one minority. There were no federal or state guidelines to deal with *majority group isolation.*[132] Nevertheless, this issue was discussed, or least mentioned, often within the context of these debates leading up to the Seattle Plan. The Central Area School Council (CASC) developed a definition of segregation for the Board in June 1977 that included white isolation: "A school should be defined as segregated if it has too high a number of students of any race. Desegregation must involve an effort to reduce the "isolation" of both white and non-white students."[133] The CASC went so far to say that a definition of segregation that does not include white students was racist.[134] The re-designed "Triad Plan" also directly addressed majority isolation in terms of defining a majority-isolated school and by including in their philosophy of cultural isolation the belief that, "the majority child also suffers…A mono-racial environment is a social vacuum."[135] The Desegregation/Integration Committee also included majority isolation in their definitions. In March 1976, they developed a definition of segregation as "the negative condition of a

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[132] Record 73, 1 December 1976 (SSR).

[133] Letter from Central Area School Council to Seattle School Board, 12 June 1977, Accession A2005-15, Box 9 (AWF).

[134] Ibid.

[135] "Triad Plan Summary," Seattle Urban League, 14 June 1977, in "Seattle Urban League," 607-7, Box 42, Folder 25, Seattle Urban League Records, University of Washington Libraries (Hereafter cited as SUL).

school population which exists when the school is racially isolated, either majority or

minority, when compared to the racial distribution of the District as a whole."[136]

However, according to Patt Sutton, Gary Little informed the board early on that there was

no enforceable legal precedent in terms of majority isolation, which was why the board

"adopted a plus/minus percent in terms of minority only."[137] A year later, in June 1977,

it was apparent to Bleakney, "that we should recognize white isolation," but then

concluded, "That we will address the problem of majority isolation in later planning."[138]

This is basically where the question was left. After June 1977 the idea had been entirely

deferred for later planning.[139]

Racial Imbalance and the Meta-Concept Multiculturalism

The emphasis of multiculturalism allowed disparate actors to agree to a definition

of racial imbalance. The common ground established by a multicultural vision was

produced by the concepts de-prioritized or disconnected from racial integration. The

deferral of both socioeconomic integration and white isolation were crucial elements in

the construction of meaning established by the Seattle Plan, that incorporated a vision of

racial equality as promotion of pluralism to the detriment of a vision of racial equality

that was committed to ending white privilege and assuring economic equality.

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[136] "Memo from Suzanne Hittman to Board Members," 30 March 1976, Accession A98-13, Box 9 (LCF).

[137] Patt Sutton, interview with author, Eugene, Or., tape recording 17 November 2007.

[138] "Memo from Bleakney to School Board Members," 6 June 1977, Accession A98-13, Box 9 (LCF).

[139] Records analyzed show no mention of white isolation after June 1977. Suzanne Hittman, Cheryl Bleakney, Patt Sutton, and Dorothy Hollingsworth were asked in interviews about debates over white isolation. They did not recall it being an issue.

For one, the dismissal established a disjuncture in The Seattle Plan, with its philosophic emphasis on cultural pluralism, and its policy orientation defined as correcting minority racial imbalance only. However, the disjuncture also revealed a consistency within District discourse going back to the 1960s. While philosophically they showed a belief in multi-cultural education and "mutual respect," the District consistently oriented measurable policy around correcting past wrongs: minority racial imbalance. This definition deferred the structural/cultural integrationist narratives that fundamentally assumed an integration policy would be measured according to not only numerical desegregation, but also cultural and structural integration. With the emphasis on minority groups, the Seattle Plan framework did little new to establish a fundamental shift in policies that were consistently directed at minority students throughout Seattle's history.

Granted, the incorporation of mandatory white student transfers shifted the immediate burden away from only minority student transfers. However, the dismissal of white isolation as integral to desegregation undercut the shift because it allowed for a non-multicultural setting so long as the setting was majority white. Under the Board's definition, a school could technically be all white, or "white-impacted," and remain within the bounds of the definition. For example, the Ballard area, which was majority white, was not included in the original plan. Moberly said, Moberly reasoned to this group that, "We can't involve every majority school in the city," and the Board could not

risk "the trauma" resulting from the loss of Seattle's middle- and upper-income residents.[140]

In a similar vein, the deferral of socioeconomic integration also dismissed a crucial element incorporated by DWAC, the Urban League, CASC and many Board members. Without an element of economic equality, ideas like 'structural integration' were left meaningless. The District could pose a belief that "all ethnic groups hold statuses and roles in the social structure of the school which are equivalent to those statuses occupied by members of other ethnic groups."[141] But without an acknowledgment of the socioeconomic aspect of equal power, the policy had little chance to follow through with this hope. What this meant for the policy was that the role of the schools still remained a legal role to end segregated schooling but a suggestive role in promoting a multicultural philosophy. The narrative built into the Seattle Plan lacked concrete ways to undertake multicultural and structural integration by de-prioritizing them with respect to the fundamental assumptions incorporated from the voluntary integrationist approach.

Why Desegregate?

One facet of the final policy came down to the question of "why is the district desegregating?" In November 1977, the Board had to decide what their public rationale for desegregating should be and decided to address the question by asking if they were

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[140] Mike Wyne, "Citizens blast Moberly for bussing plan," *Seattle* Times, 1 December 1977, A18; Constantine Angelos, "Desegregation plan 'will do job," *Seattle Times*, 4 December 1977,' A26.

[141] Citizen's Committee for Quality Education, "Final Report: Planning Recommendations for Cultural and Structural Integration," 2, 23 June 1971, 330.077 (SSD).

desegregating for legal or educational reasons.[142] Despite the apparent urgency resulting from the threat of court order, they decided to desegregate primarily for educational decisions, secondarily for legal.[143] Broadly, the Seattle Plan focused on eliminating racial imbalance through "the use of educationally sound strategies" by emphasizing "quality integrated education" as their reason for desegregating. It met the identified needs of equal educational opportunities, safety, choice, curriculum (including program diversity), the "maintenance of ethnic identity for both majority and minority students," high expectations of academic achievement, and an "assurance that every child can succeed in school."[144]

Beyond these intended goals, this reason for desegregating reflected and incorporated many narrative strands and therefore supplied the policy with variant values, contradictory goals, and unresolved tension. This decision ended up incorporating two contradictory values embedded in the idea of "quality education," which were utilized differently in narrative constellations drawn within debates since the 1960s. The combination of "quality integrated education" into one concept put emphasis on the belief that education was not quality unless it was integrated. This appears to reflect both the District's structural/cultural integrationists and the Urban League/CASC constellation, which presumably would incorporate measures of "quality" that reflected integration goals as well as academic (3 Rs) goals.

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[142] See Record 75, 26 November 1977 (SSR).

[143] Ibid., 208.

[144] Seattle Public Schools, "The Seattle Plan for the Eliminating Racial Imbalance by the 1979-80 School Year," Desegregation Planning Office, Revised Edition, 13 December 1977, 2, Footnote 5, 330.002 (SSD).

However, when this construction then is juxtaposed against the policy's definition of integration ("racial balance"), a tension arose when "integration" was to be measured in numerical terms. With an emphasis on the quality part of "quality integrated education," success was defined by academic quality within numerically racially balanced schools. In contrast, if emphasis is given to "integrated," the measure of success could imply separate and potentially independent criteria, measured in terms of both quality academics and the level of integration. As is, the source of tension came down to arrangements of emphasis. Quality education remained the priority goal in the Seattle Plan. Desegregation would prove successful if it improved the academic achievement of all youth.

This conclusion came from much debate and left much ambiguity. DWAC, for example, maintained a subtle distinction between quality and integrated education, seen in such demands for the Board "to not lose sight of the fact that we are desegregating the Seattle Public Schools because it is just and right and it can improve the quality of education for all children."[145] They prefaced this statement by saying that a court order or demands by HEW "must not be our paramount consideration."[146] In this way, DWAC joined the two goals (legal and educational), but distinctly separated them in terms of measurement. In a similar narrative emphasis, the NAACP, ACLU, Church Council, and Central Area School Council rarely used the term "quality education," except to emphasize that education that is not integrated is *not* quality education. Within this

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[145] From "DWAC's Final Criteria" sent to the Board, 3 March 1977 attached in Andrews in letter to Bleakney attached in Memo from Cheryl Bleakney to Seattle School Board, March 7, 1977, Accession A98-13, Box 9 (LCF).

[146] Ibid.

narrative, "quality education" and desegregation were not mutually exclusive goals. The Urban League and others were concerned that much of the current discussion "incorrectly and unfairly treated [desegregation] as a separate and opposed goal to quality education."[147] In a letter to the District, the ACLU wrote simply, "Quality education is impossible in a segregated school system."[148]

In these frames, quality education and desegregation are measured as separate, equally essential, goals. For example, without equality, academic quality is irrelevant. If one were to measure the success of quality, integrated education, two measures could be employed: one to examine the quality of integration, one to examine the quality of education. The measure of academic achievement would not necessarily take priority.

Similarly, other groups utilized the idea of "cultural pluralism" to describe a quality educational experience, where a multi-cultural experience was an integral aspect of a child's education and socialization. This version of "quality integrated" was prioritized in the Seattle Plan. Primarily, the League of Women Voters, the Church Council of Greater Seattle and the Asian-American Education Association (AAEA) used this narrative. The Church Council founded their philosophy on the belief "in this rich and diverse world, each child deserves to grow up in a setting that will increase his/her knowledge and appreciation of varied cultural traditions."[149] In a letter to the Board, the

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[147] "Triad Plan Summary," Seattle Urban League, 14 June 1977, in "Seattle Urban League," Accession 607-7, Box 42, Folder # 25 (SUL).

[148] "Letter from ACLU to Seattle School Board," 25 August 1977, Accession A2005-15, Box 9 (AWF).

[149] Church Council, "Desegregation and the Law," in "Church Council of Greater Seattle," Accession 1358-007, Box 38, Folder 18 (CCS).

AAEA also developed their pluralist philosophy as it pertained to education, "We believe that children of all races and ethnic backgrounds must learn that these [multicultural] values are worthy; that these values need a distinct place in the public schools."[150] Multicultural values were separate from educational values, but integral to a definition of successful educational training.

In contrast, the "Downtown group" emphasized the reason to desegregate as maintaining local control to avoid lawsuit, but they framed this concern specifically in terms of the maintenance of quality education and city pride, assumed to relate to the city's growing diversity and progressivism. The Downtown group highlighted equity and education as goals integral to the public schools' role and in enhancing the city's reputation, and arguably its future stability in terms of race relations ensured through multicultural settings. For example, their joint letter stated, "an integrated education offers children a chance to share self-knowledge and learning experiences so that they can comfortably and compatibly adjust to the pluralistic society of which Seattle is justifiably proud."[151] A member of the Municipal League's Education Committee, Jerry Skutt, reflected this interest in desegregation, "'because of my strong feelings about the quality of education in this city. [Without avoiding court order], I felt there would be a detrimental effect, not only on the quality of education, but on people's perception of the city.'"[152] Mayor Uhlman also wrote, "we must strive to enhance the quality of

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[150] Letter from Asian-American Education Association to Seattle School Board, 25 May 1977, Accession A2005-15, Box 9 (AWF).

[151] Ibid.

[152] Skutt quoted in Siqueland, *Without a Court Order: The Desegregation of Seattle's Schools.*

educational opportunities, provide equitable treatment for all students, maintain an array of educational choices for parents and students, contribute to the attractiveness of our city as a place for all people to live..."[153]

However, they also created a distinct separation of quality education and integration that ended up with an entirely different emphasis than the Urban League. In the series of letters written to the Board in the summer of 1977, we can see these actors' narrative moves to segment desegregation as a policy that can *hopefully* align with fundamental educational goals. The Chamber wrote to the Board that they believed "it is essential for the school board to see to it that the quality of educational programs is maintained while desegregating the schools. Quality curriculum is imperative to provide the kind of credibility that the school system needs."[154] Reminiscent of past narrative separations, this move connected the role of the public schools legally to desegregate, naturally to educate. Desegregation, as an add-on, is necessary because of the impending lawsuit and maintaining pride in Seattle's increasing diversity, but is not integral to the function of the schools.

Justification for Desegregation and the Meta-concept Multiculturalism

The School Board was careful to meet the needs of all actors in their decision to make the Seattle Plan "an educational plan first, a desegregation plan second." However, quality education remained the priority goal in the Seattle Plan; desegregation would

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[153] "Letter from Your City, Seattle to School Board," n.d. probably after 20 May 1977, Accession A2005-15, Box 9 (AWF).

[154] Letter from C. Mike Berry to School Board, 18 July 1977, Accession A2005-15, Box 9.

prove successful if it improved the academic achievement of all youth. With this ambiguous stance, the Board bridged the existing divisions between those primarily interested in retaining quality academic programs as well as those who believed that an educational plan was as necessary as a desegregation plan. In terms of measurement, however, the Seattle Plan did not definitively define measures of success, leaving the contradictions and tensions resulting from the re-combination of aspects of the narrative constellations. Therefore, those like the Downtown group, who distinctly separated the goals of integration and academic education, and those like the Urban League, who defined education in terms of integration, became narrative partners. The bridge, again, was the multivocality of multiculturalism. Multiculturalism became a node around which the Downtown group agreed as they associated it with city pride, attractiveness, and the necessity to avoid court order. Multiculturalism became a node that also situated the structural/cultural and civil rights integrationists, who linked it to their vision of education as inseparable from integration and equality within a diverse society.

Re-arranging Neighborhoods- Fixed Area Assignment with Options

After defining the goals and philosophies of racial balance and the reason for desegregating, stakeholders debated the strategy of student movement. The central conflict at the end of planning was the decision to go with a mandatory student assignment plan or a voluntary plan with a mandatory back up. The Board implemented mandatory assignment as the first method of movement with a voluntary option supplement for parents to choose another school's program. This policy incorporated

ideas from each constellation, and again emphasized the role of the schools as ending segregation and further segmented the role of the schools as fundamentally about academic training with the hope of bringing about social change through the maintenance of the neighborhood attendance pattern through the allotment of "choice" for parents to opt out of mandatory desegregation assignments.

By October 1977, only two civic groups had publicly stated preference for mandatory assignment, the Urban League and the Church Council. With more parents coming to meetings, expressing their fears of busing, it proved difficult to implement mandatory assignment that would include busing without an uproar. Board member Patt Sutton recalled, "many of the parents were genuinely scared of the idea of having their children removed from their school. I felt bad for them, because it is scary."[155] This formulation points to the sustained centrality of the natural value of the neighborhood school felt by many parents. Many parents came to meetings during November and December 1977 to chide the Board for "putting the burden of desegregation on children," to threaten lawsuits because mandatory assignment violated individual parents' freedom of choice, or to express their fears of the destruction of "strong neighborhoods." Most opponents remained tied to voluntary integration, distinctly disconnecting housing segregation as a problem for the schools with statements like "This is a community, rather than merely a school, problem."[156]

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[155] Patt Sutton, phone interview with author, Eugene, Or., tape recording, 19 November 2007.

[156] "Parents disagree on desegregation plan" *Seattle Times*, 6 December 1977, A4; "Why put burden of desegregation on children," *Seattle Times*, December 7, 1977.

DWAC's core committee, which included representatives from the Municipal League, Urban League, NAACP, Asian community, and the Church Council, developed the final student assignment plan.[157] Andrews felt that if he could get these individuals to agree on one mandatory model, "'it would have a strong enough political base to survive.'"[158] They agreed on a "fixed assignment" first, voluntary second model that relied on moving groups (or "neighborhoods") of students between zones unless they were able to choose an optional program that enhanced racial balance. The Board voted on this "fixed area assignment" model, a term coined by members of DWAC's core committee in order to avoid the "emotional baggage" associated with the term "mandatory."[159] This concept institutionalized both mandatory assignment features that would ensure the end of racial imbalance, and "options" or "choice" features that emphasized educational quality and avenues to avoid being part of a mandatory assignment.

This combination of ideas established common ground between the Municipal League's favored model, a voluntary magnet strategy, and the model favored by the Urban League, Church Council, and CASC that resembled the Triad Plan.[160] Specifically, the plan paired one minority-impacted elementary school with a majority-

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[157] Siqueland, *Without a Court Order: The Desegregation of Seattle's Schools.*

[158] Richard Andrews quoted in Ibid., 145.

[159] Ibid.

[160] Ibid.

impacted school or "triaded" three schools to attain racial balance.[161] After being

assigned at the elementary level, children from both schools were filtered into one middle

school and then to one high school that would then be naturally balanced.[162]

This idea of "fixed assignment" was a way to sidestep the random calculations

associated with assigning one student to one school and was a way to incorporate the

value of the neighborhood into an assignment policy. The zonal strategy to student

movement challenged a parent's natural right to choose their children's school, but

carefully incorporated the idea that neighborhood was an important site of community

values that should not be disrupted. The challenge to geography asserted that community

values could travel with a group of children, but the narrative sustained neighborhoods as

fundamentally important for schools. Within this concept, Andrews argued, "The

individual is not assigned on an individual basis."[163] Rather, an area or zone of students

received assignments, "based on the premise that you keep neighborhood groups of

children together."[164] Of course, the plan also challenged the value of neighborhoods as

sustaining historical patterns of segregation, but did not challenge the inherent value, as

did such school restructuring ideas like the Triad Plan and Continuous Progress.

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[161] Typically, paired schools grouped the first-third graders from both schools and assigned those children to one school; the fourth-sixth graders were grouped together and assigned to the other school in the pair. Essentially modeling Continuous Progress and the Triad Plan, racially balanced elementary schools became "the building blocks for establishing racially balanced junior/middle and senior high schools." (Record 75, 30 November 1977 (SSR)).

[162] "Desegregation plan 'will do job," *Seattle Times*, 4 December 1977, A26. An example is K-3 graders of Briarcliff and Hawthorne attending Briarcliff, 4-6 graders then attending Hawthorne.

[163] Richard Andrews quoted in Siqueland, *Without a Court Order: The Desegregation of Seattle's Schools.*

[164] Jerry Skutt, quoted in Ibid., 146.

The "voluntary backup" was the result of a political compromise between the Board, Shan Mullin (Chamber) and Moberly. The voluntary component prioritized attraction and choice. A week before the final Seattle Plan Resolution was signed, Moberly asked that the Plan be re-drafted in order to appease those from the public that feared "the plan did not address quality education." He asked for a re-draft on the subjects of "options, magnets, criteria as to how the options will work...and an addition in the redraft covering advanced placement..."[165] Policy ideas like the Triad Plan never incorporated educational options to attract parents to transfer their children. This was a move to please those previously interested in the Magnet program and fearful of the District focusing only on desegregation to the detriment of educational programs. The Board included options programs as a necessity to make the plan attractive to eliminate potential exit reasons for parents, and saw options programs as a way to allow parents a level of control.

With these "options," students had the opportunity to change schools to enroll in attractive educational programs, if these choices did not contribute to racial imbalance. These included program options within schools (such as Arts Emphasis), magnet programs within pairs/triads, all-zone magnets, all-city magnets, alternative schools, and special programs.[166] The Board consistently cited options as an integral, even prioritized, feature of planning even when discussing fixed assignment goals. The District pamphlet

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[165] Record 75, 7 December 1977 (SSR).

[166] Seattle Public Schools, "The Seattle Plan for the Eliminating Racial Imbalance by the 1979-80 School Year," Desegregation Planning Office, Revised Edition, December 13, 1977, 2, Footnote 5, 330.002 (SSD). Discussion of these options pgs 12-14. Students in the pair/triad schools were supposed to get their first choice of options or magnet programs, though other children could apply as space allowed. Children who were accepted into programs out of their assigned zone had to provide their own transportation.

advertising the Seattle Plan also emphasized the array of options programs more than it emphasized the act of desegregation. Of course, these options were technically open to all students, but the reality of this desire was to appease middle class residents from moving out of the school system.

Debates in the final throes of planning showed many Board members brought up potential complications arising from the voluntary back-up for racial balance with regards to equity of student movement, and educational quality for all. DWAC argued that the desegregation plan with options could not place any greater burden on minority students than majority students and the eventual zoning arrangement did as much as it could to equalize racial transfers and ensure equitably distributed educational diversity and options across all zones.[167] Furthermore, the options programs could create within-school segregation, a tradeoff acknowledged by the Board in November.[168]

Re-assigning Students, Neighborhoods, Parental Choice, and Diversity?

The fixed assignment student movement strategy combined with options to avoid student assignment arranged policy commitments to challenge the neighborhood, retain the neighborhood, and privilege parent control. This tense arrangement prioritized desegregating schools, but emphasized the integrity of the neighborhoods and privilege by moving children together, maintaining narrative sympathy for neighborhood values, and including options to exit school assignments. The arrangement de-prioritized

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[167] Siqueland, *Without a Court Order: The Desegregation of Seattle's Schools*, 3, footnote 8., Record 75, November 30, 1977, 225-227 (SSR).

[168] Record 75, 30 November 1977, 225-227 (SSR).

fundamental parent control over their children's school destination, but emphasized parent control as unavoidably important by including avenues to avoid mandatory assignments.

The arrangement of this student assignment strategy made student re-assignment mandatory in the name of ameliorating formal segregation. The measurement tool was based on numerical desegregation with little measure to account for multiculturalism or other modes of integration. Even if multiculturalism was assumed to be a piece of justification for racial student assignment, this policy element went so far as to overtly de-prioritize diversity with its focus on retaining the continuity and value of neighborhoods and creating a way for parents to avoid diversity if they wanted. This piece crafted diversity as acceptable because parents still had choice and children could still remain within their neighborhood school or at least with their neighborhood group. Parents, and in practice white parents, can choose diversity. This placed a stronger bond between the schools role as promoting, not ensuring, a multicultural educational experience. However, the connection between the dual strategy of student movement and a pluralist society allowed for groups such as the Urban League to support the same strategy supported by parents interested in avoiding desegregation.

Conclusion: Institutional Reception and Multiculturalism

There was a great sense of pride with the accomplishment of the Seattle Plan throughout the city. The implementation of this policy represented the institutional and public reception of a wide array of ideas that were creatively brought together by a

diverse group of actors. Moberly expressed this sentiment in reviewing the rationale for the final plan in late November 1977,

> Most large cities have gone the court route. They have thrown that very tough decision to a federal court and let a judge make the decision and then lost the local control. About a year ago we saw a tremendous resentment on the part of the community asking that we not allow this issue to go to the court. They said, "Let Seattle be the first city in the nation to face this very sticky, very emotional issue, and let's do it with local control..." The decision was made by the Board [...] to do it ourselves with citizen input...[169]

The Board had public confidence and commitment to pursue a mandatory desegregation and integration plan before a judge could decide.

Dorothy Hollingsworth highlighted the necessity of the whole community backing the plan, "If we had any segment that was negative...we had enough community support that it didn't matter." Patt Sutton recalled, "Everything came together... I believe we truly felt that if we could get the kids in the same classroom together that it would, with the same material and same teachers, that it would per se improve academic performance for minority kids. I really believe that was almost a given."[170] Suzanne Hittman also recollected, "What was so unique about this area? The most unique thing is that you could put into effect a desegregation plan ...without a court order. That was the *most* remarkable thing. And that you didn't have people revolt."[171] It was indeed

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[169] Record 75, 26 November 1977 (SSR).

[170] Patt Sutton, phone interview with author, Eugene, OR., tape recording, 17 November 2007.

[171] Suzanne Hittman, interview with author, Seattle, Wash., 5 December 2007.

remarkable that even though the plan was to move between 16,000-17,000 students (up from 4,500 who were in the VRT program), there was very little public revolt.[172]

National developments served as important boundary conditions for Seattle's struggles with desegregation and set important boundaries for the narrative debate that left such a level of ambiguity about *de jure, de facto*, and racially imbalanced school districts, and allowed for a wide range of ideas to address these events in often-contradictory ways. The most consistent national focus was the reliance on discriminatory intent to determine the need for desegregation as a public function. District debates reflected, but did not replicate, these debates over the boundaries between public and private would continue to pervade District debates. The District was able to craft a policy that adhered to federal guidelines but established its own set of rules, assumptions, and priorities for the local desegregation policy.

This remarkable policy achievement was triggered and aided by critical actors within this period, also coming from varying commitments to desegregation. However, the process was not manipulated or overtly directed by these actors. Of course, there were power imbalances; the Chamber of Commerce was often able to trump stronger versions of destabilizing the status quo from the Urban League, for example. But, the policy was not "won" by the Chamber. The Seattle Plan was accomplished through the creation of an unlikely discursive coalition with divergent commitments with regards to educational racial equality. The final policy result was not a result of the endorsement of one claim over another about the role of the schools or one vision of a desegregated

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[172] The Board planned very carefully for revolting parents and burning buses, but little destruction of property occurred in the fall of 1978.

society, but the creative articulation of new goals that re-envisioned the associations between racial inequality, the schools, neighborhoods, and social change.

At the most basic level, the coalition was possible because of the imminent threat of court order and the desire within major establishment actors to avoid violent situations they saw in Boston and other cities. However, this impetus cannot explain the arrangement of ideas that re-envisioned the concepts and relationships between race, equality, inequality, and the schools. Resulting from these interactive narrative processes, actors in Seattle settled on a specific policy commitment and a distinctly contingent set of priorities and emphases.

Therefore, if we look at the coalition of actors as a coalition of actors and their interacting ideas, the gaze shifts from instrumental acts to avoid court order to the unpredictable, contradictory, and creative associations of ideas that became the Seattle Plan. This discursive coalition acts of re-association altered the meaning of ideas used to establish the contours of the desegregation debate and their policy effects because of the ways they were joined together and the pieces that were left out.

The arrangement of ideas established potential avenues for measuring success because of the emphasis placed on specific elements. For example, the definition of racial imbalance signaled the inclusion of the goal of multi-cultural balance, yet with the deferral of policy emphasis on white isolation and socio-economic integration, the Seattle Plan distinctly prioritized rectifying racial imbalance of minority youth, which entails a very specific measure of "success." This prioritization most dominantly reflected the voluntary integrationist narrative because of the similar emphasis on minority youth, yet

remained tied to commitments of structural integrationists who prioritize the necessity the public role in ensuring desegregated schools.

The tense and ambiguous prioritization and emphasis set in a policy arrangement that became the Seattle Plan settled certain aspects of the desegregation debate; namely, the schools had a definitive role in desegregating their school and parents' control over their children's education could not create segregated schools or classrooms. The new arrangement also left the meaning of race up for further interpretation. Would the District re-connect visions of race and economic opportunity? Would the Board revisit the inclusion of white isolation in "racial imbalance?" The Seattle Plan re-arranged the grounds for future debate, which would have to settle the ambiguous arrangements of ideas that established narrative priorities and emphases. In the implementation and assessment of the Seattle Plan in the upcoming years, interpretative acts would solve some of these ambiguities and create many others.

CHAPTER IV

DISMANTLING DESEGREGATION AND THE ADVENT OF

SCHOOL CHOICE, 1978-1991

This chapter examines the implementation and interpretation of the Seattle Plan's

policy goals along with subsequent developments that effectively initiated the process of

dismantling desegregation. This period begins in 1978 with the implementation of the

Seattle Plan and ends with the reconfiguration of the Seattle Plan's unsteady discursive

coalition and constitutive narrative constellation with a new arrangement of ideas, held

together by the meta-concept of *school choice*. This chapter explores the development of

the narrative of school choice and its ability to attain a level of commonsense

understanding not by "winning" the political debate, but by meeting the problems and

fears of a variety of differently situated identities by becoming an acceptable avenue to

meet the needs of racial equity as well as parental demands to end busing.

Through the interaction of national political developments, changes in the courts,

and local policy developments, many features of the Seattle Plan lost discursive and

institutional legitimacy. While the conjuncture of national, legal, and local developments

can help to explain the rough boundaries of desegregation policy changes in the late

1980s and early 1990s, an analysis of the discursive processes of coalition building and

subsequent policy change allows for an explanation of the particular character of these

changes and the interpretive power of school choice to narrow the range of politically legitimate ideas that could determine school equity policy at a time when, as Gary Orfield described, "the nation [was] floating on desegregation."[1] School choice—and its narrative partner, academic excellence—gained prominence by the end of this period as the vocabulary through which equity would be interpreted, performed, and measured within the public schools.

The new narrative emphasis about the role of the schools in racial inequality included: *quality education for all students takes primacy over forced integration; the social role of the public schools is a futile goal; parental school choice is a viable indicator of equality when all parents have equal choice.* The discourse of choice displaced the previously dominant discourse of multiculturalism by replacing its frame of questions, alternatives, and debates with new accepted points of reference. School choice as a meta-concept took part in the formation of a new coalition as it generated spaces and new organization of concepts to which people could identify in new ways.

The primary question for this chapter is how did school choice become an accepted reference point for actors debating and justifying school equity policy? How did this language become the commonsense way to talk about racial equality? How did school choice gain traction as a signifier for multiple identity attachments and meanings that became the center of a narrative constellation built by complementary and competing ideas about school equality? The utilization of choice in narrative constructions was nothing new in Seattle. Actors invested in Seattle's public schools had utilized a

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[1] Gary Orfield quoted in Lee. A. Daniels, "The Winning Ways to Desegregate the Schools," *New York Times*. 17 December, 1989, A4.

framework of choice to fight against integration, school busing, or changes to neighborhood school patterns since the beginning of school segregation debates.

This chapter begins with a brief historical analysis of national developments, to explain how the Reagan administration provided a level of legitimacy for anti-bussing ideas and the end of racial integration as a public endeavor. I follow with a brief timeline of key legal developments that shaped the potential for school districts to legally halt their desegregation programs. This section includes the Supreme Court case that involved the Seattle Public Schools in 1982.

The chapter follows with an examination of local implementation struggles and how the school board, parents, and major institutional actors interpreted, responded, and re-thought alterations to the Seattle Plan to ensure equity along constructed and re-constructed criteria. During these years, the school board negotiated the tense arrangement of priorities and emphases within the Seattle Plan through debate related to measurements of "success" for the desegregation plan. Through these deliberations, new actors organized new narrative constellations out of the Seattle Plan's orientation of ideas. Certain actors played key roles in re-orienting the racial equality debate that provided legitimacy and a feel of commonsense to certain new associations.

The next section develops the key local developments that allowed the narrative of school choice to take power away from the legitimate competing narratives to become the dominant frame through which the board debated policy. I analyze how the previously powerful narrative frames—the multicultural narrative and the voluntary integrationist narrative—broke down in the face of new ways to associate ideas about

racial equity, developed by actors and within District evaluations and policy changes. Small policy changes developed to quickly respond to implementation struggles served to re-emphasize certain connections in the Seattle Plan to the detriment of others. For example, policy changes to increase options programs prioritized the attraction part of the Seattle Plan to the detriment of the equity emphasis. The critical space left by the disruption of the previous narrative connections was filled by the narrative of school choice, which became the umbrella that sheltered these widely different interests because it could include those truly invested in minority kids' education as well as those truly invested in ending busing. A *New York Times* reporter writing about Seattle in 1989 noticed, "The idea of promoting choices…represents a coming together of the political left and right."[2]

The endpoint for the chapter signaled the arrival and power of this new discursive coalition and concurrent re-arrangement of narrative constellations with power over school policy that revolved around school choice. Reflective of this arrival, the *Seattle Times* reported a few years later, "Today, the overriding issue for Seattle is not desegregation."[3] The overriding issue was academic achievement, and the means through which board policy could accomplish this—while appearing equally invested in equality of academic achievement—was school choice. After this period, the Board took steps to eliminate busing with "surprisingly non-confrontational" votes, according to

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[2] Ibid.

[3] "Choice, not busing, for Seattle's schools," *Seattle Times*, 25 September 1996, B4.

former school board member Don Nielson.[4] In 1991, the Board voted unanimously to eliminate mandatory busing within the next five years. The District moved towards this goal "with remarkably little comment from city residents and civil-rights groups," a lack of resistance that surprised many Board members and administrators.[5]

National and Legal Context

Many saw federal institutional changes and conservative Supreme Court appointments as the most significant factor for the end of desegregation. Legal counsel for the District in this period, Michael Hoge argued, "the real effect that Reagan had was appointment of judges and how that changed the legal landscape."[6] But Hoge also noted many important institutional and discursive effects the Reagan administration had on the political landscape. This period saw significant shifts in tone and federal enforcement of civil rights legislation that provided legitimacy for anti-busing claims throughout the nation. The moment Reagan began his campaign in Philadelphia, Mississippi the nation understood him as not simply as a symbol of states rights, but as a potential symbol of the end to civil rights enforcement. This section analyzes these developments and the parallel shifts in legal interpretations that affected desegregating school districts.

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[4] Don Nielson, interview with author, Seattle, Wash., 25 July 2007.

[5] "Little response to desegregation plan- school board's hearing draws only seven speakers," *Seattle Times* 7 May 1992, E1, "Busing's end means choice will begin," *Seattle Times*, 16 April 1992, A8.

[6] Michael Hoge, interview with author, Seattle, Wash., 6 September 2007.

Federal Institutional and Discursive Shifts

While Reagan pursued an end to civil rights enforcement through severe budget cuts, Justice Department appointments, and the re-organization of administrative departments, the National Education Association, the United States Commission on Civil Rights, and prominent civil rights advocates tried to sustain the gains made for civil rights since the 1960s. Resulting from this battle, the combination of more powerfully divisive discourse served to cleave a deep wedge between those favoring structural integration and those who wanted to see an end to busing and affirmative action policy. The Reagan administration was able to secure the narrative tradeoff constructed between busing and education, and not appear disinterested in equity by continuing to use a narrative of "diversity" as opposed to busing. As this relates to Seattle, this deep cleavage broke the discursive "middle" that held desegregation enforcement and investment together. The cleavage shifted the discursive power towards a significantly different coalition of actors; those who talked about racial equality (if at all) in terms of equal education and choice, a combination of ideas with coattails ranging from the 1960s property rights arguments to those focusing on quality education in terms of options and school choice.

Institutionally, the Reagan administration contributed to the demise of civil rights enforcement with severe funding and implementing policy that institutionalized the tradeoff between busing and "excellence." Marian Wright Edelman accused Reagan of trying to "'repeal or weaken everything, every single federal children's program and

every program protecting the poor.'"[7] Former Attorney general during the Carter

administration, Benajmin R. Civiletti, said "that the Reagan administration as a matter of

policy has retreated from effective civil rights enforcement."[8] William Taylor of the

Leadership Conference on Civil Rights also said he was surprised by "how brazenly the

Reagan administration has changed positions on cases already in the courts. They're not

even making any pretense of paying respect to the need for consistency."[9]

For elementary and secondary education, the Reagan administration consolidated

fifty-seven federal programs into two block grants and reduced funds by twenty percent.

New block grants were supposed to "free [School Boards] from regulations and

domination by bureaucrats in Washington."[10] As a result of these cuts, the Seattle School

District lost ninety-two percent of their federal funding by 1982. States and communities

had more discretion to handle these funds, on the assumption that "primary and

secondary education are basically local functions."[11] But given relaxed regulations

requiring spending for handicapped children, bilingual education, and desegregation

programs, it was well known that "local school authorities would tend to spend their

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[7] Kenneth O'Reilly, *Nixon's Piano: Presidents and Racial Politics from Washington to Clinton* (New York: The Free Press, 1995).

[8] Charles R. Babcock, "Reagan rights under fire at Justice," *New York Times,* 15 September 1981, A5.

[9] Ibid.

[10] Fred M. Hechinger, "About Education," *New York Times,* 2 February 1982, C4.

[11] "The Budget cuts in summary; programs, aims and points of debate," *New York Times,* 19 February 81, B6.

allotments on politically popular programs rather than special aid for the poor and the handicapped."[12]

In addition to funding cuts, Reagan's appointees to the Justice Department had a major impact on the civil rights agenda throughout the nation not only in how they relaxed enforcement, but also in how they began to frame the tradeoff between education and busing. Throughout the decade, administration officials pursued the end to racial quotas, programs for minorities, fair housing assurances, and forced busing. Justice Department representatives were quick to argue that their actions did not signal civil rights retreat. William Bradford Reynolds, Assistant Attorney General of the Civil Rights Division, "bristled" at the suggestion of retreat, contending that busing had not been useful for minority students, had been a "convenient remedy," and argued, "our position is to try to address the core concern, that some of these children are not getting a quality education." In his review of desegregation cases, "one thing that jumps out at me as the most remarkable deficiency in the litigation is that there is no effort to develop a record on educational quality... The stock answer is that the law requires desegregation, so we have to move people."[13] Deputy Attorney General Edward C. Schmults articulated the tradeoff, "We're trying to redirect thinking to try to improve enforcement. On schools, for instance, we'll focus on education, not busing people around willy-nilly."[14]

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[12] Ibid.

[13] Charles R. Babcock "Reagan rights policy under fire at justice," *The Washington Post,* 15 September 1981, A5.

[14] Ibid.

Reynolds further added that he felt the "courts have latched onto" busing as a convenient remedy, "but what are we doing when we come to the end of the bus ride?"[15]

Reagan also furthered the cleavage in the desegregation agenda through a shift I public discourse to describe education. The best example is the conceptual arrangement embedded in "A Nation at Risk." The Reagan administration furthered this discursive turn of this narrative in the report published in 1983 by Reagan's Commission for Excellence in Education, *A Nation at Risk*. This report and its assumptions were widely circulated throughout the nation. For example, the Washington Business Roundtable developed a similar report following *A Nation at Risk,*[16] to promote excellence in education and circulated "Talking Points" from the Republican National Committee about the report within Seattle.[17] In effect, this report told the nation that the public schools were at risk because of a "crisis" in academic achievement. In effect, this narrative played a dual role—one of reframing a national educational crisis in terms of academic achievement while at the same time disparaging integration.

The Commission named "excellence" as *the* role of public schooling, implying that desegregation was not *the* role. This meant a turn of attention to such issues as merit pay, charter schools, and private school tuition vouchers. The effectiveness of this narrative turn is found in the specific associations drawn between equity, individuals, and

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[15] "Obeying the law, Reagan style," *New York Times,* 19 September 1981, Section 1(22).

[16] T.A. Wilson, "Statement on Education Priorities," Washington Roundtable, Seattle, 12 November 1984, in A1995-06, Box 18, File "Washington Roundtable 1984-1989," Gus Angelos Files, Archives and Records Management Center for Seattle School District No. 1 (Hereafter cited as GAF).

[17] Republican National Committee "Talking Points," Vol. III, No. 9, 8 July 1983, in A1995-06, Box 18, File "Nation at Risk 1983-87," (GAF).

society that dismissed discussion of desegregation or race in any way. For example, the

preamble to *A Nation at Risk* reads,

> All, regardless of race or class or economic status, are entitled to a fair chance and
> to the tools for developing their individual powers of mind and spirit to the
> utmost. This promise means that all children by virtue of their own efforts,
> competently guided, can hope to attain the mature and informed judgment needed
> to secure gainful employment, and to manage their own lives, thereby serving not
> only their own interests but also the progress of society itself.[18]

First, the statement placed the individual student as the focus of educational policy.

Phrases such as "by virtue of their own efforts" and "to manage their own lives," sent the

message that it is up to the individual, not society, to determine the success of individuals

in the education system. Therefore, the alternative, group entitlements or quotas,

necessarily contradicted the assumption of individualism in this vision of public

education. The report implicitly conveyed the role of public education then is to provide

a "fair chance" for individuals, not groups, to secure the progress of the nation, "not their

own interests."

Despite the Reagan administration's aggressive re-framing of the role of the

public in civil rights and education, various groups fought hard to maintain an alternate

narrative. For example, the United States Commission on Civil Rights positioned

themselves as a "constant irritant to Mr. Reagan," publicly reporting that Reagan had cut

the Federal budget for civil rights enforcement in 1982.[19] Many publicly questioned the

assumption that race was a thing of the past, "If racial attitudes are better, why is the state

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[18] National Commission on Educational Excellence, *A Nation at Risk: The Imperative for Educational Reform,* (Washington D.C.,: U.S. Department of Education, 1983), available from http://www.ed.gov/pubs/NatAtRisk/risk.html (accessed January 31, 2008).

[19] Robert Pear, "Reported planning to name 4 to rights panel," *New York Times,* 22 May 1983, Section 1(1).

of poor blacks deteriorating?" the *New York Times* asked in 1983.[20] In response to Reagan's anti-affirmative action appointees to the USCCR, others also argued for a national economic bill of rights. For example, in response to A Nation at Risk, the National Education Association published "Three Cities that are Making Desegregation Work," Seattle being one of them. The report described the process leading up to its initiation, its early successes in implementation, and especially lauded the community-wide support integral to the Seattle Plan that included the business community.[21] Washington State Superintendent of Education, Frank Brouillet, also responded in kind with his own report critiquing the national debate over excellence as lacking balance and concern for minority education.[22]

But in terms of coalitions, for example, "there was no such coming together around a need for some kind of economic bill of rights."[23] The new combination of these narrative concepts provided increasing legitimacy to local opposition to busing. Given that the state of Washington had approved an anti-busing initiative in 1978, narratives coming out of the Reagan administration that focused on anti-busing hit home with many Seattleites. For example, in a public school board meeting late in 1980, an angry parent drew applause from the crowd when she reminded the school board of Reagan's pledge

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[20] "The movement's unfinished business is a tough agenda," *New York Times,* 28 August 1983, Section 4 (5).

[21] A Report of a National Education Association Special Study. *Three Cities That are Making Desegregation Work.* (Washington, D.C.: National Education Association, 1984).

[22] Dr. Frank B. Brouillet, "Achieveing Excellence for All," Washington State School Directors' Association, 9 December 1983, in Box 18, File "Nation at Risk 1983-7," (GAF).

[23] "The movement's unfinished business is a tough agenda," *New York Times,* 28 August 1983, Section 4 (5).

to cut the amount of busing.[24] Former Seattle Public Schools legal counsel, Michael Hoge, relayed the direct effect he felt the Reagan administration had on Seattle. For one, he argued that the fierceness behind the administration's anti-busing efforts "gave comfort to people…and encouraged them to keep [anti-busing efforts] up," according to Hoge.[25] The public acutely understood Reagan's mandate to rollback busing, Hoge noticed, "there was no real attempt to camouflage what they were doing."[26]

The way Reagan and his administration directly and aggressively attacked busing by asserting its irrelevance, told people to focus attention on a different and more important "crisis"—academic achievement. Both bolstered one another in a way to shift the public gaze away from race and desegregation and toward the "real" problem of individual academic achievement, which was also harmed by wasting money on an integrated society. To Hoge,

> An element of national political leadership has made looking at the world with blinders on respectable [...] You can't make the arguments made at the national level without pretending we've resolved our problems… when national leaders are saying those things, it's respectable for people to believe it and now worry about it.[27]

The effectiveness of Reagan's narrative turn can be seen in this dual shift; the narrative of a "crisis" in excellence in the schools was only legitimate in so far as racial inequality was deemed solved or irrelevant.

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[24] "Parents Hit Deseg and Closures," *Seattle Post-Intelligencer,* 13 November 1980.

[25] Michael Hoge, interview with author, Seattle, Wash., 6 September 2007.

[26] Ibid.

[27] Ibid.

Legal Developments

This section provides a brief outline of major legal developments relating to desegregating school districts between 1978 and 1991. I begin with the developments leading to the U.S. Supreme Court decision upholding the Seattle Plan in 1982 and then briefly examine court developments that would come to determine when it was legally justifiable for the school board to dismantle its desegregation policy.

Initiative 350

Immediately following the Board vote for the Seattle Plan in December 1977, the grassroots Citizens for Voluntary Integration Committee (CiVIC) organized a citizen initiative to essentially ban busing students for desegregation purposes. Washington's citizens voted in favor of the initiative in the fall of 1978 and the District immediately took the issue to court while pursuing the implementation of desegregation. The battle made it to the Supreme Court, where the Court eventually voted 5 to 4 to nullify the CiVIC anti-busing plan. The initiative drive attempted to initiate the cleavage between busing and education while retaining an expressed desire for integration. The politics surrounding this court case symbolized a shift in the political winds, despite the eventual ruling in favor of busing. The Reagan administration became involved rhetorically and as amicus to the State of Washington and used the narrative forum to affirm its retreat from busing. Furthermore, Justice Powell's dissenting opinion provided a window into the formation of a new competing narrative around the concept of racial classification and individual freedom that could potentially change the result of these types of decisions given a racially neutral setting.

The initiative drive began while the school board was finalizing the Seattle Plan in the fall of 1977. Citizens for Voluntary Integration Committee (CiVIC) drafted and circulated an initiative petition immediately following the initiation of the Seattle Plan in the winter of 1977-78. Initiative 350 specifically prohibited all the mandatory desegregation strategies of the Seattle Plan, namely the action of bussing a student to any school beyond his or her "nearest or next nearest" for the purposes of desegregation.[28] I-350 permitted local school districts to assign students to a school other than the nearest or next-nearest for most reasons except desegregation and allowed desegregation programs only if they were court-ordered.[29] Members thought that the initiative could survive a court challenge because they were not voting against integration, but against forced busing.[30] In April 1978, members of CiVIC campaigned strongly in eastern Washington, arguing the Seattle Plan would cost $12.5 million for Washington citizens. Chairman of CiVIC Robert Dorse told one crowd at a rally, "We see a bus buildup that is proportionately larger than what's really required."[31] CiVIC employed the voluntary integrationist narratives of the 1970s, which focused on the fact that forced busing destroyed neighborhoods and did not improve education. Ellen Roe, the only board member to vote against the Seattle Plan and a member of CiVIC, framed the support for

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[28] Constantine Angelos, "Desegregation-plan changes appear headed for approval," *Seattle Times,* 7 March 1978, A8. The original ballot title read, "Shall public educational authorities be prohibited from assigning students to other than the nearest or next-nearest school with limited exception?"

[29] *State of Washington v. Seattle School District No. 1,* On Appeal from the United State Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit, Brief of Appellees, No. 81-9, October Term, 1981, p. 9.

[30] Ibid.

[31] Constantine Angelos, "School-integration foes take their message east," *Seattle Times,* 4/1/78.

the initiative as a representation of the "chaos people feel now,"[32] and as a symbolic of

the fact that the Seattle Plan was "not even wanted by most Seattle citizens."[33]

Despite the active school board campaign against the initiative, the Washington

electorate passed I-350 in November 1978 by a 2-1 margin. The initiative failed in

Seattle's predominantly minority 37th Legislative District and in the predominantly white

43rd District.[34] The Board decided to initiate litigation, with only one member in

opposition, Ellen Roe, who cited concerns with cost.[35] District legal counsel Gary Little

advised the board that the initiative would be interpreted as a state action to re-segregate

the schools, which would violate the fourteenth amendment and could even lead to court-

ordered desegregation.[36] The official board statement prepared to initiate litigation began

with their commitment to the original reasons they voted for desegregation, "for both

educational and legal reasons" and because "educationally, the Board believes that

realistic training for citizenship in this pluralistic society should reflect the real world's

diversity of ethnic backgrounds."[37] The groups active in the push for desegregation came

back to meetings in full force to make sure the District would fight I-350 as a symbol of

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[32] Record 76, 15 November 1978 (SSR).

[33] "Memo from Ellen Roe to School Board Members/David Moberly, re: "Dissension in the ranks and How to Handle It," 6 April 1978, A98-13, Box 9 (LCF).

[34] The 37th and 43rd Districts were the ones scheduled to be joined in the 1972 Middle School Plan, (Br. App, SC 1982, pg 9.

[35] Record 76, 8 November 1978 (SSR).

[36] "Memo from Legal Counsel to Moberly and School Board: Legal Position of Seattle School District No. 1 if Initiative 350 Becomes Law," 15 August 1978, in A2005-15, Box 15, Folder "Deseg. Initiative 350 Community and Governmental Relations" (AWF).

[37] Record 76, 8 November 1978, 92 (SSR).

segregation. The Church Council reminded the Board of their moral responsibility at the same time as the Urban League pushed the Board for their "unwavering support."[38]

Federal Court Battle

In the U.S. district court, the Seattle, Pasco and Tacoma School District charged that I-350 discriminated on the basis of race in violation of the 14th Amendment, and Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964. They also charged the State and the United States had caused purposeful segregation.[39] The parties included the school districts against the State of Washington along with the head of CiVIC. The case witnessed multiple interveners, and after a trial that produced over 2,000 pages of transcripts and 250 exhibits, Judge Donald Voorhees found the initiative unconstitutional relying primarily on two cases where State law prohibited or burdened efforts to remedy or protect against discrimination (*Hunter v. Erickson* (1969) and *Nyquist v. Lee* (1971).[40] Initiative 350 followed because it prohibited all techniques to remedy segregation, while at the same time created exceptions for other significant reasons for busing (such as proximity to school and sibling attendance). Though, they could not ascertain whether the votes for I-350 had segregative intent, the court determined that one purpose of the

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[38] Record 76, 29 November 1978, 124 (SSR).

[39] *State of Washington v. Seattle School District No. 1,* On Appeal from the United State Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit, Brief of Appellees, No. 81-9, October Term, 1981, p. 9.

[40] "Last stop for anti-busing initiative," *Seattle Post-Intelligencer*, 21 March 1982. 1982, 11.

initiative was to terminate effective desegregation, leaving court-ordered policies the only recourse.[41]

The State of Washington, under the new Republican leadership of Governor John D. Spellman, with CiVIC as amicus, sought review of the case in the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals. The only constitutional issue discussed by the Court of Appeals was the District Court's conclusion that Initiative 350 embodied an "invidious racial classification."[42] The court argued that even a law which appears racially neutral may violate the equal protection clause it if causes a disproportionately adverse impact on racial minorities that could be traced to purposeful discrimination.[43]

Following the Court of Appeals decision, Seattle desegregation supporters tensely looked towards the Supreme Court trial after the State of Washington decided to continue with the case after Judge Voorhees ruling in 1981. The Seattle Post-Intelligencer reported on the significance of the 1982 case: "in the anti-busing climate that has flourished under the Reagan administration and in the 97th Congress, court watchers say the final decision made on 350 will undoubtedly set the mood for future school desegregation efforts."[44] In a turn of events from the Carter administration, the Reagan Justice Department filed as amicus with the State of Washington.[45] The Reagan

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[41] *State of Washington v. Seattle School District No. 1,* On Appeal from the United State Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit, Brief of Appellees, No. 81-9, October Term, 1981, p. 12.

[42] Ibid.

[43] *State of Washington v. Seattle School District No. 1* (No 81-9), Oral Argument of Kenneth O. Eikenberry, Chief Justice Burger, March 22, 1982.

[44] "Last stop for anti-busing initiative," *Seattle Post-Intelligencer*, 21 March 1982.

administration used the national platform to show its determination to oppose busing, and

by doing so, also pitted themselves against local school boards (and local control) by

promoting the state ruling over local decision-making. The *New York Times* called this

an "unusual" turn to oppose a "model" plan that was locally developed and actually

working.[46]

In 1982, the Supreme Court upheld the ruling against the initiative with a 5 to 4

vote, because with Initiative 350, "the state places an unconstitutional burden on racial

minorities within the governmental process."[47] The majority opinion centered on the fact

that the exceptions to I-350 permitted school boards to assign students away from their

neighborhood schools for "virtually all of the non-integrative purposes required by their

educational policies." The Court concluded with *Hunter v. Erickson* that "the core of the

Fourteenth Amendment is the prevention of meaningful and unjustified official

distinctions based on race."[48] In an interpretive moment, the Court acknowledged that,

"it should be equally clear that *white* as well as Negro children benefit from exposure to

ethnic and racial diversity in the classroom."[49] However, the Court emphasized the role

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[45] In the summer of 1981, Washington State Attorney General Kenneth O. Eikenberry, a "long-time Reagan worker and supporter," sent a letter to a former assistant to the President to "use his White House influence to sway the U.S. JD from its "lamentable" stance in opposition to anti-busing Initiative 350. Twelve days later, the U.S. JD announced it was switching sides in support of I-350 and against desegregation busing (in Ibid.).

[46] Stuart Taylor, Jr., Special to the New York Times, "U.S., in shift, urges high court to back an antibusing law," *New York Times,* 11 September 1981, A1.

[47] *Washington v. Seattle School District No. 1,* 458 U.S. 457 (1982).

[48] Ibid.

[49] Ibid. (emphasis added).

of desegregation as, "at bottom inures primarily to the benefit of the minority child, and is designed for that purpose." White, or "majority children," may benefit, according to the Court, from desegregation that could teach "members of the racial majority 'to live in harmony and mutual respect' with children of minority heritage."[50]

The dissenting opinion, written by Justice Powell, provides a light into an increasingly legitimate competing narrative, given the 5 to 4 decision. Powell attempted to take this case out of the line of desegregation cases. Following the logic of *Swann* (1971) and *Bakke* (1978), Justice Powell argued that I-350 was a racially neutral policy that did not interfere "with the power of the state or federal courts to remedy constitutional violations" because there is no constitutional requirement for a school district to integrate in the absence of a finding of unconstitutional segregation.[51] Utilizing the logic of *University of California v. Bakke* (1978), Powell argued, "In the absence of a federal constitutional violation, requiring race-specific remedies, a policy of strict racial neutrality by a State would violate no federal constitutional principle."[52] In Footnote 6 Justice Powell wrote, "Indeed, in the absence of a finding of segregation... Extensive pupil transportation may threaten liberty or privacy interests."[53] Powell re-cast the concept of racial classification: "Moreover, when a State or school board assigns students on the basis of their race, it acts on the basis of a racial classification, and we have

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[50] Ibid., 6.

[51] *Washington v. Seattle School District No. 1*, 458 U.S. 457 (1982).

[52] Ibid., 458 U.S. 492.

[53] Ibid., Footnote 17, 458 U.S. 492.

consistently held that '[a] racial classification, regardless of purported motivation, is presumptively invalid and can be upheld only upon an extraordinary justification.'"[54] Powell challenged the connections between racial classification and minority groups through the assumption that racial classification did not need intention to be considered unconstitutional.

The Washington Post reported the message from the Court as "an uncertain trumpet" for racial equality and the mechanisms to achieve such.[55] At the same time, the Court decided 8 to 1 in favor of a California proposition that amended the California constitution as to the remedies the court could impose in a school desegregation case.[56] The Court supported the voluntarily adopted mandatory desegregation policy because the initiative placed an unconstitutional burden through a racial classification built into the political process, they also ruled against the California busing plan as it went beyond federal requirements. The Court decisions signaled a consistent reliance on the

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[54] Ibid, Footnote 6, 458, U.S. 501.

[55] "High Court Issues Mixed Rulings on School Desegregation Case" *The Washington Post,* 1 July 1982, A8. At the same time the Court decided upon this case, they also decided 8-1 in favor of a California proposition that amended the California constitution as to the remedies the court could impose in a school desegregation case (Linda Greenhourse, "Courts back California busing ban: overturns related law in Washington," *The New York Times* 1 July 1982, A14).

[56] The California voter-approved Proposition 1 prevented the busing of 40,000 students in the Los Angeles, who were originally ordered by the state court beyond federal desegregation requirements. Basically, the California proposition limited the state courts to the Federal courts' remedies to ameliorate segregation. The proposition, the Court argued, did not bias the playing field against minorities because it mandated the state courts to enforce the Fourteenth Amendment as the Federal courts would. Justice Blackmun detailed the difference between the two cases: the California electorate repealed an antidiscrimination law that was not required by the Federal Constitution and that was enacted by the electorate in the first place; the Washington electorate approved a law that re-ordered the state's educational decision-making processes "to the detriment of people who are members of minority groups." In the LA case, the only dissenting opinion, Justice Marshall, argued that the Proposition 1 was similar to the Washington initiative because Proposition 1 "changed the rules of the game" for those seeking to defend their right to integrate schools through "a substantial reallocation of state power" in this case only (Linda Greenhourse,, "Courts back California busing ban: overturns related law in Washington," *The New York Times* 1 July 1982, A14).

framework of discriminatory intent and racial classification as the culprits of constitutional violation.

Supreme Court Developments After I-350

During the 1980s, many school districts considered modifications to either court ordered or voluntarily adopted desegregation plans. The courts heard cases relating to the possibility of modifications that could result in an increase of racially imbalanced schools. According to an attorney-client communication in 1987, the legal issue for Seattle became the "legal limitations on modification or termination of a voluntarily adopted plan that has been reasonably successful in maintaining desegregated schools."[57] Prior to making changes to the Seattle Plan, the district looked into student assignment-oriented acts that could possibly indicate segregative intent. In 1987, legal counsel advised the Seattle School District that if they altered their student assignment policy, the courts were likely to issue a preliminary injunction to maintain operations under existing desegregation plans pending trial.

Early in the 1980s, the courts found that mere implementation of a desegregation plan was not sufficient to release a district from court order. To be declared "unitary," a district had to remedy all effects of prior discrimination (*United States v. Texas Education Agency,* 1981) to be released of its desegregation order or necessity to

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[57] David J. Burman, "Standards Governing Complete or Substantial Termination of a School Desegregation Plan," Confidential and Privileged Attorney-Client Communication, July 17, 1987, in no accession number, no box number, at time of retrieval, Archives and Records Management Center for Seattle School District No.1.

desegregate further.[58] According to *Keyes* (1974), the term "unitary" was defined as a

district, "In which all of the students have equal access to the opportunity for education,

with the publicly provided educational resources distributed equally, and with the

expectation that all students can acquire a community defined level of knowledge and

skills consistent with their individual efforts and abilities.[59]

Despite this definition, Seattle school district legal counsel wrote, "the law in his

area is unclear and in flux."[60] Prior to 1991, for example, the Court had consistently held

that neighborhood attendance policies could result in unconstitutional school segregation,

even if this resulted from discriminatory public housing practices.[61] However, the Court

began moving away from this position before 1985. In both *Bell v. Board of Education*

(Akron) in 1982[62] and *United States v. Yonkers Board of Education* (1985), courts

required some proof that school authorities had cooperated with or contributed to

segregated housing. According to *Yonkers,* "If any trend in the law can be discerned, it

consists of an increasing focus on whether some meaningful connection exists between

the policies of public housing officials and the policies of school board officials."[63]

However, cases following did not maintain a clear declaration as they explored

school districts' intentions to desegregate. For example, in *Riddick v. School Board*

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[58] *United States v. Texas Education Agency (South Park),* 647 F. 2d 504, 508 (5th Cir. 1981), in Ibid., 62.

[59] *Keyes v. School District No. 1 (Denver),* 540 F. Supp. 399, 403-04 (D. Colo. 1982), in Ibid., 61.

[60] Ibid., 60.

[61] Ibid.

[62] Ibid.

[63] *United States v. Yonkers Board of Education,* 624 F. Supp. 1276 (S.D.N.Y. 1985), in Ibid.

(Norfolk, Va.), (1986), the court released the school district from its court-ordered

desegregation plan originating in 1956 and approved of its new student assignment policy

that resulted in about one-third of Norfolk's elementary schools becoming predominantly

minority. The court found that busing had contributed to the reduction of white students

in the public schools by fifty-percent and the loss of parental involvement in the public

schools and decided that the district had done all it could to remedy the problems, to no

avail, and therefore allowed the district to implement the voluntary assignment plan. In

contrast, in *Board of Education of Oklahoma City v. Dowell* (1986),[64] the tenth circuit

court ruled that the school board's modification to its court-ordered desegregation plans

of 1977 and 1972 violated the order because it resulted in a "resurgence of

segregation."[65] Presumably, the distinction lay within the foreseeable level of *re*-

segregation that could occur with changes to desegregation plans. In the Norfolk case,

segregation levels remained and would remain consistent despite attempts to desegregate.

Despite this distinction, the 1990s saw several Supreme Court cases in the 1990s

relax requirements for school districts to stop desegregating. The first reconsidered the

Tenth Circuit Court's decision on *Board of Education of Oklahoma City Public Schools*

v. Dowell (1991), as it dealt with a school district that would likely result in resegregation

with the end of the desegregation order. Though evidence indicated that termination

would lead to resegregation in Oklahoma City's schools, the Court ruled that a court

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[64] *Dowell v. Board of Education of Oklahoma City Public Schools*, 795 F.2d 1516, cert. denied, 479 U.S. 938 (1986) 10th circuit court.

[65] *Oklahoma City,* 795 F. 2d at 1522 in David J. Burman, "Standards Governing Complete or Substantial Termination of a School Desegregation Plan," Confidential and Privileged Attorney-Client Communication, July 17, 1987, 76, in no accession number, no box number, at time of retrieval, Archives and Records Management Center for Seattle School District No.1.

order should end if the school board had "complied in good faith" and "the vestiges of past discrimination have been eliminated to the extent practicable."[66] The Court held a district could be declared unitary when "local authorities have operated in compliance with [a desegregation decree] for a reasonable period is proper."[67] The second, *Freeman v. Pitts* (1992), considered a Georgia school district ordered to desegregate various aspects of the school system. The same school district was also considering constructing a facility that would likely benefit white students more than African Americans. The Georgia district had met the requirement to desegregate pupil assignment and held that district compliance with a portion of the court order was enough to be released the desegregation decree. The Court also held that the federal court could not consider the new facility and its discriminatory effects because the construction was not part of the original decree.[68]

The Supreme Court decisions displayed an uncertain terrain upon which districts could constitutionally lift their desegregation policies until the 1990s. With *Dowell* and *Pitts,* the Court decisions relied upon a framework that required discriminatory intent to guide decisions about the constitutionality of segregated schools, and further solidified the allegiance of the schools to comply with the Fourteenth Amendment, rather than fundamentally and actively pursuing diversity or equality within the schools. This

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[66] John Charles and Gary Orfield Boger, ed., *School Resegregation: Must the South Turn Back?* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2005).

[67] *Dowell v. Board of Education of Oklahoma City Public Schools,* 498 U.S. 237 (1991).

[68] Boger, ed., *School Resegregation: Must the South Turn Back?*, 39.

ambiguity allowed the District to maneuver both in ways that upheld busing and mandatory integration as well as ways to begin to ease definitions of racial imbalance.

National-Legal Summary

Two trends governed the direction of desegregation at the national level. The federal administration attempted an obvious retreat from busing and desegregation, fought the whole way by those invested in continuing with the civil rights gained since the 1960s. By the 1990s, the courts pointed towards more relaxed standards governing the declaration of unitary status for school districts. Despite the growing sentiment at the national level away from desegregation as the measure of equity, these developments did not give the Seattle school district declarative guidelines as to how to continue or eventually how, if at all, to revise the Seattle Plan's student assignment guidelines. The level of national indeterminacy provided the District room to maneuver with respect to both sustaining their desegregation policy and consider the end of it by the later 1980s. This indeterminate space also allowed for a politically legitimate opposition to busing to grow in Seattle and utilize some of the same constructions posing busing against education, and problematize the idea of "racial classification" as the District was further removed from the obvious discriminatory housing practices that bolstered school segregation.

Interpreting Implementation, Re-casting Narrative Constellations

In the spring of 1978, planning issues for desegregation immediately brought the unsteady discursive arrangements in the Seattle Plan to the surface. The section begins with a description of the initial implementation successes and problems and the way District actors interpreted implementation and how these interpretations addressed the critical vulnerabilities in the Seattle Plan. The section examines Seattle's implementation struggles and how the school board, parents, and major institutional actors interpreted, responded, and re-thought alterations to the Seattle Plan to ensure equity along constructed criteria. I analyze how the competing narrative constellations embedded within the Seattle Plan dealt with the tense arrangement of priorities and emphases with implementation and how the beginnings of alternate narrative constructions began to gain traction.

These new narratives resulted from and built off of ambiguities in the Seattle Plan and framed alternate visions of racial equity that both undermined and reconstructed the Seattle Plan's discursive coalition's narrative framework, providing the groundwork for the collapse of the Seattle Plan's arrangement of ideas and priorities. Even for the most predictable fault line in the Plan, actors gave conflicts new meanings despite familiar language, eventually recasting new interpretations of racial equality, segregation, and the role of the schools. The following sub-sections analyze key prioritization debates related to the first major review of the Seattle Plan in 1983 that pointed out the structural inequities resulting from the priorities placed on options and choice for parents in place

of ensuring equity along all measures. I end with a brief discussion of the beginning of an alternate narrative that began to gain institutional footing in the mid-1980s.

Initial Implementation: Balancing Equity and Attraction

In the first few years of implementation, the primary conflict arose from the disjuncture between assumptions articulated in Seattle Plan planning concerning equity in student movement and the emphasis on educational options to attract middle class white parents. Before 1983, the district had not dealt with some of the structural inequities that resulted from the Seattle Plan's "attraction" priorities, which tended to increase the voluntary options component rather than equity in student movement and desegregated classrooms. These actions created a schism between original assumptions that guided the Seattle Plan, which included: mandating equity in student movement, prioritizing options/magnets at schools involved in pairs/triads, and ensuring that options benefit all students in the schools they were placed.[69]

Overall, the implementation of the Seattle Plan was an initial success in terms of widespread acceptance, despite the I-350 campaign. The school year began without violence or disruption in the fall of 1978.[70] Michael Hoge noticed that "for quite a

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[69] Record 76, 29 November 1978, 129-134 (SSR).

[70] The most immediate concerns for the school board in implementation were declining enrollment, majority students not attending school when assigned to south-end schools, under-crowded schools, cuts in some staff and programs, and less attractive schools in the southeast (Ibid.). Other problems included extra space in southeast, east central and southwest at the intermediate level, and insufficient space at elementary level (District-Wide Advisory Committee for Desegregation, "Long-Range Facilities Planning Attention: Impact on Desegregation," 1 November 1979, in 330.202.c2 (SSD)). The board realized they were "walking a tightrope to balance conflicting needs" of all district students, especially not being under court

number of years, the whole establishment in town pretty much agreed or at least went along with the idea that [mandatory assignment for desegregative purposes] is something we ought to be doing in spite of its inconveniences and costs and downsides."[71] The city establishment rose to the challenge of I-350 and continued to work with the school district to see desegregation succeed. The City and District maintained a joint committee to address larger problems, and commitment remained in tact despite changes in both mayor and superintendent in 1979 and 1981 respectively. In two signs of public confidence, the levy election in March was a success, giving the district a much-needed $34.5 million in critical funds for district operations in 1978 and the public elected two pro-desegregation candidates over two strong neighborhood schools/voluntary integration candidates two years later.[72]

Early measures pointed to student assignment successes as well. The Desegregation Evaluation Report written after the Seattle Plan's first year showed that even though only twelve percent of the District's enrollment was reassigned, they had done an effective job desegregating the schools in the first year. The retention rate for white students was 96 percent, for minorities it was 100 percent, and overall for those affected by new assignments was 91. In 1979, approximately 4,000 students were

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order and having the flexibility to make changes, and attempted to tinker with the plan to meet these needs as they arose.(Record 76, 7 March 1979, (SSR)).

[71] Michael Hoge, interview with author, Seattle, Wash., 6 September 2007.

[72] Even those involved in CiVIC campaigned for a successful levy, stating levy defeat would only harm the overall quality of education, given the fact the Board would follow through with desegregation with or without the levy ("Voters to decide on school levies," Seattle Times, 14 March 1978, "Questions about busing," Seattle Times, 26 December 1980).

attending new feeder patterns, 5,000 students were attending schools as voluntary racial

transfers (which included enrollment in options programs), and the number of racially

imbalanced schools was reduced from twenty-seven to fifteen.[73]

In 1983, new Superintendent Donald Steele assigned the District Review

Advisory Committee (DRAC) to perform the first comprehensive evaluation of the

Seattle Plan.[74] DRAC measured the Seattle Plan's development in terms of how aspects

of the Seattle Plan affected equity beyond elimination of basic numerical segregation. In

1980, the board accorded priority to "Five Basic Principles" that outlined the priorities of

the District at this time: 1) provision of equal opportunity of all students for quality

education in a multi-racial setting, 2) effectiveness of elimination of racial imbalance, 3)

consistency with the principles of the Seattle Plan, 4) equity in movement out of home

school area between majority and minority youth on a District-wide basis, and 5)

recognition of the need for ethnic identity of minority students and sensitivity to ethnic

heritage.[75] This review retained the focus on desegregation and multiculturalism.

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[73] Office of Instructional Program Evaluation, "Desegregation Evaluation Progress Report: Changing Enrollment Patterns Under the Seattle Plan," Report No. 79-8, April 1979, available from Government Publication Division, University of Washington Libraries.

[74] Desegregation Review Advisory Committee, "Final Report: Desegregation Review Advisory Committee," 22 September 1983, 330.267 (SSD). Also see Record 81, 16 November 1983 (SSR) for board discussion of DRAC Final Report. Superintendent Donald Steele first convened DRAC on November 18, 1982 in order to evaluate whether or not the Seattle Plan met its goals. Membership comprised a variety of constituent groups within the City of Seattle plus members appointed by each member of the school board and the Superintendent. The District supported DWAC with two staff members, Dr. Colin Williams and Dr. Wayne Foley. DRAC reported to the Superintendent.

[75] Ibid., 21. An additional fourteen criteria were established to measure features of the primary five.

According to the evaluation, no school was racially imbalanced by 1981.[76]

However, DRAC reported multiple levels of inequity taking place within the Seattle Plan.

Generally, DRAC highlighted two categories- inequities in student movement and

inequity within options programs. Specifically, the report found inequities in in-building

segregation, access to specific programs, disproportionate suspension levels for black

students, the maintenance of majority-impacted schools, and inequity in the burden of

student movement.[77] DRAC defined equity in student movement to assure that "school

groupings of students attend school in their home neighborhood half of the time and

attend school out of neighborhood the other half of the time," that "an equal number of

majority and minority students are moving for desegregation purposes...and participate

in the plan" and found "on the whole the burden for desegregation is borne heavily by

minority students."[78]

Much of this inequality resulted from the options programs. DRAC reported,

"that a structural conflict existed in the Seattle Plan when it was adopted by the Seattle

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[76] Ibid., 18.

[77] Ibid., 17-21.

[78] Ibid., 19-20. For the 1980 school year, there were 4,031 white and 4,511 minority student transfers, with minorities composing 42.3percent of District students. Therefore, busing proved to be disproportionately shouldered by minority students ("School aide denies bias in busing plan," *Seattle Times,* 20 November 1980). In 1979, out of the District's enrolled 53,885 students, 5240 attended schools other than their assigned schools because of transfers to options programs or voluntary racial transfers. Of these students, 1933 reduced racial imbalance at both sending and receiving schools, while 684 worsened racial imbalance at both schools. District-wide retention rates for minority students were at 100 percent. While the net effect of movement was movement to enhance racial balance, 13 percent were allowed to move that reduced racial balance (Office of Instructional Program Evaluation, "Desegregation Evaluation Progress Report: Changing Enrollment Patterns Under the Seattle Plan," Report No. 79-8, April 1979, available from Government Publication Division, University of Washington Libraries). In 1983, approximately 60percent of minority students attended school out of their home area, while about 40 percent of white students attended school out of their home area (Ibid., 20).

School Board and it still exists."[79] DRAC reported, "the proliferation of 'options'

throughout the District" and the current administrative approach to student assignments

and transfers has made it easy for a student to transfer from one school to another without

regard for the impact of such transfers on desegregation effort."[80] For example, during

the 1982-83 school year, 46 percent of students assigned to paired and triaded schools did

not attend their assigned school.[81] Rather than enhancing desegregation, the "option

programs have been placed in a manner which has a greater tendency to undermine the

mandatory component of the Seattle Plan than to reinforce and support it."[82] The report

noted that prioritizing options also led to the situation where "valuable District resources

are being channeled out of the mandatory component of the Seattle Plan into other areas

including the massive voluntary component."[83]

DRAC established recommendations based on ensuring multiple levels of equity

and multiculturalism within the Seattle Plan. DRAC found, not surprisingly, that options

programs "favored" white students over minority students, which contributed to

segregated classrooms. Many of the most popular options program, especially the

popular gifted-student program, Horizon, became obvious enclaves of white students and

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[79] Ibid., 19.

[80] Ibid., 11.

[81] Ibid., 22. This percentage represented "white flight" families that chose options programs instead of their assigned schools.

[82] Ibid., 19.

[83] Voluntary transfers cost about twice as much as mandatory transfers (Ibid., 11-12).

segregation within schools.[84] Therefore, DRAC recommended elimination of voluntary option programs that do not meet racial guidelines, elimination of Horizon, tightening student transfer guidelines to reduce the number of students opting out of mandatory assignments, and strengthening the schools in the mandatory pairs/triads with more resources, staff, and relocated options.[85]

At this time, board meeting discussion showed most board members and interested actors expressed the desire to continue to meet both the goals of equalizing the Seattle Plan and ensuring attractiveness in programming. However, the narrative debates reveal significant differences in prioritization that became less reconcilable with time. Therefore, while the unsteady balance arranged within the Seattle Plan's narrative constellation retained strength to continue with implementation, new struggles resulted in significant shifts that began to re-arrange ideas and emphases and the needs of desegregation.

Analysis of the school board debates following the DRAC review and initial implementation struggles shows that the Board struggled with five major goals to solve the structural inequities: equalizing the voluntary options; equalizing the numbers of

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[84] Horizon was a program set aside for the top one percent of test takers. It became an embodiment of desegregation's problems. First, it became a symbol of within-school segregation, so was framed as frustrating the problems of segregation and minority achievement. Horizon was the most popular option among white parents, and its classrooms contained predominantly white children within a desegregated school in a predominantly black neighborhood. Then, the District addressed this by allotting space in Horizon programs for the top 1 percent of each racial/ethnic group. This was welcomed by minority groups, and was attacked by majority white parents. Statistics showed positive results of those entering the Horizon program without scoring high enough on the exams, and then scoring high enough to enter again the next year. Of the sixteen Horizon programs, only three set minimum requirements for equal representation. In non-Horizon programs, minority enrollment was less than 37 percent in all options programs except for two (Early Childhood Centers, ORCA, and AES) (Ibid., 34).

[85] "Desegregation: Is it Working? What lies ahead," *Seattle Times/Seattle Post-Intelligencer,* 11 September 1983; "Desegregation-panel minority dissents on report," *Seattle Times,* 27 September 1983.

minority and majority students bussed; reducing the number of students bussed;

contemplating the goal of decoupling paired/triaded schools; and changing the definition

of racial balance. "Decoupling" paired/triaded schools meant they would no longer be

involved in mandatory student assignments. Changing the definition of racial imbalance

to allow more minority students at one school would allow more schools to be labeled as

"desegregated," and therefore appropriate schools to de-couple. The following sub-

sections describe the competing narrative accounts of implementation that signaled small

breaking points that began to distance previously linked ideas in the multicultural

constellation.

The Attraction Narrative Constellation

Initial numerical desegregation successes accompanied declines in enrollment and

fears that desegregation was a cause of "white flight." School officials began to

transform the framework of attraction as excellent education into a framework of parental

choice in order to position the public schools, and the Seattle Plan, specifically as

equivalent to, or better than, private schools. Despite many assurances and pleas by

school district officials that the Seattle schools' education was equally high in quality as

the private schools, the media reported that the public often perceived the busing plan as

a "stain" on the school district, and as a tradeoff for quality education, based on interview

and polling data.[86] In these early years, District actors emphasized academic options as

an integral priority within the Seattle Plan as attractions for white students to stay in the

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[86] "Seattle schools fight poor image," *Seattle Times/Seattle Post-Intelligencer,* 25 March 1984.

public schools and to assure the public that the Seattle Plan was not only a desegregation plan, but also an opportunity to improve the Seattle public schools' educational programming. In these early years, various District actors framed options as independently popular and separately valuable from the goals of desegregation. They became engines of attraction and excellence, rather than avenues for natural student movement.

The attraction narrative de-emphasized equity and subsequently gave options programs and school choice a level of independent value, un-related to actual levels of academic quality within the District. Actors' initial framing of options as attraction mechanisms re-asserted the schools' role in ways reflective of the voluntary integrationist narratives and reflected a growing schism in Seattle Plan's discursive coalition connected by visions of multiculturalism, as it challenged the assumption that quality education was not possible without integration. Within these implementation years, options to enhance desegregation became a symbol of school choice to quell parental fears and became mechanisms of inequality that both detracted from between-school and within-school integration. Actors found difficulty in ridding the narrative connections that tied options and school choice with quality education, despite findings that these led to inequality. Actors' use of academic quality and school choice, both integral to the Seattle Plan, now began to "re-wire" their connections that placed greater emphasis on these ideas in comparison and to the detriment of integration.

The attraction narrative helped to solidify narrative connections in Seattle Plan debates that separated educational quality and desegregation as two separate goals for

two separate groups of people: options for white parents and desegregation for minority youth. Within this attraction narrative, options to enhance desegregation became a tangible mechanism of excellent educational programming to compete with private school flight. Ways of constructing parents as "consumers," shows how actors emphasized a significant role for the schools as attracting white parents. School officials increasingly framed parents as "consumers of education," or "patrons" who could opt for private schools, which were in position to "sell their customers on the value of their product."[87] For example, Moberly's annual report in 1980, he emphasized quality education within the options programs as "critical to holding upper and middle income patrons in the Seattle School District."[88] Superintendent Don Steele championed costly policy strategies on improving accessibility to and increasing the number of options programs in the city because, "if it helps to attract students back into the public schools then it will be well worth the expenditure."[89] City institutions tried to do the same; actors such as Mayor Charles Royer tried to convince the public that the public schools were better than the private schools, primarily because of the options programs, and the *Seattle Times* reported that Seattle offers more options than the suburban schools.[90] The *Seattle*

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[87] Ibid.

[88] Dr. David Moberly, "Superintendent's Annual Report," June 1980, 6, 021.094.c.1. (SSD).

[89] Record 81, 23 October 1983 (SSR).

[90] "Seattle offers more options than do suburbs," *Seattle Times,* 25 March 1984.

Times tried to re-frame the public's fear as well, noting "that the Seattle Plan has spawned a benefit rarely afforded to parents of public-school students: choice."[91]

Assessing the Attraction Constellation

The attraction constellation was built through connections that drew emphasis between academic excellence and non-minority "consumers" and a disconnection drawn between "quality" and "integrated" education. Thus, the priority for the school in this constellation was a connection between white parents and their perceptions of the District, increased through mechanisms of control, or choice. The constellation also further deferred any latent connections between "integration" and "white isolation." This constellation attempted to re-cast the plan that involved busing, as providing a "rainbow of choices" for the rest of the public uninterested in busing.[92]

The Diversity Narrative Constellation

Throughout the 1980s, the District retained a firm yet contested definition of desegregation as incorporating both the social role of integration and along with educational equity. In the wake of the DRAC review, many, if not all, board members maintained narrative connections between equity and diversity over attraction. Reflective of the cultural/structural integrationist narrative of the 1970s, this narrative tried to counter the attraction narrative and arguments that desegregation (busing) was a tradeoff

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[91] "The flip side of busing is Seattle schools' rainbow of choices," *Seattle Times,* 12 March 1984.

[92] Ibid.

for educational quality by emphasizing the social or diversity-oriented aspects of desegregation (multi-cultural education, preparing students a pluralist world), integration for all students, and equalizing the structural inequalities presented by DRAC. This narrative tried to disentangle the measurements of academic attraction and desegregation that were so carefully being cast as opposing alternatives by the Reagan administration and local district actors. In contrast to the 1960s and 1970s civil rights narrative constellations, these actors responded to initial implementation struggles with the development of an interpretation of "success" that *separated* the goals of desegregation and academic quality as two, equally viable, and separately measurable goals. That is, it was not that education could not be quality without being integrated. This constellation directly aligned separate measurements for "quality" and "integration."

Now, the diversity, pluralist, and multicultural elements of integration became *the* concepts through which these actors argued for its continuation. For example, School Board Resolution 1983-27 expressed the assumption that "a desegregated education is essential to prepare students adequately to participate in the labor market and as citizens in our pluralistic democracy."[93] Dr. Colin Williams, district staff support for DRAC, argued that black children who have been exposed to the majority community have the "inestimable advantage" of "just knowing the right people."[94] Along similar lines, Suzanne Hittman focused on exposure in terms of the white kids. She hoped to be able to measure desegregation's effects on the majority community as well:

[93] Robert L. Nelson, "Superintendent's Preliminary Recommendations for the Implementation of Seattle Plan Improvements," 17 February 1984, 330.196 (SSD).

[94] "Desegregation: Is it Working? What lies ahead," *Seattle Times/Seattle Post-Intelligencer,* 11 September 1983.

> When we see them in their adult life and as leaders, will they tolerate housing projects that will exclude people? Will they have practices in their businesses that will not exclude people? That's the proof of the pudding. Will they be citizens of the world?"[95]

Mayor Charles Royer also noted "the cultural diversity that the plan has brought to the city's schools is one of the greatest advantages of education here."[96] As the Status Report of Seattle Plan Improvements in 1985 argued, the "ultimate measure of the District's integration efforts," should be "reflected in the ability of Seattle School students to be economically productive and to effectively exercise their rights as democratic citizens in a complex multiethnic society and world."[97] These statements asserted desegregation as necessary to further social goals (economic opportunity and diversity), thus posed "ultimate" evaluative measures in terms of economic productivity of all students and culturally competent attitudes to democratically participate in society.

This narrative established a new relationship between these social goals and academic goals to counter the tradeoff argument that combined and then prioritized academic quality over desegregation, as if a zero-sum formula. For example, Vassar responded to questions about the Seattle Plan's improvements to academic achievement: "a desegregation plan isn't an educational plan."[98] In a personal interview, T.J. Vassar articulated the vision that desegregation was not just about moving kids around, and was an integral part of education both socially and economically,

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[95] Ibid.

[96] "Seattle Schools fight poor image," *Seattle Times/Seattle Post-Intelligencer,* 25 March 1984.

[97] Dr. Colin Williams, "Status Report, 1985-1986, Seattle Plan Improvements: Year Two," 13 January 1986, in A1995-06, Box 8, File #2 (GAF).

[98] "Desegregation-change talks begin," *Seattle Times,* 24 November 1987.

> I always thought we could do both, I always thought we could be able to give people quality education as well as diverse or at that time an integrated education… It wasn't just sitting next to white people. I always thought that when you have people who are more influential and powerful in schools with people who are less powerful, that sort of evens things out and the resource allocation is more even and therefore the education is more even.

Rather than framing a quality education as equivalent to an integrated education, Vassar posed the possibility of having *both* integration and education, but as *separate* goals. Vassar tried to eliminate the connection at this point to avoid a desegregation plan measured in terms of academics.

Within policy debates, actors crafted this narrative specifically in responses to actors utilizing attraction arguments to "decouple" schools (ending mandatory assignment between schools) and to change the definition of "racially imbalanced," not because they were successful in desegregating students, but to decrease the number of students being bussed. In response to calls to "decouple" paired/triaded schools, Board member T.J. Vassar argued, "schools should be uncoupled when they are no longer viable in assisting their paired or triaded schools with racial balance."[99] Vassar believed that the discussion about de-coupling should not be a goal in itself, but something to discuss if the pairs/triads are not doing what they are supposed to do (maintaining desegregated schools). Likewise, Barbara Beuschlein did not agree that the District should pursue de-coupling for the sake of de-coupling, but declared she "is looking forward to the time when some Seattle Public Schools can be decoupled because

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[99] Record 81, 16 November 1983, 318 (SSR).

neighborhoods are integrated."[100] For both board members, reducing mandatory busing through decoupling schools was an event to look forward to because desegregation had worked, not something to do in order to enhance the attraction of the public schools for those who did not want to be bussed.

In response definitional change proposals, Vassar tried to convince the board that there was more at stake than a definitional change to reduce costs by reducing busing. Changing the definition of "imbalanced" in order to reduce busing did not align with the goal of a definition of "balance" in order to desegregate schools. Vassar, and others, looked at these attempts as attempts to attract more parents, rather than to enhance integration. Vassar immediately re-framed their attempt to recast the definition in order to meet attraction demands by declaring, "The board is about to take a philosophical giant step away from its seven-year commitment to desegregation busing."[101] At a public hearing, one Parent-Teacher Association (PTA) member from Whitworth framed the change to the definition as an act of dismantling desegregation: "You can hold firm at what has been fought for and won over many years or you can begin dismantling the Seattle (desegregation) Plan. If dismantling is your intent and your goal, then we ask you to have the guts and forthrightness to do it now."[102] For these actors, a change in the

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[100] Record 81, 21 October 1983.

[101] "'Racial balance' divides 2 blacks on board," *Seattle Post-Intelligencer,* 28 March 1984, A5.

[102] "School board hears views on racial balance," *Seattle Post-Intelligencer,* 29 March 1984.

definition did not create an easier route to desegregation nor did it provide increased racial equity, it simply meant a withdrawal from the goals of integration.[103]

Assessing the Diversity Constellation

Therefore, this diversity narrative connected and emphasized the role of the schools as a dual-role, as embedded in the Seattle Plan, but drafted a schism that asserted the public as fundamentally and instrumentally social and academic, but that the social and academic must be measured as separate goals. This separation opened up a new tension with the fact that now both the attraction and diversity narratives separated education from desegregation. The attraction narrative combined them when measuring desegregation, but inherently separated their place in the role of the schools. That is, they measured desegregation in terms of academics because only the academic aspect of desegregation was a role of the schools. This diversity narrative separated the two in terms of measurement, but prioritized each as fundamental roles of the schools.

Crafting a New Equity Narrative Constellation

Policy deliberation in the mid-1980s became a re-negotiation of the space left between the attraction and diversity narrative constellations that utilized the same space cleaved between education and integration but re-filled this space with a new way to envision equity: academic achievement. District policy changes witnessed actors attempt to incorporate both the attraction and diversity narratives, by balancing the tradeoff

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[103] See, for example, "Integration plan might cut need for school busing," *Seattle Post-Intelligencer,* 22 March 1984; "'Racial balance' divides 2 blacks on board," *Seattle Post-Intelligencer,* 28 March 1984, A5.

debate represented by the attraction narrative with a distinct emphasis on the structural

inequities reported by DRAC. Actors developed this alternate interpretation of equity to

critique inequities discovered by DRAC and to implore the inequity built into the options

programs. Additionally, the narrative provided a way to think about equity goals by

clearly emphasizing the need for all students to be equally, academically, educated. The

resulting narrative constellation re-wove the goals of equity with academic achievement,

emphasized academic equity, and retained legitimacy because the concern centered on

students who were not beneficiaries of the realms of academic excellence within the

schools (options). Concurrently, this narrative narrowed the role of the schools as

academic and cleaved previous measures of equality away from their narrative

constellation.

Revised policies, for example, tried to re-frame the options, rather than

disbanding them, to retain their original purpose: to enhance desegregation by attracting

more white families to options in minority-impacted areas or incorporating more

minorities into options. Some actors critiqued the fundamental character of the options as

producing inequality. For example, Board member Richard Alexander suggested at a

board meeting, "the administration [should] worry most about educating the students who

are presently enrolled in the Seattle Public Schools rather than providing programs which

will attract students back from private schools."[104] Similarly, the *P-I* critiqued the

options programs for draining staff resources, top students, and staff from the "regular

schools, including those in and out of the mandatory busing plan." They critiqued the

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[104] Record 81, 24 October 1983 (SSR).

idea to move options to mandatory paired/triaded schools because it still left some schools "as haves and some as have-nots."[105] Spruiell White, president of the Urban League in 1983, also pointed out the inequities in the special options, and explained that while the numerical desegregation phase of the Seattle Plan had been accomplished, "quality integrated education" still is just a dream for most city school children, especially for minority youngsters who "seem to dominate" regular and remedial classes but are scarce in the advanced courses.[106]

More often, solutions centered on the availability of more options for students within the District. A representative of the North Central School Council, Ellen Duffield, argued to the board, "Quality education programs should be available to all children. Choices for variety in educational experiences should not mean choosing between excellent educational programs and poor ones."[107] A citizen attending a board meeting in 1983, suggested equalizing options like Horizon; "The enrichment provided in the Horizon programs should be given to all District students without an examination. The lower 95 percent of students can benefit more from the enrichment of the Horizon program than the top students who often have many advantages at home."[108]

Board decisions reflected a tension within this framework as they clearly emphasized attraction as priority and subsequently framed equity concerns in terms of

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[105] "Sour notes in city schools," *Seattle Post-Intelligencer,* 4 October 1983.

[106] "Desegregation in Seattle: 5 Years Later," *Seattle Times*, 11 September 1983.

[107] Record 81, 2 November 1983, 291 (SSR).

[108] Ibid.

maintaining yet equalizing options. Board Resolution 1983-27 addressed these structural

difficulties and proposed to desegregate all options programs (or phase them out), and

ensure equity of movement by means of program placement to make options available to

those attending paired/triaded schools.[109] On March 21, 1984 the school board approved

a $2.2 million plan to "correct flaws in Seattle School District's desegregation busing

plan," which included forty-eight new academic choices available in 34 schools.[110] To

correct busing, they added options. The district also re-divided the city into four zones

and limited transfers within the zone that students live in. Previously, students could

choose options programs from any zone.[111] In these policy changes, board policy placed

options in these schools to award for those participating in mandatory transfers, therefore

hoping to equalize options as well. The media reported this was done to "bring back

students to those schools that have lost enrollment since mandatory busing began."[112]

Within these policy goals, the Board was careful to frame options as not simply

attractors, but also an educational advantage that should be available to all students.

Board member Michael Preston was integral in constructing this equity

framework as politically legitimate. Out of the three African-American board members

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[109] Record 81, 16 November 1983 (SSR). "Desegregation-panel minority dissents on report," *Seattle Times,* 27 September 1983.

[110] "$2.2 million plan OK'd to correct flaws in schools' busing program," *Seattle Post-Intelligencer,* 22 March 1984.

[111] Minority tipping schools were K-5 or K-6 schools where "the ethnic balance is close to or exceeds the limits permitted by the School Board's definition of racial imbalance" (Robert L. Nelson, "Superintendent's Preliminary Recommendations for the Implementation of Seattle Plan Improvements," 17 February 1984, 1, 330.196 (SSD)).

[112] "$2.2 million plan OK'd to correct flaws in schools' busing program," *Seattle Post-Intelligencer,* 22 March 1984.

in the 1980s, he was the only one who fought to end busing. Instead, Preston consistently

argued for policies to achieve equity in academics in direct opposition to those

emphasizing any part of the mandatory assignment plan. In critical narrative moves, he

challenged the necessity to create different situations for those bussed and those not,

while at the same time advocating for equal educational advantages for all schools. For

example, Preston emphasized providing more money to "smaller" schools (under-

enrolled, minority) to equalize education. This was a counter argument to equalizing

student movement in order to increase white enrollment at these under-enrolled schools.

He turned the argument towards the benefit of minority students. He consistently

supported his recommendations with a focus on equalizing education; "money will be

well spent to improve the quality of education in the smaller schools because these

schools can provide a more personal experience for children than larger schools."[113]

Preston's most significant policy recommendation was the change to the

definition of a racially imbalanced school, designed to "foster less student movement"

and limit "the amount of disruption" caused by busing.[114] He was able to do this by

framing busing as linked to, even causing, inequality. In an unusually long statement to

the board in 1983, Preston carefully outlined his reasoning, framing the change in direct

relationship to equity, arguing that the District's desegregation definition "appears to be

contrary to the goals outline in *Brown v. the Kansas Board of Education* decision, "

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[113] Record 81, 24 October 1983, 267 (SSR).

[114] Record 81, 16 November 1983, 315 (SSR).

because far fewer majority students were transferred to "distant schools."[115] With this narrative move, he called on *Brown* in order to fight for a definition of racial balance that allowed schools to be racially segregated *because* the Plan resulted in unequal student movement.

Changes to the definition of racial imbalance became the focus of many board debates, which navigated the tension between increasing attraction and focusing on integration. In these debates, Preston creating another tradeoff, between busing and "stability," arguing parents, white and black, favor stability over mandatory busing. He noted, "there appears to be a growing desire for fewer mandatory assignments in the District" and said, "parents want stability in the schools and a say in what schools their children attend."[116] Preston drafted a proposal for a definitional change in a way that emphasized attraction, "[the definition] should send a message to the public, especially to the white kids who opt out of the system now, that they wouldn't have to move around so much."[117] Board Resolution 1983-27 modified the definition of racial imbalance to "complement the process of unlinking residentially desegregated pairs/triads."[118] This resulted in a slightly higher percentage of minority students allowed in a school to be still considered "balanced." In the spring of 1984, the board also approved of a more significant proposal to change the definition of racial imbalance, initiated by Michael

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[115] Ibid.

[116] Ibid.

[117] "'Racial balance' divides two blacks on board," *Seattle Post-Intelligencer,* 28 March 1984.

[118] Record 81, 16 November 1983 (SSR); "Desegregation-panel minority dissents on report," *Seattle Times,* 27 September 1983.

Preston. T.J. Vassar represented the resistance to the change and urged the district to consider the "proposal of this magnitude" because "we're thinking about going back to the very heart of the busing plan."[119] Specifically, the definition said that a school is racially imbalanced if it had 50percent of any one minority, or if the minority total exceeds the district minority average by 20 percent.[120] With the district minority average at 49 percent in 1984, a school could have 70percent minority and be balanced. These recommendations to adjust the definition of segregation did not aim to provide greater racial balance, but lower thresholds to meet their self-imposed requirements.

Preston consistently emphasized minority student achievement to justify relaxing desegregation requirements and busing. Preston argued though a definitional change could leave a school with 80 percent minority students as racially balanced, "there would be many advantages to having schools in which minority students comprise approximately 80 percent of the population." He argued, "that the minority students would not be culturally deprived should they be in the majority in a school" or that "minority children are harmed by being placed in schools where they comprise 20% or less of the student population."[121]

This was possible because Preston did not connect "cultural" or "social" benefits to desegregation; he framed the benefits of desegregation solely in academic student achievement terms. Therefore, he essentially displaced the multicultural role of the public schools by making it irrelevant. At the end of the board debates to implement

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[119] "Integration plan might cut need for school busing," *Seattle Post-Intelligencer,* 22 March 1984.

[120] "New segregation definition: Some big issues unchanged," *Seattle Times,* 13 April 1984.

[121] Record 81, 16 November 1983, 315 (SSR).

change to the Seattle Plan on November 16, 1983, Preston concluded with an exemplary

statement:

> I hope that in the future minority students will be well enough educated to be able
> to have jobs which will enable them to afford to move into the higher income
> neighborhoods so that the School Board and other public entities will not have to
> speak of desegregating neighborhoods by using public housing projects.[122]

By associating education with economic success, Preston first implied a link between

economic opportunity and academic success. In a similar statement five years later,

Michael Preston exemplified the complexity this argument:

> By teaching children how to read, and to think, and keeping them invested in
> public education where they are still willing to participate and be part of the
> system, we have the opportunity to create a new economic class of people. Then
> neighborhood integration will be fiscally possible with the availability of housing
> and the open mindedness of real estate agents because people will be able to
> afford to move into more expensive housing stock…If we continue on our present
> course, our options are to continue producing a permanent underclass of
> uneducated and hostile individuals who will be relegated to certain geographic
> locations, and low economic status, and the necessity for busing will go on, and
> on, and on.[123]

Preston hypothesized the schools' role in preceding and determining economic as well as

social success by also defining the end result of unequal academic achievement resulting

not only in economic failure but also "hostile" behavior. Concurrently, he alludes that

integration is a good idea but separates this idea from the realm of the schools.

Integration is beneficial when people can have the tools to make the choice to integrate.

Note that Preston used almost identical language to two sets of actors in the 1970s

and re-crafted two, completely different, strands of ideas into one narrative storyline. He

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[122] Ibid.

[123] Michael Preston, "Board must look to future to consider all-voluntary plan," *Seattle Post-Intelligencer*, 10 July 1987.

associated racial inequality with the development of an underclass with no opportunity for advancement. The Urban League and Central Area School Council in the 1970s, linked the root cause of racial inequality to structural segregation and often referred to the purpose of racial desegregation as socioeconomic opportunity. Preston posed the root cause of an economic underclass as a lack in minority achievement, whether or not minorities attended segregated schools. Above, he associated neighborhood integration with the event of people able to afford expensive housing. This implied integration would happen when it is fiscally possible for black families to move into higher-price neighborhoods. The creativity of this dual narration is Preston's articulation of the schools' role as *not* forced integration, but in ensuring an educated black population who can then become economically advantaged because of their education.

Assessing the Equity Constellation

These interpretations of policy problems and racial inequality resulted in the creation of an alternate narrative that gained power because it re-wired concerns within both the attraction and diversity narratives to create a new storyline. This narrative incorporated direct concerns for racial equality while separating the schools role as solely academic, and therefore distancing the schools' role in integration, which had already been separated as a separate goal within both the attraction and diversity constellations. With the creative influence of Michael Preston, an alternative equity narrative could implore desegregation as irrelevant while at the same time assuming the schools' role was to ensure the academic success of minority youth. As these actors crafted the

association between options with academic excellence, the narrative allowed for those interested in attraction to also identify with the narrative opposed to desegregation but in favor of equalizing education for all students.

Comparing the Narrative Constellations

These board debates revealed consequential shifts in narrative explanations of problems and definitions of racial inequality. In response to the attraction narrative, Vassar exemplified the narrative crafted to assert the dual role of the schools as both social and academic (3 Rs) and emphasized the necessity for including integration and quality education within the role of the public schools. Despite the similarity with the narrative of, for example, the Urban League of the 1960s-70s, Vassar slightly re-arranged the integrationist ideas to separate academics and desegregation as two differently measurable goals in order to counter those who began to critique the Seattle Plan because it did not raise the achievement levels of minority youth. With critics crafting a narrative tradeoff between quality education and busing, Vassar attempted to separate the two to avoid the tradeoff debate.

Actors also attempted to address both the tradeoff and equity concerns through new narrative associations. Despite the board's early defeats of most of Preston's early proposals and recommendations to consider equity and reduce busing, Preston's alternative narrative that presented the measure of equity to be academic achievement had gained a level of legitimacy in the public eye. When Preston began to utilize this equity narrative in the early 1980s, he could not justify dismantling desegregation when most of

the invested actors did not believe it was a politically savvy, or constitutionally permissible, action. Given the legal context, the district would most likely not be able to show the courts a legitimate attempt to create racial balance in the schools because of the obvious structural inequalities within the Plan. Yet, Preston was able to cobble together the beginning of a narrative that included a challenge to mandatory desegregation because of its disregard for minority children's quality education. This narrative began to recast alternatives to equity and desegregation that quickly frayed the unsteady edges of the Seattle Plan's discursive coalition. The following key developments aided the power of the alternative narrative beginning in the mid-1980s.

Effectively, these new interpretive arrangements disrupted some of the tenuous connections grafted in the Seattle Plan. The "multicultural" center was losing its hold as a meta-concept that drew disparate actors and ideas together under one policy. In the face of white flight, concerns in the black and white community with busing, inequities within the Plan, and new actors, the cleavage created between academics and social issues enlarged within these implementation struggles.

Equity (Policy) Reconsidered: Gathering a Discursive Coalition

Certain developments gave more power to the argument that desegregation was not providing quality education for minority students despite numerical desegregation. This section explores these developments that were utilized by actors, such as Preston, who framed problems of desegregation in equity terms, but measured equity in terms of educational quality (achievement). These new connections began to gain institutional

influence over policy and also began to create new ways for actors to situate themselves in school issues. The new equity constellation began to organize the re-association of ideas used to respond to these developments, which joined and took power away from previous narrative associations. Actors who both argued for integration and challenged busing began to expand their policy influence by the way they braided together three separate trajectories as if they were indistinguishable elements: racial equality, academic achievement, and school choice.

The interpretation of these idea developments allowed for a new vision of policy alternatives that became accepted as a new commonsense language that recast the role of the schools, the meaning of racial equality, and therefore the place for desegregation. The reconsideration of "equity" within this new narrative constellation combined and siphoned off elements from previous competing narratives elements that defined the Seattle Plan and the subsequent implementation debates; it emphasized equity for minority education, parental choice, and achievement; and it siphoned off any concern for integration and relegated the "social" role of the public back to the private realm. The emphasis constructed in the combination of these ideas was integral to their legitimacy in implementing policy ideas in a time when the possibility of court intervention remained possible.

The academic equity narrative translated into a new foundation for a discursive coalition with addition of school choice. Various interrelated developments allowed the framework of school choice to become a meta-concept that oriented new identifications around school equity policy. First, the Seattle Plan's discursive coalition began to break

down physically, as fewer representatives of civil rights interests frequented school board debates. This resulted in fewer actors expressing alternate narratives representing visions of the public schools as promoting social, economic, and academic roles. Second, school policy and national school rhetoric associated and measured racial equality as equity in academic achievement. When desegregation did not prove to alleviate the "achievement gap" between blacks and whites, actors chided the desegregation plan as unsuccessfully implementing racial equity. This embedded a schism within the Seattle Plan's discursive linkages by displacing the role of the schools as a social role and defining equity policies in terms of academic achievement.

Third, the role of options was then integral to the development of the school choice narrative. Equity began to be defined in terms of access to options, or expanded choice, that the Seattle Plan was not able to ensure, given the structural inequities and constructed irrelevance of desegregation for equalizing academic achievement. The Seattle Plan engendered options and a subsequent debate about the structural inequalities inherently embedded in the options programs, which resulted in the continued prioritization of options as excellent academic tools, under the assumption that they could be equalized. Thus, rather than disbanding the options as mechanisms of inequality, the District expanded options to increase the opportunity for educational excellence. The following sub-sections describe these interrelated developments that aided the construction and legitimacy of this alternate narrative that eventually dismantled the Seattle Plan's discursive basis for coalition and policy.

The Seattle Plan's Discursive Coalition Begins to Disband

The unsteady, yet solid, discursive coalition that arranged the Seattle Plan began to show signs of strain by the mid-1980s. Many of the groups represented by the Seattle Plan began to show dismay or disinterest with desegregation. The careful crafting of a new interpretation of equity and desegregation was politically boosted by actors who aggressively pushed desegregation in the Seattle Plan formation, who changed their views on desegregation, or simply stopped showing up to policy debates. For example, black leaders in Seattle increasingly expressed discontent with desegregation. This began as early as 1981, when the most prominent voice to introduce an alternate narrative discussion, Professor Derrek Bell, spoke in Seattle and pronounced that, "busing doesn't work." He argued that schooling was still unequal, despite busing, and said "integrated schools might be as oppressive as the segregated schools" because "both took away choices by assigning students to schools on the basis of race."[124] Likewise, board member Michael Preston began his first years on the Board in the early 1980s with the obvious intention to impress upon the school district that improving education of black youth was more important than desegregation.[125] With more reports in the mid-1980s showing the maintenance of an "achievement gap" between white and black students, more public calls came to improve education and forget about busing.[126]

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[124] "Busing doesn't work, black law dean says," *Seattle Post-Intelligencer,* 23 May 1982.

[125] "'Racial balance' divides 2 blacks on board," *Seattle Post-Intelligencer,* 28 March 1984, A5.

[126] "Black students need more help," *Seattle Post-Intelligencer,* 14 November 1985, A10; "Blacks attack busing," *Seattle Post-Intelligencer,* 20 November 1985. In 1976, the median percentile in reading for the state's black fourth graders was 32, compared with 63 for white pupils. In 1984, the percentile had risen

During this time, the business community also began to show reticence to support busing over academic achievement. In 1984, a group of businesspeople, parents, minority and church groups formed a coalition called The Education Campaign in order to discuss issues and lobby the legislature. This campaign included the League of Women Voters, the PTA, and business leaders who were integral in the Seattle Plan acceptance of the 1970s. Joining these groups, the Washington Roundtable, composed of the top executives of the thirty largest corporations in Washington, became the most prominent member of the Campaign and helped to finance the coalition's yearlong effort.[127] Roundtable president, Richard S. Page, expressed the group's goal, "These business leaders are concerned with the quality of public education in the state of Washington," with recommendations to look at "issues" of teacher pay, collective bargaining, teacher tenure, "the roles and missions of various educational institutions," and governance.[128] Another co-sponsor of the group, Roberto Maestas of the King County Minority Executive Director Coalition, said, "the [academic] situation for minority students in the state has not improved dramatically since minority students staged a sit-in at Franklin High School 15 years ago," and promised to "ensure that the upcoming review of education treats the causes of racism in the public schools rather than

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for blacks to 42 percent but the gap between white and black remained at 30 percent ("School Busing: A long way to go," *Seattle Times*, 2 March 1986, B3).

[127] "Groups unite to suggest improvements to education," *Seattle Times,* 31 March 1984.

[128] Ibid.

the symptoms."[129] For Maestas, the "symptom" he described was segregation. For him,

busing was merely a solution to the symptom.

The board witnessed a reduced presence of those highly vocal and active

representatives from the Church Council, the Urban League, the Central Area School

Council, and even the NAACP and American Civil Liberties Union. *Seattle Times*

reporter Constantine Angelos began a 1984 article with the query,

> It used to be when the Seattle School Board held a hearing on a desegregation
> issue, the place was full and the testimony lasted for hours. Last night it only took
> a half hour for eight persons to testify on a proposal by board member Michael
> Preston that would broaden the board's definition of what constitutes a racially
> imbalanced school. And no one from a traditional civil rights group showed
> up.[130]

T.J. Vassar recalled, in a personal interview, "Some of the old guard [NAACP, CASC] in

the city still wielded a lot of influence, but that influence was beginning to dwindle…

Communities didn't have the leaders they used to have."[131] Dorothy Hollingsworth also

described the situation in retrospect, "I think many of the social organizations became

less forward in making demands. Because I think the community, some of them, began to

think it was not accomplishing as much."[132] Vassar and Hollingsworth described theories

related to why the demands became quieter, namely the dissolution of the Central Area

leadership circle beginning in the late 1960s. Vassar explained, "In part, it was because

of some of the successes of affirmative action. More people [sic] were getting jobs. In

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[129] Ibid.

[130] "School Board hears views on racial balance," *Seattle Times*, 29 March 1984.

[131] T.J. Vassar, interview with author, Seattle, Wash., 7 September 2007.

[132] Dorothy Hollingsworth, interview with author, Seattle, Wash., 6 December 2007.

the past you couldn't get jobs, so you would work for NAACP, the Urban League. So now people were making money, moving out of the central area."[133] Nonetheless, there is no evidenced consensus on this development.

However, these groups and sentiments had not disappeared for good. An anti-busing movement in the late 1980s sparked the "old [civil rights] guard" back into action. In 1986, a group of parents formed "Parents Against Forced Busing," to push for an open enrollment plan to encourage neighborhood schooling and end the Seattle Plan's busing. At this point, the district assured the public that they would make no recommendations that would re-segregate the schools. Preston, as Board President in 1986, told the press that he is in favor of dropping schools from busing in some situations, but added the caveat, "there's the catch: I would not favor any action which would have the effect of resegregating schools."[134] Preston said, "It is better to continue self-imposed desegregation than to let a federal court dictate the terms."[135] The NAACP threatened to block any effort to re-segregate the schools.[136]

In response to PAFB, most board members expressed their commitment to busing and their adherence to the idea that integration was necessary. Susan Harris told Lawless at a board meeting, "If you can tell me how we can create an integrated society without

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[133] T.J. Vassar, interview with author, Seattle, Wash., 7 September 2007.

[134] Ibid.

[135] "Proposal to scrap busing greeted coolly," *Seattle Times,* 9 January 1986.

[136] Ibid., "NAACP warns it will fight any effort to change busing plan," *Seattle Times,* 6 February 1986.

busing, I'm sure we'd all like to know how to do it."[137] Ellen Roe advised Lawless to

"review the efforts of those who opposed busing earlier," presumably to show PAFB that

simply because more citizens are calling for changes in mandatory busing the district

cannot abandon desegregation plans for reasons that could appear to end in un-checked

re-segregation.

The Disproportionality Study

The turning point for the legitimacy of the alternate narrative that emphasized

quality education over busing and securely linked academics as the means to racial equity

came about with a report released in 1986, locally known as the "Disproportionality

Study."[138] A former school board member at this time recalled, "*The* galvanizing thing

was the Disproportionality Study."[139] The results of the study and following

recommendations detached integration from achievement, not as separately measurable

goals as Vassar framed, but as competing alternatives.

Superintendent Nelson formed the Disproportionality Task Force in August 1985

in response to community pressure to address the issue of disproportionate achievement

levels between racial and ethnic groups in Seattle.[140] The task force included thirty-nine

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[137] "Proposal to scrap busing greeted coolly," *Seattle Times,* 9 January 1986.

[138] Seattle Public Schools Disproportionality Task Force "Recommendations for the Elimination of Disproportionality," September 1986, in 138.004.c.1 (SSD).

[139] Anonymous, interview with author, Seattle, Wash., 25 July 2007.

[140] Record 85, 22 September 1986, 2 (SSR). Among others, in 1985, the Coalition for the Education of Black Children had called for a district-wide review of grades to determine why black students' achievement "was lagging compared with other ethnic groups" ("Black coalition seeks district-wide review of grades," *Seattle Times,* 12 November 1985).

members, half from the district and half from the community. The task force developed

over 150 recommendations and presented these to new Superintendent William Kendrick

in the spring of 1986. This was the first time the District had disaggregated its

achievement data by race and/or ethnicity controlling for income levels.[141] The study

disaggregated data according to nineteen ethnic groups measured along categories

including academic achievement and dropout rates, among others. The Task Force

presented information publicly and to the board in April 1986 and showed that black

students performed or measured substantially worse in most categories measured.

The most powerful narrative that interpreted the Disproportionality Study follows

that of the academic equity narrative began by Preston, among others. The report did not

mention desegregation in either positive or negative terms, and defined differences

between racial or ethnic groups in terms of "disproportionality." The use of the term,

"disproportionate" eased the transposition of equity narratives because actors distinctly

separated issues of racial equality from segregation and its association with racism or

discriminatory intent. To explain, "disproportionate" alleviated the need for an agent

who caused this result, leading actors to want to address and frame its "root" cause as

unequal *academic* conditions for achievement. Framing unequal achievement in terms of

disproportionality narrowly confined the questions asked about inequality to the school

setting only. This deferred any intention or agent of discrimination that caused the event.

These conditions could include a wide range of school-related issues, from lack of

minority teachers, attitudes of teachers, lack of excellent programs for minority students,

[141] The State had disaggregated this data before, revealing constant achievement gaps, but they had not controlled for income ("School Busing: A long way to go," *Seattle Times*, 2 March 1986, B3).

unequal resources, and family conditions. For example, just after the Disproportionality Study results went public, the *P-I* cited multiple reasons for the achievement gap and other measures of disproportionality. While also including continued racism among teachers and students as a potential reason, the disproportionality study measured disciplinary action, teacher expectations, single-parent homes, lack of role models for black children, lack of involvement by the black community, and lack of minority teachers.[142]

The combination of both social and academic causes for disproportionate achievement levels signaled a specific directional arrow between social conditions and schools. With the turn of focus to achievement, alternate factors could account for lack of achievement in black children when disassociated with segregation. That is, without the causal arrow pointing from segregation to behavioral issues, e.g., lack of role models can be a causal factor of low academic achievement. Therefore, without connection between this "home" condition and the schools, the schools can presumably address this issue (by providing role models, counseling, etc.) or take care of its academic results (low achievement).

In Seattle, by the mid-1980s, more actors were distancing the schools from social or cultural factors, directing their solution to the home. Many actors exemplified this "focus on the family." In 1985, the *Seattle Times* quoted Lacey Steele of the NAACP impart part of the problem of black achievement on parents: "Parents, I repeat, parents, must become involved in the educational process. Black students must be taught by

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[142] "Success for blacks still lags," *Seattle Post-Intelligencer,* 9 April 1986.

parents and by the community that education is important."[143] The Coalition for the Education of Black Children noted after the disproportionality study, "We don't have time to tamper with busing per se. [The first priority] is to make sure all children achieve no matter where they are. Our priority is to make sure schools work."[144] Michael Preston also said "parents and community members must reinforce the work of the schools in local neighborhoods so that it is not just the schools that are asking children to speak standard English and change other behaviors."[145] Once resistant to "societal" problems like segregated housing, school and civic actors began to ask the broader society to take care of "individual" problems manifesting in the schools.

Board response also showed disconnections between the schools and social issues. In the "Educational Plan to Eliminate Disproportionality," they agreed upon the definition of "disproportionality" as "the overrepresentation of the number of students of a particular ethnic group in any given area of education such as disciplinary action or low academic achievement."[146] In this statement, the Board framed education specifically as academic by associating "overrepresentation," previously used to describe a racially imbalanced school, to academic achievement or disciplinary action. They sought to eliminate disproportionality to "increase the academic achievement and socio-cultural literacy skills of high-risk students."[147] The mention of "socio-cultural," previously

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[143] "Black coalition seeks district-wide review of grades," *Seattle Times,* 12 November 1985.

[144] "School busing: A long way to go," *Seattle Times/Seattle Post-Intelligencer,* 2 March 1986.

[145] Record 85, 22 September 1986, 8 (SSR).

[146] Ibid.

linked with multiculturalism or pluralism, now was directly and only connected to "literacy" of "high risk" students. Reflective of the trends in the Courts and many narrative constellations, these actors again began connecting efforts to address racial equality in terms of minority students "lacks" in achievement or cultural competency, when they manifested in academic results. The other recommendations addressed staff training, intervention for high-risk students, remedial learning, teacher intervention, an overall increase in monitoring, and new academic goals to meet.[148]

This event again widened the schism between integration and education by combining the goals of equity and education into one goal. In contrast to Vassar, who measured the goals as separate and equally necessary goals, the Task Force was careful to define their belief "that equity compliments educational excellence and...educational excellence cannot be achieved without equity." They expressed concern with "persistent notion that the two issues are completely different, or that the latter (equity) can only be secondary to the former (excellence)."[149] At first glance, this division appears similar to the diversity narrative. However, the Task Force did not include any recommendations for integration to alleviate disproportionality, which showed that this division was meant to assure that educational excellence be equal for all students.

In a personal interview, one board member who desired to remain anonymous explained the significance of these results as two-fold. Board member Connie Sidles

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[147] Ibid.

[148] Disproportionality Task Force, "Recommendations for the Elimination of Disproportionality," September 1986, in 138.004.c.1 (SSD).

[149] Ibid.

noted, "There's been a real recognition from black parents in the community that busing has not improved education. They say 'Why go through the pain of busing my children out of the neighborhood to a hostile environment when they will not be better educated because of it'?"[150] Michael Preston stressed, "that we could have quality education without student movement."[151]

Following the study, more people in the black community questioned the value of desegregation, given the burden and the lack of academic results; "there were so many in the black community stressing the importance of achievement over integration that it made it politically possible for people to say, 'ok, let's go back to achievement and if that doesn't mean forcing integration we're not going to force integration.'"[152] Black educators in the district also began to push for "closer-to-home" strategies rather than busing, to improve the education of black youth.[153] The tradeoff was a very real concern with such drastic cuts in school funding, but as Vassar and others continued to argue, the policy possibilities did not have to instigate a zero-sum policy debate that had to prioritize education or desegregation. In personal interviews, multiple school board members discarded funding cuts as causally related to desegregation decisions, suggesting that schools are always under-funded.[154]

[150] "Proposals to curb busing in Seattle seeks to attract whites to schools," *New York Times*, 28 March 1988, A17.

[151] "Desegregation-change talks begin," *Seattle Times*, 24 November 1987.

[152] Anonymous, interview with author, Seattle, Wash., 25 July 2007.

[153] "Blacks attack busing," *Seattle Post-Intelligencer,* 20 November 1985.

[154] Dorothy Hollingsworth, Cheryl Bleakney, Suzanne Hittman, Don Nielson, and Anonymous were asked about the effects of Reagan funding cuts. Dorothy Hollingsworth explained the effect of perception on the

A second point of significance, the same Board member said, was "it made it possible for white leaders to say 'this isn't working, see, the whole purpose was to improve education for black students and we're not doing that.'... It enabled the decision that something else must be done.'"[155] Therefore, "when it became arguable that the goal was not being met, then it became politically feasible to say let's change it because it's not working...you could be a good liberal and still say it's not working."[156] Following this logic, the white liberals began to confine solutions to equity problems in terms of academics. This narrative connected the measurement of equity in terms of achievement and recast the "root" of racial inequality as academic achievement, with busing or integration as a treatment for its symptoms. These assumptions countered over thirty years of civil rights narratives that aligned the root cause of academic inequality with the structural problems associated with home and school segregation.

For example, white Board member Linda Harris, recognized the historical inequalities in Seattle and simultaneously critiqued public projects to fix segregated situations. In a personal interview, she said, "Federal housing in the 50s was a horrible experiment, turned into ghettos, crime, didn't improve anybody's quality of life. But the quality of those schools went downhill because [they were] so impacted."[157] She voted

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construction of a tradeoff: "I think when the people thought the monies that were coming in were scarce," that may have impacted the way the community began to look at it, as if "we're spending to so much money [on desegregation] and not enough in the education programs." (Dorothy Hollingsworth, interview with author, Seattle, Wash., 6 December 2007).

[155] Anonymous, interview with author, Seattle, Wash., 25 July 2007.

[156] Ibid.

[157] Linda Harris, interview with author, Seattle, Wash., 6 September 2007.

for the Seattle Plan, "I voted for all the deseg plans," but she looked back and argued, "If you assume that a good school has parental involvement, good teachers, and leadership, and you put all of that in place and say, well all the schools are good schools, and it shouldn't matter where your child goes to school."[158] White board member Don Nielson argued, "integration was the right decision, busing was the wrong decision." His mission on the board was to enhance schools, "if you create a good school you will integrate neighborhoods." Busing wasted resources because "there is no educational value to a bus ride." Nielson argued that the focus needed to be the minority children, who have been "deprived of life experiences and learning… Spending a lot of time on integrating schools takes the eye off the focus of what we really need to be doing. You need to be upgrading the quality of schools in the neighborhood where that kid lives."[159]

Upgrading quality for Nielson and those who called for increased quality education for minorities meant higher quality teachers, librarians, classroom materials, classroom space, and other support services within the schools. An "upgrade" did not mean more social interaction between racial and ethnic groups. Nielson directly addressed the structural inequality first pointed out by DRAC, but then placed blame on integration because it does not focus on the key issues- minority education. For Harris, the ultimate was lack of support and funding for essential educational programs that would improve every school.

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[158] Ibid.

[159] Don Nielson, interview with author, Seattle, Wash., 25 July 2007.

Following Preston, these narrative associations served to solidify the measurement of racial equality in terms of academic achievement. Note that these arguments no longer incorporated any links to multiculturalism or the benefits of diversity. These responses became legitimate because they did not emphasize the benefits of neighborhood schooling and did not emphasize parents' individual rights to choose their schools. Actors connected disproportionality in achievement to the effects, or results, of desegregation and therefore left desegregation as suspiciously ineffective in achieving equal opportunity.

The Policy Change of "Controlled Choice"

The Board began to revisit the desegregation plan under new Superintendent William Kendrick in the fall of 1986. The District had decided to make major changes to the Seattle Plan to address the public concerns with disproportionality and the continued decline in enrollment. The Board enacted an overhaul of the Seattle Plan, "Controlled Choice," where the district re-zoned Seattle schools to decrease the amount and distance of mandatory student bus-rides, and offer a greater level of "choice."

Throughout discussion of changes to the Seattle Plan's student assignment plan, the Board remained under the constraint that major changes to desegregation could lead them to a lawsuit, even though they were most likely doing more than necessary under federal law. Legal counsel Michael Hoge, told the board, "As a matter of federal law, the district is doing as much and probably more than it needs to do, at least in student

assignments," but noted that, "the eventual answer to [the question of constitutional violation] may not be ascertained for years to come if brought to litigation."[160]

The District modeled Controlled Choice after a similar policy implemented in Cambridge, Mass. The Board voted unanimously to re-zone the Seattle schools in order to provide more choice for parents within a specific set of schools in hopes of providing more equity for white and minority parents to access choice options, fewer bus rides, and to "lure white students back into the city's public schools."[161] Families could choose between potential schools within eight racially balanced clusters of six to ten schools, including some close to the family's home and some in another part of the city dependent on the race of the child.[162] The plan aimed to maintain the goal of integration, but allowed more students to attend neighborhood schools as well. The plan envisioned 80-90 percent of parents getting their first or second choice of schools and was projected to reduce the number of students bused from more than 10,000 to 4,700.[163]

The policy gained the support of the NAACP and a coalition of Seattle minority and business leaders.[164] Head of the local chapter, Lacy Steele, said the plan "should

[160] Record 85, 15 December 1987, 1 (SSR).

[161] "Integrating equality and excellence," *Seattle Times,* 21 June 1987; "Integration plan aims to cut busing," *New York Times,* 11 June 1988, Section 1 (32).

[162] Laura Kohn, "Priority Shift: The Fate of Mandatory School Busing for Desegregation in Seattle and the Nation," (Rand/UW, Institute for Public Policy and Management, University of Washington, 1996).; "Integration plan aims to cut busing," *New York Times* 11 June 1988, Section 1 (32).

[163] "Busing plan heads for final vote: Decision set today on overhaul," *Seattle Times,* 8 June 1988; Timothy Egan, "Proposal to curb busing in Seattle seeks to attract white to schools," *New York Times,* 28 March 1988, A17.

[164] "Proposal to curb busing in Seattle seeks to attract white to schools," *New York Times,* 28 March 1988, A17.

result in less black students being bused because they have borne the brunt of the busing... We say, on the surface, it seems to be a fair plan."[165] The plan tentatively appealed to many parents and civic actors, who either remained skeptical of the "controlled" part of Controlled Choice or its assurances of continued equity.

The board debates displayed the unresolved juxtaposition of the narratives of attraction, diversity, and the academic equity narrative. Within the concerned Seattle community and the school board, there appeared to be equal amounts of concern for white attraction, quality education, as well as ensuring the desegregation element sustained. Board members also sustained interest in the desegregation element. Board member Elizabeth Wales expressed concern that the Seattle Plan was often "blamed for all of the ills of the District," and recommended that the planning committee include the "many positive educational benefits which have taken place" with the Seattle Plan. [166] The Planning Advisory Committee also initiated their report to the board with their "first major philosophy statement" that there can be "no quality education without integration."[167] The committee clearly stated they would not support a return to the neighborhood school concept, which could lead to 70 percent of elementary and 80 percent of high schools re-segregated.

The District also spent an extensive amount of time gathering public opinion to specifically target changes to the Seattle Plan. The results of community outreach efforts

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[165] "Integration plan aims to cut busing," *New York Times* 11 June 1988, Section 1 (32).

[166] Record 85, 29 October 1986, 29 (SSR).

[167] "Seattle schools: No quality education without integration, committee says," *Seattle Post-Intelligencer,* 15 May 1987.

showed Superintendent Kendrick, "that there is great concern about the quality of

educational experiences in the schools…much of the concern… centered on the Seattle

Plan."[168] Parents also expressed concern with wanting to "find a way to have their

children attend school closer to their homes," to avoid "excessively long bus rides" and

lessen the inconvenience of after-school activities.[169] Surprising for Kendrick, there were

also many who showed up to the neighborhood forums in support of busing, "despite its

inconveniences."[170]

By the mid-1980s, the press began to publicize the decline in enrollment as

greater than ever, and therefore even those within the District who expressed desire for

integrated education also expressed concerns with fewer enrolled students. A 1986

Seattle P-I article, boldly and largely titled "Whites avoid Seattle public schools,"[171]

quoted the assistant superintendent Mona Bailey, "this year will be critical because the

district will have to convince white parents that academic achievement will improve for

all students, not just minorities."[172] In board discussion prior to changes, Dr. Colin

Williams cited the need to "attract additional young people to schools where majority

[168] Superintendent Kendrick met with over 157 organizations and visited 47 schools in the summer of 1986 (Record 85, 29 October 1966, 27 (SSR)).

[169] Ibid. See also, "School district, citizen panel analyze desegregation plan," *Seattle Times,* 30 October 1986.

[170] "Integrating equality and excellence," *Seattle Times,* 21 June 1987.

[171] The "attraction rate" for white families was around 44 percent since 1980, compared with 62 percent in 1969 ("Whites avoid Seattle Public Schools," *Seattle Post-Intelligencer,* 7 October 1986).

[172] Ibid.

students are needed"[173] because of declining enrollment. Another *Times/P-I* survey

found respondents also desired more voluntary elements or a return to the neighborhood

school concept, which to them meant an end to mandatory student assignment. [174]

However, the narrative that gained prominence centered on the zero-sum tradeoff

that set busing against education and the subsequent prioritization of quality education

over "the bus ride." This narrative successfully and narrowly cast busing as having

always been in service of the goal of achieving equal academic outcomes. For example,

the *New York Times,* writing about Seattle, noted the winning sentiment in the

desegregation debates: "busing has not raised quality."[175] The major Seattle newspapers,

traditionally supportive of desegregation efforts, ran an op-ed titled "Focus on teaching,

not the bus ride," in the spring of 1987.[176] A month later, the *P-I* ran an op-ed by

Michael Preston where he wrote "busing even after 10 years has not provided an equal

educational opportunity for all children."[177] Both articles suggested the benefits of

"multi-racial experiences" and the Seattle Plan's "contribution to race relations in

Seattle," but called on the district to focus on improving public education and arrange its

priorities to distribute its resources equitably for minority students.

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[173] Record 85, 29 October 1986, 29 (SSR).

[174] "Eliminate busing, say a third of opponents," *Seattle Times/Post-Intelligencer,* 17 May, 1987.

[175] Timothy Egan, "Proposal to curb busing in Seattle seeks to attract whites to schools," *New York Times,* 28 March 1988, A17.

[176] "Focus on teaching, not the bus ride," *Seattle Times/Post-Intelligencer,* 14 June 1987.

[177] "Board must look to future, consider all-voluntary plan," *Seattle Post-Intelligencer,* 10 July 1987.

The Muddled Picture of School Desegregation

Events that followed the Board's decision to implement Controlled Choice revealed significant weaknesses of the diversity, or multicultural, narratives layered within the academic equity narrative. Immediately following the implementation of Controlled Choice in the fall of 1988, the city became embroiled in further debate over the mandatory element of student assignment embedded in Controlled Choice. The narrative terrain of conflict witnessed a shift in emphasis from debates between equity and education to debates about the level of "control" in Controlled Choice. In these debates, student choice became the narrative center of a new discursive coalition that began to define, and dismantle, desegregation policy.

Though many did not like the "controlled" part of controlled choice, 90 percent of parents received their first choice for elementary school students and the number of children bussed was halved. Despite this number, the press reported that "a flood of parents unhappy that their children didn't get into their first-choice public school this fall are trying to enroll their children in private schools."[178] The back-up mandatory assignment, inclusion of kindergarten, and school closures to necessitate equity in student movement, enraged many parents.

In the spring of 1989, city election politics began to heat up with the initiation of an anti-busing initiative and a hotly contested mayoral race that centered on busing. The anti-busing group Save Our Schools launched the anti-busing Initiative 34. Republican candidate for the mayoral election, Doug Jewitt, initiated the group, organized and led by

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[178] "Parents swamp private schools with applications," *The Oregonian*, 18 July 1989, B02.

community member Kathy Baxter. The SOS initiative allotted six percent of city sales-tax revenue to the District if they adopted an open-enrollment plan. The initiative set aside $4.3 million in taxes for high school improvements and magnet programs to encourage integration.

The initiative became the central issue for the mayoral election between Doug Jewitt and Norm Rice. Norm Rice unexpectedly entered the race on the last day to file, saying he was prompted by the SOS initiative, which the other candidates had been silent on. Rice entered the race with a tone of unity; he did not fiercely support busing but the framed his opposition to SOS as one of disgust for such divisive tactics, citing his decision a result of "a terrible new ingredient has been added: the so-called SOS initiative to segregate our schools."[179] The election resulted in an uncertain civic opinion: Rice won the election by a wide majority while the initiative passed by one-percent margin. Rice was the first African-American to be elected mayor of Seattle. Following the election, Rice announced he favored the movement towards all-voluntary integration in the near future.

If ever there was an uncertain trumpet for change, this election showed the contingency of this point in Seattle's history. *The New York Times* reported, "If the picture of school desegregation in Seattle seems muddled, it is in the rest of the country as well."[180] Though the public narrowly approved the initiative, the Board declined the

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[179] "Norm Rice unexpectedly enters race for Seattle Mayor on the last day for filing," July 28, 1989. HistoryLink.org Essay 4284, available from http://www.historylink.org/index.cfm?DisplayPage=output.cfm&file_id=4284; (accessed May 31, 2009).

[180] Lee A. Daniels, "The winning ways to desegregate the schools," *The New York Times,* 17 December 1989, Section 4(4).

funds offered by the initiative with a 4 to 3 vote, thus making it favorable vote moot. Board members Michael Preston, Amy Hagopian, and Connie Sidles voted to approve the initiative. The *Seattle Times* noted the philosophical division still present in the board as "Michael Preston's search for a fourth vote" ran up against Marilyn Smith, Kenneth Eastlack, Ellen Roe, and Allan Sugiyama who voted for the rejection.[181]

The policy of Controlled Choice layered the narrative constellations of attraction, diversity, and academic equity without re-wiring their connections in ways that made sense to almost anyone. In the District's attempts to please every constituency, they did not provide a way to decrease the cleavage that had vastly widened between these constellations. The election merely signaled to District actors again, that the city was also caught in the pendulum swinging between desegregation and academics. The tradeoff between the two had for the most part been settled, given the measurement of racial equality was almost solidified as academic achievement. On Seattle, the *New York Times* noted the sentiment winning over the desegregation debates was "busing has not raised quality."[182] However, the city and invested actors retained an investment in racial equality that included diversity.

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[181] Joe Haberstroh, "Divided board ponders open enrollment," *Seattle Times,* 2 January 1990, B1. T.J. Vassar did not vote for the proposal because he declined to run for school board in the fall of 1988.

[182] Timothy Egan, "Proposal to curb busing in Seattle seeks to attract whites to schools," *New York Times,* 28 March 1988, A17.

The Meta-Concept of Choice

With the threats of the civil rights groups meaning less to the Board, a discursive coalition representing the same set of actors as the Seattle Plan led the Board towards the dismantling of desegregation. The concept of choice was able to reconcile diversity, academic achievement, parental control, and frustrations with busing and brought this discursive coalition together. Choice gained independent value in relationship to academic achievement and racial equality and its polyvalence allowed choice to become the umbrella that sheltered these widely different interests because it could include those truly invested in minority kids' education as well as those truly invested in ending busing. School choice could gather another unlikely coalition of actors, who were able to use the narrative of choice to interpret issues of equity, achievement, and attraction in multiple ways. Like the discursive coalition that crafted the Seattle Plan, this arrangement of ideas that ended desegregation in favor of school choice also represented a mix of contradictory but temporarily comfortable ideas.

The combination of the diversity, attraction and equity constellations could not be reconciled in Controlled Choice. Preston's academic equity constellation embedded within Controlled Choice allowed the policy to dissolve from the inside because it could critique Controlled Choice in the same way it critiqued the Seattle Plan: it drove away white families, it did not improve quality education for black children, it bussed kids far away from their neighborhood schools, and it wasted resources better spent to improve education.

After only two years of Controlled Choice, the Board committed to shift student assignment to a voluntary racial assignment policy based on school choice. In January 1990, Michael Preston unveiled a plan to phase out mandatory busing within four years.[183] Preston described the open-enrollment plan as a "middle ground" between Initiative 34 and "controlled choice," because it did not rely on neighborhood assignment patterns and also ended busing.[184] Though the plan would ultimately phase out busing for integrative purposes, it anticipated another voluntary racial transfer component in the form of magnet programs to encourage student movement to promote racial balance. Following, the Board unanimously committed itself to a voluntary enrollment plan for the fall of 1991 while examining its definition of racial imbalance. By July 1990, all seven members agreed that the Seattle Plan's desegregation definitions should be relaxed and essentially concluded, "that it's time to give up."[185] At the first hearing to publicly discuss the changes, the "sincere long-term watchdogs against resegregation" came to warn against changing the definitions and guidelines of racial imbalance.[186] However, the press labeled this group, which included the Urban League, Church Council, and

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[183] Joe Haberstroh, "Voluntary enrollment pledged- school board to implement plan for 1991-92 classes," *Seattle Times,* 26 January 1990, B3.

[184] Joe Haberstroh, "Divided board ponders open enrollment," *Seattle Times,* 2 January 1990, B1.

[185] Michele Matassa Flores, "It just won't work-School Board giving up on mandatory integration," *Seattle Times,* 10 July 1990, A5.

[186] "Redefining racial balance- hair-trigger threat of suit dilutes school dialogue," *Seattle Times,* 24 June 1990, A18.

League of Women Voters, a "tired threat."[187] The battle over integration was becoming

more a memory than a threat.

Neither school nor city actors anticipated the quick progression. Head of SOS,

Kathy Baxter noted this paradox in 1990 when the Board voted to go all-voluntary,

saying only two years ago she "couldn't talk about busing without having her motives

questioned."[188] In 1990, the *Time's* reported the result of a public hearing to ascertain the

public's view on relaxing desegregation rules, which "was as unclear as the complicated

rules themselves."[189] By 1991, the Board could push through drastic changes to basically

end mandatory desegregation quite smoothly without being labeled discriminatory or

catering to the North end white parents.

What is the character of this discursive arrangement of ideas that could bring the

entire board together to vote to essentially end mandatory desegregation just two years

after they re-vamped the Seattle Plan? On the surface, this coalition appeared to join both

progressive liberals and strict anti-busing critics. This was not a simple coalition of

actors utilizing "colorblind conservative" rhetoric to hide racist intentions within a

discourse of individualist equality. The discursive coalition that convened under around

the meta-concept of choice provided the legitimacy necessary to begin the process of

dismantling desegregation policies because it articulated a relationship between the role

of the schools and the individual in ways that made *choice* more commonsense than

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[187] Ibid.

[188] Joe Haberstroh, "Voluntary enrollment pledged- school board to implement plan for 1991-92 classes," *Seattle Times,* 26 January 1990, B3.

[189] Michele Matassa Flores, "Reactions mixed on desegregation," *The Seattle Times,* 21 June 1990, B6.

integration in terms of racial equity. This articulation provided potential connections to create audiences by crafting new ways for people to think about their identities in relation to the schools, others, and race. Within specific development processes, we can see how these identity attachments enlarged the scope and identifications possibly connected under "school choice."

Equity as Achievement, Busing as Harmful for Achievement

This narrative of school choice that opposed busing could do something the call for neighborhood schooling could never do: retain the assumption of racial equality. Despite cultural or historical differences, the narrative of school choice could not be sustained without the interest in the increase in minority student achievement. This points to *the* central piece that could align this discursive coalition. Institutional actors could legitimately address calls to end desegregation when linked with either the futility of desegregation efforts or the argument that desegregation was not "working" in terms of increasing minority achievement. Narratives, such as T.J. Vassar's, became all but anachronistic because they could not account for achieving academic racial equity. Actor such as Michael Preston successfully questioned the value of pursuing diversity and social relations when the academic achievement of minority youth remained unchanged. This was the creativity of Michael Preston, who articulated the necessity to account for diversity and equality that was integral in Seattle's image, and also acceptably prescribe an end to busing because it was not helping diversity and equality. The effectiveness of the narrative was that it could also include a range of people who remained highly

skeptical, or overtly against, desegregation for reasons ranging from racism to deep concern for minority students' achievement. The idea that academic achievement for minority youth had not improved with desegregation also became an argument that desegregation even harmed the academic choices for black students. The *Seattle Times* noticed, "Diversity, though still given lip service, has been replaced by a battle cry for "academic achievement," in an articled titled, "Busing's end means choice will begin."[190]

In early 1990, parents framed desegregation as actually "killing Central and South area schools."[191] Amy Hagopian spoke for these parents: "The minority community has decided the battle they want to fight is around quality education for their kids and the disproportionality of achievement- not around busing."[192] Mandatory assignment meant fewer academic choices for their children because the District's priority on busing still left black students with fewer attractive options. One black parent articulated her new view of the current state of desegregation by providing her own historical context. For her, "unequal education was the result of segregation," for her children, "it stems from desegregation."[193] The narrative redirected the gaze of the "root" cause away from structural segregation to the tradeoff inherent in desegregation.

The expansion of options programs, which had been proven to exacerbate racial inequality, could be framed as necessary, to achieve equal opportunity. Choice could

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[190] Terry Tang, "Busing's end means choice will begin," *The Seattle Times,* 16 April 1992, A8.

[191] Michele Matassa Flores, "Busing emptying south end schools, parents say," *The Seattle Times,* 5 June 1990, B3.

[192] Michele Matassa Flores, "It just won't work-School Board giving up on mandatory integration," *The Seattle Times*, 10 July 1990, A1.

[193] Michele Matassa Flores, "Choice doesn't work for all in Seattle- one woman's view: 'crumb' vs. 'full loaf,'" *The Seattle Times,* 10 July 1990, A5.

function as identification for minority families who wanted more academic opportunity, as well as identification for white parents who desired academics, and not busing, as the fundamental role of the public schools. For example, Amy Hagopian admitted that the schools always needed to attract the white families or the "middle class...because if we lose that, it's the worst thing that could happen for poor peoples. So we have to hold on to them even if we have to do some despicable things. Like these gifted programs, stuff that I've never been interested in, but they hold on to the middle class."[194] The subtle dismissal of evidence that options programs exacerbated inequality holds the narrative together because the actor's understanding of racial inequality allowed her to promote privilege, because it was strategic rather than self-interested. Hagopian associated options programs and magnets as "shameless pandering... that appeal to upper class values." But, "one way to keep the middle class in school is to give them a choice...then you have to pair that choice with incentives that cause integration."[195] Hagopian separated choice and integration as both private choices, but also made school choice instrumental in attracting, or maybe manipulating, white students back into the public schools.

Diversity as Choice, Integration as Choice

Intimately associated with the connections forged by the association between equity and achievement was the association between diversity and choice that allowed

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[194] Amy Hagopian, interview with author, Seattle, Wash., 6 September 2007.

[195] Ibid.

diversity and integration to become available within this language. Most actors who retained legitimate voices in these debates maintained an apparent, albeit abstract, desire for an integrated, or diverse, society. The narrative of school choice could account for those who believed in diversity, by placing diversity as a private choice. Rather than dismissing historical and structural inequalities like opponents did in the 1960s, actors in this context overtly recognized historical inequalities and differences in culture. These actors addressed these differences in a context that had secured the cleavage between the diversity and the role of the schools. In this way, actors could separate diversity concerns and the role of the schools through the acceptance of diversity and individual choices made in private life. Therefore, one could be a racist or a liberal and promote similar policies that focus on the schools as academic and relegate cultural or private concerns to the home. The narrative of choice allowed actors to craft an ambiguous perspective of diversity because parents can choose the level of diversity they desire without appearing segregationist.

For example, choice can account for a paradoxical view of inequality that reifies culture. Former school board member Don Nielson then posed the inevitability of segregation and futility of forcing diversity or integration because of the choices individuals naturally make; "Why do we have a Chinatown? There's no law that says that Chinese to live in one certain area. We have a Chinatown because Chinese like to live near Chinese." He also used the example of African-American colleges, to pose as natural the desire of an African-American student he knew who wanted attend Howard University, when he could attend "any school in the nation." With these counteracting

examples, segregation is assumed to be a historically determined as well as a natural

choice. A public institution should "allow" for more choice in home location by ending

overt discrimination, and should also respect an individual's natural choice to choose a

home next to others that look like them.

Board member Linda Harris noticed "we're a very divided country, and I think if

you were to ask me about Seattle, yes, they believe in diversity. But I don't know if

that's the way across the country. Seattle loves diversity...they *love* diversity."

However, she qualified the idea: "Until it comes down to 'my child,' everybody supports

it [diversity], eighty percent are going to say 'we really believe in diversity'...People

aren't going to sacrifice. If it came about naturally, because everyone believes in it."[196]

Likewise, former board member Amy Hagopian framed Seattleites love for diversity,

when accomplished by choice. She said, "You know, it's lovely for white families to live

in Laurelhurst to have black kids bused into your school. You get diversity, and you get

to say your kids go to a desegregated school, it's so nice, those kids are cute. But sending

your kids there, that's a whole other [matter]."[197] She argued those parents are not overt

racists, "these people weren't bigoted in the sense that they didn't want black kids in their

schools, they just didn't want to send their kids to a school to achieve that."

Choice also allowed actors to recognize historical inequalities and also question

the reason the schools had to deal with them. For example, Amy Hagopian recognized the

historical plight of minorities in Seattle, noting historical racism within the housing

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[196] Linda Harris, interview with author, Seattle, Wash., 6 September 2007.

[197] Amy Hagopian, interview with author, Seattle, Wash., 6 September 2007.

industry, when "there were whole neighborhoods in Seattle where realtors were not allowed to, or just by practice, never showed homes to black families." As these actors expressed respect for both inequality and cultures, they re-cast the argument used for three decades to oppose desegregation with questions like "Why is deseg solely the responsibility of the school district?"[198] Hagopian expressed a sense of futility on the part of the schools to change this historical fact. She asked, "Why did the city, for example, why was the city never asked to play ball on housing desegregation? [...] Why did America throw that problem at the schools and leave it there?"[199] Former School Board member Don Nielson re-visited a complaint utilized throughout Seattle's desegregation history, "I believe that [school] integration is predominantly a real-estate question and not a social engineering question for the schools."[200] Former school board member Linda Harris noted, "Seattle has very established patterns [...] there's no control over that in the education system yet, but the ed system is supposed to make up for the fact that we didn't put low-income housing everywhere." She emphasized the fact that racial inequality was much broader, "I don't think it's a school district or a school problem. It's a *community* issue."[201]

For decades, actors had tried to limit the schools' reach into "community issues," such as neighborhood schools or parental rights. The school choice narrative could allow multiple interpretations of the division between the schools' reach and the

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[198] Ibid.

[199] Ibid.

[200] Don Nielson, interview with author, Seattle Wash., 25 July 2007.

[201] Linda Harris, interview with author, Seattle, Wash., 6 September 2007.

"community's" responsibility. For example, within the school choice narrative, actors

were able to re-define segregation as a "community issue." Like the 1960s, segregation

became a "social" or "cultural" problem, and accepted as resulting from individual

choices apart from public institutions. Hagopian believed "one of the hugest predictors

of your school experience is who you go to school with," thus possibly alluding to the

importance of noticing the social make-up of schools and classrooms.[202] She then

lamented that, "if you go to school with kids who are from a culture of not achieving and

don't expect to achieve, that's what you're going to be like too."[203] In order to explain

cultural differences, she then justified cultural differences by respecting them as

individual choices,

> You know the other fact of the matter is that some cultures have this huge
> tradition of getting involved in school, some cultures do not. And, it is an
> interesting sort of anomaly about immigrant kids that most foreign cultures don't
> have this thing about volunteering at the school… It's that anomalous for some
> cultures. You know, and the PTA women who, all these PTA white women go to
> these meetings and say, where are the black families? Well, that's not how they
> get involved in schools. They get involved in different ways. They have to
> appreciate those ways and connect with those ways, or just suffer in silence or
> whatever…. I mean it is too bad there are not black voices in those arenas,
> because resources get expended at those meetings.[204]

Hagopian recognized PTA meetings grant power over school decisions, thus are

representative of structural inequalities, and that cultural differences naturally preclude

this power equalization. Therefore, how can the schools step in and force one family to

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[202] Amy Hagopian, interview with author, Seattle, Wash., 6 September 2007.

[203] Ibid.

[204] Ibid.

do something it's not natural for them to do? Within this narrative, choice is both a public policy and a private privilege.

The concept of school choice could also include those who cast liberals' desires for diversity as facades. Former board member Don Nielson argued Seattle's belief in diversity was disingenuous, and shows the inevitability of desegregation's failure and need to re-focus the equity debate. He re-cast the alternative to disingenuous desires for diversity as instituting choice for all students, so as not to privilege "liberals." Among other reasons, his dissatisfaction for the busing plan rested in the false desire for diversity of "liberal" white families when they were unwilling to change their own patterns. The key association Nielson made is how he then highlighted the unfair result for minority families who bore the burden of busing, because busing took away their choice under the guise of "diversity." To white families that believe in diversity, he told them to make the choice, "If you want your kid to go to an integrated school, then move into an integrated neighborhood."[205] Families cannot force minority kids to bus into their neighborhoods because they want the appearance of caring about diversity; they need to make the choice to move into an integrated neighborhood. Central in this narrative is the assumption that white families always have choice and impose their choice onto minorities, by choosing to diversify "their schools" at the expense of minority kids who had been the ones most often bused despite their choice.

The result of the separation between diversity and the schools, which could both respect and dismiss cultural differences, was the completed disconnect between

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[205] Don Nielson, interview with author, Seattle Wash., 25 July 2007.

integration and equity. The combination of busing as a source of blame for inequality and diversity as the way to talk about racial matters in Seattle, the idea of integration had no potential connector to either the schools or racial equality. Therefore, it became disconnected from the narrative constellation held together by choice, as it became the antithesis of choice. With racial equity re-cast in terms of academic achievement, the debate over integration had also come to an end in Seattle. Integration as a source of diversity became a compelling interest, much like the "mutual respect" narrative of the 1960s. Racial equity had become a matter of academic issue and not one of structural segregation or necessary cultural training for all students.

Conclusion

Policy deliberation in 1980s became a re-negotiation of the space left between the attraction and diversity narrative constellations that re-filled this space with a new way to envision equity: academic achievement. The combination of fewer actors framing diversity as an inherent role for the schools, the development of academic achievement as the measure of desegregation's success, and the association of options as academic achievement allowed a framework of school choice to work as a signifier of equity, educational excellence, and attraction that could create discursive identifications for a wide range of people. *A New York Times* reporter writing about Seattle in 1989 noticed, "The idea of promoting choices...represents a coming together of the political left and

right."[206] By the 1990s, the District's policy stance reflected the early Reagan administrations attempts to recast the problem of education as a "crisis of academic achievement" and concomitantly declare busing as irrelevant and therefore harmful for the pursuit of academic excellence. However, policy changes avoided the association with Reagan's overt retreat from civil rights interest.

These developments in Seattle incrementally disassociated key connections within the narrative constellations used to sustain the Seattle Plan and interpret its implementation. The advent of Reagan, shifts in the Courts, and policy developments combined resulted in cleaving a wedge between education and integration, as associated with busing. The development was not determined, but resulted from the interpretations of actors dealing with policy on the ground. There was no pre-determined reason that busing should be interpreted as "successful" if it improved test scores. But, actors began to solidify the interpretation of busing's measure in terms of academic achievement. Alongside this interpretive development, actors began specifically talking about racial equity in terms of academic achievement and begin to talk about busing as harmful for minority groups as well as something that is driving white families from the schools.

These interrelated developments did not join until the advent of the concept of school choice. The District implemented more "choice" for parents in the Controlled Choice policy change in 1988. By this time, the layering of choice aspects and mandatory busing did not allow for widespread support. The diversity narrative of T.J. Vassar had all but become anachronistic by this time, as the Disproportionality report

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[206] Lee A. Daniels, "The winning ways to desegregate the schools" *The New York Times,* 17 December 1989, A4.

galvanized remaining support for busing as a means for racial equality. However, interest in minority equality and diversity required a place in policy ideas in Seattle, given their long-standing support for multiculturalism and "mutual respect."

The concept of choice, rising from both the Seattle Plan and Controlled Choice, can be seen as a meta-concept because of its ability to re-wire connections between commonly used ideas and between actors and their narrative constellations. In this way, choice became a mechanism of coalition building because of its polyvalent and multivocal character. Choice acquired independent standing though, as something disconnected from both diversity and achievement, and something that also connected people interested in diversity and achievement.

Academic achievement became the prime measure of racial equity, which broke the connection between racial equality and integration. One mechanism that reinforced the connections and disconnections were possible between equity, choice, achievement, and diversity was the association crafted between school choice and equity that concurrently separated the measure of success of school choice from equity or academic achievement. School choice had become a signifier of equity and academic achievement, without being a measure for either. The idea of school choice became an independently valuable idea, measured only in terms of choice. Whether or not choice led to equal choices, actors had solidified its narrative link to equity. The power of school choice lay within its polyvalent character that provided many meanings for different actors or functions without providing concrete measures of its success.

Actors interpreted school policy in ways that solidified the public realm as ensuring academic equity and solidified school choice as independently accountable for academic quality, middle class retention, racial equity, and respecting cultural diversity. For example, if school choice led to gaps in academic achievement, the answer was more resources, better teachers, more educational programs to counter this trend. District actors consistently avoided any recommendation that challenged school choice as culprit. Likewise, if cultural or social conditions surfaced as obstacles to public school functions, the blame did not fall on school choice. For example, Hagopian's example of unequal representation of minority groups at PTA meetings was explained through a narrative of choice that framed this situation as a respect for the differences in cultures. Culture and the neighborhood or community can be culprits, but not choice. In this context, the neighborhood was not reified as an independently valuable concept, whether as a "right" or "community good," but its resulting configuration was again separated from concerns of the public school.

Extrapolating from this, segregated communities became irrelevant when the focus of racial equality had nothing to do with private choices. Given the history of interest in mutual racial respect in Seattle, actors had to give the idea of diversity credence and did so by re-casting its position into the private, or cultural, realm again. Racial equity had become a matter of academic issue and not one of structural segregation or necessary cultural training for all students. Through the combination of these trajectories, segregation became an irrelevant event not only out of the school

district's jurisdiction but an issue that got in the way of pursuing policies to rectify racial

inequities and academic achievement.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION

Five years after the School Board voted to introduce voluntary open-enrollment

student assignment policy, the Board eliminated busing. At the same time, the Board

began to discuss ways to equalize student achievement rates. In 1996, the Board

approved the Weighted Student Formula, which was a new way to allot resources to

schools based on student enrollment. The formula allotted funding to schools based on

the different needs of each student.[1] Student were allotted more money based on the

"weight" assigned to special designations, including "regular," "bilingual," "special

education," "poverty," or "student mobility."[2] Race was not included in this weighting

formula, but was addressed through characteristics of "bilingual" and "poverty."

The combination of policy acts to end busing and also allot more resources for

disadvantaged students made sense at this time. The school district had not been overrun

with "colorblind conservative" board members or "avid liberals" who attempted covert

ways to bring race back into school issues. Both extremes still continued to voice their

ideas. For example, another citizen drive (Parents Involved in Community Schools)

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[1] "Weighted Student Formula: A System for Allocating Resources to Schools for the 1997-98 School Year," Seattle Public Schools Budget Department Chief Financial Officer, 049.050C.2 (SSD).

[2] Ibid.

forced any level of race-conscious policy back to the courts and the ACLU and Church Council continued to show up to school board meetings and send memos regarding racial inequality. School board members continue along their ways muddling through issues of equality, race, academic achievement, and school choice. Currently, the Seattle School District is in the process of initiating a new student assignment process based on boundary changes to further the goals of academic achievement for all and equitable distribution of resources.[3]

This analysis has shown that the process of development is an on-going negotiation and interaction between actors and their creations of ideas about racial equity and academics. This interpretation does not discount the endurance of certain ways to talk about race, equity, and the schools but broadens the lens out to how these certain arrangements became commonsense understanding, anachronistic, or which idea connections were disrupted for these developments to occur. Pluralist politics, regime theory, or studies of ideology have a hard time explaining this development without discussing the meaning and formation of "interests" and the way interests, or identities, are activated at certain moments in reaction to certain developments.

This project developed a deeply empirical explanation of the politics of the Seattle public schools. In doing so, I could view policy formation with tools that came out of the story I discovered during research. Previous analytic tools did not allow this project to develop explanations for the *improbability* of the creation and the collapse of the Seattle

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[3] Seattle Public Schools, "Student Assignment Plan," approved June 17, 2009, available from http://www.seattleschools.org/area/newassign/final_assign_plan_June17_Cleveland.pdf; accessed October 22, 2009.

Plan. Looking at language as fundamentally empirical allows the analytic lens to focus

on the actors and meaning-formation and therefore on the improbable ways actors can

create contingent discourses about such highly contested concepts like race, equality, and

schools. Analyzing these contingent and highly interactive discourses then allowed this

project to develop a specific explanation about racial politics in the Seattle schools, but

also theoretical leverage to broader explanations of political change. Though not

specified within APD scholarship, certain ways of discussing ideas also take on a path

dependent character when "ideas" are defined as "liberal," "conservative," "anti-

transformative," or "egalitarian."

Political Change

This project re-convenes the questions of idea formation, coalition building and

policymaking to join agency, local politics, and processes of meaning making. At this

intersection, the study of discursive processes as an eventful piece of political change

enlivens the debate over ideas, institutions, and coalition building. While being careful

not to posit the notions of ideas, institutions, and coalition building in causal or

directional relationships, this deeply empirical study can speak to American political

development concepts that often latch on to explanations that require path dependence,

whether within institutions or ideas. When attributed to institutions, path dependence

assumes that choices made within politics that create governing arrangements reinforce

these relationships over time. Certain institutional orders "lock in" a character of development.[4]

I situate the central questions of this project in policy process and political development to explore where change occurs and what constitutes change. Prevailing accounts of change within the American political development literature focus on three categories of examination: institutions, ideas, and actors. These accounts of change have developed theories of American political development with an eye to macro-level institutional and cultural changes. Thus, political science has benefited from a dynamic view into the interaction between political actors and institutions and the constitutive their ideas and policy constructs institutionalize into the American political system and affect future policy and cultural predispositions.

This project can re-orient APD's focus on change in order to gain perspective on the formation of ideas, how and why actors express ideas in particular ways in particular times, and the discourses that inform political experiences. Scholars have attempted to adjust the assumption of institutional order as the nature of political development in order to place ideas as produced within the political process and also constitutive of change. Robert C. Lieberman (2002) suggests, "relaxing the common focus on order" in order to consider institutions and ideas as "integral, endogenous explanatory elements."[5] Studies of political entrepreneurs and elite actors have broadened the vision of political

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[4] See Paul Pierson, *Politics in Time: History, Institutions, and Social Analysis* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2004), Stephen Skowronek, *Building a New American State: The Expansion of National Administrative Capacities 1877-1920* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982).

[5] Robert C. Lieberman, "Ideas, Institutions, and Political Order: Explaining Political Change," *American Political Science Review* 96, no. 4 (2002).

development to emphasize the agents as the instigators of change.[6] Stephen Skowronek (2008) critiques theories that limit ideas and agents to durable sets of alternatives deployed instrumentally by actors and sees general ideological trends, such as "deep-seated currents of racism and liberalism," as "points of departure" for thinking about ideas as moving through time and politics.[7]

Ideas can define, re-define, shift, and re-associate purposes in unpredictable ways. Accordingly, Skowronek re-envisions the study of political traditions and development as the identification of processes of idea movement and analysis of "how, and with what effect, these shifts occur."[8] Therefore, ideas are analyzed less for their inherent nature, but in how they are used by specific actors for specific purposes; in how they are "re-worked or re-deployed."[9] Examining ideas in this way allows for a shift in question away from which idea "wins" or "loses" but in how purposes can also "absorb different influences, how racism and liberalism become mutually constitutive within the culture."[10] This assumes a dynamic view of ideas as constantly changing and developing meaning *within* politics.

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[6] Ibid, Eric Schickler, *Disjointed Pluralism: Institutional Innovation and the Development of the U.S. Congress* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2002), Adam D. Sheingate, "Political Entrepreneurship, Institutional Change, and American Political Development," *Studies in American Political Development* 17 (2003), Margaret Weir, "Ideas and the Politics of Bounded Innovation," in *Structuring Politics: Historical Institutionalism in Comparative Analysis*, ed. Steven Steinmo, Kathleen Thelen, Longstreth (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992).

[7] Stephen Skowronek, "The Reassociation of Ideas and Purposes: Racism, Liberalism, and the American Political Tradition," *The American Political Science Review* 100, no. 3 (2008).

[8] Ibid.

[9] Ibid.

[10] Ibid.

However, these scholars often focus on elite and macro-level political processes that limit potential purchase in explanations of change. This research provides space for actors, but often reverts to a view of ideas as interests and a view of agency as intentional maneuvering, as Hattam and Lowndes (2006) argue, "to the extent that order recedes."[11] For example, Sheingate and Schickler both centralize actors and their direct effects on policy and institutions. Sheingate focuses on "political entrepreneurs," who remain within "regulative, normative, and cognitive constraints" provided by institutions.[12] Actors are able to be creators because of institutional complexity, and thus take on entrepreneurial roles when opportunities arise. Furthermore, in Sheingate's account, actors tend to be almost singular intentional entities until they are able to "consolidate their innovations by building *robust coalitions* in support of institutional change."[13] Schickler develops an account of agency also possible because of the complex, layered, and ambiguous nature of political institutions. Schickler places actors as central to the institutional dynamic of change in congressional institutions, but frames actors in terms of competing interests and the policy result as a layering of these competing interest.[14] Skowronek (2008) uses an elite actor (Wilson) to develop a robust vision of how ideas travel across time, but remains tied to the dynamic between the grand ideologies

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[11] Victoria Hattam, Joseph Lowndes, "Changes beneath Our Feet: Language, Culture and Political Change," in *Formative Acts*, ed. Stephen Skowronek and Mathew Glassmen (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2006).

[12] Sheingate, "Political Entrepreneurship, Institutional Change, and American Political Development."

[13] Ibid.

[14] Schickler, *Disjointed Pluralism: Institutional Innovation and the Development of the U.S. Congress.*

characteristic of American political development, allowing for their paradoxical and complex compatibility.

I shift the focus away from macro-level institutional processes and grand ideological trends in order to take a step closer to the ground to examine the emergence, use, and shift in ideas that happens when local actors work together to solve policy problems. For example, an analysis of culture and language as it intersects with macro-level institutional change may conclude that desegregation policy succumbed to the inherent push-pull between entrenched cultural battles between egalitarian liberal ideologies and anti-transformative racist ideologies.[15] However, in Seattle, it is misleading to understand the final conflicts as debates *between* integrationists and anti-busers that set up a stable, defined, institutional order. The conflicts implied movement, action, and creation rather than winning and losing.

Chris Ansell's theory of institutional change as "constitutional process" is useful here in that he envisions institutional change and institutions themselves as dynamic processes of negotiation between people. He argues, "An institution develops when a group of people [...] have come to understand their joint activities as something that has meaning and that will continue into the future."[16] A constitutional process is "one in which there is an on-going negotiation about the meaning of particular concepts." What is essential in this view is the observation that institutional change revolves around

[15] Desmond S. and Rogers M. Smith King, "Racial Orders in American Political Development," *American Political Science Review* 99, no. 1 (2005).

[16] Chris Ansell, "Institutional Change as Constitutional Process, Conference Paper, Unstructuring Politics Workshop," (Eugene, OR: 2009).

people who are mutually concerned with the meaning of concepts "without necessarily agreeing on the foundational meaning of those concepts."[17] In Seattle, institutional change was led by coalitions brought together by concerns with similar concepts, yet diverging interpretations of the meaning of the concepts. The coalitions arranged the concepts into a policy, most often without resolving many of the conflicting meanings embedded in the concepts.

The idea of institutional change as an interactive and constitutional process can bridge the theoretical divide that interprets "institutions or ideas" and "macro or micro" as central debates. Rather than ask about whether or not institutions caused ideas or ideas set the groundwork for change, this study reveals space to re-invent the question of political development as a question of meaning-making processes. Seattle's desegregation policy changes were built through re-envisioned connections between ideas and then also embedded certain connections between ideas, which became new sources of identification, conflict, and cooperation. Without the interpretation of meaning, the event of policy change leaves little room for explanation of *how* policies mean for the situation of racial politics, for example. With meaning in mind, analysis searches how policies affect racial politics and how they reflect racial politics continually and in different ways.

In this study, I found that looking at the way people arrange similar concepts in different ways, in narrative constellations, showed how concepts could link contending ideas, and their actors. Certain arrangements of ideas signal potential political change.

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[17] Ibid.

Therefore, understanding the way concepts are connected can help studies examine the meaning of the concepts and change. These associational potentials lay the groundwork for, but do not determine, change. Analytical perspectives based in policy processes can help give actors a space in these processes of change. Policy actors have to deal with these complex issues on an every day basis. The requirements of democracy make it so actors interact with one another, which can lead to an assumption that ideas also interact with one another. Coalitions form in policy processes and can promote one set of ideas over others when they find enough common ground. Yes, coalitions can form based on strategic interest for instrumental reasons. However, analysis of ideas and language can open up the possibility of coalitions to form in other ways as well. Hattam and Lowndes (2006) argue that coalition building that produces enduring change "need to generate new identifications through which adherents understand their social location and interests therein."[18] Hajer envisions coalition building in terms of discursive processes, as a "discourse coalition" suggests that, "politics is a process in which different actors from various backgrounds form specific coalitions around specific story lines."[19] The new story lines or ways of identifying activated within these coalitions serve to re-organize social organization and policy. In Seattle, actors began to agree on significant policy change that disrupted the status quo connectors when they could re-identify with the palette of available ideas.

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[18] Hattam, "Changes beneath Our Feet: Language, Culture and Political Change."

[19] Maarten A. Hajer, "Discourse Coalitions and the Institutionalization of Practice: The Case of Acid Rain in Britain," in *The Argumentative Turn in Policy Analysis and Planning*, ed. Frank Fischer and John Forester (Durham: Duke University Press, 1993).

The analytic addition of meta-concepts is used in this step between narrative constellations and coalition building and policymaking because the use of certain concepts in Seattle proved to build bridges between actors who were both adversarial and compatible. Deborah Stone writes, "In politics, as in life, many relationships are simultaneously adversarial and symbiotic."[20] A meta-concept can be thought of as a conceptual magnet that creates its own magnetic "field" that re-align actor's orientations. The level of authority a concept requires to connect actors comes from its ability to remain ambiguous enough to account for multiple meanings and grounded enough to be "rooted in concrete practices."[21] In policy making struggles involving such highly charged issues involved in schools, neighborhoods and race, a concept that can bind disparate actors together is a crucial conceptual cite for understanding. These meta-concepts can re-orient actor's identifications, which can arrange policy priorities and emphases in ways that change the meaning of race, for example, as it relates to policy solutions.

As an addition to APD theories of change, identifying "narrative constellations, "discursive coalitions and "meta-concepts" in local processes allows one to explore the ways actors create stories out of ideas and coalitions out of dynamic actors. The analytic lens these concepts widen challenge the conception that politics is necessarily described as macro-processes of order and change. Ideas about race, schools, neighborhoods, and school choice gained power locally because of the meaning given to them by local actors

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[20] Deborah Stone, *Policy Paradox: The Art of Political Decision Making* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 2002).

[21] Ansell, "Institutional Change as Constitutional Process, Conference Paper, Unstructuring Politics Workshop."

in certain contexts. While certain ways of talking about neighborhoods, for example, took on characteristics of stability, "neighborhood" acquired meaning when people filled it with meaning. Theories of path dependent order and change would have allowed a minimal focus on what happened to be the most dynamic sites of change: committee meetings, memos, School Board meetings. For example, trying to explain one actor's role by looking at how multiple layers of policy could have allowed enough ambiguity for creative actions consistently missed the question of the story that actor may have been creating at that moment and how that meant in relationship to other actors in Seattle. Through a local focus on actors interacting with one another, the narratives they use to describe social reality, and the policies they create from these multiple meanings and visions can add a rich local light into the dynamics of American political development. When the subjects of inquiry are also so inherently local (race, schools, neighborhoods), this addition to American political development hopes to add a rich layer that complicates visions of what race means in the United States.

The Meaning of Race in Seattle

Within the debates over liberalism and the possibilities for racial equality, the question of the post-*Brown* era often comes to the fore: how does racial conservatism survive in a liberal polity? Integral to this foundational and constitutional question have been people who are the actors and foundational interpreters organizing the meaning of race and the American polity. Regular people on the ground have found ways to fill concepts such as inequality, race, busing, and schools in ways that challenge the

foundational questions of liberalism and racism. The way actors embed these meaning-filled concepts in policy and debate usually circumvent the easy associational label games that target one policy as 'racist' and another 'progressive.' Within this study of racial politics and public schools, the processes of idea formation and language association revealed a political development that failed to map on to many ways of explaining the "rise" and "fall" of desegregation and challenges the very interpretation of desegregation's development as either a rise or fall, which become falsely associated with a U.S. political development as progressive, linear, or cyclical.

It is difficult to simplify the development of racial politics in Seattle forged by actors who identified with many different interests at different times. However, the political changes over time showed a consistent thread that connected race and equality by way of concepts related to diversity. This is significant because of disconnect implied with concepts of economic equality, for example, that attack a different layer of the problems involved in historical racial inequalities. "Mutual respect," "integration," "multiculturalism," "diversity," and even "choice" became the center of broad coalitions of actor who came together to define "race" in Seattle.

In the 1960s, school policy decisions sustained the focus of racial inequality as discriminatory intent and the neighborhood as the basis for student assignment. However, actors had challenged these links with ideas that challenged the neighborhood, the meaning of segregation, and the vision of school equality. The narrative constellations organized new ways to talk about and identify with race and the schools. The Middle School Policy, though ending with a voluntary racial transfer policy that

looked like the status quo, incorporated these new connections even if the connections did not retain strength. The development of emphasis associated with "integration" over "separatism" allowed new connections to be possible and activated ways for actors to identify with a shift in policy. Though the discursive coalition that pushed integration over separatism did not create a significant policy change, they shifted the groundwork for future discourse that prioritized a role for the schools in addressing issues of "inter-group" relations, and potentially multi-racial integration.

In the 1970s, new narrative constellations organized interpretations of racial equality, segregation, and the schools that that expressed differences over mandatory or voluntary integration policy and the exact role of the schools in the situation of "racial imbalance." As actors began to intensify deliberation in the face of court intervention, they crafted visions of Seattle desegregation. The policymaking deliberations saw actors re-working, layering, and re-arranging their constellations' connections. The concept of multiculturalism became a constructed center for actors with disparate ideas about integration to come together, creating a discursive coalition. When multiculturalism became a concept that could frame multiple meanings of various concepts, the discursive coalition organized the Seattle Plan. Multiculturalism activated multiple ways for actors to identify with integration and create a policy that incorporated visions of desegregation as ameliorating segregation to avoid court order and creating a multicultural society that would provide equal opportunity for all students. The incorporation of multiple meanings also left the policy connections stable, yet ambiguous and tenuous. The discourse coalition gave meaning to racial equality as a vision of the amelioration of

segregation as well as a vision for pluralist and democratic cultural relationships. The discourse coalition also gave meaning to racial policy as oriented for minorities as well as whites, though contradicted the inclusion of whites into a multicultural future vision as whites were more easily able to avoid integration than any other group.

After the Seattle Plan was implemented, actors interpreted its development in multiple ways. Actors began to craft new narrative constellations in response to developments and to other actors' interpretations in order to push their visions for desegregation. Through these interactions and developments, actors who framed the success of desegregation in terms of academic achievement began to gain traction. In comparison, other actors accepted this cleavage and associated different measures for "diversity" and academic achievement, so as not to create a tradeoff debate between the two. Those who interpreted busing as not enhancing black children's education began to gain audiences of both black and white families who distanced the idea of equity from busing. This new connection served as sieve for various actors' ideas and identities; the sieve separated the unwanted associations of racism and white privilege to anti-busing from the appropriate associations between anti-busing and a lack of minority students' achievement gains by holding concerns with diversity and equity.

School choice became the concept that solidified varying identifications that supported the end of busing. This discursive coalition grafted together actors and ideas that could legitimately challenge the logic of segregation and the logic of integration at once under the logic of school choice. That is, both segregation and integration became irrelevant issues when the issues of racial equity and academic achievement were defined

in terms of school choice, as both diversity and private choice were respected and accepted. Through these articulations, actors were able to use school choice in ways that appeared to join staunch anti-busing activists, active liberals, and racists in the task of dismantling desegregation.

In sum, actors most often sustained racial equality policy through associations with diversity-oriented concepts like multiculturalism and "mutual respect." With the increasing amount of suburbanization, and the growing separation of races and ethnicities in daily life, and fewer avenues to be "race conscious," the implications of segregation have become more physically obvious but less accepted as topics of conversation. "Perhaps," as Hochschild ponders, "we live not in a liberal polity, but in a race- and class-constrained polity for which equal opportunity and respectful pluralism are convenient myths?"[22] Policy and discourse emphasis on "respectful pluralism," myths of equal academic opportunity, and multicultural hopes for the future could possibly lessen the potential for "race" and its enduring inequalities to be connected to conversations about academic inequalities, citizenship, and democracy.

Though not exactly aligned with this study, discussions of the discourse orienting "race" and "ethnicity" point to a problem in allowing discussions of multi*culturalism* dominate racial equity policy. Hattam (2007) problematizes the current shift to ethnicity as the "preferred" term to improve group inequalities. She posits that when "race" is dropped from discussions of group inequality in favor of "ethnicity" and group inequalities persist, "the language of ethnicity will severely limit our ability to address

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[22] Jennifer L. Hochschild, *The New American Dilemma: Liberal Democracy and School Desegregation* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1984).

persistent group inequalities and hierarchies in the decades ahead."[23] In Seattle, this

implicit distinction between the discourse of "multicultural" or "diversity" that drops

"race" as an unspeakable and irrelevant concept appears to have left racial inequalities

intact. In Seattle and throughout the nation, the racial achievement gap persists. Like

Hattam argues, the distinct but implicit comparison between "race" and "diversity" in

Seattle was grafted over time by continually deferring certain associations to racial

equality, such as socioeconomic equality or white isolation, and the ability to talk about

group inequalities as racial inequalities.

In a time when the most common topics in schooling discussions are excellence,

test scores, charter schools, and educational choice, with this project I take a step beyond

the illusion of the primacy of these issues that remain viable only within the assumptions

of the myth of equal opportunity in today's schools. I argue the taken-for-granted

acceptance of the growing racial separation not only as a feature of the public schools,

but as one of the United States school system as a whole. As Seattle became the arena

through which the Supreme Court in 2004 denied the use of race-conscious measures for

assigning students in the public schools, the hope for re-associating group inequalities in

the schools in terms of racial inequalities has become bleak. The guiding assumption of

this project denies ultimate pessimism. Analyzing politics in terms of ideas, discursive

coalitions, and re-orienting concepts can help re-associate ways to envision policymaking

or political analysis that accounts for the full spectrum of an idea like race, its history of

associations, and the processes through which its meaning has been engaged, interpreted,

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[23] Victoria Hattam, *In the Shadow of Race: Jews, Latinos, and Immigrant Politics in the United States* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2007).

re-engaged, and re-interpreted over time. This project hopes to add an example of these processes and potentials for actors to understand their central roles in giving meaning to the politics of race and education.

APPENDIX A

TIMELINE OF DESEGREGATION EVENTS

1964----------Seattle School District implements Voluntary Racial Transfer Policy; Seattle Urban League develops Triad Plan

1966----------Two day boycott of schools organized by CACRC

1970----------Seattle School District implements Middle School Plan; C.A.M.B files suit, seeking injunction against the mandatory plan

1971----------U.S. District Court says SSD has right to bus children for desegregation; Superior Court judge delays Middle School Plan for one year

1972----------District implements Middle School pilot with about 624 students; District sustains Voluntary Racial Transfer Policy

1977----------District adopts Magnet School Plan; School Board approves mandatory desegregation plan.

1978----------District implements Seattle Plan; CiVIC initiates Initiative 350 campaign; Citizens approve Initiative 350 in November election

1979----------U.S. District court rules I-350 unconstitutional

1980----------Ninth U.S. Court of Appeals upholds District court ruling

1982----------U.S. Supreme Court affirms lower court rulings against CiVIC and State of Washington thereby declaring the Seattle Plan constitutional.

1983----------DRAC Review Completed

1988----------District implements Controlled Choice

1989----------SOS initiates Initiative 34 campaign for citywide election; voters approve I-34; voters elect first African-American mayor Norm Rice

1991----------School Board votes to end mandatory busing within four years

APPENDIX B

COMMITTEES AND ORGANIZATIONS IN SEATTLE

AAEA (Asian-American Education Association): Education advocacy group that joined desegregation planning and debates in the 1970s. It was composed of educators, and leadership from most Asian communities in Seattle. AAEA decided to participate in the lawsuit in 1977 in order to ensure the Seattle Plan was mandatory

BUCFA (Black United Clergy for Action): Worked with the Church Council of Greater Seattle and provided significant black leadership in the 1970s. Became involved in desegregation planning in mid-1970s and called for mandatory desegregation planning.

CAC (Citizens Advisory Committee for Equal Educational Opportunity): Convened in 1963 by the School District to provide recommendations on equal educational opportunities, particularly in the Central Area. The group, made of up citizens and administrators, reported to the School Board. The committee represented a variety of backgrounds and advocated no fixed position.

CACRC (Central Area Civil Rights Committee): Reverend Mance Jackson of Mt. Zion Baptist Church initially convened the CACRC in 1962 to address job discrimination. John Adams became the leader of CACRC after Reverend Jackson was transferred to Atlanta shortly after it convened. Under Adams, the CACRC became a uniquely unified body representing Seattle civil rights groups.

CAMB (Citizens Against Mandatory Busing): Formed in 1970 by citizens invested in ending busing. They were a well funded and organized opposition to the "Middle School Plan" and successfully delayed full implementation of the plan through legal action.

CASC (Central Area School Council): Created by the District in 1968 as a separate administrative planning unit for the Central Area schools. Continued in the 1970s as an advisory council composed of Central Area parents and school administrators. They were formed in order to meet the demands of the black power groups in the Central Area and took an integrationist position in 1976 to support the Seattle Plan.

CCQE (Citizens Committee for Quality Education): The CCQE was formed by representatives of many Seattle civil organizations in 1971 and granted school board sanction to examine all aspects of desegregation and present alternative plans to the Board. The Board gave sanction to CCQE to develop as set of recommendations to

promote cultural and structural integration of the Seattle Public Schools by September 1973.

Church Council (Church Council of Greater Seattle): Beginning as a Protestant group in 1919, the Church Council took on a distinctly activist character in its history. In Seattle, they formed the Task Force on Racial Justice in 1976 with a statement supporting racial pluralism and diversity, which included support of mandatory desegregation of the schools.

Civic Unity (Seattle Civic Unity Committee): Formed in December 1944 from a cross-section of city actors interested in addressing racial issues in Seattle. They endorsed a voluntary exchange program between high schools in 1963.

CiVIC (Citizens for Voluntary Integration Committee): Formed to oppose the Seattle Plan in 1978 by citizens. Initiated Initiative 350 to stop mandatory busing. Disbanded after Supreme Court ruled against CiVIC and the State of Washington in 1982.

CORE (Congress on Racial Equality): National organization formed in 1961. CORE documented racial segregation in Seattle and offered proposals for desegregation. When these were rejected, black power advocates assumed leadership of CORE.

CQE (Citizens for Quality Education): Established in June 1968 by city-wide actors interested in Seattle's desegregation "'to generate public enthusiasm about advancing contemporary concepts of education' in Seattle."[1] Chairman of the organization was Dr. August Swanson, Associate Dean of the University of Washington Medical School. Herman Siqueland, a Seattle attorney, served as vice-chairman.

DRAC (District Review Advisory Committee): first convened by Superintendent Donald Steele on November 18, 1982 in order to evaluate whether or not the Seattle Plan met its goals. Membership comprised a variety of constituent groups within the City of Seattle plus members appointed by each member of the school board and the Superintendent. The District supported DWAC with two staff members, Dr. Colin Williams and Dr. Wayne Foley. DRAC reported to the Superintendent.

DWAC (District-Wide Advisory Committee): DWAC was created with the application for ESAA in 1974 to provide the opportunity for the community to advise the Superintendent on desegregation planning and for the Superintendent the opportunity to inform the community about desegregation programs. Members were recruited city-wide, from over sixty organizations representing education, ethnic, and community groups. Active membership included people from the NAACP, CQIE, ACLU, CASC, League of Women Voters, and the Parent-Teacher-Student Association (PTSA). In the

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[1] Doris Pieroth, "Desegregating the Public Schools: Seattle, Washington 1954-1968" (University of Washington, 1968).quoted 354

final throes of desegregation planning, the Municipal League and Chamber of Commerce also sent representatives to DWAC. DWAC was a uniquely committed group that pushed the District to implement mandatory desegregation.

SOS (Save Our Schools): Citizen group organized in 1989 by Republican mayoral candidate Doug Jewett. They launched a city initiative campaign to end mandatory busing. Katherine Baxter became director of SOS and helped the initiative to succeed in the 1989 election. Voters approved Initiative 34, the sole goal of SOS, by a one percent margin in November 1989.

APPENDIX C

ARCHIVAL COLLECTIONS CONSULTED

Archives and Record Management Center for Seattle School District No. 1

AWF   Administrative Working Files
BHF   Bruce Hunter Office Files
CRF   Chronological Reference File
GAF   Gus Angelos Files
LCF   Litigation Case Files
SMM   School Board Meeting Material, 1981-85
SSD   Seattle School District Published Material
SSR   Seattle School District Records
VOF   T.J. Vassar/Owen Lee Office Files

University of Washington Libraries, Seattle, Washington

BKP   Bullitt (Katherine) Papers
CCS   Church Council of Greater Seattle Records, 1935-2003
LCP   Lowry (Mike) Congressional Papers
SUL   Seattle Urban League Records

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