EMBRACING SEGREGATION: THE JURISPRUDENCE OF CHOICE AND DIVERSITY IN RACE AND SEX SEPARATISM IN SCHOOLS

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In this article, Professor Levit studies the growing impulse toward resegregation in education. She traces the history of the judicial move away from court-ordered desegregation in the name of “choice” and a “diversity of options,” and she describes the educational system’s parallel increase in experimentation with single-sex schools and classes, also in the name of choice and diversity. In both movements, courts and commentators have been resistant to use empirical data when considering the constitutionality of single-sex and resegregated schools. Professor Levit contends that the primary arguments used to support separatism—choice and diversity—are flawed. The concepts of choice and diversity in the separatist educational movements are vastly different from the constitutionally endorsed concept of diversity in school admissions or affirmative action cases. The article returns to the message of Brown that “separate educational facilities are inherently unequal”—that official endorsement of segregation based on identity characteristics creates inequality. Embracing Segregation presents empirical evidence from the social sciences, as well as international experiences with gender and racial apartheid, that government-sponsored separatism tends to stigmatize citizens, even under conditions of relative equality. Finally, Professor Levit urges local schools and communities to experiment with less-segregative methods of education. She also encourages courts and commentators to consider empirical literature that studies the effects and cultural meanings of segregative educational practices.

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I. THE RUSH TOWARD SEGREGATION

Any student of history is familiar with the timeline in the half century since Brown v. Board of Education: 1 the massive resistance and foot dragging through the 1970s, particularly on the part of southern states, the desegregation orders stemming from Brown, and the still-reluctant compliance with those orders by school districts into the 1990s. 2 In the past decade, the judiciary has shivered away from the promise of Brown, with a surge of federal district courts declaring the school districts under their supervision to have achieved “unitary status.” 3

Courts have ended, or soon plan to end, desegregation suits in at least three dozen school districts, many in major metropolitan areas such as Boston, Buffalo, Charlotte, Cleveland, Dallas, Denver, Kansas City, Little Rock, Miami, Norfolk, Oklahoma City, Savannah, San Diego, and Wilmington. 4 Since 1974, when Congress passed antibusing legislation, it has been the official policy of the U.S. government to have students attend neighborhood schools. 5 State legislatures are joining the effort toward resegregation by passing “Neighborhood Schools Acts,” which encourage or require students to attend the public schools closest to their homes. 6 A study by the Harvard Civil Rights Project shows that when desegregation orders end and schools retreat from integration efforts, school districts rapidly resEGegrate. 7

3. The number of jurisdictions under desegregation orders is dwindling: “The Justice Department reports it is monitoring 395 school districts still covered by desegregation orders, down from a high point of 504. But many of those cases are so old as to have been almost forgotten.” Kim Cobb, After Desegregation, HOUS. CHRON., June 2, 2002, at 1. Courts are stepping up the pace of ending their oversight: “The U.S. Justice Department reports 10 school districts across the country have been declared unitary—free of all vestiges of past discrimination—in the past five months alone.” Id.
5. Congressional anti-busing legislation passed in 1974 declares that it is the official “policy of the United States that . . . the neighborhood is the appropriate basis for determining public school assignments.” 20 U.S.C. § 1701(a)(2) (2000).
7. Erica Frankenberg et al., The Civil Rights Project, Harvard University, A Multiracial Society with Segregated Schools: Are We Losing the Dream?, at http://www.civilrightsproject.harvard.edu/re search/reseg03/AreWeLosingtheDream.pdf (2003) (noting the rapid resEGregation of schools as federal law on desegregation has changed in the last twenty years); Gary Orfield, The Civil Rights Pro-
In the context of race, both the judiciary and the legislature seem to agree with former President Ronald Reagan that desegregation is a “failed ‘social experiment that nobody wants.’” Law professor Mark Tushnet aptly called it the “‘we’ve done enough’ theory of school desegregation.” The country may have just heard the incipient echo of this theme from the law school affirmative action case, 

**Grutter v. Bollinger**, in the U.S. Supreme Court’s statement, “We expect that 25 years from now, the use of racial preferences will no longer be necessary.”

The parallels between the return to racial segregation and the welcoming of sex segregation seem to be going largely unnoticed. Across the country, individual public schools and public school districts show increasing interest in single-sex education. “Eight years ago only four public schools in the United States offered single-sex educational opportunities.” In the 2004–05 school year, 156 public schools across the

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11. Id. at 310. The statement is certainly open to multiple characterizations: Was that just a hope that affirmative action will not be needed in a quarter of a century, or was that a statute of limitations?

Any comparison of treatment based on facets of identity comes with caveats: Gender and race are different in important ways—not just in the constitutional test but also in the flavor of discrimination historically directed toward the two groups (benign paternalism compared to more virulent oppression). Important epistemological differences surface too: We have too little race consciousness—whites are not particularly conscious of being white and are woefully ignorant of the continued manifestations of racial inequality, *see generally Critical White Studies: Looking Behind the Mirror* (Richard Delgado & Jean Stefancic eds., 1997)—and perhaps too much gender consciousness—politicians, academics, judges, and the popular media often unduly stress natural differences between males and females in ways that outstrip the biological realities and that imbue real physiological differences with magnified social significance. *See Nancy Levit, The Gender Line: Men, Women and the Law* 15–63 (1998). But it is the commonalities between the treatment of these two facets of identity that I want to stress in this context of schooling, and the increasing acceptance, in somewhat different ways, of the idea that segregation based on race and sex is beneficial.

14. *Single-Sex Public Schools in the United States*, at http://www.singlesexschools.org/schools.html (last visited Sept. 29, 2004); *Number of Public Single-Sex Schools Jumps 50 Percent as Bush Ad-
country are either completely single-sex or have single-sex classes for some subjects. Single-sex classes, particularly for math or science, are also on the rise. This grouping by sex draws on very weak evidence of biological differences between boys and girls and administrative concerns of teachers who would like to remove the gonadal distractions of opposite-sex students in a single classroom.

Single-sex education received new support in 2002, when the President signed into law the No Child Left Behind Act. The purpose of the Act is “[t]o close the achievement gap with accountability, flexibility, and choice, so that no child is left behind.” The Act not only expressly promotes single-sex schools and classes in public schools, as long as comparable opportunities are provided for both sexes, it also provides $450 million in federal funds for experiments such as single-sex education. The government now officially sponsors “experiments” in sex segregation just as it rushes to declare the “experiment” over in the case of racial desegregation orders.

Educators have also begun using identity characteristics other than race and sex to segregate public education. In the fall of 2003 the New York City school system opened Harvey Milk High School, the nation’s first public high school for lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgendered (LGBT) students. The Harvey Milk High School is being defended in part along the same rationale as that advanced in single-sex school cases: since students are choosing to segregate themselves, the Constitution should not be offended. Both single-sex and LGBT schools rely on the force of arguments made in the larger school choice movement: the fact of “choice” averts constitutional concerns. Stereotypic facets of its curriculum—an “academically rigorous school that [will] specialize in computer technology, arts and a culinary program”—aside, the school is in-

\begin{thebibliography}{99}
\bibitem{id} Id.
\bibitem{nyct} NYC To Open Public Gay High School, CHI. TRIB., July 29, 2003, at 3.
\bibitem{campanile} Carl Campanile, School’s ‘Out’—City Is Launching First HS for Gay Teens, N.Y. POST, July 28, 2003, at 3.
\end{thebibliography}
tended as a safe haven for 170 LGBT New York students who face bullying and physical violence in regular school settings.

However, LGBT teenagers do suffer extraordinary levels of vicious physical and mental abuse, high drop-out rates, depression, and suicide.25 Given the unsafe environment for LGBT students in regular public schools, segregated education on the basis of sexual orientation has a better remedial justification than segregation based on race or sex. But, it is of a piece with the separatism on the basis of identity characteristics seen in the context of desegregation retrenchment and the promotions of single-sex schools. It shares the same flawed remedial approach: rather than confront discriminatory practices in coeducational schools nationwide, this approach cordons off a small enclave, segregates students into it based on one aspect of identity, and makes that offering available to a select few.

This article explores the growing national impulse toward resegregation in education on the basis of identity characteristics. The segregationist movement stems from a peculiar alliance of conservative forces who have long believed that separation of the races and sexes is natural and appropriate and liberal groups who, recently and particularly with respect to gender, see separatism either as a tool of liberation or as the lesser of bad alternatives compared to a flawed coeducational system.26

25. The Gay, Lesbian and Straight Education Network conducted a national survey of lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender students. It showed that 84% of the respondents heard anti-gay remarks at school “frequently or often.” 31% had “missed at least one entire day of school in the past month because they felt unsafe based on sexual orientation,” 83.2% reported being verbally harassed, 31% physically harassed, and 21% physically assaulted because of their sexual orientation. GAY, LESBIAN AND STRAIGHT EDUCATION NETWORK, THE 2001 NATIONAL SCHOOL CLIMATE SURVEY: LESBIAN, GAY, BISEXUAL AND TRANSGENDER STUDENTS AND THEIR EXPERIENCES IN SCHOOLS 2, at http://www.glsen.org/binary-data/GLSEN_ATTACHMENTs/file/185-1.pdf (2001); see also Kimberly Atkins, Festival Will Highlight Identity Issues, BOSTON GLOBE, May 9, 2002, at 4 (“According to the Massachusetts Youth Risk Behavior Survey of high school students in the state, nearly one-third of students who identify themselves as gay, lesbian, or bisexual attempted suicide in the past year, as compared with about 7 percent of other students. . . . The survey, as well as other studies [show] that gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgendered youths suffer disproportionately from drug and alcohol addiction, depression, and feelings of alienation.”); John Hildebrand, Strength in Numbers for Gay, Straight Teens, NEWSDAY, Mar. 26, 2002, at A42 (“More than 80 percent of gay students report verbal harassment in schools, according to national surveys. Even the word ‘gay’ has become synonymous with ‘bizarre,’ as in the teenage expression ‘That’s so gay!’ Gay youths are two to three times as likely as heterosexuals to attempt suicide.”); Mary Pasciak, School Alliance Against Gay Harassment; Posts a Message of Tolerance for All, BUFF. NEWS, Feb. 22, 2003, at B1 (“Gay and lesbian students in many communities frequently find themselves the target of verbal abuse. A study by the Massachusetts Department of Education found that gay students hear homophobic comments more than 25 times a day—and faculty intervene only about 3 percent of the time.”); Robert Tomsho, Schools’ Efforts to Protect Gays Face Opposition, WALL ST. J., Feb. 20, 2003, at B1. (“Researchers say harassment of gay students is rampant. Human Rights Watch, a New York-based group, estimates that two million U.S. students a year are bullied because they are, or are thought to be, homosexuals. Meanwhile, more than half of teens surveyed last year by the National Mental Health Association said classmates use terms such as ‘fag’ and ‘dyke’ on a daily basis.”).

26. See, e.g., Robyn E. Blumner, Single-sex Education Won’t Help Students in the Real World, ST. PETERSBURG TIMES, May 26, 2002, at 6D (“In 1991, the Paul Robeson Academy in Detroit opened for black males only because black activists claimed the answer to the education crisis in their community was not integration but rigid segregation by both race and sex—as if African-American boys were in-
Part II of this article examines the parallels between the movement to end racial desegregation and the current welcoming of sex segregation in schools as a matter of official government policy. What is striking in both the race and gender contexts is the anti-empiricism of courts and commentators to the phenomenon of segregation itself. In the desegregation context, some activist conservative courts have rushed to end their supervisory jurisdiction over desegregation cases. They rely in part on the doctrinal urgings of the Supreme Court to return school districts to local control and partly on selective and politicized reception of the empirical evidence submitted in the individual cases. In their hurry to declare that districts have attained unitary status, courts ignore available evidence, disparage or diminish the value of social science evidence, and narrowly limit their inquiries to ignore how segregation operates and the consequences that flow from it.

Courts have decided very few cases of single-sex schools under the current form of heightened constitutional scrutiny. At present, the single-sex education issue is playing out in the court of public opinion; however, commentators’ evaluation of the social science evidence regarding sex-exclusive schooling suffers from the same methodological flaws as courts’ evaluation of sociological evidence in desegregation cases: reliance on selected studies or pieces of anecdotal information to support preexisting positions; incomplete attention to the cumulative wealth of evidence; and an unwillingness to correlate the developing body of social science research with the legal or doctrinal tests.

27. By anti-empiricism, I mean both ignoring existing research from the social sciences about the consequences of segregation and integration, as well as selective or unscientific interpretation of the existing studies regarding desegregation and single-sex schools. When advocates selectively present research findings, offer arguments not supported by the empirical literature, and fail to acknowledge contrary research, they are acting in anti-empirical ways. See Gerald W. Barrett & Scott B. Morris, The American Psychological Association’s Amicus Curiae Brief in Price Waterhouse v. Hopkins: The Values of Science Versus the Values of the Law, 17 LAW & HUM. BEHAV. 201, 204–07 (1993) (discussing examples cited in the brief); see also Michael Heise, The Importance of Being Empirical, 26 PEPP. L. REV. 807, 834 (1999) (concluding legal scholarship would be greatly enhanced by the use of more empirical evidence).
Another similarity in these movements toward separation based on identity characteristics is the rhetoric used by its proponents. Supporters of single-sex schools and those who favor ending desegregation both use the language of “choice” and “natural differences.” Parents, the argument goes, should be able to have “choices” about their children’s education: they should be able to “choose” neighborhood schools or single-sex classrooms.28 “Natural” gender differences between boys and girls necessitate single-sex schools.29 People of different races want to be “among others just like themselves.”30 The language is chillingly reminiscent of the Dixiecrat segregationists of the 1940s and 1950s, whose banner stated the platform they supported: “the segregation of the races and the racial integrity of each race; the constitutional right to choose one’s associ-
mates.” It also resembles the terminology used by the early- to mid-nineteenth-century anatomists, eugenicists, and physical anthropologists of race who believed in the importance of race as a biological construct, a natural ordering of races, the natural superiority of the white race, and the belief that the races were—by nature—incompatible.

Part III of the article evaluates the philosophical underpinnings of the segregationist movements in education. It analyzes the jurisprudence of “choice” and “diversity”—the theoretical and constitutional meaning of the primary arguments used to support separatism. Proponents of single-sex and neighborhood schools have made a curious plea for tolerance of segregation as a matter of choice. Regarding single-sex education, the proposed choice model is essentially an option play idea: parents should have the choice of single-sex or coeducational schools. In the desegregation area, the argument is that courts should end forced integration and thus restore parental selection of schools in their chosen residential neighborhoods. This choice, for supporters of single-sex schools, provides a “diversity” of educational options; this choice, for opponents of desegregation, revives parents’ unfettered autonomy with respect to their children’s schooling.

The separatist educational movement mistakenly advances a concept of choice that masquerades as the constitutionally endorsed concept of diversity. The choice of single-sex, or what amounts in many cases to single-race education, has nothing in common with the diversity rationale advanced in school admissions or affirmative action cases. The constitutional concept of diversity focuses on affording students a group of fellow travelers who are heterogeneous along multiple dimensions—race, sex, ethnicity, national origin, experiences, and talents. The segregationist concept of “diversity” demands homogeneity along the only dimension of identity that is being measured—race or sex. This section concludes that it is a painful irony for “diversity” to be used in the service of segregation on the basis of identity characteristics.

Courts and the public seem to recognize that integration is a good thing, but collective memory seems to have lapsed that segregation is a bad thing. We seem to be forgetting why segregation is socially, morally, and instrumentally wrong. This section of the article returns to the holding of Brown that inequality is produced by government endorsement of


The science of race developed in Western Europe roughly between 1790 and 1840. Physical anthropologists purported to identify naturally discrete classes of people; biologists then debated their origins and natural compatibilities; cultural anthropologists matched the peoples to distinct civilizations. Of course, these were not merely “racial differences” that were being discovered; the science of race, rather, was defining “superior” and “inferior” races. Id. at 118; see also Robert L. Hayman, Jr. & Nancy Levit, Un-Natural Things: Constructions of Race, Gender, and Disability, in CROSSROADS, DIRECTIONS, AND A NEW CRITICAL RACE THEORY 159, 162 (Francisco Valdes et al. eds., 2002).
segregation based on identity characteristics. It asks whether the reasoning in *Brown* regarding stigmatic injury applies to separatism under conditions of equality. This section considers available empirical evidence—the state of research in educational and social psychology—about government sponsorship of separatism. It examines the public discourse regarding issues of choice and diversity and assesses whether the media’s portrayal of “experiments” in separatist schooling corresponds with performance results of more systematic studies. It also assesses international and comparative data about experiences of intentional separation based on race and gender. Those data suggest that cultural equality is not possible under conditions of government-sponsored separatism. Part III also explores the tension between the principles of equality and associational rights and evaluates whether separatism based on identity characteristics for beneficent purposes can avoid the stigmatic injury. It concludes that this country has insufficient distance from illicit segregation to reinvest practices of apartheid with new meaning.

Part IV suggests that the fate of schools segregated on the basis of identity characteristics may rest less with judges ruling on their constitutionality than with individual teachers and school administrators creating “experimental” classes and local politicians responding to media reports on these trial runs. It also calls for attention to media portrayals of racial resegregation, single-sex schools, and the private choice rhetoric that is used to support them. Those opposed to segregation need to develop new communications strategies to persuade the court of public opinion that segregation based on race and gender reinforces damaging stereotypes.

The national mood regarding race and gender inequities in public schools is one of despair—the problems seem intractable. School administrators and politicians are grasping for any novel solution that seems to have educational benefits, and many of them demonstrate a much greater willingness to try something new than to think about the moral implications or empirically evaluate the longer-term consequences of segregation. That single-sex and single-race schooling fit with the conservative agenda and that at least the former can command public funding are features providing the political and economic capital to implement the projects. In these desperation moves, those promoting single-sex schools and the dismantling of desegregation are simply not taking seriously the harms of segregation. The article concludes by urging attention to the empirical literature regarding the actual academic effects of education that is segregated based on race and sex, as well as the cultural meanings that segregative practices create.

II. ANTI-EMPIRICISM AND THE TRIUMPH OF APARTHEID

In the context of both race and gender, courts and commentators frequently take an unscientific approach to the phenomenon of segregation. On the part of the courts, some of the empirical myopia has to do with the way Supreme Court precedent has developed. Prevailing doctrinal law, particularly in the desegregation area (since the single-sex schools area is relatively uncharted judicial terrain), limits the admissibility and relevance of sociological and psychological research, evidence of social context, as well as evidence about the social consequences of segregation.

A. Doctrinal Constraints

1. Desegregation

One reason for the anti-empiricism in the desegregation context is that the doctrinal law that has developed there sharply curtails inquiry outside certain limited areas. Brown v. Board of Education (Brown II)\(^{34}\) required lower federal courts to assert jurisdiction over segregated school systems until the school district had eliminated all vestiges of state-imposed segregation.\(^{35}\) In 1968, in Green v. County School Board,\(^{36}\) the Supreme Court held that district courts should retain their supervisory jurisdiction until the school district achieved “a unitary, nonracial system of public education.”\(^{37}\) The Green Court provided six criteria for determining when the vestiges of past discrimination have been sufficiently eliminated: the composition of the student body; faculty hiring and placement; staff assignments; student transportation, the provision of extracurricular activities; and the physical facilities and resources of the school.\(^{38}\)

Two decades later, in Board of Education v. Dowell,\(^{39}\) the Supreme Court diluted the Green mandate that school districts “take whatever steps might be necessary to convert to a unitary system in which racial discrimination would be eliminated root and branch.”\(^{40}\) Instead, the Dowell Court urged that desegregation decrees be dissolved as long as local authorities had “complied in good faith with the desegregation decree since it was entered” and as soon as the school districts had eliminated the vestiges of prior de jure segregation “to the extent practicable.”\(^{41}\) Numerous lower courts accepted the Dowell invitation and held

\(^{34}\) 349 U.S. 294 (1955).
\(^{35}\) Id. at 301.
\(^{36}\) 391 U.S. 430 (1968).
\(^{37}\) Id. at 436.
\(^{38}\) Id. at 435.
\(^{40}\) Green, 391 U.S. at 437–38.
\(^{41}\) 498 U.S. at 249–50.
that desegregation had been attained “to the extent practicable” as long as the school district made good faith efforts, even if desegregation actually had not been accomplished.\(^\text{42}\)

In \textit{Freeman v. Pitts},\(^\text{43}\) the Court echoed the impatience it had expressed a year earlier with the specter of “never-ending supervision by the courts of school districts simply because they were once de jure segregated.”\(^\text{44}\) The Court endorsed the concept of partial unitary status, which encouraged lower courts to end supervision of school districts “in incremental stages, before full compliance has been achieved in every area of school operations.”\(^\text{45}\)

Four years later, in \textit{Missouri v. Jenkins},\(^\text{46}\) the Supreme Court again limited school districts’ obligations to desegregate. Until \textit{Jenkins}, school districts under desegregation orders were responsible for explaining persistent racial disparities.\(^\text{47}\) The \textit{Jenkins} majority may have subtly effected a burden shift by saying that when district courts consider whether school districts have desegregated “to the extent practicable,” they must specifically identify “the incremental effect that segregation has had on minority student achievement or the specific goals of the quality education programs.”\(^\text{48}\) In other words, the plaintiff essentially has to prove causation twice—once during the liability phase and again, under a much higher standard, on the defendant’s motion for a finding of unitary status. Even after a court has identified a constitutional violation on the part of a school district, the obligation to establish the need for continuing supervisory jurisdiction now rests with the plaintiff, who must carefully trace the residual effects of segregation that are attributable to the defendant.\(^\text{49}\) The \textit{Jenkins} Court also made a special effort to remind

\(^{42}\) See, e.g., NAACP v. Duval County Sch., 273 F.3d 960, 965 (11th Cir. 2001) (affirming the district court’s holding that “the Board had fulfilled its constitutional obligation to eliminate the vestiges of \textit{de jure} segregation and to desegregate Duval County’s schools in good faith and to the extent practicable”); Belk v. Charlotte-Mecklenburg Bd. of Educ., 269 F.3d 305, 312, 324, 326 (4th Cir. 2001) (repeatedly intoning the “to the extent practicable” language); Liddell v. Special Sch. Dist., 149 F.3d 862, 867 (8th Cir. 1998) (“This Court’s supervision of the local school system is a temporary measure to remedy past discrimination. The desegregation decree should thus be dissolved after the local authorities have achieved ‘unitary status’ by complying ‘in good faith’ with the decree for ‘a reasonable period of time,’ and by eliminating ‘the vestiges of past discrimination to the extent practicable.’” (quoting Bd. of Educ. v. Dowell, 498 U.S. 237, 245–50 (1991))); Hoots v. Pennsylvania, 272 F. Supp. 2d 539, 551–52 (W.D. Pa. 2003) (citing Dowell and remarking on the school district’s good faith compliance); Tasby v. Moses, 265 F. Supp. 2d 757, 763 (N.D. Tex. 2003) (accepting the directive of Dowell that courts should return schools to local control “at the earliest practicable date”).


\(^{44}\) Id. at 495.

\(^{45}\) Id. at 490.


\(^{47}\) See Wendy Parker, \textit{The Future of School Desegregation}, 94 Nw. U. L. REV. 1157, 1172–73 (2000); Reardon & Yun, supra note 7, at 1566 n. 7.

\(^{48}\) 515 U.S. at 101. This may be a departure from \textit{Freeman}’s holding that once the plaintiff establishes a constitutional violation, the defendant “bears the burden of showing that any current imbalance is not traceable, in a proximate way, to the prior violation.” \textit{Freeman}, 503 U.S. at 494.

\(^{49}\) James E. Ryan, \textit{The Limited Influence of Social Science Evidence in Modern Desegregation Cases}, 81 N.C. L. REV. 1659, 1673 (2003) (“Gone is the presumption that all disparities in achievement
lower federal courts of their obligation "to restore state and local authorities to the control of a school system that is operating in compliance with the Constitution."50

Cumulatively, Dowell, Freeman, and Jenkins—what Professor Leland Ware has aptly named the "resegregation trilogy"51—created "a three-fold shift from an affirmative duty to eliminate all vestiges of segregation to acquiescence to resegregation."52 The message of this trilogy is that it is time to end the experiment of desegregation,53 and the standard for unitary status is now one that "virtually every school district can satisfy."54

The Green factors of student, staff, and faculty composition, transportation, extracurricular activities, and facilities have become a "checklist" that invites numeric computation "of black to white students and faculty and concrete comparisons of activities and facilities."55 They have also become an artificial way of limiting inquiry into the principal issue in the desegregation context: whether the vestiges of past segregation remain. Freeman’s approval of the incremental withdrawal of judicial supervision confines the district court’s later investigation to considerations of whether the school district has complied in the specified areas:

The implication of Freeman, therefore, is that, once a school district has incrementally desegregated each articulated area, the district court may declare the system unitary even if the school district remains segregated as measured by other criteria. As a result, actual vestiges of the discriminatory system not captured by the enumerated Green areas may persist even after the school district is declared unitary and the litigation is dismissed.56

are the result of prior segregation; courts now are charged with identifying the causes of those disparities and apportioning responsibility accordingly… [T]his seems to require that plaintiffs, not the school district, establish the incremental effect of prior segregation on current levels of achievement."

For an example of the point, see Coalition to Save Our Children v. State Board of Education, 90 F.3d 752, 777 (3d Cir. 1996) (allocating the burden to the plaintiff to establish that performance disparities were the result of de jure segregation). But see NAACP v. Duval County Sch., 273 F.3d 960, 966 (11th Cir. 2001) (applying a presumption that continued racial imbalances in a school district result from prior de jure segregation) (citing Keyes v. Sch. Dist. No. 1, 413 U.S. 189, 208–09 (1973)).

50. 515 U.S. at 102 (quoting Freeman, 503 U.S. at 489).


52. Id. at 65.

53. Chemerinsky, supra note 7, at 1618 (“The three cases—Dowell, Freeman, and Jenkins—together have given a clear signal to lower courts: the time has come to end desegregation orders, even when the effect could be resegregation. Lower courts have followed this lead. Indeed, it is striking how many lower courts have ended desegregation orders in the last decade, even when provided with clear evidence that the result will be increased segregation of the public schools.”).

54. Ware, supra note 51, at 70.


56. Bradley W. Joondeph, Note, Killing Brown Softly: The Subtle Undermining of Effective Desegregation in Freeman v. Pitts, 46 STAN. L. REV. 147, 160 (1993) (“Once a district court articulates its criteria for measuring a school district’s progress toward unitary status—even if it selects other criteria in addition to the traditional Green factors—its inquiry is necessarily limited to the chosen factors.
Despite language in *Freeman* specifically approving the district court’s consideration of “an additional factor that is not named in *Green*—the quality of education being offered to the white and black student populations” for most lower federal courts, demonstration of the vestiges of past segregative policies is strictly limited to the *Green* factors.

*Capacchione v. Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools* is a good example of this cramped interpretation of Supreme Court desegregation precedent. It is also emblematic of the demise of desegregation. In *Capacchione*, the U.S. District Court for the Western District of North Carolina approved a finding of unitary status for the Charlotte school system and dissolved a thirty-year-old desegregation decree, despite increased segregation in both the elementary and secondary schools during the final decade of the desegregation order. Even though the court acknowledged that “there has been more imbalance in recent years than at any time since the desegregation orders have been in place,” it attributed the widening racial imbalance to “independent demographic forces and private choice.” Despite evidence of “recurrent racial problems in pupil assignment [that were] hangovers from previous active discrimination,” the court found that the “defendants are actively and intelligently addressing these problems without court intervention.”

The court relied primarily on the *Green* factors and rejected the “laundry list of quality of education concerns” raised by the plaintiffs. These “ancillary considerations” that the court discarded included: comparative evidence of teacher competence and experience; disparities in elective course offerings; measures of student achievement that included

From that point forward, unitary status, by definition, equals the school district’s satisfying its affirmative duty to desegregate each selected area . . . . Achieving compliance in each *Green* area essentially becomes an end in itself rather than a measure of overall compliance.”

57. *Freeman v. Pitts*, 503 U.S. 467, 492 (1992) (“It was an appropriate exercise of its discretion for the District Court to address the elements of a unitary system discussed in *Green*, to inquire whether other elements ought to be identified, and to determine whether minority students were being disadvantaged in ways that required the formulation of new and further remedies to ensure full compliance with the court’s decree.”).


59. 57 F. Supp. 2d 228.

60. Intriguingly, the school district and the plaintiff class were allied by the remedial phase of the litigation, both resisting the motion of plaintiff-intervenors, the parents of some other children in the district who were complaining that the desegregation order was being used as a “pretext to pursue race-conscious, diversity-enhancing policies in perpetuity.” *Id.* at 232.

61. *Id.* at 250, 255.

62. *Id.* at 236 (quoting *Swann v. Charlotte-Mecklenburg Bd. of Educ.*, 67 F.R.D. 648, 649 (W.D.N.C. 1975)).

63. *Id.* at 244–70.
“racial disparities in student test scores;” survey data of student treatment; an expert’s conclusion that the district permitted a “hierarchically differentiated system of instructional delivery, commonly known as ‘tracking’”; and differential rates of discipline and suspension by race.64 The district court pronounced it “totally unforeseeable that CMS would return to an intentionally-segregative system.”65 The U.S. Court of Appeals for the Fourth Circuit upheld the district court’s ruling, and the Supreme Court denied certiorari.66 The new student assignment plan, adopted in 2001, did not consider race.67

The consequences flowing from the 
Capacchione ruling were swift and dramatic: in the 2002–2003 school year, the number of Charlotte-Mecklenburg schools with minority enrollment of 91% to 100% more than doubled from the previous year—from seven elementary schools in 2001–2002 to sixteen in 2002–2003, and from two middle schools to four.68

The irony of the outcome in 
Capacchione is that the case was originally part of the remedial phase of 
Swann v. Charlotte-Mecklenburg,69 where the Supreme Court had held in 1971—during the height of a national commitment to desegregation—that the central issue in determining the constitutionality of a remedial plan was its “effectiveness” in dismantling segregation.70

In assessing whether school districts have achieved unitary status, some lower federal courts have, particularly in the 1970s and 1980s, considered factors other than those identified in 
Green. In approving unitary status, courts have looked favorably on minority school board representation,71 the absence of white flight,72 and indications of community

64. Id. at 269–81 (citations omitted). A more complete critique of the reasoning in 
65. 57 F. Supp. 2d at 284.
66. Belk v. Charlotte-Mecklenburg Bd. of Educ., 269 F.3d 305, 335 (4th Cir. 2001) (including almost boilerplate language: “After more than three decades of federal court supervision, [Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools] have complied in good faith with the mandate of 
Brown embodied in the district court’s desegregation orders to achieve a unitary school system. The dual system has been dismantled and the vestiges of prior discrimination have been eliminated to the extent practicable.”).
67. See Jennifer Wing Rothacker & Celeste Smith, Board Oks Assignment Plan for 2002–03; Method Does Not Include Using Race; Boundaries Expected Next Week, CHARLOTTE OBSERVER, Aug. 1, 2001, at 1A.
70. Id. at 25. The 
Swann Court also recognized that the judiciary needed to invoke a range of equitable remedies to eliminate the vestiges of discrimination, even though they “may be administratively awkward, inconvenient, and even bizarre in some situations.” Id. at 28.
71. See, e.g., Riddick v. Sch. Bd., 784 F.2d 521, 528 (4th Cir. 1986) (considering the number of black superintendents and school board members).
acceptance of desegregation. 73  Other courts, in evaluating the progress of desegregation efforts, have also looked more broadly at social context—determining that the culturally biased content of the curriculum or a hostile racial atmosphere were continued vestiges of de jure segregation. Conversely, in the 1990s, lower federal courts refused to examine some of the most important indicia of integration in considering requests to retain supervisory jurisdiction. For example, although a positive community reception of desegregation efforts is a factor for some courts in lifting a judicial order, many courts in unitary status hearings find that new evidence of community resistance or new evidence of other constitutional violations is irrelevant.76

One indication of whether a school district has dismantled a dual system of racially identifiable schools is the quality of education its students are receiving. This is not one of the factors enumerated in Green. Although the Freeman Court permitted examination of the educational quality in assessing unitary status,77 three years later in Missouri v. Jenkins,78 the Supreme Court held that courts “should sharply limit, if not dispense with” considerations of the quality of minority student education or measures of minority student achievement.79 The vast majority of lower courts have accepted this directive.80 In assessing unitary status,
most courts do not consider dimensions of educational opportunities outside the *Green* factors, such as academic performance differences, over-representation of minority students in special education and their under-representation in gifted and talented programs, racial gaps in student test scores and drop-out rates, or harsher discipline received by minority students. For instance, in *Belk v. Charlotte-Mecklenburg Board of Education*, in a school district where forty-two percent of the students were black, two-thirds of all the students disciplined were African American. The Fourth Circuit Court of Appeals nevertheless approved the district court’s conclusion that a pattern of continuing racial disparities in discipline was unrelated to de jure segregation.

*Freeman* and *Jenkins* curtailed the remedial authority of courts in another extremely important way. In *Dowell*, the Supreme Court had cautioned the district court on remand to ascertain whether current residential segregation was a result of economics and personal preferences but seemed to leave open the possibility that residential segregation

meant merely distribution of educational resources, and never required elimination of an achievement gap among the races.

81. See, e.g., *People Who Care*, 111 F.3d at 535–37 (reversing in part the lower court’s remedial decree that had required a reduction of the racial gap in test scores and that had abolished ability grouping which had racially segregated students); *Coalition to Save Our Children*, 90 F.3d at 776–78 (finding that although the 1978 district court order had required consideration of “ancillary remedial measures” such as providing a plan to avoid discriminatory discipline and reviewing the curriculum, current student performance disparities were the result of “socioeconomic factors”); *Keyes*, 902 F. Supp. at 1299–1300 (finding that despite “disturbing,” “longstanding and seemingly intractable” racial differences in participation in gifted and talented programs, as well as differences in drop out rates, student achievement, and discipline, “[t]he mere existence of such differences does not identify them as vestiges from the dual system existing twenty-five years ago [because] there are too many variables, including societal and socio-economic factors, to infer causation from prior unconstitutional conduct.”). *But see* United States v. Yonkers Bd. of Educ., 984 F. Supp. 687, 694 (S.D.N.Y. 1997) (referring to the school board’s own educational improvement plan, adopted in 1980, which had promised to “address areas such as racial attitudes, student discipline procedures, academic achievement and performance goals, teaching in a diverse racial/ethnic environment, and integration goals”).

82. 269 F.3d 305 (4th Cir. 2001).

83. *Id. at 320, 332.

84. *Id. at 332.
could be a “vestige of former school segregation.” The Freeman Court upheld the district court finding that the present racial imbalance in schools was caused not by the school district but by “independent factors,” such as the “private choices” that produce “massive demographic shifts.” In Jenkins, the Court flatly stated that “external factors [that] are not the result of segregation . . . do not figure in the remedial calculus.” The Jenkins Court specifically rejected the district court’s reliance on “white flight” as a justification for its interdistrict program of magnet schools and added its own speculation that court-ordered desegregation itself—rather than the lingering effects of de jure segregation—may have caused the white departure to the suburbs. The burden now became the plaintiff’s to tie existing residential segregation to de jure segregation. Unsurprisingly, since Jenkins, it is the rare case that considers residential segregation a vestige of prior de jure segregation.


86. Freeman, 503 U.S. at 494–95.

87. Jenkins, 515 U.S. at 102.

88. Id. at 94–96; see also William D. Henderson, Demography and Desegregation in the Cleveland Public Schools: Toward a Comprehensive Theory of Educational Failure and Success, 26 N.Y.U. REV. L. & SOC. CHANGE 457, 474 (2000-01) (refuting the Supreme Court’s conjecture that causation ran from the desegregation order to white flight: “In Jenkins, two decades of white outmigration to the suburbs already had left the Kansas City, Missouri school district 65% black when the desegregation litigation commenced in 1976. When the creation of the magnet schools was ordered in 1985, after an eight-year period of mandatory student reassignments, the black enrollment had only increased to 68.3%.”) (citations omitted); Gary Orfield, Metropolitan School Desegregation: Impacts on Metropolitan Society, 80 MINN. L. REV. 825, 827 (1996) (criticizing courts for blaming white flight on desegregation and “using this as a basis for ending desegregation orders. The courts have not considered, however, the possibility that their own limited remedies may have made lasting desegregation impossible.”).

89. Compare some of the earlier desegregation decisions to cases in the latter 1990s. Compare, e.g., Riddick v. School Bd., 784 F.2d 521, 539–40 (4th Cir. 1986) (approving the school board’s consideration of “white flight” in the development of a voluntary integration plan), and Johnson v. Bd. of Educ., 604 F.2d 504, 516–17 (7th Cir. 1979) (holding that voluntary state action taken to avert resegregation through white flight was constitutional), and Parent Ass’n of Andrew Jackson High Sch. v. Ambach, 598 F.2d 705, 720 (2d Cir. 1979) (“[W]e may in the limited circumstances of purely voluntary action, accept the probability of white flight as a factor which the Board was entitled to take into account in the integration equation.”), and Higgins v. Bd. of Educ. of the City of Grand Rapids, 508 F.2d 779, 794 (6th Cir. 1974) (“[T]here is a valid distinction between using the defense of white flight as a smokescreen to avoid integration and realistically considering and dealing with the practical problems involved in making voluntary efforts to achieve integration.”), with NAACP v. Duvall County Sch., 273 F.3d 960, 970–71 (11th Cir. 2001) (finding that although twenty-six identifiably black schools persisted in the county, this was the result of “white flight” and “present-day choices by parents”), and Manning v. School Bd., 244 F.3d 927, 937–38 (11th Cir. 2001) (finding that “shifting demographics was a substantial cause of the racial imbalances in Appellants’ student assignments and that Appellants did not deliberately cause the racial imbalances”), and Reed v. Rhodes, 179 F.3d 453, 467 (6th Cir. 1999) (declaring unitary status and finding that “[t]he demographics of recent years have reflected rapid population shifts within the city that were not caused by or attributable to the Cleveland School District. These demographic dynamics were inevitable as a result of suburbanization and socioeconomic conditions.” Finding also “[n]o evidence has been developed in these proceedings to support a conclusion that the effect of the Cleveland School District’s previous unconstitutional conduct may have con-
Although changing societal attitudes takes time—perhaps measured in generations—\(^\text{90}\) the Supreme Court, lower federal courts, and even commentators have expressed their impatience with the duration of desegregation orders.\(^\text{91}\) Indeed, the Supreme Court has issued specific language limiting the anticipated duration of federal court supervisory jurisdiction.\(^\text{92}\) In the past decade, the Supreme Court has introduced each of its desegregation opinions by commenting on the duration of the suit, “despite the longevity of the violation and the usual delays in ordering and implementing the remedy.”\(^\text{93}\) An important indicator of the viability of integration is whether it will last: whether state-sponsored racially divisive attitudes have indeed been altered. Yet courts have made findings of unitary status after school districts have been under desegregation orders for only a few years,\(^\text{94}\) and most courts in unitary status hearings reject arguments regarding the threat of resegregation.\(^\text{95}\)

\(^\text{90}\) Paul Gewirtz, *Choice in the Transition: School Desegregation and the Corrective Ideal*, 86 Colum. L. Rev. 728, 793 (1986) (“A period of sustained compliance, perhaps an entire generation, is needed for public perceptions about the racial character of the schools to be transformed.”) (citations omitted).

\(^\text{91}\) In *Board of Education v. Dowell*, 498 U.S. 237 (1991), the Supreme Court loosened the requirements for attaining “unitary status,” stating that school desegregation decrees “are not intended to operate in perpetuity.” *Id.* at 248; *see also* Oliver v. Kalamazoo Bd. of Educ., 640 F.2d 782, 820 (6th Cir. 1980) (Weick, J., concurring in part and dissenting in part) (“I agree with much of the well written majority opinion which details at great length the history of this small school desegregation case over a period of nine years which is all too long and I think it is about time to write finals to it.”); Spangler v. Pasadena City Bd. of Educ., 611 F.2d 1239, 1245 n.5 (9th Cir. 1979) (Kennedy, J., concurring) (“Necessary concern for the important values of local control of public school systems dictates that a federal court’s regulatory control of such systems not extend beyond the time required to remedy the effects of past intentional discrimination.”); Monika L. Moore, *Note, Unclear Standards Create an Unclear Future: Developing a Better Definition of Unitary Status*, 112 Yale L.J. 311, 313 (2002) (proposing a “twelve-year plan” that would only require “a school to remain under court supervision until all of the students who had standing in the desegregation suit have a chance to graduate”). These, of course, may be examples not of a loss of patience but of an abandonment of the original purpose.

\(^\text{92}\) *Dowell*, 498 U.S. at 248 (desegregation decrees may be dissolved after a school district has complied for a “reasonable period of time”).


\(^\text{94}\) *See, e.g.*, Stell v. Bd. of Pub. Educ., 860 F. Supp. 1563, 1584–85 (S.D. Ga. 1994) (terminating court supervision after the school district operated for six years under a voluntary plan); Moore, supra note 91, at 517 (reporting that “[o]ne Mississippi district court released a school district from its desegregation order after the district had complied with the order for seven years. Another district court in Oklahoma removed a school district from supervision after it had met the requirements of the desegregation plan for only five years.”).

\(^\text{95}\) *See, e.g.*, Stell, 860 F. Supp. at 1583 (rejecting fears of resegregation).
Although desegregation plaintiffs now have the burden to demonstrate the vestiges of segregation attributable to defendants, the law artificially constrains the evidence they can introduce. The Supreme Court has issued essentially a “checklist” of factors that define whether a school system has attained unitary status, along with repeated urgings for lower federal courts to dissolve desegregation orders as quickly as possible. Many lower courts have heeded this call. Numerous desegregation decisions, particularly in the last decade, seem to be a product of a judiciary that repeatedly expresses impatience with desegregation, looks selectively at empirical evidence about whether desegregation remedies have been effective, and considers resegregation noncontroversial and unrelated to de jure segregation. As Gary Orfield, Professor of Education and Co-Director of the Harvard Project on Civil Rights, laments, “Some of the same courts that provided all deliberation and no speed in desegregation have been engaged in an unseemly rush to resegregate.”

2. Single-Sex Schools

Single-sex school cases do not have the wealth of precedent that exists in the desegregation context. What they do have is the 2002 congressional enactment of the No Child Left Behind Act, which encourages “same-gender schools and classrooms” by providing federal funds for innovations in same-sex education. The No Child Left Behind Act reverses thirty years of federal policy opposing segregation based on sex. Civil rights groups are contemplating challenges to the Act, but none have been filed to date. While ultimately litigation may occur under Title IX, the Equal Educational Opportunities Act, or equal educational opportunities provisions in state constitutions, the most important suits must address the constitutionality of single-sex public school education.

96. See, e.g., Dowell, 498 U.S. at 248.
97. See, e.g., Oliver v. Kalamazoo Bd. of Educ., 640 F. 2d 782, 820 (6th Cir. 1980); Spangler v. Pasadena City Bd. of Educ., 611 F. 2d 1239, 1245 n.5 (9th Cir. 1979).
100. Orfield, supra note 76, at 54.
107. See, e.g., Garrett, 775 F. Supp. at 1010–11 (holding in an injunction hearing that Michigan’s Elliott-Larsen Act would likely prohibit the establishment of a public school that excluded one sex).
Of the few existing lower court opinions on single-sex education, most were developed before the contemporary intermediate scrutiny standard. In 1970, a Virginia federal district court struck the male-only program of the University of Virginia at Charlottesville. Even without any elevated scrutiny, the court held that the state could not discriminate on the basis of sex in providing educational opportunities at that university. That same year, a South Carolina federal district court held in Williams v. McNair that sex-exclusive admissions policies of “girls” colleges in that state could not be “wholly wanting in reason.” Reasoning that South Carolina provided the Citadel as an all-male military institute, the Williams court spoke approvingly of Winthrop, the “school for young ladies,” as offering “courses...specially helpful to female students,” such as “sewing, dressmaking, millinery, art, needlework, cooking, housekeeping and such other industrial arts as may be suitable to their sex.” The reasoning in Williams, applauding traditional social roles, makes it something of an antique for purposes of the present debate.

In 1976, the Third Circuit Court of Appeals in Vorchheimer v. School District of Philadelphia rejected the constitutional challenge of a female high school student who sought admission to the public all-male Central High School in Philadelphia for academically gifted students because the district had provided the “essentially equal” all-female Philadelphia High School for Girls. The court held that the “controverted, but respected theory that adolescents may study more effectively in single-sex schools” did bear a substantial relationship to the district’s goal of providing a quality education.

The federal district court in Vorchheimer sharply questioned the logic of the school district’s position that it was trying to protect girls from the adverse effects of coeducation: “If coeducation is detrimental to girls, all the public schools should be sex-segregated; if it is not, then there is no ‘fair and substantial’ relationship between sex-segregation and the educational goals of the School Board.” Although the Third Circuit’s decision provides some support for those favoring single-sex education, the precedential value of Vorchheimer is limited. The federal district court considered two pieces of evidence introduced by the Board: one slice relating to the work conducted by Professor M. Elizabeth Tidball on the correlation between attendance at a women’s college between 1910 and 1950 and later career success; the other concerning a single

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110. Id. at 187.
112. Id. at 137.
113. Id. at 136 n.3.
114. 532 F.2d 880 (3d Cir. 1976).
115. Id. at 881
116. Id. at 888.
study that compared the values of students in New Zealand who attended single-sex high schools with those who attended coeducational institutions, where the author of the study, as a defendant’s expert, admitted he was “reluctant to apply the conclusions of the New Zealand study to American single-sex schools for academically superior students.”

The district court found both these pieces of evidence of limited applicability to the case, yet the court of appeals referred to them approvingly.

Garrett v. Board of Education of Detroit blended single-sex and single-race education as a remedial idea. Female plaintiffs in Garrett challenged Detroit’s scheduled opening of all-male academies for elementary and middle school African American males. The boys-only schools—with a specialized Afrocentric curriculum, individual counselors and mentors, career education, and Saturday and extended weekday classes—had the objective of addressing “the high unemployment rates, school dropout levels and homicide among urban males.” The court determined that the defendants had presented no evidence that it was the presence of girls that accounted for the educational hurdles faced by urban males or “that excluding girls is substantially related to the achievement of the Board’s objectives.”

Since Detroit provided no comparable educational opportunities for girls, Garrett left open the viability of single-sex education where a school district offers comparable alternatives. The reasoning in Garrett, though, is similar to that employed under the contemporary equal protection standard—requiring an “exceedingly persuasive justification” for sex exclusivity. The Garrett court seemed to require quantitative evidence tracing improved academic performance to the exclusion of one sex:

Although co-educational programs have failed, there is no showing that it is the co-educational factor that results in failure. Even more dangerous is the prospect that should the male academies proceed and succeed, success would be equated with the absence of girls.

118. Id. at 329–31.
119. Id. at 333.
120. 532 F.2d at 882, 882 n.2.
122. Id. at 1005.
123. Id. at 1006.
124. Id. at 1007. “In fact, the Board’s characterization of its pedagogical choice as an experiment that was necessary because nothing else had been successful made that choice seem more like an expression of desperation than an exercise of professional judgment.” Denise C. Morgan, Anti-Subordination Analysis After United States v. Virginia: Evaluating the Constitutionality of K–12 Single-Sex Public Schools, 1999 U. CHI. LEGAL F. 381, 456.
125. The court specifically noted: “Urban girls drop out of school, suffer loss of self esteem and become involved in criminal activity. Ignoring the plight of urban females institutionalizes inequality and perpetuates the myth that females are doing well in the current system.” 775 F. Supp. at 1007.
126. See infra text accompanying notes 128, 212.
rather than any of the educational factors that more probably caused the outcome.127

The contemporary constitutional threshold is higher now than it was thirty years ago. In assessing whether single-sex education is supported by an “exceedingly persuasive justification,” the standard enunciated in United States v. Virginia,128 courts will need to consider both theoretical justifications and available empirical evidence. The Third Circuit in Vorchheimer was willing to assume the accuracy of a “controverted” theory and then extrapolated—based on extremely weak empirical evidence—that the theory had a substantial relationship to the objective of a quality education.129 Current Supreme Court precedent compels a more searching inquiry regarding the fit between the state’s objective and the means chosen to reach it.130 Current precedent also demands inquiry into the history and meaning of institutions that have been segregated on the basis of identity characteristics.131 The Vorchheimer court found that sex-segregated education had “a long history and world-wide acceptance.”132 Unfortunately, that history of widespread acceptance, both in this culture and in others, is a history of the exclusion of females from opportunities available to males.133

The Supreme Court has addressed single-sex educational programs twice—both concerning advanced education and both in the context of an absence of comparable programs for the excluded sex. In Mississippi University for Women v. Hogan,134 the Supreme Court held that a publicly funded women’s nursing college could not exclude men from its program.135 Because Mississippi provided no other single-sex educational opportunity for men, the Court specifically left open whether a state could establish separate but equal public educational institutions.136 While the Court touched on the historic exclusion of women from public spheres, it ultimately viewed that history as unrelated to the school’s justification of the single-sex nursing program as “educational affirmative action.”137 The Court in Hogan found no specific legislative intent that

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132. 532 F.2d at 882.
135. Id. at 733.
136. Id. at 720 n.1.
137. Id. at 725 n.10, 726 n.12, 727.
the single-sex admissions policy was to act as compensation for any present discrimination, and it cautioned that classifications cannot be based on “archaic and overbroad generalizations about women.”\textsuperscript{138}

\textit{United States v. Virginia (VMI)}\textsuperscript{139} was not specifically about single-sex elementary or secondary schools.\textsuperscript{140} In \textit{VMI}, a female high school student sought admission to the all-male Virginia Military Institute (VMI).\textsuperscript{141} The Supreme Court found VMI’s male-only admissions policy unconstitutional.\textsuperscript{142} It also rejected Virginia’s attempt to create a parallel female-only, but mostly ceremonial, corps of cadets at Virginia Women’s Institute for Leadership as a “pale shadow” of the educational choices, funding, facilities, alumni influence, and prestige available to men at VMI.\textsuperscript{143}

Virginia had argued that the admission of women to VMI would undermine the adversative training program used to produce “citizen soldiers.”\textsuperscript{144} This adversarial training program consisted of an honor code (“The Code of a Gentleman”), spartan barracks living, a hierarchical class system, a “rat line” in which entering cadets are subjected to strenuous physical exercise, continuous and minute regulation of behavior and boot camp conditions, a “dyke” system of upperclassmen advising freshmen, and military training that emphasized “[p]hysical rigor, mental stress, absolute equality of treatment, absence of privacy, minute regulation of behavior, and indoctrination in desirable values.”\textsuperscript{145} The Commonwealth contended that this training would have to be modified since it was not appropriate for “most women,” who would learn better through a “cooperative method which reinforces self-esteem.”\textsuperscript{146} The Supreme Court rejected this justification, holding that a state must “not rely on overbroad generalizations about the different talents, capacities, or preferences of males and females.”\textsuperscript{147} Stereotypes “about typically

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{138} \textit{Id.} at 730 n.16.
\item \textsuperscript{139} 518 U.S. 515 (1996).
\item \textsuperscript{140} Ruth Bader Ginsburg, \textit{The Supreme Court: A Place for Women}, 32 Sw. U. L. Rev. 189, 197 (2003) (stating that “the VMI case was not really about the military. Nor did the Court question the value of single-sex schools. Instead, VMI was about a State that invested heavily in a college designed to produce business and civic leaders, that for generations succeeded admirably in the endeavor, and that strictly limited this unparalleled opportunity to men.”).
\item \textsuperscript{141} United States v. Virginia, 518 U.S. at 523.
\item \textsuperscript{142} \textit{Id.} at 519, 557–58.
\item \textsuperscript{143} \textit{Id.} at 550–53.
\item \textsuperscript{144} \textit{Id.} at 540.
\item \textsuperscript{146} United States v. Virginia, 518 U.S. at 526–35, 548 (quoting United States v. Virginia, 852 F. Supp. at 476).
\item \textsuperscript{147} \textit{Id.} at 533. The Court emphasized that the “question is whether the Commonwealth can constitutionally deny to women who have the will and capacity, the training and attendant opportunities that VMI uniquely affords.” \textit{Id.} at 542. In concurrence, Justice Rehnquist underscored the point that “the State should avoid assuming demand based on stereotypes.” \textit{Id.} at 565 (Rehnquist, J., concurring).
\end{itemize}
male or typically female “tendencies” are insufficient to support the searching inquiry.148

The Commonwealth also claimed a legitimate state interest in providing single-sex education as a diverse educational opportunity.149 The Court rejected this as an ex post facto rationalization, noting that “Virginia has not shown that VMI was established, or has been maintained, with a view to diversifying, by its categorical exclusion of women, educational opportunities within the Commonwealth.”150 In a footnote, the VMI majority left open the possibility of a state “evenhandedly” supporting “diverse educational opportunities,” observing that “it is the mission of some single-sex schools ‘to dissipate, rather than perpetuate, traditional gender classifications.’”151

In neither Hogan nor VMI did the Court address whether government-sponsored separatism is inherently unequal. Indeed, neither case directly addressed the message sent by sex exclusivity itself. Both cases, however, offer important methodological suggestions for courts evaluating the constitutionality of single-sex public education, whether the proffered justification is a diversity rationale or a remedial rationale. In the later section on segregated education for remedial purposes, this article returns to the Supreme Court’s guidelines to assess the constitutionality of single-sex and single-race education.152

B. Courts and Commentators Mishandle the Sociological Data

When addressing segregation cases, courts show an obvious discomfort with empirical data.153 Their unease is not unique to issues of education or identity. Judges grapple with scientific and social science information and expert testimony in many kinds of cases.154 They have exhibited a lack of familiarity regarding the use of empirical data, applied diverse standards regarding the admission of such data, and relied on parties—who have widely varying abilities and resources—to find or produce that research.155 These limitations regarding the provision, admission, and interpretation of data (as well as the limits of the data themselves) are almost universally present.

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148. Id. at 541.
149. Id. at 535.
150. Id.
151. Id. at 534 n.7 (citations omitted).
152. See infra Part III.C.4.
153. See infra text accompanying notes 156–93.
In the desegregation and single-sex schools contexts, however, courts and commentators exhibit particular idiosyncrasies and exceptionally unscientific methods regarding the acceptance and admission of scientific research. Courts assessing whether school districts have attained unitary status have shown a specific reluctance to consider social science evidence regarding the causes or consequences of segregation. In the context of single-sex schools cases, most commentators seem willing to consider sociological evidence but often do so in extremely selective ways.

1. Desegregation

Part of the courts’ unwillingness to consider social science evidence in the desegregation context stems directly from the constraints of the Green template that limits the admissibility of evidence regarding factors other than staff and faculty, facilities, transportation, and extracurricular activities:

[I]t is important to notice what is not factored into the decision as to whether decrees should be dissolved. There is no consideration of whether black or white students are currently benefiting from the desegregation plan at issue. Studies about the benefits of integrated education are thus formally irrelevant to the determination of unitary status. In addition, there is little consideration of the impact that lifting the decree will have on students. It is irrelevant that schools might become resegregated once decrees are lifted and districts reinstitute neighborhood school policies, and it is irrelevant that minority students might suffer if remedial programs are discontinued. Right from the start, then, the bulk of social science studies concerning the costs and benefits of racially integrated schools are relegated to the sidelines of the unitary status inquiry.156

In the last decade, federal and state courts have moved increasingly toward the incorporation of information from numerous disciplines outside law—economics, history, medicine, literature, sociology, political theory, and so on—in a variety of cases.157 This tendency toward interdisciplinary exploration is much less pronounced in more recent cases regarding the fate of desegregation orders. Courts in the liability phase of

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156. Ryan, supra note 49, at 1670 (footnote omitted).
desegregation cases seemed more open to considering social science evidence before the 1990s than courts have in the past decade.\footnote{158}

Consider as an example the Kansas City, Missouri desegregation case, *Missouri v. Jenkins*.\footnote{159} The trial court had specifically found that de jure segregation “caused a system wide reduction in student achievement” in the Kansas City, Missouri schools and developed a remedial plan.\footnote{160} The Eighth Circuit upheld the district court’s later decision denying the school district’s motion for a finding of unitary status.\footnote{161} Dissenting to the denial of a request for rehearing en banc and objecting to the district court’s establishment of a student achievement goal, gauged by results from standardized tests, Judge Arlen Beam wrote, “In my view, this case as it now proceeds, involves an exercise in pedagogical sociology, not constitutional adjudication.”\footnote{162}

This cynicism about tracing the gap in student achievement to the prior dual system was echoed by the Supreme Court in *Jenkins*, when it ordered the district court to “sharply limit, if not dispense with, its reliance on” student achievement as measured by test scores.\footnote{163} The Court’s anti-empiricism was most starkly on display in *Jenkins* when it ignored the district court findings regarding white flight being attributable to the prior constitutional violation and substituted instead its own “supposition” that white flight resulted not from segregation, but from demographic shifts and the desegregation order itself.\footnote{164} (On remand, the district court conducted hearings, carefully evaluated expert multiple regression analyses, and made extensive findings of fact, ultimately holding that this evidence indicated that a specific portion of the achievement gap was causally related to prior de jure segregation.\footnote{165})


\footnote{160.} Jenkins v. Missouri, 11 F.3d 755, 762–63 (8th Cir. 1994).

\footnote{161.} Jenkins v. Missouri, 19 F.3d 393, 404 (8th Cir. 1994) (Beam, J., dissenting).

\footnote{162.} 515 U.S. at 101.

\footnote{163.} Id. at 95, 102.

\footnote{164.} The Court finds that Dr. Trent’s test is reliable and accurately identifies the incremental portion attributable to the prior de jure discrimination. Race, by itself, reduces a black student’s test score by 4% to 9%. Low expectations increase the achievement gap by 2% to 4%. Combining these in-
That skepticism surfaced again in *Little Rock School District v. Pulaski County Special School District No. 1*, where the district court held (in a section of its opinion entitled “The Metaphysics of Using the ‘Achievement Gap’ as a Factor in Deciding Unitary Status”) that plaintiffs had not come forward with evidence to attribute the achievement gap to unconstitutional conduct of the school board. The court mused:

How does a trial court go about determining with any degree of precision, the percentage of the achievement gap (assuming there is any) that is causally related to de jure segregation (which ended many decades earlier)—after somehow excluding the host of other socioeconomic factors that are universally recognized as also contributing to the achievement gap? The court proceeded to revisit with suspicion the specific findings of the district court on remand in *Jenkins*, using phrases such as “largely speculative conclusion,” “the appearance that the trial court pulled a number from thin air,” and an expert “guessing in his testimony that attempted to calculate—nay, divine—the percentage of the KCMSD achievement gap.”

Some of the judicial evasion of social science data may be an unwillingness on the part of courts to impute any characteristics as a matter of group belonging. Judges also may be somewhat cynical about information coming from the soft sciences. This cynicism was evidenced in

cremental portions, using the high end of the range for both factors—race and teacher efficacy—the total “race effect” amounts to 13% of the achievement gap.

Further, the increase in the gap needs consideration. While minority school children arrive at school without the necessary skills for high achievement, the gap between blacks and whites increases while they are students within the KCMSD. As the Court discussed earlier, this gap grows from as little as three and a half to as large as ten NCEs [normalized curve equivalents]. The Court cannot say for certain that the same factors that play a role in the original gap do not influence the increase in the gap as well. It seems reasonable to this Court that the “race effect” plays just as substantial a role in the increase that it did in creating the original gap.

Therefore, to sum up, the original gap between black and white test scores is approximately ten NCEs. The increase in the achievement gap at the high end is approximately ten NCEs. The Court has found that 13% of the initial gap and 13% of the increase in the gap may be traced to the prior discrimination within the KCMSD. *Jenkins v. Missouri*, 959 F. Supp. 1151, 1164–65 (W.D. Mo. 1997).

167.  Id. at 1040.
168.  Id. at 1037.
169.  Id. at 1037–38 (quotations omitted).
171.  See, e.g., Phoebe C. Ellsworth & Julius G. Getman, Social Science in Legal Decision-Making, in LAW AND THE SOCIAL SCIENCES 592 (Leon Lipson & Stanton Wheeler eds., 1986). They may think that sociologists come in with a political agenda in ways that a physicist who is calculating the coefficient of friction would not. Another concern is that knowledge is constantly changing in the social sciences. Criticizing the Supreme Court’s reliance on social science evidence in *Brown v. Board of Education*, legal philosopher Edmund Cahn observed, “since the behavioral sciences are so very young, imprecise, and changeful, their findings have an uncertain expectancy of life. Today’s sanguine asseveration may be cancelled by tomorrow’s new revelation—or new technical fad.” Edmond Cahn, *Jurisprudence*, 30 N.Y.U. L. REV. 150, 167 (1955). However, the Supreme Court has recently applied the factors from *Daubert v. Merrell Dow Pharmaceuticals, Inc.*, 509 U.S. 579 (1993), to the assessment
Davis v. School District of Pontiac,172 where the court ended its supervisory jurisdiction and released a school district from a desegregation order.173 In Davis, the court dismissively waved off the information value of social science evidence:

Even now, with the perspective of almost three decades, historians, sociologists and legal scholars vigorously disagree over the socioeconomic, demographic and educational impact busing has had on our communities. As in so many areas of debate, current perspectives on the impact of busing appear divided along the lines of the old adage, “Where you come in is where you go out.”174

Like Justice Thomas in Jenkins, the Davis court also sweepingly assumed that “larger social forces” of population demographics could be the “real source of racial imbalance.”175 Few other courts go as far as Davis in the studied avoidance of existing knowledge, but a number of other decisions disparage the value of social science evidence, particularly when deciding whether to lift desegregation orders.176

2. Single-Sex Schools

Like the later desegregation cases, single-sex schools cases and commentary are marked by inattention to social science data, dismissal or devaluation of expert testimony, reluctance to expand inquiry into social context, selective inclusion of research, and the slanted presentation of evidence. Few single-sex schools cases have been decided by courts.177 Fewer still have relied on expert testimony or social science evidence.178


173. Id. at 698.

174. Id. at 693 (quoting Missouri v. Jenkins, 515 U.S. 70, 117 (Thomas, J., concurring)).

175. See, e.g., Wessmann v. Gittens, 160 F.3d 790, 804–08 (1st Cir. 1998) (reviewing critically several experts’ testimony, dismissing all of their conclusions as methodologically unfounded, and ultimately holding that a race-conscious admissions policy was not justified by the history of de jure segregation, all after expressing its own ineptitude with the statistical information in the case: “We do not propose that the achievement gap bears no relation to some form of prior discrimination. We posit only that it is fallacious to maintain that an endless gaze at any set of raw numbers permits a court to arrive at a valid etiology of complex social phenomena.”). A sharp difference exists between critiquing methodology or results and dismissing expert testimony outright while substituting subjective conclusions unsupported by research.

176. The trial court in Vorchheimer v. School District of Philadelphia, 400 F. Supp. 326 (E.D. Pa. 1975), did refer to the research of Dr. Elizabeth Tidball regarding successes of women’s college graduates but questioned its applicability to an all-male high school: “The analysis performed by Dr. Tidball does not show that males who attend a single-sex school are more likely to be career achievers than those who attend coed schools. It is extremely doubtful that Dr. Tidball’s conclusions concerning the correlation between all women’s colleges and career successful women can be applied to women at an academic high school such as Central.” Id. at 333. The Third Circuit determined that the separate boys and girls schools did not constitute an equal protection violation. Vorchheimer, 532 F.2d at 888. That decision did not rely directly on any social science research but did defer to the school board’s interpretation of the “controverted, but respected theory that adolescents may study more effectively...
Many of the reports in the popular education literature are partisan opinion pieces or anecdotal reviews of experiences in a single “experimental” classroom. Thus, the principal evaluation of social science research regarding single-sex education has come through media commentary.

Consider reports of the successes at the Young Women’s Leadership School in New York (TYWLS). TYWLS, a small public high school whose budget is supplemented by private grant money, opened in East Harlem in the fall of 1996 with a seventh grade class of fifty girls. The school has nearly 400 students in grades seven through twelve, ninety-nine percent of the students are racial minorities. Even amid fairly good evidence of some performance differences relative to other schools in New York City, the key question—whether the results are attributable to the sex-exclusive nature of the schooling—is unanswered. Worse, it is unexplored.

The school reported high standardized test scores compared to citywide averages and proclaimed that 100% of the thirty-two seniors in its first graduating class were accepted at four-year colleges. The numbers are just tabulations, with no controls for other influential variables. In fact, the numbers themselves are rarely analyzed. The entering
class that graduated in 2001 actually had fifty students in it.\textsuperscript{186} Thus, it seems that eighteen of the original group were lost, which is a thirty-six percent attrition rate—roughly comparable to the attrition or transfer rate of other city schools.\textsuperscript{187} This is the sort of information that is hard to ferret out; it is certainly not featured in news stories lauding the successes of the single-sex program at TYWLS.

The reported success rate may also be influenced in other, even less visible ways. The Leadership School has an extremely selective admissions process: “For the 2002–03 year there were more than 550 applications for the 60 openings in the seventh grade and a waiting list of 1,200 for 3 ninth-grade slots.”\textsuperscript{188} Student performance is demanded, and parental involvement commanded: “At TYWLS, Principal Celenia Chevere makes each family come to school for goal-setting conferences. . . . Students must be the best they can be at TYWLS, any girl who cannot or will not do the work will be asked to leave the school so a more deserving student can take her place.”\textsuperscript{189}

If the lessons of prior single-sex research are any indication, once other variables are controlled, the effects attributable to sex exclusivity will likely disappear. At TYWLS, it is not at all clear that the successes were due to the fact of sex segregation and not the infusion of economic resources (the Harlem school even provides tea and muffins in the morning for its students),\textsuperscript{190} the curriculum, class size,\textsuperscript{191} academic counselors who meet with each student every single day,\textsuperscript{192} the self-selectivity of the students and parents (the very fact of attendance means a parent who, by and large, is more interested in the child’s learning), or the Hawthorne effect,\textsuperscript{193} resulting from the high expectations. Was it really the presence of boys in the classroom that had been impairing the academic performance of these girls at TYWLS? This level of student and parent engagement questions not only whether the results at TWYLS can be extrapolated, but importantly, whether the results are attributable to pre-selection of girls who will succeed, weeding out of those who will not, an

\textsuperscript{186} Salomone, supra note 183, at 13.

\textsuperscript{187} Karen Stabiner, The Pros and Cons of Single-Sex Schools, MILWAUKEE J. & SENTINEL, May 20, 2002, at 11A (noting that “almost a third” of New York high school students fail to graduate).

\textsuperscript{188} Salomone, supra note 183, at 21.

\textsuperscript{189} Ellie McGrath, Separate but Better? An Exploration of Single-Sex Education that Misses the Mark, CHI. TRIB., Nov. 24, 2002, at 1.


\textsuperscript{191} Blumner, supra note 26 (“While the Harlem academy claims significantly better test scores for its female students relative to the rest of the school district, the achievement is easily understood without considering the chromosome makeup of its student body. The school has tiny class sizes (originally the goal was no more than 10 students per class), top-notch faculty and girls with interested, involved parents.”).

\textsuperscript{192} Salomone, supra note 183, at 21.

\textsuperscript{193} “Decades of research have shown that people may change their behavior if they know they are participating in a research study.” Daniel H. Klepinger et al., Effects of Unemployment Insurance Work-Search Requirements: The Maryland Experiment, 56 INDUS. & LAB. REL. REV. 3, 12 (2002).
infusion of resources, the commitment of supportive families, and the learning environment of small classes.

The popular media touting of celebrated single-sex experiments is at odds with the cumulative evidence emerging from studies in the sociology of education. While some early studies indicated advantages for women in single-sex colleges, those studies from the 1960s flatly “did not control for socio-economic status.” The popularly accepted notion that single-sex education is “better for girls” is not supported by more recent studies and those with careful methodological controls. Female students in all-girl classes or schools certainly have more participation opportunities in activities, since there is only one sex in the class or school. Anecdotal and self-reporting studies indicate somewhat higher measures of self-esteem and student satisfaction with the warmth or friendliness of an all-girl environment.

While single-sex classes may promote some self-assurance in girls, this does not necessarily translate into analytic or academic advantages. The American Association of University Women captured the findings of numerous studies: “Whereas girls perceive the classrooms in many cases to be superior, and may register gains in confidence, these benefits have not translated into measured improvements in achievement.” When studies control for student background differences (such as prior academic achievements, test scores, race, socioeconomic status, and educational aspirations), school selectivity, reputation, class sizes, curriculum, and resources, the studies show no consistent advantages in educational quality in single-sex schools or classes. Indeed, once conflating

195. Beth Willinger, Single Gender Education and the Constitution, 40 LOY. L. REV. 253, 268 (1994) (describing M. Elizabeth Tidball’s studies of women “achievers,” defined solely by inclusion in Who’s Who of American Women, and based on women’s experiences at the Seven Sisters colleges, noting that these women “came from privileged backgrounds, had tremendous resources, and... were going to succeed no matter where they went”).
196. Id. at 269.
197. ALEXANDER W. ASTIN, WHAT MATTERS IN COLLEGE?: FOUR CRITICAL YEARS REVISITED 324 (1993). Other studies have found no overall satisfaction differences. See Daryl G. Smith, Women’s Colleges and Coed Colleges: Is There a Difference for Women?, 61 J. HIGHER EDUC. 181, 191–92 (1990); see also Mikyong Kim & Rodolfo Alvarez, Women-Only Colleges: Some Unanticipated Consequences, 66 J. HIGHER EDUC. 641, 645 (1995) (using national CIRP student data surveys from students at thirty-four women’s colleges and female students at 274 coeducational schools and finding that students at women’s colleges had a more positive social self-confidence but less confidence in their job preparation skills and abilities).
199. See Richard Harker, Achievement, Gender and the Single-Sex / Coed Debate, 21 BRIT. J. SOC. EDUC. 203, 216 (June 2000) (reporting that a comparative longitudinal study of 5300 students at thirty-seven single-sex and coeducational secondary schools in New Zealand, which controlled for differences in prior student achievement and background, showed no differences between the two types of school in all of the subjects evaluated); Valerie E. Lee, Is Single-Sex Secondary Schooling a Solution to the Problem of Gender Inequity, in SEPARATED BY SEX, supra note 198, at 41, 43 (offering a meta-analysis of research on private schools and finding that it demonstrates “no consistent pattern of effects
variables are controlled, performance differences between coeducational schools and single-sex schools entirely disappear.200

While some researchers have found that single-sex education may have some advantages for minority-race boys,201 the general consensus is that males do not flourish in single-sex environments.202 Providing separate classes for boys is either a neutral or negative along dimensions of socialization and academic quality.203 For both sexes, but particularly for boys, placement in sex-segregated classes is associated with the development of attitudes that favor traditional, even stereotypic, views of gender roles.204 Recent research shows discrepancies between the perceptions of teachers and students about the academic benefits of single-sex schools and actual performance results—the myth that single-sex education is beneficial for girls persists, despite the absence of supporting empirical data.205

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201. Providence College sociology professor Cornelius Riordan suggests that minority race sex segregation for economically disadvantaged students—segregation essentially by race and sex and class—may be academically beneficial. See CORNELIUS RIORDAN, GIRLS AND BOYS IN SCHOOL: TOGETHER OR SEPARATE? 61 (1990); Cornelius Riordan, The Future of Single-Sex Schools, in SEPARATED BY SEX, supra note 198, at 53, 54; Cornelius Riordan, Single-Gender Schools: Outcomes for African and Hispanic Americans, 10 RES. SOC. EDUC. & SOCIALIZATION 177, 192–202 (1994). Riordan’s 1990 studies of minority race males and females, however, were conducted in Catholic and private schools, which are environments with aspects, from religious constraints to rigid discipline to economic advantages, that make them unrepresentative of public education.

202. See Cornelius Riordan, The Case of Single-sex Schools, in SINGLE-SEX SCHOOLING: PROONENTS SPEAK 43, 44 (Debra K. Hollinger & Rebecca Adamson eds., 1993) (admitting that for males in “single-sex secondary or post-secondary schools” the attitudinal “results for males . . . are generally null or negative”).


205. For instance, one ten-year longitudinal study of Australian secondary schools showed that “[w]hile no advantage was found for either single-sex or co-educational school in terms of actual
The concern that segregation based on sex can reinforce gender stereotypes is supported by a study of the experimental California academies. In 1997, as a pilot project, California provided five million dollars to institute ten public single-sex academies, equal down to the number of pencils. A study conducted by researchers from the University of Toronto and the University of California at San Diego, and sponsored by both the Ford and Spencer Foundations, evaluated the academies between 1998 and 2000, interviewing over 300 students, parents, teachers, and administrators, and observing classes. One of the researchers’ findings was that administrators viewed the state grant as a means of assisting at-risk students (which, the researchers acknowledged, may conflate other findings). An important finding was that although the California administrators insisted on equal resources, assumptions about the different educational needs of boys and girls caused the educators to explicitly reinforce traditional gender stereotypes. As one example, during a unit on frontier exploration, the boys’ schools learned survival skills, and the girls’ schools learned how to quilt and sew. The researchers concluded that overall “[b]oys tended to be taught in a more regimented, traditional, and individualistic fashion, and girls in more nurturing, cooperative, and open environments.”

When courts do begin to assess the recent empirical evidence about single-sex schools, they will need to evaluate whether segregation is supported by an “exceedingly persuasive justification.” It can only be hoped that they will look at the wealth of evidence, not just selected anecdotal reports or “studies” without adequate methodological controls. Empirical inquiry needs to be systematic and searching. To comport with principles of scientific method, this inquiry should look for cumulative, comprehensive, and converging evidence, and employ consistency in

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achievement, the teachers believed that single-sex schools were better for girls’ academic performance.” Carolyn Jackson & Ian David Smith, Poles Apart? An Exploration of Single-Sex and Mixed-Sex Educational Environments in Australia and England, 26 EDUC. STUDIES 409, 414 (2000).


208. Id. at 5.

209. Amanda Datnow, Single-Sex Schooling: Critique of Report Relies on ‘Disturbing Overgeneralization,’ EDUC. WK., Oct. 17, 2001, at 36, available at 2001 WL 12047039 (“Our study suggests that the way in which educators viewed significant differences between males and females informed their notions about classroom practice with respect to curriculum, pedagogy, and discipline; the structure and practices of the single-gender academies often contributed to the belief that boys and girls are different, to the point of ignoring the commonalities.”).


211. Datnow et al., supra note 207, at 7; see also Jesse J. Logan, Separate and Unequal? Multiple Problems in Single-Sex Schools, PSYCHOL. TODAY, Nov. 1, 2001, at 28 (quoting Datnow as saying, “The tendency was to teach according to presumptions that girls are cooperative or boys are competitive.”).

exploratory methods. Hopefully, courts will carefully evaluate whether the claimed benefits from single-sex classes are attributable to sex segregation or instead to other variables, such as the experimental nature of the program, religious school influences, better student-teacher ratios, smaller class size, more experienced teachers, novelty, or additional resources.

C. Media Reporting About Segregation and Integration

With respect to both race and sex segregation, news reports provide little systematic information about studies regarding government-sponsored separatism or research regarding the benefits of integration. Newspaper articles reduce complex and nuanced studies of single-sex education to simplistic and favorable blurbs. They report the latest trial run or episodic result at a single school and make glossy pronouncements about the general state of research. These experiments in single schools or classes are reported simply as successes with no consideration given to other variables that might have affected the trial. Most people have little training in statistics; if they had that training, they might discount reports on an individual study or experience because it is unrepresentative. Work in the field of heuristics, however, demonstrates that “people are overly influenced by single-case information.”

Articles in the popular media often focus on human interest stories. This focus feeds the ways people like to receive information. In the


214. See, e.g., Brian Dickerson, Single-Sex Classes Are Worth a Look, DET. FREE PRESS, Feb. 10, 2003, available at 2003 WL 2542316 (“No one I’m aware of has produced any evidence that single-sex instruction hurts students of either gender.”); Walter Sidney, Solving Coed Conundrum, DENV. POST, June 13, 2003, at B7 (“[T]hree decades of research on the effects of single-sex secondary schools on student achievement and attitudes consistently show that single-sex schools offer innumerable benefits to both girls and boys.”). While the media tilt is extraordinarily more favorable than the cumulative research results in the academic literature, in fairness it is important to note that individual reporters make sweeping pronouncements in both directions. See, e.g., Jennifer Mrozowski, School Tries Single-Gender Classes to Boost Learning, CINCINNATI ENQUIRER, Nov. 12, 2002, available at 2002 WL 101822522 (offering various opinions by students, teachers, and education experts, some of whom support and others who oppose single-sex classrooms).

215. See, e.g., Denise Barnes, Single-sex Classes Showing Results; Pupils’ Achievement Rises at Anacostia Elementary School, WASH. TIMES, Nov. 29, 2002, at B1 (“Mr. Smitherman said research also showed girls performed better in single-sex classrooms, but his concerns centered on the boys.”); Dickerson, supra note 214 (“It’s too early to tell how the same-sex students’ grades stack up against those of their co-ed classroom peers. But Williams says his teachers report that both boys and girls in the single-sex classes are flourishing.”).

216. See Uhlenhuth, supra note 13 (“[T]he principal [of Moten Elementary School in Washington, D.C] decided in September 2001 to experiment with sex-segregated classrooms and a couple of other innovations. The next spring the principal got a call from the district office: The school’s test scores had catapulted from the bottom to the top of the heap.”).


218. Id.; see also Daniel Kahneman & Amos Tversky, On the Reality of Cognitive Illusions, 103 PSYCHOL. REV. 582 (1996).
“everybody loves a winner” tradition, newspaper and popular press articles report the success stories: satisfying experiences of girls in single-sex classes and women in single-sex colleges. Additionally, much newspaper reporting is event-based. Programs that do not work—single-sex schools that close, for example—tend to be nonevents: their demise is not proclaimed; instead, they die quiet deaths. Compare the much-heralded opening of the California all-boy and all-girl academies with the absence of reports on the closing of all but two of the schools. Newspaper articles written well after the results of the Ford Foundation-sponsored study of the California academies continue to ignore the study’s results and offer instead vague political or economic excuses for the closing of the schools. Some newspaper articles do not even mention that any of the California pilot schools closed.

It is much harder to say nothing or to publish reports about the null hypothesis. In *Dinosaur in a Haystack*, evolutionary biologist Stephen Jay Gould wrote of “Cordelia’s Dilemma”—in *King Lear*, Cordelia’s quandary whether to keep silent in the face of her sisters’ false protestations of love for their father, and Lear’s demand that Cordelia too pro-
claim her love for him. The King’s failure to recognize that “silence—overt nothing—can embody the deepest and most important meaning” ultimately leads to his “blinding, madness, and death.”

Negative results are, of course, vital to the process of scientific discovery. Scientists actively try to prove the null hypothesis to dispute a scientific theorem. The difficulty with proving nothingness, as Gould points out, is that it is flatly uninteresting. Cordelia’s dilemma encompasses “the all too wonderfully human love of a good tale—and our simple and utterly reasonable tendency to shun the inconclusive and the boring.” Proof of a negative does not command publication opportunities. Research results showing no differences between single-sex and coeducation, for example, reside in file cabinets across the country. The media, although happy to report on numerous variations of men being from Mars and women from Venus, fail to report that, in actuality, men and women are both from Earth.

Of course, this is the point where the empirical evidence is most strongly supportive. Newspaper articles focus on participation in extracurricular activities or single-measure performance results without examining the larger body of evidence regarding educational consequences of single-sex education along multiple dimensions. Sadly, many reports regarding segregation in schools are prone to hyperbole and are presented without reference to the larger body of social science data showing an absence of academic improvement attributable to sex segregation itself.

Reports on desegregation are equally lacking in context. News accounts of improvements made under desegregation orders are often tied to reports of requests for the lifting of those orders, rarely linked to the racial isolation, achievement gaps, and inequalities in educational opportunities that remain. Although the Harvard Civil Rights Project


224. GOULD, supra note 223, at 123.

225. Id. at 124.

226. Id.

227. Lee, supra note 199, at 42 (quoting ROBERT ROSENTHAL & RALPH L. ROSNOW, ESSENTIALS OF BEHAVIORAL RESEARCH: METHODS AND DATA ANALYSIS 379 (1984)) (“[T]he journals are filled with the 5 percent of studies that show Type I errors [in which differences are statistically significant at probabilities below .05], while the file drawers back at the lab are filled with the 95 percent of the studies that show nonsignificant (p > .05) results.”).

228. See, e.g., Walter Sidney, Solving Coed Conundrum, DENVER POST, June 13, 2003, at B7 (“[S]tudies have shown that single-sex education allows students to explore a variety of activities without worrying about looking foolish or showing off for members of the opposite sex. Boys join school choirs more readily, for example, and girls form science clubs.”).

229. See supra text at notes 179, 214–16, 219–22; see also Levit, supra note 200, at 503–05, 521–22.

study—which concluded that most of the gains made during the 1960s and 1970s under desegregation orders had been turned back in the past decade—did receive some press, the coverage is not balanced.

An enormous amount of coverage is given to school districts’ requests to be “free” from court orders requiring desegregation, parents’ desires for neighborhood schools, and the failures of busing. Very little interest exists in the contemporary or complete racial picture. While some reports lament resegregation after the lifting of desegregation orders, many others proclaim the failures of desegregation and counterpose integration and academic quality. Newspaper articles largely ignore successful integration, choosing to focus instead on perceived failures such as integration programs that have been discarded in favor of neighborhood schools. They tout the benefits of school choice using vague, unsubstantiated theories and state the belief that neighborhood schools will improve education and parental involvement without any supporting research. Articles on single-sex schools and classes usually

102478629; Angela Simoneaux, Lafayette Schools Closer to Unitary Status in Teacher, Staff Assignments, BATON ROUGE ADVOC., Oct. 2, 2002, at 4B.
232. See, e.g., Tresa Baldas, Saying Goodbye to Desegregation Plans, NAT’L L.J., June 16, 2003, at 4 (“A Texas judge has ended a 33-year-old school desegregation case in Dallas, adding to the list of large American cities that have recently gained freedom from court-supervised desegregation efforts.”); Melanie Markley, District Seeks Freedom from Court's Mandate, HOUS. CHRON., Sept. 21, 2002, at 1.
233. See, e.g., Joseph H. Brown, Racial Indexes Do Little To Aid Education, TAMPA TRIB., Sept. 1, 2002, at 6 (“After three decades of forced busing, parents and students of all races were sick of it, preferring neighborhood schools regardless of racial percentages.”); Tim Simmons, Where Do We Go From Here?, NEWS & OBSERVER (Raleigh, NC), Feb. 25, 2001, at A23 (“Other educators, citing strong support in the black community for neighborhood schools and charter schools, say some African-American families apparently have given up hope that the traditional model of integration will ever work completely.”); see also Jennifer Booth Reed, School Choice: Part 2 of 3, NEWS-PRESS (Fort Meyers, FL), June 10, 2002, at 6A.
235. Kim Cobb & James Kimberly, After Desegregation; Civil Rights Group Split as Priorities Are Changed, HOUS. CHRON., June 3, 2002, at 9 (“A 1998 survey by the Public Agenda Foundation showed that 80 percent of black parents and 88 percent of white parents believe raising academic standards and achievement is more important for schools than integration.”).
236. See, e.g., Maureen Downey, Black Schools White Schools With Court-Ordered Busing Fading and Races Choosing to Live Separately, ATLANTA J.-CONST., June 22, 2003, at E1 (“A pairing plan had been suggested in response to the declining enrollments in Decatur’s mainly African-American schools. In the race-conscious debate that ensued, white parents succeeded in preserving ‘neighborhood’ schools, even though the partner school was a mere 1.08 miles down the road.”); Simmons, supra note 233 (noting that some black parents are choosing “a caring but substandard school over an academically successful program” and that they “have given up hope that the traditional model of integration will ever work completely,” thus “feeding a desire to re-create the all-black schools of yesteryear”).
237. See, e.g., Reed, supra note 233, at 6A (“There are several arguments about the academic benefits of School Choice. Among them, a theory that children will perform better and parents will be more involved in schools they have picked . . . . [N]eighborhood schools could help teachers and administrators respond to the needs of particular communities. An example: Schools could reach out to populations where parent involvement and early, at-home learning is minimal. In many cases, the par-
ignore the issue of official government sponsorship of segregation and instead focus on the ability of a school or a parent to choose a single-sex alternative.\textsuperscript{238} The parallel is unmistakable: for both race and sex, the popular press trumpets separatism, and the meaning of “choice” is not evaluated.

III. THE JURISPRUDENCE OF “CHOICE” AND “DIVERSITY”

A. School Choice as Diversity

One point at which the constitutional justification for considerations of race and sex directly intersect is the diversity rationale. Proponents of single-sex education draw on the diversity concept from admissions cases to argue that single-sex education provides experiential diversity. Virginia, for example, argued that its all-male military institute contributed to a diversity of educational opportunities.\textsuperscript{239} While the VMI Court found that this explanation was an ex post facto rationalization on the part of Virginia,\textsuperscript{240} other supporters of single-sex education have embarked on single-sex school projects claiming that the distinctive pedagogical methods used will make legitimate contributions to educational diversity.\textsuperscript{241} Some supporters make the argument that diversity exists in the specialized educational needs of individual students, although without any supporting empirical data that single-sex education matches those needs.\textsuperscript{242}

\textsuperscript{238} See, e.g., Jane Eisner, Single-sex Schools Are Valid Choice for Today, PHILA. INQUIRER, May 19, 2002, at C1 (“Choice is the fundamental byword in education today, and there’s no reason such schools as Girls High can’t be among the choices—because of its tradition and in spite of it. For that reason, the Bush administration’s shift on single-sex education in public schools is welcome.”); Murray Light, Same-Sex Schools Aren’t a Good Idea, BUFF. NEWS, May 26, 2002, at H5 (“The Education Department said the change gives school districts greater flexibility and gives parents more choices.”); Karen Stabiner, Boys Here, Girls There: Sure, If Equality’s the Goal, WASH. POST, May 12, 2002, at B1 (“Single-sex public schools and classes, as odd as it may sound, are about inclusion; any school district that wants one can have one and everyone can learn from the experience.”).


\textsuperscript{240} 518 U.S. at 533.

\textsuperscript{241} They attribute the success of single-sex schools to the fact that segregation allows teachers to respond more effectively to sex-specific developmental and educational needs. Indeed, the recent resurgence of interest in single-sex education is, in part, the result of an effort to address concerns about the efficacy of responding to the educational needs of male and female students with the same pedagogical approaches.

\textsuperscript{242} See, e.g., Tomiko Brown-Nagin, Toward a Pragmatic Understanding of Status-Consciousness: The Case of Deregulated Education, 50 DUKE L.J. 753, 830 (2000) (making the argument that diversity should include “diversity within status groups, including those boys and girls within various racial groups who prefer or might benefit from single-sex education”); Kimberly M. Schuld, Rethinking Educational Equity: Sometimes, Different Can Be an Acceptable Substitute for Equal, 1999 U. CHI. LEGAL F. 461, 482 (suggesting that “a country as diverse as the United States should be able to allow some
The primary argument advanced is that diversity is promoted by the availability of various alternatives in a school system—that “[a] state which offers a single-sex option, in addition to its variety of coeducational institutions, has dramatically expanded the diversity of its entire system, and consequently has provided new opportunities for students to select the type of education most closely-tailored to his or her [sic] own developmental and learning needs.”

The choice argument itself is rarely critically evaluated by those championing citizens’ rights to choose neighborhood or single-sex schools. “Choice” is advanced as an unfettered good, with little or no thought given to the impact of choice on equality, however, in the context of neighborhood schools, choices are based on votes of dollars in the housing market. Thus, those who might want integrated schools or better schools often do not have the power to make other “choices.” If the government steps into the business of promoting choice at the expense of equality, many students—those unwillingly attending segregated schools and unable to move to a different district—will have no “choice” for options of a better school or a school that offers diversity.

Moreover, the choice argument is rarely contextualized. The options are presented in stark, dichotomous fashion: either busing or neighborhood schools, either coeducation rife with inequalities or single-sex schools. Little attention is given to moderate alternatives: perhaps a more integrated school, one with greater resources, nearby but not in the neighborhood; or perhaps the possibility of coeducation without the microinequities. In short, supporters of segregation sidestep issues of context, power, and equality.

If diversity is viewed as providing a wider choice among schooling alternatives, it is a concept without constitutional support. Decisions upholding school vouchers, for instance, have done so despite their friendliness to parochial education, not because of it. In Zelman v. Simmons-Harris, school vouchers were constitutionally permissible because they were intended primarily to provide poor children with a quality education, rather than providing direct government aid to religious schools.

unique educational settings that address the specific needs of students—male or female”). Even if those data exist, see infra text accompanying note 244, query whether this fits under the diversity or remedial rationale since the argument seems to be that some students have a particularized need for homogeneous environment.

247. See id. at 653.
Diversity, if viewed as “choice,” is an instrumental concept. Diversity itself is not inherently good. Many things—ways of dying, a proliferation of new viruses, methods of execution (the rack, the gas chamber, the firing squad), a wide selection of terrorist targets, parenting styles (teaching children to finger-paint or make moonshine)—can be diverse without being good. As Professor Denise Morgan writes:

[E]mploying a diverse array of educational approaches within a single school system . . . is a quantitative change which does not necessarily result in the same qualitative educational improvement produced by interaction among students from diverse backgrounds. Greater choice is only beneficial to the extent that the additional pedagogical choices are themselves desirable. Therefore, the diversity which single-sex schools add to public education systems is good for students only if the schools themselves are educationally beneficial.  

Choice, in the sense of self-determination, is generally a good thing, as long as it does not intrude on other people’s self-determination or on other equally important communitarian values. Segregation as a choice, however, is empowering to some, but disempowering to others and harmful to society as a whole.

In the single-sex and single-race schools context, advocates are conflating diversity and choice. Diversity in the equal protection sense is not about markets, but choice is. A society might want a broad menu of options or experiments regarding products—some good, some questionable—so that consumers’ choices will separate the good from the bad, letting some options thrive and others eventually disappear. This kind of “choice” is sometimes linked with the “diversity of ideas,” as in the free speech arena, where the metaphor of a marketplace of ideas promises to reward good ideas and kill bad ones. 

But diversity in the equal protection sense is not about market choice. We do not advocate a broad spectrum of races, for example, so that through competition the best races will rise and the worst will fall. Indeed, we do not believe any identity-based category is better than another; we mean for them all to thrive. Diversity in the equal protection sense is not at all about choice. Choice is about the liberal value of self-determination; diversity is about a communitarian goal. To the extent that the diversity argument is one of curricular innovation or sex-conscious pedagogy, no literature explains why the allegedly distinctive

249. But see Barry Schwartz, The Tyranny of Choice, CHRON. HIGHER EDUC., Jan. 23, 2004, at B6 (pointing to research in the psycho-social literature showing that an overabundance of choices leads to psychological distress).
251. This actually was the premise of an Edgar Rice Burroughs science fiction book, John Carter of Mars (1940).
methods of cooperative education or a supportive, encouraging classroom atmosphere could not be applied to males as well as females.

Use of the diversity argument in the single-sex schools context to mean variety rests on flawed logic: it is an argument that is labeled as diversity but one that is premised foundationally on a choice among alternatives. The assertion is that parents should have a choice between single-sex and coeducational schooling for their girls, and that the state provision of this choice affords a diversity of educational offerings. The diversity resides in the choice among educational options, not the experiences of the students.

What if the Supreme Court accepts the “option play” concept of diversity? The argument here is that diversity means an assortment of educational offerings. By this logic, single-race schools would provide a diversity of educational experiences. On the other hand, a school district composed entirely of single-sex schools would not be constitutional. It would be odd to have the constitutionality of a state-funded educational program depend on the rarity with which it is offered.

B. The Constitutional Meaning of Diversity

The greatest flaw in the diversity-as-choice position is that it does not share the reasons why the Supreme Court considered educational diversity in admissions to qualify as a compelling state interest. The real meaning and purpose of diversity as a justification for government action providing differential treatment based on identity characteristics is illuminated in the university admissions cases. In his plurality opinion in Regents of the University of California v. Bakke, Justice Powell stated that “the attainment of a diverse student body” is a “constitutionally permissible goal.” Race was “only one element in a range of factors a university properly may consider in attaining the goal of a heterogeneous student body.”

This understanding of diversity was amplified by the recent decision in Grutter v. Bollinger, where the Supreme Court held that the attainment of a diverse student body “is a compelling state interest that can justify the use of race in university admissions.”

The diversity to which the Court referred was “student body diversity,” a diversity among students of interests, backgrounds, and identity characteristics. The Grutter Court repeatedly referred to interactions among students of different races as part of the training for students to

254. Id. at 311–12 (Powell, J., plurality opinion).
255. Id. at 314.
257. Id. at 325.
258. Id.; see also Jones v. Bd. of Educ., 632 F. Supp. 1319, 1324 (E.D.N.Y. 1986) (holding that the conversion of an all-girl public high school to a coeducational one was supported by the state interest in “providing an educational environment that mirrors the diversity of modern society”).
effectively navigate in “our heterogeneous society.”259 Reports of experts cited approvingly by the Supreme Court in *Grutter* refer to the educational benefits of students interacting with other students of different races.260 One expert testified, for example, that interactions among students of different races cause “racial stereotypes [to] lose their force because nonminority students learn there is no ‘minority viewpoint’ but rather a variety of viewpoints among minority students.”261 Student body diversity, according to the American Educational Research Association et al. amicus brief quoted by the Court, “‘better prepares students for an increasingly diverse workforce and society, and better prepares them as professionals.’”262 The diversity benefits did not flow from the ability to choose one’s school companions but from the “exposure to widely diverse people, cultures, ideas, and viewpoints.”263

Notice, though, where diversity in single-sex schooling occurs—not within the classroom, not in society,264 not at the individual student’s experiential level—but only at the school district level. In fact, within the school or classroom, the students experience only homogeneity with respect to the only facet of identity that is considered.265 “Diversity” in the single-sex schools context simply means a choice between two educational options: attendance at either a single-sex or coeducational school. Government-sponsored sex separation thus cannot legitimately claim the mantle of *Bakke*’s or *Grutter*’s diversity rationale, which was to afford students exposure to other students different from themselves based on a variety of identity characteristics.266 Indeed the logic of *Grutter* was that the University of Michigan’s law school program was constitutional in large part because race was not the only way that diversity was being measured.267 It would sharply twist the meaning of *Grutter* for single-sex proponents to use the diversity argument to uphold segregation on the basis of an identity characteristic when sex is the only facet of identity that is being measured, and the educational objective is to have all students in the class or school be absolutely the same on the basis of sex.

260. *Id.* at 330.
261. *Id.* at 320 (citation omitted).
262. *Id.* at 330.
263. *Id.*
264. Since sex segregation is pervasive in society, see *LEVIT*, *supra* note 12, at 15–63, further segregation on the basis of sex within schools does not provide a varied social experience.
265. *LEVIT*, *supra* note 200, at 520 (“Diversity in this context means only sameness along the only dimension (gender) that is examined. The logic of the diversity argument becomes Orwellian in its implicit contradictions: sameness is diversity.”).
C. Segregation as Diversity

Lower courts have mentioned the goal of fostering integration as a compelling state interest.\(^{268}\) The Supreme Court recently endorsed diversity in support of an integrative ideal in \textit{Grutter}.\(^{269}\) In the context of both single-sex schools and the movement away from desegregated schools, the segregative alternatives are being advanced as just additional “options” in the melting pot.\(^{270}\) In short, we have lost the understanding of what makes government-sponsored segregation based on identity characteristics wrong.

1. Separation Under Conditions of Equality

Fifty years ago, the Court in \textit{Brown v. Board of Education}\(^{271}\) said unequivocally that state-sponsored racial segregation stigmatizes black Americans: “To separate [grade and high school children] from others of similar age and qualifications solely because of their race generates a feeling of inferiority as to their status in the community that may affect their hearts and minds in a way unlikely ever to be undone.”\(^{272}\) The question for the neighborhood and single-sex schools debates is whether separation can exist without inferiority—whether stigmatization would result from government separation based on identity characteristics under conditions of equality.

Regarding resources, in the case of single-sex schools, presumably the tangible features of education would be equal. The experimental California academies, for example, insisted on equality in the boys and girls schools down to the number of pencils.\(^{273}\) This assumption is not accurate in the case of neighborhood schools. As schools resegregate based on race—which is often intertwined with a resurfacing of economic inequalities—the schools suffer marked disparities in resources.\(^{274}\) Minority students in predominantly single-race neighborhood schools suffer “substandard and deteriorating facilities, racial isolation, and concentrated poverty.”\(^{275}\) Resegregation affects the educational environment in

\(^{268}\) See, e.g., Johnson v. Bd. of Educ., 604 F.2d 504, 518 (7th Cir. 1979); Parent Ass’n of Andrew Jackson High Sch. v. Ambach, 598 F.2d 705, 720 (2d Cir. 1979).

\(^{269}\) \textit{Grutter}, 539 U.S. at 348; see also supra text accompanying notes 256–63.


\(^{272}\) \textit{Id.} at 494.


\(^{274}\) Gary Orfield, supra note 7.

\(^{275}\) Leland Ware, \textit{Redlining Learners: Delaware’s Neighborhood Schools Act}, 20 Del. Law. 14, 16 (2002).
many ways, including academically inferior programs, racial differences in performance on standardized tests, drop-out rates, rates of college attendance, and other inequities in the distribution of educational opportunities and performance outcomes.276 “Racially segregated schools more often rely upon transitory teachers and have curricula with greater emphasis on remedial courses, higher rates of tardiness and unexcused absence, and lower rates of extracurricular involvement. As a result, educational achievement is highly racialized.”277 Racial isolation has long-term detrimental effects on intergroup social relations, as well as human capital effects in terms of mentoring, social networks, and job references.278 These consequences of resegregation have tremendous effects on the future income potential of students, the absence of minority employees from positions of standing in professions, and ultimately, the reinforcement of sharp racial and socioeconomic divisions in society.279

But even if the tangible aspects of the educational program are equal, the intangible message of the separatism itself was at the heart of Brown.280 The stigmatic harm in Brown did not result from inferior educational facilities. To squarely present the separate but equal issue in Brown, the plaintiffs stipulated that the tangible aspects of education—"with respect to buildings, curricula, qualifications and salaries of teachers" and other factors—were equal.281 While people knew at the time that the economically deprived black schools often did provide an inferior education, that was not the injury the Brown Court addressed. The Court spoke to the inequality inherent in the fact of separation and the implicit message as to the social status of black Americans that would be sent by government approval of racial separation as a matter of official policy.282

Separatism under conditions of equality still stigmatizes, since the message produced by government sponsorship of separatism remains one


278. See, e.g., Clark D. Cunningham et al., Passing Strict Scrutiny: Using Social Science to Design Affirmative Action Programs, 90 GEO. L.J. 835, 841 (2002) (“[L]abor market discrimination, even several generations in the past, when combined with ongoing segregated social structure can perpetuate indefinitely huge differences in social capital between ethnic communities.”).

279. See, e.g., R. George Wright, Cumulative Case Legal Arguments and the Justification of Academic Affirmative Action, 23 PACE L. REV. 1, 28 (2002).


281. Id. at 492.

282. Id. at 494–95.
of denigration. For many supporters, the segregative alternative is premised on a foundational idea of inherent or natural differences.

The concept of race as an inherent biological phenomenon has been thoroughly discredited by genetic anthropologists, psychologists, ethnographers, and evolutionary biologists. Sociologists, historians, and legal theorists have demonstrated the ways in which race is socially constructed and historically and culturally contingent. Increasingly, evidence indicates that gender differences once presumed to be innate or natural have a much larger cultural component than previously thought. The importance of the differences that do exist rests primarily on the social consequences society chooses to attach to these features of identity. In Martha Minow’s words, the significance we give to the race and gender differences that do exist is what “make[s] all the difference.”

The Supreme Court, for its part, has consistently refused to accept socially constructed differences as supportive of inequalities in education and employment. In short, the idea of natural differences, in

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283. See Cahn, Jurisprudence, supra note 171, at 158–59 (“[S]egregation under government auspices inevitably inflicts humiliation, and . . . humiliation of innocent, law-abiding citizens is psychologically injurious and morally evil.”); Charles R. Lawrence, III, If He Hollers Let Him Go: Regulating Racist Speech on Campus, 1990 DUKE L.J. 431, 439 (“Brown held that segregation is unconstitutional not simply because the physical separation of black and white children is bad or because resources were distributed unequally among black and white schools. Brown held that segregated schools were unconstitutional primarily because of the message segregation conveys—the message that black children are an untouchable caste, unfit to be educated with white children.”) (footnotes omitted).

284. “Social and religious conservatives . . . view single-sex schooling as a means to accommodate what they consider the inherently different capabilities, tendencies, and preferences of women and men.” SALOMONE, supra note 183, at 39; see also Mike Allen, “Separate” No Stigma for Some: Black, Women’s Schools Growing, R ICH. TIMES-DISPATCH, June 30, 1996, at A1 (quoting former Virginia Governor L. Douglas Wilder regarding historically black colleges as saying, “There will always be the natural inclination for consciousness of kind to assert itself . . . . For that reason I would not be opposed to people going to school where they feel most comfortable. That is usually the case with whites.”).

285. See, e.g., HAYMAN, supra note 32 at 128 (1997) (“There are . . . about 150 different genetically coded proteins that have been identified and examined; 75 percent of these are monomorphic, that is, they are identical in all individuals. Just 25 percent, then are polymorphic, that is, they vary among individuals. . . . The smallest proportion of variation—just 7 percent (of, remember, the polymorphic genes, which are in turn just 25 percent of the overall pool)—is between groups that have conventionally been considered ‘races.’ Significantly, no polymorphic gene perfectly discriminates among the traditionally classified racial groups.”).


287. See, e.g., LEVIT, supra note 12, at 18–28 (referring to declining differences between males and females in SAT scores and running times, as well as cross-cultural studies regarding the development of aggression in girls); Carolyn B. Ramsey, Subtracting Sexism from the Classroom: Law and Policy in the Debate Over All-Female Math and Science Classes in Public Schools, 8 TEX. J. WOMEN & L. 1, 9 (1998) (“Sex differences in math and science achievement seem to derive from socialization rather than from inherent disparities in intelligence or spatial skills.”).


either race or sex, has been repeatedly repudiated. A concept of diversity that rests foundationally on supposed congenital or natural differences fosters some of the worst stereotypes of all.

Even though the current segregation (in the single-sex schools area) is not forced, and even under conditions of equality, consider the implicit statement: government sponsorship of segregation says that different races or opposite sexes do not belong in a classroom together. The argument is presented more starkly in the single-sex schools cases—it is that some sort of contamination will occur through the intermingling of boys and girls. The argument is made with some stealth in the desegregation context—that parents should be able to choose neighborhood schools so students can attend schools closer to home with other, like-minded (read: same-race) students. Supporters of neighborhood schools and single-sex education make a sort of revivified Plessy argument that the use of race and gender classifications to segregate does not imply inferiority.

2. The Historical Meaning of Segregation by Race and Sex

Proponents of single-sex education and those who advocate turning to neighborhood schools advance the ideas as fresh, novel solutions to problems of gender inequities or inconveniences of busing. Both of these types of educational arrangements rely on the assumption that segregation can be invested with new meaning. Yet supporters never address that assumption or its difficulties—the problematics of context, time, and history. Contemporary separatism is presented without history, without context, as if a beneficent purpose—the good will of a school district or the parental motive of keeping children close to home—somehow sterilizes the current proposals. But segregation based on identity cannot be divorced from history or social meaning. Given the historical treatment of women and minority races, in the not-too-distant

290. See Levit, supra note 12, at 18–28; Hayman & Levit, supra note 32, at 162–65.
292. Compare Plessy v. Ferguson, 163 U.S. 537, 544 (1896) (segregation does not “necessarily imply the inferiority of either race to the other”) with McQuillan & Englert, supra note 291, at 744 (referring to Justice Clarence Thomas’ line of reasoning that integration efforts imply black inferiority, and thus resegregation into neighborhood schools is a way of reclaiming equality through separatism), and Hutchison, supra note 270, at 1079–80 (arguing that single sex education is not “per se inferior” as long as “the two institutions offered the same quality of education and were of the same overall caliber”) (quoting United States v. Virginia, 518 U.S. 515, 565 (1996) (Rehnquist, C.J., concurring)).
293. See, e.g., Hutchison, supra note 270, at 1076–78 (discussing how single-sex education may be one option to better fit the needs of children); McQuillan & Englert, supra note 291, at 742–45 (discussing how neighborhood schools may solve inconveniences of busing).
past, the segregation itself marks those separated with a badge of inferiority.294

The national history of public education includes state mandates for racially segregated schools, inferior educational opportunities for women and minorities, resistance to the integration of both females and racial minorities, and the only relatively recent admission of women and minorities to professional schools in significant numbers.295 The history of public education rigidly segregated by race and sex is inextricably linked to the “legalized inequality” of women and racial minorities.296 It is a history tied to beliefs about innate differences between the races and between men and women,297 and a past wedded to the exclusion of women and racial minorities from lucrative employment opportunities.


It has been less than a quarter of a century since the last of the elite private colleges opened their doors to women. Cynthia Fuchs Epstein, The Myths and Justifications of Sex Segregation in Higher Education: VMI and the Citadel, 4 DUKE J. GENDER L. & POL’Y 101, 118 n.11 (1997); see also Joan Gerseh Marek, The Practice and Ally McBeal: A New Image for Women Lawyers on Television?, 22 J. AM. CULTURE 77, 77 (1999) (noting that the Association of American Law Schools did not prohibit sex discrimination in admissions policies of its member schools until 1970). Although women now enroll in law schools in numbers close to those of men, the percentages are still not equal. The statistics reflect steadily increasing percentages of women enrolled in law schools, from 5% in 1967 to 20% in 1974 to 40% in 1985, but topping out at 49% in both 2001 and 2002. American Bar Association, First Year Enrollment in ABA Approved Law Schools 1947–2002 (Percentage of Women), at http://www.abanet.org/legaled/statistics/lsstats.html (last visited Mar. 21, 2005) [hereinafter Percentage of Women]. In 2003, “[m]ales comprise 51.3% of the J.D. enrollment . . . while females comprise 48.7%.” American Bar Association, Fall 2003 Enrollment Statistics (mem. from David Rosenlieb, Data Specialist, to Deans of ABA-Approved Law Schools), at http://www.abanet.org/legaled/statistics/enrollment2003statistics.pdf (Jan. 14, 2004) [hereinafter Fall 2003 Enrollment Statistics]. The history of the enrollment of racial minorities in law schools has not been as dramatic as that of women. In 1971, the percentage of all law students who were minorities was 5.9% in 1971, while in 2002, that percentage was 19.33%. These percentages are derived from a comparison of the total figures of all minorities in 1971 (5568) and 2002 (27,175), American Bar Association, Minority Enrollment 1971–2002, at http://www.abanet.org/legaled/ statistics/minstats.html (last visited Mar. 21, 2005), with the grand total enrollment numbers from 1971 (94,468) and 2002 (140,612). Percentage of Women, supra. Moreover, the rate of minority enrollment is not rocketing upward. In 2001 “minorities comprised 21.2% of first year enrollment.” Fall 2003 Enrollment Statistics, supra. The 2002 figure dipped to 21.1%, and the percentage inched up to 21.6% in 2003. Id.


297. Maurice E.R. Munroe, Unamerican Tail: Of Segregation and Multicultural Education, 64 ALI L. REV. 241, 268 n.192 (2000) (noting that segregated schools were the product of a belief that blacks were inherently intellectually inferior); Valerie K. Vojdik, Girls’ Schools After VMI: Do They Make The Grade?, 4 DUKE J. GENDER L. & POL’Y 69, 84 (1997) (“[H]igher education was considered by leading experts of the time to be dangerous and inappropriate for women. Experts claimed that scientific evidence established that women were physically and temperamentally not suited to the rigors of the academy. . . . Separate education for men and women paralleled the separate spheres that each was expected to occupy.”).
Consider just how recent the requirement of integrated education is in this country’s history of public education. As Justice Ginsburg has observed, “higher education” in the early- to mid-nineteenth century “was considered dangerous for women.” Administrators opposed the admission of women to the premier colleges for men “because they believed that women would be distracting, men would be uncomfortable with women in their midst, women would weaken the colleges’ reputations for scholarship, and admission of women would undermine the founders’ plans.” When women’s colleges began to be established in the mid- to late-nineteenth century, they were inferior in many ways to colleges for men. Many elite private colleges did not even become co-educational until the 1960s and 1970s. The history of sex segregated elementary and secondary education followed a similar pattern: “It was not until the latter part of the 19th century that almost all public elementary schools admitted both boys and girls.” The efforts of civil rights and feminist movements in the half century since Brown have been toward trying to further break down the walls of segregation. In short, official educational segregation based on race and sex are phenomena not far removed in time.

Brown, of course, does not mark a point in time when segregation ceased. Opposition to integrated education continued, particularly in the South, for decades after Brown. Across the country, forms of segregation continue today, even within “desegregated” schools. Moreover, prejudice is tenacious—the stereotypes and generalizations about racial groups that have shaped American institutions and infected the national consciousness did not lapse with the passage of the Civil Rights Act. Prejudice persists among whites, as unconscious behavior, negative generalizations and expectations, and discomfort in associations with members of minority groups. Pervasive patterns of economic and political

301. Fuchs Epstein, supra note 295, at 118 n.11.
304. See Drew S. Days, III, Brown Blues: Rethinking the Integrative Ideal, 34 WM. & MARY L. REV. 53, 55 (1992); Pamela J. Smith, Reliance on the Kindness of Strangers: The Myth of Transracial Affinity Versus the Realities of Transracial Educational Pedism, 52 RUTGERS L. REV. 1, 66 n.289 (1999) (citing numerous instances of intra-school segregated activities, such as separate proms and black and white class officers).
305. See Munroe, supra note 297, at 256 (“[G]iven the relative continuity of American social life and its institutions over the last 100 years, and given the longevity of racial prejudice and its intensity during even the 1960s, such a complete break with the past is difficult to imagine.”).
domination create structural inequalities—and achieve normative legitimacy—that lasts for decades, perhaps centuries. This country does not have sufficient distance, in time or in segregative practices, from the days of flatly unconstitutional single-sex and single-race educational customs and traditions.

3. International Experiences with Apartheid

The international experience with gender and racial apartheid illustrates the horrors that often accompany institutionalized segregation. The racial apartheid regime in South Africa encompassed atrocities of detention without trial, forced labor, routine disappearances, gross human rights violations, rape, torture, murder, and genocidal activities such as forced sterilization. The lingering effects of separatist policies are rampant—visible in the patterns of persistently inhumane treatment, harassment, and discrimination, the deep educational inequities, the continued assaults, arson, and the malnutrition and starvation. The world saw equally, if not more, horrific consequences of race labeling and separation in Rwanda, Bosnia-Herzegovina, and Nazi Germany.

Comparable forms of gender discrimination exist throughout the world and share many of the same premises about inherent differences—but are often treated as much more innocuous. Indeed, “sexual apartheid”—the separation of women, domestically, physically, educationally, and economically—is frequently considered part of the natural ordering. The cultural practices of countries where sharp sex segregation exists include rampant domestic violence, female infanticide, and sexual slavery. Women are veiled, raped, mutilated, and tortured. They lack political and economic rights, and they are barred from public

employment, educational, and religious participation. Apartheid of both gender and race rests foundationally on long-discredited premises of the presumed inherent superiority of one sex or race and are linked to the harshest forms of government oppression. Countries where women are spatially segregated from men are almost universally those in which women are shunted into traditional gender roles and away from full civic and economic participation. In short, cross-cultural evidence indicates that state sponsored segregation exists in an inverse relationship with emancipation. It is linked to social and economic stratification as well as rigid and hierarchical gender roles.

4. The Concept of Remedial Segregation

The focus of this article is on the “choice” and “diversity” rationales for segregation in education, but a few notes on the remedial purpose rationale for sex and race segregation are warranted. A number of thoughtful commentators have made the argument that separatism in education is needed under an affirmative action rationale. Professor Denise Morgan and Professor Rosemary Salomone, for example, suggest that single-sex education, particularly for minority race girls, may be antithetical. Professor Kevin Brown recently considered whether an Afrocentric curriculum could promote a sense of cultural identity but noted the constitutional difficulties with a curriculum that endorsed segregation.

Policies of racial separatism, even for reasons of affirmative action, are tested constitutionally with a strict scrutiny standard. If single-sex education is justified by an affirmative action rationale, the Hogan Court held that remedial, gender-based classifications can be supported only if “members of the gender benefited by the classification actually suffer a disadvantage related to the classification.” The Court also stated that the government cannot “exclude or ‘protect’ members of one gender because they are presumed to suffer from an inherent handicap.” A court evaluating sex segregated educational offerings will need to test not whether the exclusion of one sex provides some pedagogical benefits, but

315. Salomone, supra note 183, at 41; Morgan, supra note 124, at 426.
319. Id. at 725.
whether the benefits of that segregation, when compared to its detriments, provides an exceedingly persuasive justification.

After VMI, the constitutional threshold for sex-based exclusion from state programs is skeptical scrutiny, which the court has defined as requiring the government to demonstrate an “exceedingly persuasive justification” for its actions. Both VMI and Hogan offer some indications about the strength of the evidence required to justify the fit of intermediate scrutiny. The VMI Court’s assessment of the empirical validity of Virginia’s claims about adversative versus cooperative training methods indicates that gender-based differentiation must be based on real “physical” or “inherent” differences between the sexes because behavioral differences are influenced by stereotypes and social structure. Categorical sex-based assumptions require substantial empirical support and cannot rest on stereotypic generalizations about the interests or abilities of either sex. In considering whether the empirical support is “exceedingly persuasive,” it must consist of more than hypotheses, cannot “rely on overbroad generalizations about the different talents, capacities, or preferences of males and females,” and should be founded on a wealth of scientific and statistical evidence, not just selected snippets of information.

According to the logic of both VMI and Hogan, this “exceedingly persuasive justification” test is a contextual inquiry. In evaluating the strength of the justification for a policy excluding one sex, Hogan indicates that courts must consider the social meaning of segregation itself. In Hogan, the Court held that “MUW’s policy of excluding males from admission to the School of Nursing tends to perpetuate the stereotyped view of nursing as an exclusively woman’s job.” That social meaning is defined in part by history. It is doubtful whether race- and sex-based classifications in the context of education can be divorced from their history of subordinating racial minorities and women—particularly given the recency of their exclusion from public higher education.

321. Id. at 533.
322. See supra text accompanying notes 146–48. Prior Supreme Court cases decided under the intermediate scrutiny standard also suggest that something much more than modest empirical support is necessary for a categorical sex-based exclusion. See, e.g., Weinberger v. Weisenfeld, 420 U.S. 636, 645 (1975) (determining that differences in social security benefits based on sex are unconstitutional despite “empirical support” that men likely to be breadwinners); Frontiero v. Richardson, 411 U.S. 677, 688–89 (1973) (holding unconstitutional the armed services policy of requiring dependent spouses of female service members to prove their dependency, despite “empirical” fact that “wives in our society frequently are dependent on their husbands, while husbands rarely are dependent on their wives”).
324. See, e.g., J.E.B. v. Alabama, 511 U.S. 127, 138 n.9 (1994) (finding that despite “quasi-empirical claim that women and men may have different attitudes about certain issues justifying the use of gender as a proxy for bias,” peremptory strikes based on sex are unconstitutional).
326. Id. at 729.
327. See supra text accompanying notes 281–94.
Furthermore, it is not only state-sponsored exclusions rooted in a history of discrimination that are unconstitutional, but also those arrangements that may feed archaic or stereotypic views of the role or abilities of males and females. Thus, courts need to assess the subordinating effects of single-sex policies on the social identity of men and women. Part of the context that must be considered is whether shielding girls from the domination of boys in the classroom promotes stereotypic thinking about the roles and abilities of the sexes.328

Similarly, courts need to assess the social meaning of separatist treatment of racial minorities toward nonintegrative goals. A clear difference exists between consideration of identity characteristics for purposes of integrative remedies, like affirmative action in the employment and educational admissions contexts, and segregative remedies, like separatist enclaves of education. This difference exists not just as a matter of constitutional theory,329 but also as a matter of sociological and behavioral research330 and educational practices.331

Perhaps benefits can be attributed to school “choice” along racial lines or to the fact of sex separation in schools in specific contexts,332 but we must be aware of the great dangers that inhere in the very fact of state-sponsored separatism in many, probably most, contexts. Perhaps something is distinctive about the situation of inner city schools in pre-

328. United States v. Virginia, 518 U.S. at 534 (gender based “classifications may not be used as they once were, to create or perpetuate the legal, social, and economic inferiority of women”) (citation omitted).


331. True integration addresses the issues of achievement, opportunity, community, and relevancy at a systemic level. Through a transformative process, the school system becomes a place of learning and growth for students and teachers through innovative curriculum, technology, teaching practices, and administration, as well as a broad cultural understanding and application of that understanding. These instrumental advances then create a grounding for the more far-reaching goals of the radical integrationist, who seeks to build upon the transformation of the school setting to the recreation of a truly democratic society.

At the site of curricular reform, true integration requires a multicultural curriculum that is incorporated into daily work, and not merely added on or reserved for study during a special month, such as Black History Month. Powell, supra note 244, at 695.

332. The wealth of empirical evidence, though, suggests that favorable results are usually attributable to other factors. See supra text accompanying notes 183–209.
dominantly minority race districts that makes the fact of sex segregation less unequal; however, in a context marked by hierarchy, in a context of oppression—in our society, in other words—the mere fact of race or sex segregation is likely to bring with it a countervailing inequality.

IV. CONCLUSION: REINTRODUCING KNOWLEDGE AND RECLAIMING THE DISCOURSE

While the jurisprudential and constitutional understandings of choice and diversity are significant, the ways the media interprets these ideas for popular consumption are equally important. Decisions about “neighborhood” and single-sex schools are being made, in the first instance, at the grassroots level: by school boards, teachers, principals, parents, and legislatures. The interpretation of media reports regarding these intersections between race and sex in schools and the law is important because the fate of decisions about desegregation and single-sex schools may not be in the hands of judges. What may be of more consequence in the desegregation and single-sex schools areas is the court of public opinion. The kinds of “experiments” that occur in individual classes (separating boys and girls for math class, for example) are unlikely to result in litigation. The patterns of residential segregation that occur on the race side seem almost untouchable under current legal doctrines.333 For both race and sex segregation, the more promising, or at least the more immediate, path for change may lie in a different realm: speaking to the American people.

Media reporting strongly shapes public understanding of legal issues.334 The ways that issues are recounted have deep effects on public opinions and attitudes. The slanted coverage of single-sex education has had a powerful impact on the increase in such experiments across the country.335 Similarly, stories and news accounts that pronounce the failure of desegregation efforts sift into the public consciousness.336

333. Regarding racial desegregation, the doctrinal avenue seems concentrated on voluntary integration plans. See John Charles Boger, Willful Colorblindness: The New Racial Piety and the Resegregation of Public Schools, 78 N.C. L. REV. 1719, 1768–91 (2000). The doctrinal law in the desegregation context is fairly settled, while the empirical question in the single sex schools context will be factually complex, but not legally complicated—does the existing research regarding single-sex education present an exceedingly persuasive justification for government-sponsored segregation? Litigation is needed, and amicus briefs will need to question whether an exceedingly persuasive justification exists for single-sex schools.

334. The public depends almost exclusively on the news media for legal information. “[T]he average citizen reads no court opinions, watches few court proceedings in court, studies no law review articles, has no regular contact with judges or attorneys, and handles no legal problems himself. The press is his law reporter.” Richard Stack, The Uneasy Alliance of Attorney and Reporter, or When Perry Mason Meets Lois Lane, CHAMPION, July 2003, at 22 (quoting LYLE W. DENTON, THE REPORTER AND THE LAW: TECHNIQUES FOR COVERING THE COURTS (1980) (alteration in original)).

335. See, e.g., Annie Gowen, Same-Sex Classes a Growing Trend—But Not All Teachers Are Sold on Concept, STAR-LEDGER (Newark, NJ), Sept. 29, 2002, available at 2002 WL 100695403 (“Collins [an elementary school principal] said that she was inspired to try a class for boys after reading a U.S.
The left has relied on the media, with a certain amount of complacency, assuming that the media is left of center and that the truth will emerge, and trusting that journalists will be Woodward and Bernstein-like government watchdogs. Depending on whom you believe, the media systematically favors the left—or the right.\textsuperscript{337} Conservatives charge that the media has a strong liberal bias,\textsuperscript{338} and they claim to have been wronged by newsrooms staffed with liberal ideologues who promote their social agendas in lieu of objective news reporting.\textsuperscript{339} Liberals make the parallel argument that the right-wing favoritism and limited exposure for left-wing commentators on mainstream television and talk radio mean the slant is toward the right.\textsuperscript{340} Concentration of ownership means conservative voices are louder, heard more often, and dominate the shrinkingly available bandwidth.\textsuperscript{341} Liberals also note that conservatives have been brilliant in using the folklore of liberal media bias to their advantage.\textsuperscript{342}

The debate about media tilt seems misguided at best, dangerous at worst. Evidence exists for leanings in both directions. (The debate itself is almost a policy Rorschach—it tells much more about the political beliefs of the person arguing than the political contours of the media inkblot.) The best evidence indicates the media is increasingly corporate, increasingly profit-driven,\textsuperscript{343} and unflinchingly interested in sensational stories, sound bites, audience numbers, and ratings.\textsuperscript{344} The media like controversy and may have little time or space for substance. Perhaps deadline frenzy prohibits deeper treatment, but reporters should be encouraged to put studies in context. Reporters may need some assistance

\begin{itemize}
\item News and World Report Article last year—headlined ‘Are Boys the Weaker Sex?’—that explored how differences in body chemistry between boys and girls may affect learning."
\item See Simmons, supra note 233 ("Other educators, citing strong support in the black community for neighborhood schools and charter schools, say some African-American families apparently have given up hope that the traditional model of integration will ever work completely.").
\item See generally Eric Alterman, What Liberal Media?: The Truth About ‘Bias’ and the News (2003) (maintaining that the media has a conservative bias); Ann Coulter, Slander: Liberal Lies About the American Right (2002) (arguing that the media is unabashedly liberal); Bernard Goldberg, Bias: A CBS Insider Exposes How the Media Distort the News (2001) (same).
\item Cathy Young, New Ammo in the War over Media Bias, Boston Globe, June 9, 2003, at A15.
\item Id.
\item Alterman, supra note 337, at 28–44, 70–74.
\item Thane Peterson, The Faint, Fading Voice of the Left, Bus. Week, May 20, 2003, available at 2003 WL 6952380 ("At this point, the left’s most influential representatives consist of small journals like The Nation, a handful of newspaper commentators such as Paul Krugman and Frank Rich at The New York Times, and syndicated columnist Molly Ivins.").
\item Think Political News Is Biased? If You’re a Republican, It Depends Who You Ask, Ascribe News, Apr. 6, 2003, available at 2003 WL 5500376 ("The individuals charging bias may have an agenda that leads them to make such claims in order to coerce more favorable coverage from a press that prides itself on objectivity.").
\end{itemize}
to avoid the assumption that complex understandings are the stuff of academic journals.

The left is confident in the power of ideas to sift into the public consciousness; the right knows better. Conservative pundits are particularly adept at linguistic spin. Indeed, the rhetorical strategies of the political right prompt a curious mixture of admiration and revulsion in the observant reader. Consider the efforts of Frank Luntz, the Republican pollster and communications consultant who wrote a 222-page manifesto for Republicans in Congress, “Language of the 21st Century,” in which he told Congress people how to rename issues to push the conservative agenda.345 For instance, he warns to avoid the alarmist term “global warming”—that makes people think there might be a problem; instead, he advises using the term “climate change.”346 When people think about “climates,” they think of places they would enjoy visiting, like Hawaii or Colorado.347 He has since distilled his book into a handy seventy-five-page pocket pamphlet, entitled “Conservatively Speaking.”348 It advises, “Talk about COMMON SENSE... When talking about ‘common sense values,’ you are all things to all people.”349 “Sentences that work particularly well,” Luntz writes, include: “All children deserve a chance at a quality education.”350

The idea of “spin” is often repulsive to thoughtful liberals, who want deep and nuanced reflection on ideas.351 But if the communications tactics of the left are ineffective and if people opposed to segregation are losing in the war of words to unexplored terms such as “choice” and “natural” and “neighborhood,” those approaches need rethinking. One example of the point is occurring in the environmental justice area. The Center for Progressive Regulation (CPR), a nonprofit group of academics committed to promoting public understanding of legal, scientific, and economic issues regarding health and environmental issues, has developed a progressive agenda that moves away from negative attacks on law and economics or complaints about anemic efforts at pollution regulation.352 CPR just wrote The New Progressive Agenda: Repaying Our

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346. Lenore Skenazy, Spin City Cuts Both Ways, N.Y. DAILY NEWS, Mar. 9, 2003, at 41; see also Luntz Research Companies, supra note 345 (“‘Climate change’ is less frightening than ‘global warming’ ... While global warming has catastrophic connotations attached to it, climate change suggests a more controllable and less emotional challenge.”).

347. See id.; see also, e.g., Hawaii: Treasure of Islands with Perfect Climate, KOREA TIMES, July 6, 2000, available at 2000 WL 82343325.


349. Id. at 8.

350. Id. at 26.


Debt to the Future, as a response to the pervasive and unthinkingly accepted cost-benefit ideas in the environmental regulatory area.\textsuperscript{353} The chapter headings offer good examples of positive ideas packaged into digestible and readable text: “Shift the Focus” (to what the public actually desires), “Safety First,” “Fair Distribution” (to avoid, for instance, geographic inequalities in pollution), and “Democracy Demands Disclosure.”\textsuperscript{354} Academics need to develop more such conscious rhetorical strategies to reach the public.\textsuperscript{355}

In addition to considering wordsmithing\textsuperscript{356} and communications strategies, attention needs to be given to the substance of segregation critiques. One substantive matter is to disseminate existing empirical information about the consequences of education in racially segregated or sex segregated environments.\textsuperscript{357} Another is to point out that, at present, at least with respect to single-sex education, a sharp disjunction exists between media portrayal of single-sex school outcomes and actual performance results.\textsuperscript{358} Finally, opponents of segregation need to consider how to address the ideological issues for a public audience—how, for example, to make the critique of choice one that resonates with the public.

It is curious that the Supreme Court rejected a Virginia county’s “freedom of choice” plan thirty-five years ago in \textit{Green v. County School Board},\textsuperscript{359} with the recognition that “choice” would perpetuate segregation.
tion, and yet the language of choice has resurfaced as an abstract but un-
qualified good. Some excellent academic treatments exist documenting
that “choice” exacerbates segregation and undermines educational op-
portunities; particularly for economically disadvantaged students of
color, “choice” is not universally available, and the value of “choice” of-ten conflicts with other values such as justice.360

The philosophical debates should also include an exploration of
whether sameness—homogeneity of gender or race—really promotes the
constitutional concept of diversity. Another issue regarding the wisdom
of segregation has to do with the nature of experimentation. The
embrace of “experimentalism” in the case of single-sex schools and the
hurry to declare the “experiment” over in the desegregation context de-
mands inquiry into how courts should approach educational experimen-
tation. Other, less segregated, experiments are available. For example,
target specific academic concerns, such as gender-inclusivity in mixed-sex
classrooms.361 Try a coed TWYLS. Approach poor academic perform-
ance with intensive instruction, small class size, and academic rigor. Im-
plicate instructional methods that directly address problems of gender
domination. Schools should first try experiments that are more likely to
be successful and less likely to be unconstitutional.

In assessing the empirical case for segregative alternatives as op-
posed to integrative options, it is important to keep in mind the lessons
of history as well as the principles of the scientific method. As courts
contemplate the constitutionality of state-sponsored segregation based
on identity characteristics, they should study the large body of empirical
research that has been conducted in the social and behavioral sciences.362

The evaluation of the justifications for government-endorsed separatism

360. See, e.g., Rebecca French, Shopping for Religion: The Change in Everyday Religious Practice
And Its Importance to the Law, 51 BUFF. L. REV. 127, 174–75 (2003) (“Perhaps more significant is the
fact that some social science studies show that the ‘private choice’ rhetoric hides social inequalities.”);
1229, 1240–41 (2003) (“[T]he new injection of market-style language and concepts into sectors such as
education, social services, and prisons assumes that competition and choice are pertinent, effective,
and better than governance by democratic and constitutional values.”); powell, supra note 244, at 680
(“We must reject a model of choice advocated by many reformists that mischaracterizes choice as un-
fettered, that conceives of choice being exercised by the individual, and that envisions only distributive
goals for participants. A new model of choice would view education as a public good. It would be
constructed around choice as a matter not just in the abstract, but in reality and as relational. Specifi-
cally, a new model would conceive of choice in terms of ability to participate, not only in terms of so-
cial resources but also in terms of the constitution of our society and ourselves. If all families are pro-
vided a list of schools that they can send their children to, but only half of those families in fact have
the capability of accessing those schools, the model is unjust. However, if the model contemplates
capability to exercise choice, it will move us closer to a just result.”); John R. Logan, Choosing Segre-
gation: Racial Imbalance in American Public Schools, 1990–2000, Lewis Mumford Center for Com-
parative Urban and Regional Research, University at Albany, at http://mumford1.dyndns.org/

361. See, e.g., Lesley H. Parker & Léonie J. Rennie, Teachers’ Implementation of Gender-
Inclusive Instructional Strategies in Single-Sex and Mixed-Sex Science Classrooms, 24 INT’L J. SCI.

362. See generally Levit, supra note 200.
in education should also include international experience with identity-based segregation, empirical evidence of student achievement, educational quality, and longitudinal social outcomes attached to race and gender resegregation in schools, and the possible stigmatic messages the segregation would send. Attempts to imbue segregation based on identity characteristics with sudden legitimacy must fail when viewed in light of their historical and social meaning.

Fifty years ago, in Brown v. Board of Education, the Supreme Court recognized that “[s]eparate educational facilities are inherently unequal.”363 The message is simple: official endorsement of segregation based on identity characteristics creates inequality. This country has insufficient distance from its segregative past and the ravages of those practices to vest separatism with new meaning. If the nation’s past offers any lesson, surely it is that government separation of equals will recreate the very inequality that so many have fought so hard to overcome.