

Pathways to Integration: Examining Changes in the Prevalence of Racially Integrated Neighborhoods

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Abstract: Few researchers have studied integrated neighborhoods, yet these neighborhoods offer an important window into broader patterns of segregation. We explore changes in racial integration in recent decades using decennial census tract data from 1990, 2000, and 2010. We begin by examining changes in the prevalence of racially integrated neighborhoods and find significant growth in the presence of integrated neighborhoods during this time period, with the share of metropolitan neighborhoods that are integrated increasing from just under 20 percent to just over 30 percent. We then shed light on the pathways through which these changes have occurred. We find both a small increase in the number of neighborhoods becoming integrated for the first time during this period and a more sizable increase in the share of integrated neighborhoods that remained integrated. Finally, we offer insights about which neighborhoods become integrated in the first place and which remain stably integrated over time.

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Introduction

While many scholars track patterns of racial segregation in metropolitan areas, very few have focused attention on racially integrated communities themselves. This lack of attention may be a consequence of the popular view in the United States that racial integration is extremely rare, and when it occurs, only temporary. In the years after World War II, many urban neighborhoods quickly transitioned from all-white to all-black. Thomas Schelling (1972) helped to explain this rapid tipping through a simple model of racial preferences. His model assumes that whites will continue to live in the community only as long as the black population remains below their individual tolerance threshold. As the most prejudiced whites leave, the proportion of black residents will rise above the tolerance threshold of the next most prejudiced white group, until the neighborhood becomes all black.

Equipped with Schelling's simple model, together with the empirical reality of rapid racial transition in the post-War era, most researchers have, until recently, viewed integration as a rare exception to the norm of racial homogeneity. Even the researchers that have studied integrated neighborhoods have tended to focus their case studies on communities that self-consciously work to maintain their diversity (Saltman, 1990; Keating, 1994; Nyden, Maly, and Lukehart 1997). The implied message of these studies is that without such robust, ongoing efforts to maintain integration, stably diverse communities would not exist.

Yet while our metropolitan areas remain highly segregated by race, racially integrated neighborhoods grew considerably more common between 1980 and 2000 (Ellen, 2000; Fassenfast, Booza, and Metzger, 2004; Rawlings et al, 2004; Ellen, 2007; Friedman, 2008; Easterly, 2009; Logan and Zhang, 2010; Farrell and Lee, 2011). Moreover, research suggests

that many of these integrated neighborhoods were not just temporarily mixed in the process of transitioning from all-white to all-minority, but were remaining integrated for years (Ellen, 1998; Ellen 2000; Rawlings et al, 2004; Ellen, 2007; Logan and Zhang, 2010). This literature does not extend past 2000, however; we do not know what has happened to the prevalence or stability of integrated neighborhoods more recently.

We aim to fill this gap using decennial census data from 1990, 2000, and 2010. We begin by examining changes in the prevalence of racially integrated neighborhoods in recent decades. We then shed light on the pathways through which these changes have occurred. Finally, we explore which neighborhoods become integrated in the first place and which remain stably integrated over time.

1. Background and Literature Review

Why Might Integration Become More Prevalent Over Time?

We can draw from the existing literature on segregation to identify some hypotheses about why racially integrated neighborhoods might increase in number. Note that integration can increase through two basic pathways – more neighborhoods can become integrated or a greater number of existing integrated neighborhoods can remain integrated over time. At a broad level, there are three factors that might lead to either changes in the number of neighborhoods becoming integrated or shifts in the stability of neighborhoods once they become integrated: demographic trends, shifts in income differences across racial groups, and changes in racial attitudes.

In terms of demographic shifts, an increase in the share of the population that belongs to a minority group will allow for more integration (at least up to the point where the minority group is no longer a minority). For example, if the population moves from all white to 80 percent white, the potential for integration surely increases. However, a larger minority population also provides the potential for minority groups to become more segregated, as their presence in neighborhoods is substantial enough to create concentrated minority neighborhoods (South et al., 2011). And white households may feel less comfortable living in integrated neighborhoods as the overall number of non-whites in their city or region grows.

There are also reasons to believe that integration will grow as the non-white population diversifies. Evidence from surveys suggest that whites are more comfortable sharing neighborhoods with Asians and Hispanics than they are sharing neighborhoods with blacks (Bobo and Zubrinsky 1996), while other research suggests that the segregation exhibited by non-black minorities is less persistent and easier to explain (Bayer, McMillan, and Rueben 2004).¹ Overall population growth and the accompanying new housing may also facilitate the emergence of integration, as newer communities do not have the same legacy of racial segregation or history of discriminatory housing practices (Farley and Frey, 1994; Logan et al, 2004; South et al, 2011).²

To the extent that income differences between racial groups contribute to racial segregation (Harsman and Quigley, 1995; Bayer et al, 2004), then reductions (or increases) in such gaps should lead to increases (or reductions) in the prevalence of integration. While the difference between the median income of non-white and white households has barely budged in

¹ Some have argued that whites feel more comfortable sharing their neighborhoods with blacks when the non-white population as a whole is more diverse (Frey and Farley, 1996).

² Similarly, greater fragmentation of the metropolitan area may provide more opportunities to segregate (South et al, 2011; Farley and Frey, 1994).

the past few decades,³ it is possible that the increased number of middle- and high-income minority households has allowed for more integration. In other words, there may be more overlap in the distributions of income by race and thus more overlap in the type of housing and neighborhoods accessible and attractive to different racial groups.⁴

Finally, shifts in racial attitudes may lead to shifts in neighborhood preferences (Clark, 1991; Harris 1999). There is considerable evidence that white households have grown more open to living in integrated neighborhoods over time (Farley et al, 1993; Bruch and Mare, 2006). Similarly, as racially integrated neighborhoods grow in number, more white residents may start to view integrated communities as viable options, creating something of a virtuous cycle.

Which Neighborhoods Become Integrated?

Few have studied the creation or emergence of integrated communities, but some of the same factors that explain shifts in the prevalence of integration over time (demographic patterns, racial attitudes, and racial differences in income) are also helpful in predicting variation across space. We would expect to see more integrated communities emerge in areas with more rapidly growing populations and minority populations in particular, more racially tolerant populations, and more similar incomes across racial groups.

In addition, given the research suggesting that minority households are more open to moving into largely white neighborhoods than white households are to moving into largely minority neighborhoods, we expect largely white neighborhoods to become integrated more commonly than largely minority neighborhoods (Bruch and Mare, 2006).

³ The ratio of black to non-Hispanic white household income was unchanged between 1972 and 2000, and the Hispanic to non-Hispanic white household income ratio declined only slightly from 0.74 to 0.69 (DeNavas-Walt et al, 2011).

⁴ The creation of larger, middle class minority groups could also provide an opportunity for greater segregation, through the creation of middle-class minority neighborhoods (Bayer et al, 2011).

Finally, the characteristics of the housing market in a metropolitan area may also influence the share of neighborhoods in an area that become integrated. For example, it is possible that racially homogenous neighborhoods will be more likely to transition to integrated communities when rapid price appreciation pushes white households to look beyond homogenous white neighborhoods, which could encourage integration of largely minority areas and also potentially open up opportunities for middle-income minority households to enter previously white neighborhoods.

Which Integrated Neighborhoods Remain Integrated Over Time?

There is a small body of research studying which integrated neighborhoods are likely to stay that way. Again, demographic trends, racial attitudes and income differences across racial groups are hypothesized as factors explaining differences across areas in the stability of integration. Empirically, white-black integrated tracts in metropolitan areas with smaller black populations are found to be more stable (Ellen, 2000), as are those in cities where white households have more tolerant racial attitudes (Card, Mas and Rothstein, 2008). Researchers also find evidence that the underlying growth of the minority population in a city or metropolitan area affects stability, as integrated neighborhoods are likely to ‘tip’ to largely minority more frequently when the minority population is growing (Ottensmann et al., 1990; Denton and Massey, 1991; Ellen, 2007). Interestingly, researchers find little evidence that the income or poverty of the neighborhood makes a difference in terms of stability (Steinnes, 1977; Logan and Stearns, 1981; Logan and Schneider, 1984; White, 1984; Galster and Keeney, 1993; Ellen, 2000).

As for other factors, Ellen (2000) posits a theory of race-based neighborhood stereotyping, suggesting that white households (and some non-white households too) tend to assume integrated neighborhoods will unravel and experience the type of structural decline that they associate with largely minority areas. Empirically, she finds some support in that the white population loss is smaller in the neighborhoods that white households expect to remain integrated in the future (those farther from the central area of black residence and that have experienced only modest growth in the minority population in the previous decade).⁵ Despite the lower mobility rates of homeowners, she also finds that white loss in integrated tracts during the 1980s was greater in neighborhoods with higher homeownership rates, perhaps because white homeowners, due to their financial stake in the community, are more sensitive to worries about the trajectory of conditions in a neighborhood than white renters (Ellen, 2000).

In this paper we add to this literature in several ways. First, we extend earlier work on the degree of integration to examine shifts in racial integration between 2000 and 2010, using 2010 Decennial Census Data. Second, unlike previous work, we study the specific pathways through which greater integration occurs, namely increases in the proportion of newly integrated neighborhoods, and increases in the stability of such neighborhoods once they are created. Third, we explore which non-integrated neighborhoods become integrated and which racially integrated neighborhoods are more likely to remain integrated over time.

2. Definitions

⁵ Lee and Wood (1991) also find evidence that distance to nearest tract with minority concentration is positively correlated with racial stability.

There is no single, widely-accepted definition of an integrated neighborhood. Drawing on past literature and taking into account recent demographic changes, we derive a set of definitions of neighborhood types. We use constant thresholds across the U.S. to define categories, rather than relative thresholds that vary depending on the racial composition of the individual metropolitan area. We make this choice because our definitions are aimed at capturing the experience of residents in the neighborhood; whether its composition is such that residents experience meaningful integration in their surrounding community. A neighborhood that is 98 percent white and 2 percent minority may be relatively diverse in an essentially all white metropolitan area, but it cannot be considered a meaningfully integrated community.

To start, all neighborhoods are categorized as either integrated or not, then further classified by the race and ethnicity of the groups with a significant presence. We define integrated neighborhoods as those shared by a significant number of non-Hispanic whites (who we simply call whites in the paper) and a significant number of individuals belonging to at least one minority racial group.⁶ We require the presence of whites because whites remain the dominant group in our society, and historically it is whites who have excluded and/or avoided living near members of minority groups. Thus, while a community lived in by blacks, Hispanics, and Asians may be highly diverse, we do not consider it to be integrated. Rather, we classify it as mixed minority. For computational ease, we divide the non-white population into three mutually exclusive groups: black, Hispanic, and Asian/other. Most of the individuals in the “Asian/other” category are Asian, but the category also includes non-Hispanic individuals who identify as a member of a racial group other than black, white, or Asian, such as Native-

⁶ For expositional ease, we refer to race and ethnicity grouping as ‘race.’

American.⁷ We group these individuals into a single, other race group in order to keep the number of neighborhood categories to a manageable number.

Specifically, we identify nine different neighborhood types (four integrated, and five not integrated):

Integrated	Not Integrated
White-Black	Predominantly White
White-Hispanic	Predominantly Black
White-Asian/other	Predominantly Hispanic
White- Multiple Minority	Predominantly Asian/other
	Mixed Minority

To be counted as ‘significantly present’ in a neighborhood, a group must comprise at least 20 percent of the population. Thus, an integrated white-black neighborhood is one in which at least 20 percent of the population is non-Hispanic white, at least 20 percent is black and Hispanics as well as Asian/others each comprise less than 20 percent of the population. A predominantly white neighborhood is one in which none of the three minority racial groups comprise 20 percent or more of the population. Technically, this means a neighborhood that is 43 percent white, 19 percent black, 19 percent Hispanic, and 19 percent Asian/other would be identified as ‘predominantly white.’ But in fact, all the predominantly white neighborhoods are majority white and most are overwhelmingly white; in 1990, the median predominantly white neighborhood was 93 percent non-Hispanic white, and 90 percent of white neighborhoods were at least 79 percent white. Similarly, all the predominantly minority tracts were also comprised

⁷ In all three decades, between 84 and 88 percent of the ‘Asian/other’ population is Asian.

overwhelmingly of that single minority group. Consider that the median predominantly black neighborhood in 1990 was 94 percent black, and 90 percent of predominantly black neighborhoods were more than 80 percent black.

This definition of integration, like any definition, is of course arbitrary to some degree, but when we experimented with different thresholds and definitions, we found that our key results were highly robust. (For example, we also experimented with using a lower threshold to capture non-white presence and a higher threshold to capture white presence, given the difference in their overall population shares, and still the overall trends were the same.)

Although we are using the term ‘race’ in this paper to indicate both race and Hispanic ethnicity, the Census actually asks respondents a separate question about Hispanic origin. We classify individuals who self-identify as Hispanic and black as black, but all other individuals who self-identify as Hispanic are coded as Hispanic. Another complicating factor is that starting in 2000, the Census allowed individuals to self-identify as belonging to multiple racial groups. We use the bridging method developed by Jeffrey Passel at the Urban Institute to categorize these multiracial respondents (GeoLytics 2002). Specifically, anyone who selects black as one of their racial groups is considered black (essentially applying the one drop of blood rule). Anyone who lists Asian (but *not* black) is categorized as Asian. Anyone who self-identifies as white (but does *not* also list black, Asian, or Pacific Islander) is considered to be white.

3. Data

Following most prior research, we use census tracts to proxy for neighborhoods. Census tracts include an average of about 4,000 people, and most include between 2,500 and 8,000

people. Some have argued that census tracts are too large to approximate neighborhoods and have advocated studying segregation at the block level instead (Farley and Frey 1994; Jargowsky 1997). To be sure, census tracts are not perfect representations of neighborhoods, and presumably fewer neighborhoods would appear integrated if we used a smaller level of geography. Nonetheless, census tracts are probably closer in size to what most people view as a neighborhood than individual blocks, and far more data are available at the tract-level than at the level of the block.

This study relies on the Neighborhood Change Database (NCDB) developed by GeoLytics and the Urban Institute for data on 1990 and 2000 census tracts, together with decennial census data from 2010. The NCDB draws on census tract data from the decennial census for 1970, 1980, 1990 and 2000. It covers all census tracts in the U.S. In addition to individual files for each of these four census years, the NCDB also includes a longitudinal file of census tracts with fixed boundaries, in which 1970, 1980, and 1990 census tract data are remapped to Census 2000 tract boundaries. We use this dataset, as it is particularly useful for examining changes in the composition of census tracts that are not driven by alterations in boundaries. We limit our analysis to census tracts in metropolitan areas, and we omit any census tracts with fewer than 200 residents or if more than half of its population lived in group quarters in either 1990 or 2000.

We rely on the weights provided in the correspondence file provided by the Census Bureau to link the 2010 census tract data back to 2000 tract boundaries. To account for error in matching data, we omit tracts that experienced extremely large reductions or increases in population between 2000 and 2010. (Specifically, we rank neighborhoods according to

population change and omit the top and bottom one percent.) In total, our sample includes 49,074 tracts, spread across 331 metropolitan areas.

4. Prevalence of Racial Integration

Our first question is simply how many neighborhoods are racially integrated, and how that number has changed in the past two decades. As shown in Table 1, 30 percent of metropolitan neighborhoods in the United States (or just over 14,600 census tracts) were racially integrated in 2010, according to our definitions. Most of these neighborhoods were white-black or white-Hispanic; these two types of neighborhoods together accounted for about three quarters of all integrated neighborhoods. Table 1 also shows that integration has become more common in the past twenty years. In 1990, just under 20 percent of metropolitan neighborhoods were racially integrated. That share then rose to 25 percent in 2000 and 30 percent in 2010.⁸ Not all types of integrated neighborhoods have seen the same rate of growth. The proportion of neighborhoods shared by black and white residents grew between 1990 and 2000 but then remained similar between 2000 and 2010, while the proportions of other types of integrated neighborhoods increased steadily in both decades. To some extent, this growth may simply reflect the underlying growth in Hispanic and Asian populations. The proportion Hispanic living in all tracts in our sample nearly doubled between 1990 and 2010, rising from 10.2 percent of the population to 18.3 percent, while the share Asian/other rose from 4.0 percent to 7.5 percent.

When examining who lives in integrated neighborhoods (numbers not shown), we find that white households are much less likely than minority households to live in such communities. Only 24 percent of white households lived in integrated neighborhoods in 2010, as compared to

⁸ We obtain nearly identical percentages when weighting by population, in each decade.

39 percent of black households, 42 percent of Hispanic households and 44 percent of Asian/other households. However, white households have experienced a larger jump in integration than minority households. The share of whites living in integrated tracts rose from 14 percent in 1990 to 24 percent in 2010 while the share of blacks living in integrated tracts rose from 34 percent to 39 percent, and the share of Hispanics in integrated tracts inched up from 40 percent to 42 percent.

In terms of regions, perhaps not surprisingly, Table 2 shows that integration was most common in the West; indeed, by 2010, 41.3 percent of census tracts in the Western Census region were racially integrated. The Midwest was the least integrated region, with only 20.1 percent of census tracts in the region classified as integrated. Notably, despite the great variation in the extent of racial integration, the prevalence of integration increased in all four regions between 1990 and 2010, and the relative ranking remained the same.

The table also shows the share of neighborhoods that are integrated separately for central city and suburban neighborhoods. A significantly greater share of central city neighborhoods are integrated in each year. In 2010, for example, 36.5 percent of central city neighborhoods were racially integrated as compared to just 25.7 percent of suburban neighborhoods. But integration became more common in both suburban and central city areas during our time period.

5. Pathways to Integration

As noted, such an increase in the prevalence of integrated neighborhoods can occur in two ways: a larger share of homogeneous neighborhoods may become integrated, and/or more

integrated neighborhoods may remain integrated.⁹ We find that both of these channels to integration increased between the 1990s and the 2000s. Table 3a shows that four of our five types of non-integrated neighborhoods were more likely to become integrated between 2000 and 2010 than they were between 1990 and 2000. While most increases were fairly modest, the increase for largely black neighborhoods was dramatic. Although only 5.5 percent of them became integrated between 2000 and 2010, this was up from only 1.8 percent in the 1990s. In absolute numbers, 173 largely black neighborhoods became integrated between 2000 and 2010, up from just 54 census tracts between 1990 and 2000. Interestingly, most of the increase came from neighborhoods in the South.

Despite this shift, predominantly white neighborhoods remained far more likely to become integrated than largely minority neighborhoods. Between 2000 and 2010, 15.0 percent of predominantly white neighborhoods became integrated, as compared to only 5.5 percent of black neighborhoods, 3.4 percent of Hispanic neighborhoods, 6.4 percent of Asian/other neighborhoods and 4.9 percent of mixed minority neighborhoods. Thus, despite media attention to the entry of young whites into a few urban, minority neighborhoods, integration still results overwhelmingly from the in-movement of minority households to largely white neighborhoods. Indeed, of all racially integrated neighborhoods that were newly integrated in 2010, 93 percent of them were white neighborhoods in 2000.¹⁰

The regional variation presented in Table 3b is striking. In the West, 18.8 percent of non-integrated neighborhoods became integrated between 2000 and 2010, compared to 16.3 percent

⁹ In addition, the number of neighborhoods may change, and more of these ‘new’ neighborhoods may be integrated from the start. Note, we have done our analysis when controlling for the number of neighborhoods, and get the exact same pattern; the increased prevalence of integrated neighborhoods is not driven by new census tract designations.

¹⁰ This share was actually down from 2000; of all racially integrated neighborhoods that were newly integrated in 2000, 97.5 percent of them were white neighborhoods in 1990.

in the South, 9.3 percent in the Northeast, and just 8.6 percent in the Midwest. The small increase in such transitions primarily occurred in the Midwest and South. Despite these differences, in all four regions, over 90 percent of newly integrated neighborhoods in 2010 started off as white neighborhoods in 2000.

We next turn to the stability of integrated neighborhoods over this time period. Table 4 reports the share of neighborhoods in each of our four categories of integrated neighborhoods that remain integrated at the end of the decade. The first column shows the results for the 1990-2000 decade, and the second column for 2000-2010.

There are two key observations to glean from this table. First, integrated neighborhoods look fairly stable in each decade. We see that the overwhelming majority of neighborhoods that begin a decade as integrated end the decade as integrated, for both decades. Second, a noticeably larger share of each category of integrated neighborhood remained integrated between 2000 and 2010 than between 1990 and 2000. Of the neighborhoods that were white-black integrated in 1990, 78.6 percent remained integrated ten years later. That share rose to 82.6 percent between 2000 and 2010. White-Hispanic neighborhoods were similarly stable. Between 1990 and 2000, 78.8 percent remained integrated, while 82.7 percent remained integrated between 2000 and 2010. The increases over this time period were even more striking for white-other and white-mixed neighborhoods, with the share of the former neighborhoods remaining integrated rising from 82.8 to 89.4 percent, and share of the latter neighborhoods remaining integrated rising from 50.0 percent to 64.0 percent.

Despite this substantial increase in stability, white-mixed neighborhoods were considerably less likely to remain integrated than other integrated neighborhoods, probably because the baseline proportion of whites in integrated, white-mixed tracts is considerably lower.

In 2000, the average white-mixed neighborhood was 34 percent white, while the average white-black neighborhood was 51.8 percent white. Hence it takes a much smaller decline in the white population for a typical white-mixed neighborhood to transition to an all-minority neighborhood than for a white-black neighborhood to transition.

To avoid this boundary problem, and in recognition that the primary avenue through which integrated neighborhoods transition to not integrated is through declines in the share of the population that is white, Table 5 shows changes in percentage non-Hispanic white across decades for each of our integrated neighborhood categories. Of course, this loss in percentage white could be driven as much by rapid growth of the minority population as by flight or loss of white residents. In terms of overall trends (column 1), the percentage white fell in all types of integrated tracts in both decades, but the loss in percentage white was lower in each type of integrated neighborhood between 2000 and 2010 than during the 1990s. The mean loss in percent non-Hispanic white in white-black integrated tracts, for example, was 8.2 percentage points between 2000 and 2010 as compared to 10.9 percentage points during the 1990s. And even when accounting for changes in the overall rate of white loss in metropolitan areas, integrated tracts still appear to be more stable between 2000 and 2010 than they were during the 1990s.¹¹

The remaining three columns provide more detailed information on the distribution of neighborhoods within each of our categories by the change in percent white. The numbers show that a substantial majority of all types of integrated tracts experienced a 5 percentage point or greater decline in percentage white, and thus were at risk of not remaining integrated over time.

¹¹ The overall loss in percentage non-Hispanic white in our metropolitan census tracts was very similar over the decades, dropping very slightly from a 6.8 percentage point decline during the 1990s, to a 6.5 percentage point decline during the 2000s.

Once again, however, a smaller proportion of integrated neighborhoods experience a significant loss in percentage white between 2000 and 2010 than during the 1990s.

In summary, we see an increase in both pathways to racial integration between the 1990s and the 2000s. However, the shift over time is more dramatic for the proportion of neighborhoods *remaining* integrated than it is for the proportion of neighborhoods *becoming* integrated.

6. Which Neighborhoods Become Integrated?

As noted, there is almost no research that examines which neighborhoods *become* integrated in the first place. We first focus on the predominantly black neighborhoods that became integrated in the 2000s, as this group of non-integrated tracts experienced the largest increase in the share becoming integrated. Table 6 compares the baseline characteristics of largely black neighborhoods in 2000 that experienced a gain in percent white of at least five percentage points over the subsequent decade (and thus were moving towards integration) and those that did not.¹² (Note that when we examine changes in the absolute numbers of white residents, we see that the white population actually grew significantly in the integrating tracts; it was not simply the case that they lost black residents.) Perhaps surprisingly, there was virtually no baseline difference in the proportion of black residents across the two types of tracts. Perhaps even more surprising (given racial differences in income), the neighborhoods that moved towards integration started the decade with higher poverty rates and lower incomes. Middle class black neighborhoods, in other words, are not the neighborhoods most likely to diversify.

¹² Results are largely the same when we look at the 1990s.

Indeed, the largely black neighborhoods that gained white population share would be classified as high poverty, with average poverty rates of 31 percent. This suggests that the growth of the black middle class does not explain the increased integration of black neighborhoods.

We find more support for other theories about entry to integration. In particular, the black neighborhoods that moved towards integration have lower homeownership rates, consistent with the notion of race-based, neighborhood stereotyping, as white renters will feel they face less at risk in entering a largely black community (Ellen, 2000). The communities that become more integrated also have fewer families with children, perhaps suggesting that white households are more open to entering largely black neighborhoods when those neighborhoods (or they) have fewer children. The neighborhoods where white populations grew also tended to experience gains in median income and in the share of residents with college degrees, suggesting an economic transition as well as a racial one (exhibiting patterns of transition typically associated with gentrification).

In terms of broader metropolitan features, the black neighborhoods where white population grew were typically located in more rapidly growing metropolitan areas (including growing minority populations) but not specifically areas with higher housing appreciation. The black neighborhoods that became more white were, however, more likely to be located in the central city than other black neighborhoods.

Given that so many more integrated neighborhoods started off as largely white, it is arguably more important to study the characteristics of the largely white neighborhoods that became integrated. Table 7 compares the 2000 baseline characteristics of largely white neighborhoods that experienced a loss in percent white of at least five percentage points in the subsequent decade (thus moving towards integration) and those that did not, as well as selected

contemporaneous changes.¹³ In this case, we see few notable differences across income and socioeconomic status. Largely white tracts that experience a loss in percent white start off slightly less white and with slightly lower incomes, but otherwise there are few clear differences, other than a somewhat lower rate of homeownership and a shorter distance to largely minority neighborhoods. Notably, there was little difference in the economic trajectory in the two groups of neighborhoods either; the contemporaneous income changes in the neighborhoods that lost white population share are almost identical to those in the neighborhoods that did not.

Consistent with the predictions above, white tracts that are experiencing these losses in white population share and moving towards integration tend to be in metropolitan areas experiencing greater population growth (overall and in their minority population) and greater increases in housing costs than other white tracts. In addition, white tracts that experience a decline in percentage white are more often located in the central city.

7. Which Integrated Neighborhoods Remain Integrated?

Another key question that remains unanswered is which neighborhoods remain integrated over time. To answer this question, Table 8a and Table 8b compare the characteristics of racially integrated neighborhoods (white-black and white-Hispanic, respectively) in 2000 that experience a loss in white population share of at least five percentage points between 2000 and 2010 (neighborhoods on a path towards becoming largely minority) to those of integrated neighborhoods with stable white populations, and finally to those of integrated neighborhoods that experienced a gain in percent white of at least five percentage points (a smaller group, but

¹³ It is worth noting that the loss in share white is driven heavily by the growth in the absolute size of the minority populations. The actual size of the white population barely declines in these neighborhoods, while overall population growth is quite high.

neighborhoods potentially on a path towards becoming largely white).¹⁴ We distinguish the two paths out of integration, as they may well be driven by different factors, though notably many more tracts experience reductions in percentage white than increases. The first panel shows white-black integrated neighborhoods while the second panel shows white-Hispanic neighborhoods.¹⁵ The results are quite consistent across the two types of integrated neighborhoods.

We begin by contrasting integrated neighborhoods that experience a loss in percentage white with other integrated neighborhoods. Notably, integrated neighborhoods experiencing a loss in white population share do not have a larger share of non-whites at the start of the decade than neighborhoods where the white population is stable. Indeed, for white-Hispanic neighborhoods, the share Hispanic is lower. Contrary to Schelling's canonical model then, the loss of whites from these neighborhoods does not appear to be triggered by the size of the minority population reaching some tipping point. In the Hispanic-white tracts, we also see that tracts with more stable white populations have a larger foreign-born population than tracts that lose white households. Whites do not seem to be avoiding immigrants.

The differences in socioeconomic status overall are small and mixed. Tracts with stable or growing white populations tend to have higher poverty rates but more residents with college degrees. While income differences for whites across these types of tracts are small, minority incomes are much higher in tracts that experience a loss in percentage white (numbers not in table). As a result, the tracts with stable or growing white populations have minority-white income ratios that are further from one. In other words, contrary to theoretical predictions, it is the tracts in which whites and nonwhites have more divergent incomes that are more likely to

¹⁴ Results are fairly similar when we replicate the analysis for integrated tracts in 1990.

¹⁵ We focus on these two categories of integrated neighborhoods as these are the most common.

retain and attract whites. It may be that the non-white residents in these neighborhoods are living in pockets that are less affluent and cut-off from the white part of the community. In terms of neighborhoods where percentage white declines, much of this may be driven by a growth in the middle class minority residents who are attracted to middle-class, integrated communities.¹⁶ Consider that the average income of black households (not shown in table) is highest in neighborhoods that experience a decline in percentage white, and these neighborhoods experienced a large increase in their black populations over the decade.

As predicted, past growth in the minority population is highly correlated with white losses in the current decade, perhaps because white households have little faith that those neighborhoods will remain integrated over time. Distance to minority tracts is also smaller for tracts that lost whites than for those that remained racially stable, either contributing to fears of instability for whites, or increasing the desirability of such neighborhood for minorities.

The results are primarily consistent with the idea that households with a greater stake in the community will be more wary of integration, although perhaps surprisingly more so for white-Hispanic tracts. Tracts that retain or gain whites are generally those in which a smaller share of housing units are owner-occupied and a smaller share of households have children. Within white-black tracts, the real difference is that these shares are noticeably lower in the small number of tracts that actually gain whites.

Note the differential in the share of households with children holds for both white and non-white households. The fact that the minority households living in tracts that retain or gain whites also have fewer children may suggest that white households are more uneasy with integration when more of their neighbors have children. Of course, it could also be true that

¹⁶ This is consistent with Bayer, Fang and McMillan (2011) who find that as the share of blacks with higher levels of education increases in a metropolitan area, a greater share of these households are more likely to choose to live in middle-income black neighborhoods.

white households stay away from these neighborhoods because they have fewer services and amenities geared to children.

As for the broader city/metropolitan area, integrated neighborhoods that experienced a loss in percentage white were located in metropolitan areas with more rapidly growing minority and total populations. Counter to expectations, we see no meaningful difference in the baseline metropolitan racial segregation across these types of integrated tracts and no difference in the degree of house price appreciation.

Only seven percent of neighborhoods that were integrated in 2000 experienced a gain in percentage white of more than five percentage points (during a decade when the average change in percentage white in metropolitan tracts was *negative* 6.5 percentage points). It is worth noting a few features of these neighborhoods. First, they started off with a larger minority population share and higher poverty rates than either of the other two groups of integrated tracts. Second, as noted, the homeownership rate is quite low in these tracts, as is the share of households with children. Third, these neighborhoods experience both a large increase in absolute size of the white population and a decline in the minority population, so these are neighborhoods whose composition is changing greatly.

In terms of larger area characteristics, the tracts with growing white population shares tend to be located in metropolitan areas that experienced slower growth in both the total and the minority populations. The lack of differences with respect to housing appreciation may be surprising, since the rest of the pattern is quite consistent with gentrification. Perhaps the most notable difference is that over 80 percent of integrated neighborhoods that attracted whites were located in central cities, as compared to only about half of those that lost or retained whites.

Further, these tracts are much closer to a largely minority tract (also a sign of central location) than the integrated tracts that maintained their racial composition.

8. Conclusion

We address three distinct research questions in this analysis. First we explore how prevalent racially integrated neighborhoods have become from 1990 through 2010. We find significant growth in the presence of integrated neighborhoods during this time period, with the share of metropolitan tracts that are integrated increasing from just under 20 percent to just over 30 percent. To some extent this increased prevalence may simply be a by-product of growth in the Hispanic and Asian populations. Both of these populations nearly doubled during our study period. But the proportion of neighborhoods shared by blacks and whites also increased during this period, even though the black population did not experience a similar growth rate to the other minority groups.

Second we examine the pathways through which integration has increased. We find both a small increase in the number of neighborhoods becoming integrated for the first time during this period and a more sizable increase in the share of integrated neighborhoods that remained integrated. We observe a particularly large increase in the share of black neighborhoods that became integrated in the 2000s, though the overall share remains small. The overwhelming majority of tracts that were newly integrated in 2010 began the decade as primarily white. Thus, despite growing attention to the gentrification of largely black neighborhoods, this path to integration remains lightly tread.

Examining the stability of racial integration, we find that in both decades integration appears fairly stable, but a larger share of each category of integrated neighborhood remained so during the 2000s than in the 1990s. Most of our types of integrated neighborhoods experienced very high rates of stability, with the share remaining integrated growing from 77 percent in the 1990s to 81 percent in the 2000s.

Third we shed some light on the types of neighborhoods that become integrated and remain so over time. Focusing on the types of black neighborhoods that attracted white residents, we find that these were not middle-class minority neighborhoods, but rather neighborhoods that had initially higher poverty rates and lower levels of income. Also, consistent with the theory of race-based neighborhood stereotyping, these are neighborhoods with lower homeownership rates, as renters are less likely to worry about a community's future. Finally, the largely black neighborhoods that attract whites start off with fewer families with children, suggesting that white households may be more open to sharing neighborhoods with non-white neighbors when those neighbors do not have children. As for the predominantly white neighborhoods that moved towards integration, we find few evident patterns.

Finally exploring the types of integrated neighborhoods that retain or attract whites, we find, perhaps surprisingly, that they are those in which white and non-white residents have more divergent incomes. The pessimistic interpretation is that whites are more comfortable sharing neighborhoods with non-whites when their non-white neighbors are living in a less affluent corner of their neighborhood. However, recall that the loss in percentage white can be driven by either a loss in white population or a gain in the minority population (or some combination). Thus, it is also possible that integrated tracts with more similar incomes across races lose white population share because of heightened demand among middle class minority households. In

addition, consistent with the notion of race-based neighborhood stereotyping, the integrated tracts that retain (for white-Hispanic tracts) or attract whites (both white-Hispanic and white-black tracts) appear to be those that households believe will remain stable in the future based on past trends and those that house residents with a lesser stake in the quality of a community's services (notably renters and households without children).

In the most recent decade, a small share of integrated tracts actually experienced a meaningful gain in percentage white. While the numbers are still small, this pattern suggests that some integrated neighborhoods may unravel by becoming more white. These tracts were overwhelmingly located in central cities and closer to largely minority neighborhoods, perhaps suggesting a pattern of gentrification. Indeed, the neighborhoods that gained whites saw reductions in poverty and increases in college-educated residents.

In sum, while our cities and metropolitan areas remain highly segregated by race, a growing number of neighborhoods are integrated and remaining so over time. This work has also provided some stylized facts on the types of neighborhoods that are becoming and remaining integrated over time, but more work is needed to understand these pathways.

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Table 1 Racial Composition of Neighborhoods 1990-2010

	<i>Overall Share</i>		
	<i>1990</i>	<i>2000</i>	<i>2010</i>
<i>Neighborhood Type</i>			
White-Black	9.1%	10.1%	10.1%
White-Hispanic	7.7%	10.0%	12.9%
White-Asian/other	1.4%	2.5%	3.4%
White-Mixed	1.5%	2.6%	3.8%
<i>Subtotal, Integrated:</i>	<i>19.7%</i>	<i>25.2%</i>	<i>30.3%</i>
White	69.6%	60.5%	52.3%
Black	6.0%	6.9%	6.9%
Hispanic	2.3%	3.7%	5.5%
Asian/other	0.3%	0.5%	0.6%
Mixed-Minority	2.2%	3.4%	4.5%
<i>Subtotal, Not Integrated:</i>	<i>80.4%</i>	<i>74.8%</i>	<i>69.8%</i>
<i>Total</i>	<i>49,074</i>	<i>49,074</i>	<i>49,074</i>

Table 2: Share of Tracts that are Integrated by City/Suburb and Census Region, 1990-2010

	<i>Overall Share in Region</i>		
	<i>1990</i>	<i>2000</i>	<i>2010</i>
Northeast	12.4%	17.2%	21.0%
Midwest	11.5%	15.9%	20.1%
South	24.8%	30.7%	36.5%
West	28.1%	35.0%	41.3%
Central City	26.4%	32.5%	36.5%
Suburb	14.8%	19.9%	25.7%

Table 3a: Transitions to Integration

	% Integrated at Decade End	
	2000	2010
<i>Neighborhood Type in Base Year</i>		
White	14.1%	15.0%
Black	1.8%	5.5%
Hispanic	3.7%	3.4%
Asian/other	5.0%	6.4%
Mixed-Minority	2.2%	4.9%
<i>All Non-Integrated</i>	<i>12.6%</i>	<i>12.9%</i>

Table 3b: Non-Integrated Neighborhoods that Transition to Integrated by Region

	% Integrated at Decade End	
	2000	2010
Northeast	9.2%	9.3%
Midwest	7.7%	8.6%
South	15.3%	16.3%
West	18.8%	18.8%

Table 4: Stability of Integration

	% Integrated at End of Decade	
	2000	2010
<i>Neighborhood Type in Base Year</i>		
White-Black	78.6%	82.6%
White-Hispanic	78.8%	82.7%
White-Asian/other	82.8%	89.4%
White-Mixed	50.0%	64.0%
<i>All Integrated</i>	<i>76.8%</i>	<i>81.6%</i>

Table 5: Change in Percentage Non-Hispanic White in Integrated Neighborhoods

<i>1990 to 2000</i>				
Distribution of Tracts by Change in % White				
	Mean Change in % White	% White Falls > 5 percentage points	% White Stable	% White Grows > 5 percentage points
<i>Neighborhood Type, 1990</i>				
White-Black	-10.9	66.3%	24.8%	8.8%
White-Hispanic	-14.0	80.1%	14.4%	5.6%
White-Asian/other	-12.8	80.9%	16.2%	2.9%
White-Mixed	-12.0	80.4%	14.1%	5.5%
<i>2000 to 2010</i>				
Distribution of Tracts by Change in % White				
	Mean Change in % White	% White Falls > 5 percentage points	% White Stable	% White Grows < 5 percentage points
<i>Neighborhood Type, 2000</i>				
White-Black	-8.2	61.7%	29.0%	9.3%
White-Hispanic	-10.4	78.2%	16.1%	5.7%
White-Asian/other	-9.8	76.7%	20.9%	2.4%
White-Mixed	-8.1	71.6%	21.4%	7.0%

Table 6 Characteristics of Predominantly Black Neighborhoods

2000 Characteristics by Shift from 2000 to 2010		
	% White Increases by ≥ 5 percentage points	% White Falls or Increases by < 5 percentage points
<i>Baseline Neighborhood Characteristics</i>		
% Black	86.3%	88.9%
% Poverty	30.7%	25.2%
% College	14.1%	12.7%
% Homeowners	33.8%	49.9%
% With Children	31.9%	38.0%
% Foreign Born	11.4%	9.2%
Median Household Income	\$31,438	\$38,081
<i>Contemporaneous Neighborhood Changes (2000-2005/2009)</i>		
Change Poverty Rate	-1.6%	1.5%
Change % College	10.5%	2.2%
Change Median Income	\$2,786	-\$2,630
<i>Baseline MSA Characteristics</i>		
Share of tracts in central city	93.8%	81.8%
Minority-white segregation	0.60	0.61
<i>Contemporaneous MSA Changes (2000-2010)</i>		
Overall population change	7.1%	5.5%
Growth in minority population	21.3%	19.3%
House price appreciation (2000-2006)	43.2%	44.4%
N	384	2,990

Table 7 Baseline Characteristics of Predominantly White Neighborhoods

2000 Characteristics by Shift from 2000 to 2010		
	% White Decreases by ≥ 5 percentage points	% White Increases or Falls by < 5 percentage points
<i>Baseline Neighborhood Characteristics</i>		
% White	83.9%	91.7%
% Poverty	7.4%	7.0%
% College	30.4%	31.8%
% Homeowners	69.1%	75.1%
% With Children	29.5%	30.2%
% Foreign Born	8.8%	5.3%
Median Household Income	\$65,798	\$68,418
Distance to nearest minority tract (miles)	8.5	12.6
<i>Contemporaneous Neighborhood Changes (2000-2005/2009)</i>		
Change Poverty Rate	1.9%	1.2%
Change % College	2.9%	3.4%
Change Median Income	-\$2,215	-\$1,088
<i>Baseline MSA Characteristics</i>		
Share of Tracts in Central City	34%	23%
Minority-white segregation	0.55	0.57
<i>Contemporaneous MSA Changes (2000-2010)</i>		
Overall Population Change	8.7%	5.8%
Growth in minority population	31.4%	27.6%
House price appreciation (2000-2006)	67.0%	54.0%
N	15,891	13,782

Table 8a Characteristics of White-Black Integrated Tracts, by Change in White Population (2000-2010)

	Shifts Between 2000-2010		
	Loss in % White > 5 percentage points	Stable % White	Gain in % White > 5 percentage points
<i>Baseline Neighborhood Characteristics</i>			
Share White	52.1%	53.0%	43.9%
Share Black	38.6%	39.5%	45.8%
Share Hispanic	5.6%	4.4%	6.2%
Share Asian/other	3.8%	3.1%	4.1%
Share Foreign Born	8.4%	6.4%	9.0%
Share Poverty	14.2%	18.0%	21.9%
Share College Degree	20.8%	21.7%	30.0%
Black/White Income Ratio	0.87	0.73	0.62
Share of White Households with Children	25.9%	26.4%	19.6%
Share of Black Households with Children	44.9%	36.7%	30.8%
Homeownership rate	57.1%	56.0%	40.5%
Distance to nearest minority tract (in miles)	4.2	8.0	4.4
<i>Lag Neighborhood Changes (1990-2000)</i>			
Percentage Point Change Share Black	14.6	2.7	-1.3
<i>Contemporaneous Neighborhood Changes (2000-2005/2009)</i>			
Change Poverty Rate	3.4%	1.2%	-1.3%
Change % College	1.5%	3.7%	9.5%
Change Median Income	-\$10,387	-\$7,403	-\$1,348
<i>Baseline MSA Characteristics</i>			
Share of Tracts in Central City	54.4%	53.2%	80.5%
Minority-white segregation	0.57	0.56	0.56
<i>Contemporaneous MSA Changes (2000-2010)</i>			
Overall Population Change	9.4%	7.8%	8.3%
Growth in minority population	30.5%	27.4%	27.2%
House price appreciation (2000-2006)	47.7%	50.1%	49.8%
N	3,060	1,441	461

Table 8b Characteristics of White-Hispanic Integrated Tracts, by Change in White Population (2000-2010)

	Shifts Between 2000-2010		
	Loss in % White > 5 percentage points	Stable % White	Gain in % White > 5 percentage points
<i>Baseline Neighborhood Characteristics</i>			
Share White	48.5%	45.4%	42.1%
Share Black	6.5%	5.8%	6.5%
Share Hispanic	39.2%	42.6%	45.4%
Share Asian/other	5.8%	6.2%	6.0%
Share Foreign Born	22.5%	27.6%	30.4%
Share Poverty	14.6%	18.5%	20.5%
Share College Degree	17.4%	22.6%	28.5%
Hispanic/White Income Ratio	0.88	0.78	0.74
Share of White Households with Children	32.1%	26.5%	20.1%
Share of Hispanic Households with Children	57.1%	50.3%	45.5%
Homeownership rate	56.9%	44.0%	32.6%
Distance to nearest minority tract (in miles)	4.7	5.5	3.0
<i>Lag Neighborhood Changes (1990-2000)</i>			
Percentage Point Change Share Hispanic	15.2	9.7	2.4
<i>Contemporaneous Neighborhood Changes (2000-2005/2009)</i>			
Change Poverty Rate	1.8%	-0.5%	-2.5%
Change % College	1.7%	5.1%	12.1%
Change Median Income	-\$7,825	-\$4,265	-\$1,764
<i>Baseline MSA Characteristics</i>			
Share of Tracts in Central City	46.5%	61.5%	84.2%
Minority-white segregation	0.53	0.55	0.58
<i>Contemporaneous MSA Changes (2000-2010)</i>			
Overall Population Change	11.2%	7.7%	6.5%
Growth in minority population	28.0%	20.0%	18.6%
House price appreciation (2000-2006)	99.7%	88.2%	94.4%
N	3,847	792	278