



FACT SHEET

Poverty & Race Research Action Council Op-Ed: Supporting Integrative Choices

Summary: Written by Ingrid Gould Ellen and published by the Poverty & Race Research Action Council, this article discusses different strategies to encourage neighborhood racial integration. Growing out of testimony Professor Ellen gave to the National Commission on Fair Housing and Equal Opportunity, the article considers several different options that could help bring about more racially diverse neighborhoods. Professor Ellen concludes that non-coercive strategies could be used to encourage households to consider a broader set of residential options, fostering racial integration in the process.

Ingrid Gould Ellen (October 2008). *Poverty & Race Newsletter – Poverty & Race Research Action Council*. Retrieved from http://prrac.org/full_text.php?text_id=1191&item_id=11273&newsletter_id=101&header=Housing&kc=1.

Key Findings and Supporting Research:

- Due to negative stereotypes, white households tend to believe that black-white integrated neighborhoods have poor schools and high rates of decay and crime.
- Neighborhood segregation continues to contribute to racial differences in quality of life indicators, such as education, health, housing, and labor market outcomes.
- Several studies also suggest that white families living in racially segregated communities typically become more racially tolerant.
- Findings show that racial segregation is harmful not only to minority households, but also to society as a whole.
- Many white and black households may actually prefer to live in racially integrated communities, but because of a belief that mixed neighborhoods are unstable, fewer communities actually exist.

Policy Suggestions:

- Most policy discussions about racial segregation focus on housing market discrimination rather than on other external factors. Effective policy suggestions fall into three broad categories: providing accurate information, making the choice of a mixed neighborhood more appealing in low-cost ways, and changing the “architecture of choice.”
- Using web-based information systems to provide more accurate information about neighborhood conditions, including school quality and crime, can help dispel neighborhood stereotypes.
- Making low-cost upgrades to racially diverse neighborhoods to fight blight and superficial signs of decay can help encourage white households to consider integrating into communities they might otherwise avoid.
- Diversity in neighborhoods could be increased by providing incentives for realtors to show homes to clients in neighborhoods where they are racially under-represented.
- A traditional television advertising campaign can help promote the benefits of mixed neighborhoods.
- Encouraging Section 8 voucher recipients to use their vouchers in low-poverty Section 8 neighborhoods could lead to increased diversification in low-poverty communities.