CREATING DIVERSITY, MANAGING INTEGRATION

By

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ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION

Creating Diversity, Managing Integration

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This dissertation builds on two years of data collection in five schools to advance understanding of school integration policies. I interrogate how legal changes that restrict the use of race and ethnic criteria in school admissions intersect with bottom-up changes in how policymakers, advocates, and school community members talk about and understand integration to inform how school integration policies evolve on-the-ground. I study the Diversity in Admissions (DIA) pilot in New York City's public elementary schools. The DIA is a voluntary policy program that sets-aside seats each year for students entering pre-kindergarten and kindergarten classes based on varying economic and language criteria. The aim of the program is to halt or reverse a process through which schools that traditionally served low income students of color now serve growing numbers of more affluent white students as a result of gentrification in their communities. I evaluate the DIA pilot in two ways. First, I ask whether schools see changes to their racial, ethnic, and economic composition. Second, I ask whether schools create substantive integration and inclusion, meaning an environment where families of all backgrounds feel welcomed and enfranchised and that works towards equity among students and families. I study these issues in three articles. The first article examines the numeric outcomes the DIA pilot has in different schools in the first two years after

implementation. I explain why one school was able to increase the share of low-income students while another school faced substantial challenges in meeting the policy's goals. In the second article I analyze how school administration and parental leadership manage school policy-related conflicts in the period after implementation. I explore how managing school integration informs the management of other contentions in the school. In the third article I study the work of parents' diversity committees in two schools and contrast between actions that sustain existing social hierarchies in the school and actions that undermine the privilege of white families and students. Together, the three articles contribute to our understanding of school integration policies and have important policy implications. They show that school integration policies have yet to accommodate the existing legal restrictions in a constructive way. They also show that the common assumption in the field of education that school choice hinders school integration should be reevaluated in the context of gentrification. My study also suggests that school integration requires a nuanced approach to families' racial, ethnic, and economic backgrounds. School should be both attuned to how these backgrounds shape parents' engagement but also sensitive to the ways in which parents' attitudes and grievances are independent of their demography. Finally, my study suggests conditions under which a political motivation to question existing social hierarchies can potentially translate into school practices that undermine racial and economic privileges. These contributions offer guidelines both to policymakers who shape integration policies and to communities that are interested in integration and inclusion as to how to achieve their goals.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

DEDICATION

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INTRODUCTION

School racial, ethnic, and economic integration in the United States is at an historical crossroads. On the one hand, scholars have termed our time as the era of school re-segregation (Fiel 2013; Logan, Zhang, and Oakley 2017; Orfield 2001; Reardon et al. 2012). Trends of school desegregation that followed Brown vs. Board of Education have ended. In the past two decades, most school districts that were under mandated court orders to integrate have been released from court supervision (Fiel and Zhang Forthcoming). Desegregation of students across schools and school districts have halted, and some argue that they have reversed (Reardon and Owens 2014). Economic segregation of students between schools is on the rise (Owens, Reardon, and Jencks 2016). And the Courts have increasingly curtailed the reach of public school integration policies, and specifically, the use of race and ethnicity in admissions policies for public schools (Frankenberg, Diem, and Cleary 2017; McDermott, DeBray, and Frankenberg 2012; Pitre 2009).

On the other hand, as federal intervention and top-down integration policies are receding, school integration as a voluntary, bottom-up, policy is on the rise. In the 1990s only a handful of school districts in the United States implemented voluntary integration programs. Today, there are over one hundred school districts around the country serving over four million students that have such programs (Kahlenberg, Potter, and Quick 2019). At the same time, the ways in which integration and group relations are discussed by scholars and those who engage with integration on the ground has changed. Scholars and activists view diversity and integration as a positive attribute of society overall and of schools specifically, as beneficial to all students, and as necessary for democracy more

broadly (see Wells, Fox, and Cordova-Cobo 2016). And while, in the decades after Brown, the assumption was that mixing students of different racial, ethnic, and economic backgrounds and identities was enough to meet the goals of integration, scholars today agree that additional work needs to be done in diverse schools to achieve the beneficial outcomes of integration (Keels 2013; Lewis and Diamond 2015; Lewis, Diamond, and Forman 2015).

However, it is an open question of how school integration might function in practice in this historical context. In this dissertation, I address this question by analyzing a case of a voluntary school integration policy in New York City public elementary schools. The policy, a result of a grassroots efforts by school administrators and parents, is based on admission criteria other than race and ethnicity and is implemented in schools that explicitly seek not only to be diverse, but to be socially integrated and equitable. For two years, I collected data in five schools implementing a pilot of this policy that is designed to alter school composition through changes to the admissions system. In two of the school I collected administrative data and conducted interviews with principals and parent-coordinators. In three of the schools I also conducted observations of School Leadership Team, Parent-Teachers Association, and Diversity Committee meetings and conducted interviews with parents. I studied the policy in terms of its effect on student sociodemographic composition, and its impact on the relationships between families and the school and among families. My research focused on school administrators and parents as the main figures negotiating the implementation of diversity and integration in schools. Scholars have noted that in the policy era that combines school choice with school accountability, the actions and interactions of school administrators and parents are

crucial for understanding school policies and everyday dynamics (Jennings 2010; Lareau and Muñoz 2012; Wells and Serna 1996). Studying parents and administrators allow an analysis of the processes through which integration policy specifically, and policies more broadly, are shaped in schools. By drawing on these data, in this dissertation I address several overarching issues that I argue underlie current school integration efforts.

Tensions between Policy Intentions and Policy Design

The first issue I address in this dissertation is the tension between the intentions of advocates and policymakers when they imagine and discuss integration policies and the ways integration policies are currently designed, and how these tensions inform how integration policies play out on the ground and their outcomes. In short, I argue that the experiences and outcomes of school integration policies today arise out of the tension between the imagination of integration through the Brown vs. Board of Education lens of integration as a black-white project, the current legal restrictions that limit the use of racial criteria in school admissions, and the changing demographic characteristics of the United States. The legal context of integration has changed fundamentally in the past two decades. The 1954 Brown vs. Board of Education Supreme Court decision declared that de jure school segregation is unconstitutional as it undermines the 14th Amendment right of equal protection under the law (Supreme Court of the United States 1954). The decision referred specifically to the race of students, arguing that state-mandated school segregation of black students was infringing on their constitutional rights, and was thus illegal. For several decades after the Brown decision, many school districts were under court-mandated integration orders and were required to change their admissions to create more racially balanced schools (Fiel and Zhang Forthcoming). School districts in areas

that did not have legal separations were also mandated to desegregate if their schools had de-facto segregation (Crain 1968). In both cases, school integration programs were based on students' race, and mostly aimed at transferring black students into white schools (see Pattillo 2014).

In the early 2000s, however, court-mandated integration receded, and school districts came under legal challenges to their school integration plans. In a series of cases, white families sued school districts arguing that integration plans, and the resulting school assignments, were infringing upon their rights to send their children to schools of their choice. They further argued that as these restrictions were based on their child's race, they were in violation of the 14th amendment. In 2007, the Supreme Court largely accepted their claims. In the *Parents Involved vs Community Schools* decision, the Court declared that public school districts should refrain from using students' *individual* racial and ethnic characteristics in school assignments. While the Court acknowledged the importance of diversity and integration, the ruling held that 'balancing' schools based on individual racial and ethnic characteristics is unconstitutional. The Court did not completely prohibit the use of race and ethnicity in school admissions, but this is how the decision was interpreted by school districts and their legal teams (Ryan 2007). As result of the *Parents Involved* decision (and in expectation of it) state and federal policymakers started shifting toward the idea of 'socio-economic integration' (Kahlenberg 2001, 2007). In order to comply with the Court's ruling, those who sought school integration replaced the individual racial criteria with economic ones, mainly the designation of the federal low-income free and reduced-lunch eligibility (Frankenberg et al. 2017; Kahlenberg 2007; McDermott et al. 2012). However, economic criteria became a stand-in for race

and ethnicity in school policy, out of the assumption that race and economics largely overlap in the American context. School integration was still thought of among policymakers and advocates in terms of race, and the goals of most integration programs remained achieving racial and ethnic integration (see Frankenberg 2018). In this dissertation, I argue that the experiences and outcomes of school integration policies after *Parents Involved* should be analyzed in light of this constant tension between the policies aims, or the imagination of integration, and the existing legal restrictions on available policy tools. In other words, understanding how integration policies play out on the ground in this time requires taking into account the gap between what policymakers, advocates, and school leaders see as integration, namely a social project of moving black and brown low-income students into white schools, and the current legal tools, that restrict the use of race.

The relationship between intentions and the policy tools used to meet them becomes even more complicated when considering the current shifts in the demographic composition of the United States. As mentioned above, one main reason that economic criteria were chosen by policymakers as the new tool to design school integration plans was the assumption that, in the American context, race correlates with class, and thus using it in admissions policies would achieve the goal of black-white integration (see Reardon and Rhodes 2011). However, this assumption is oftentimes false and using economic criteria of does not necessarily captures racial diversity. First, the United States population is becoming increasingly diverse beyond blacks and whites. The share of whites in the U.S. populations is declining while the share of Latinxs and Asians is increasing, and these groups are also class-diverse (e.g., Alonzo 2018; Lichter 2013;

López et al. 2017; Vespa et al. 2018). Further, a growing number of blacks are middle class (Landry and Marsh 2011). As Pattillo (2013) argues, the black middle class has been ignored by policymakers and scholars for decades, and this tendency is not different among school integration policymakers. Thus, the use of economic criteria for integration policies challenges the imagination of integration. Low-income students in the current American context come from varied racial, ethnic, and immigrant groups which are unintentionally becoming the target groups of integration policies, while the black middle class is left out of school integration policies. My research addresses the implications of these gaps for how schools grapple with integration.

The Question of Intentional Integration

The second issue this dissertation addresses is that of voluntary and intentional integration and its implications for the relationship between diversity – the numeric mix of students from different backgrounds in schools – with integration and inclusion, which are more profound processes of creating cross group relationships, environments that are welcoming to all families, and equitable opportunities to all students (King 1986; Lewis et al. 2015; Moody 2001). For decades, scholars of school desegregation focused on the challenge of white flight as the central mechanism impeding the success of school desegregation (Fiel 2013). The argument was that white families impede school integration by transferring their children to private schools or relocating their families to areas away from diverse schools and school districts (e.g., Clotfelter 2001; Logan et al. 2017; Zhang 2009). In the 1990s, the idea of public choice took hold among education policymakers as an alternative solution to the problem of the persistent achievement gap between whites and blacks, one of the central problems that school integration policies

tried to address (Berends 2015; Wells 1993). Policymakers believed that parents should be given choice to attend schools other than their zoned, neighborhood schools with the purpose of creating market pressure on public schools to improve and providing educational alternatives to communities that were served by struggling schools. However, ample evidence suggests that school choice ultimately became a vehicle for school segregation. Without having to explicitly avoid diverse public schools, school choice became an implicit mechanism of the flight of white families out of public schools (Renzulli and Evans 2005; Roda and Wells 2012; Saporito and Lareau 1999; Schneider and Buckley 2002). Further, not only did school choice allow white parents to avoid racially diverse schools, but studies suggest that when given options, black parents opt in to charter schools that are more segregated than their public options as they perceive charter schools to be better performing and more academically excellent compared to traditional public schools (Almond 2012; Berends 2015; Bifulco and Ladd 2007; Gulosino and d'Entremont 2011). The working assumption of integration research for decades, then, was that parents, and especially white parents, mostly avoid integrated schools for reasons varying from explicit racial animosity, to concerns about poverty and 'security 'to differential preferences in education (e.g., Fiel 2015; Schneider et al. 1998; Schneider and Buckley 2002).

In this dissertation, however, I engage with a context that defies decades of scholarship. I study school communities where parents of different racial, ethnic, and economic backgrounds choose to send their children to integrated schools. Given the long and pervasive history of avoidance, what does it mean when families of different background voluntarily choose to share educational spaces? Amanda Lewis and her

colleagues (Lewis 2003; Lewis and Diamond 2015; Lewis et al. 2015) suggest that choosing diverse schools is not enough for creating school integration. Demographically mixed schools, even when they are in communities that are intentionally diverse, tend to reproduce social hierarchies and inequality (see also Lewis-McCoy 2014; Posey-Maddox 2017). The case I study further extends this literature. I add another layer of variation to our understanding of what happens in intentionally diverse schools. Lewis and others have criticized intentionally diverse schools for not being aware, or not thinking of, the ways in which they reproduce inequality. In the schools that I study, not only do parents of different backgrounds intentionally chose diverse schools for their children, but the schools – the administration and parental leadership – are also intentional in their attempts to create integration and inclusion. The administrators and parental leaders in the schools are well versed in the academic literature by Lewis and others that shows the ways in which diverse schools reproduce inequality. These schools are hyper-aware of questions of inequality.

How does integration look in such contexts? On the one hand, we could expect these schools would be better positioned to undermine the inequalities that Lewis repeatedly shows exist in diverse schools. But evidence suggests that developing awareness of group differences and inequality might not necessarily help undermine segregation in relationships or patterns of inequality. For example, a recent article about Jewish-Arab integrated schools in Israel argues that in the schools that are intentionally integrated, where parents send their children intending for them to integrate across national groups, there are fewer integrated friendships among students than in schools that are circumstantially diverse, where parents send their children for educational

reasons, and not due to interest in integration (Shwed, Kalish, and Shavit 2018). The authors argue that the reason for the heightened friendship segregation in the intentionally integrated school is the priming and constant attention that is given to group differences in the context of an intentionally integrated school. These intentional settings, the authors argue, enhance the distance between the groups. In my dissertation I further explore the relationship between intentionality and awareness of the problems of integration to the processes of integration and inclusion in diverse schools. I ask how the context of voluntary and intentional integration inform everyday school policies and how it shapes cross-group relations. Further, I ask whether schools that are intentional about their effort to integrate are able to achieve inclusive school communities where parents of different backgrounds feel enfranchised, and what can be learned from these settings about processes of integration and inclusion in other contexts, such as diverse organizations or higher education institutions that are grappling with similar issues.

School-Community Relationships

In this dissertation, I also interrogate school integration policies considering questions of school-community relationships. Historically, schools in the United States emerged as a community-based organization. School are connected to the communities where they are located in terms of their resources, values, and curriculum (Arum 2000). In addition to the model of schools as rooted in geographical communities, schools have been core organizations for 'communities of choice' where people who share ideologies, believes, or lifestyles choose to send their children based on these characteristics, rather than on geography. U.S. parochial private schools are the exemplar of schools that are not tied to a geographical community, but rather to a community that is bonded around

values, ideas, or sometimes wealth (e.g., Coleman and Hoffer 1987). These school of choice have always undermined the relationship between geographic and school communities. The connection between schools and geographical communities was further undermined with the rise of public-school choice in the form of charter and magnet schools, vouchers, and other choice reforms. While the roots of public choice policies are politically questioned – whether the aim was to serve the will of white and wealthy families to segregate or to serve low-income communities of color by offering alternatives to failing public schools (see Berends 2015) – there is consensus among scholars that public school choice policies expanded the use of school options that are not residentially constrained. New York City, where public school choice was introduced in 2004, provides a striking example of this trend. In 2017, 40% of kindergarten students in the city's public school system did not attend their local zoned school, and this number does not include the students who attend private and charter schools (Mader, Hemphill, and Abbas 2018). These trends of school-community relationships raise the question of what a school community is, and how changing relationships between schools and communities inform school integration.

The question of the relationship between schools and communities has been central to the work of scholars engaging with the intersection of education and gentrification. For many years, scholars argued that gentrifiers tend to avoid their neighborhood public schools (e.g., DeSena 2006; Keels, Burdick-Will, and Keene 2013). But scholars have recently noted an increase in the participation of gentrifiers in public schools in cities such as Los Angeles, New York, Boston, and Washington D.C. (e.g., Billingham and Kimelberg 2013; Mordechay, Ayscue, and Orfield 2019) turning

attention to how gentrifiers' choices change, numerically and culturally, urban public schools (e.g., Cucchiara and Horvat 2009; Mordechay, Ayscue, and Orfield 2017; Posey-Maddox 2014). Thus, literature on schools, communities, and gentrification suggests multiple and sometimes contradictory trends. Schools are thought of in many American contexts as community-based, although private and parochial options are common and public-school choice has increased. Simultaneously, gentrification has, in some contexts, reduced the connection between residence and schooling, while in other contexts it has increased the numbers of children from White and higher income families who attend their community schools. How do these varying trends of the relationship between communities and schools influence current school integration efforts?

In this dissertation, I attempt to answer this question by exploring how schools are shaped by the communities that surround them and the communities that choose them. I argue that in the context of gentrification, being a school of choice, rather than a geographically bound neighborhood school, supports the mission of integration. In gentrifying areas, neighborhood schools become a core battleground for struggles over ownership and thus a hotbed for tensions around integration, similar to struggles and tensions occurring in the neighborhood outside the school. In choice schools, that are not geographically bound, the tensions around gentrification do not affect the school community to the same extent and thus are less crucial for numeric and substantive school integration. This insight allows for questioning the notion that the development and expansion of school choice unequivocally increases school racial and economic segregation (e.g., Roda and Wells 2012) and suggests a novel understanding the place of 'schools of choosers' in shaping the current forms of school integration.

Integration in a Progressive and Elitist Context

Lastly, this dissertation engages with the tension between progressive education and integration, and more broadly, of integration in an elitist context. The three schools in my study are part of, to different extents, the progressive movement in education. Building historically on ideas by John Dewey (Dewey 1998), and more recently on the writing of Alfie Kohn (Kohn 1993, 1997, 1999, 2000a, 2000b, 2006), the progressive movement in education has several main principles: that children are natural learners who should be active, rather than passive in the classroom; that learning should be communal, rather than individual; that education should be kind, rather than disciplinary; that students should experience nature and not only the classroom; that all children, and people, have unique and diverse set of skills that should be explored and encouraged; and that education should develop critical thinkers and the human character, not only skills (Kohn 2015; Reese 2001).

From its inception, however, progressive education has been associated with affluent, white families and was criticized for the treatment of black students in some of the first progressive schools, where they were tracked or denied admission (Pak 2001; Semel and Sadovnik 1999). An especially staunch critic of progressive education, Lisa Delpit (1986, 1988, 2006) argues that progressive educators ignore the life experiences and knowledge of black students. Further, she argues, progressive educators carry damaging stereotypes of black students to whom they cannot possibly relate, given their starkly different backgrounds. Delpit argues that students of color do not benefit from the methods and pedagogy espoused by progressive education, that progressive teachers fail to include parents of color in conversations on what is best for their child, and do not give

any place for the values and cultures children of color bring to the classroom. The progressive agenda, Delpit argues, is based on a white-affluent view of the world and does not allow for other ways of seeing. Delpit's criticism points to a key tension in the progressive movement in education that is evident in the schools I study: how does a school bridge an elitist educational project with the goal of racial and economic integration?

I argue that elitism in the context of progressive education is problematic for integration for two reasons. First, progressive educators tend to hold the view that those who do not agree with the progressive way are simply wrong, or uninformed (see Delpit 1988). As Delpit argues, this approach undermines any possibility for conversation across differences. How can schools that aspire to create not only demographic diversity but also inclusion across groups overcome the tension between a closed ideology on one hand and the will to be open to families of different backgrounds on the other? How does homogeneity in thinking invites inclusion? Second, Berrey (2015) argues that elitist settings promote 'selective inclusion' in which high status, but not low status, people of color are invited to integrate into elite institutions. Selective inclusion, she argues, is 'low-risk' for high status white people as it does not necessitate that organizational leaders address racial inequality, and 'lessen the risks of radical, race-class transformation that social justice may require' (Berrey 2015:8). By their virtue of catering to white and affluent families, progressive schools might function as institutions of selective inclusion, where families of color are symbolically included but practices that reinforce inequality in treatment and resources are not questioned. Thus, such schools would not become spaces of substantive integration and inclusion. I address these

tensions in the dissertation by investigating how progressively oriented schools manage

diversity and integration, and the challenges that arise from being a progressive *and*

diverse school. These settings allow for engaging with broader questions about elitism

and integration. In a recent commentary on the progressive movement in the United

States, Frances Lee writes that progressive spaces demand participants to self-police their

statements and thoughts in the name of one correct way of viewing and understanding the

world (Lee 2017). By studying progressive schools that attempt to integrate, I further our

understanding of these dynamics as they happen in progressive spaces.

Overview of the Dissertation

I address these overarching themes in three articles. The first article *"From*

Brown to Parents Involved: Implementation Challenges for Economic-Based School

Integration Program" examines the numeric outcomes the admissions pilot has in

different schools in the first two years after implementation. More broadly, it addresses

the challenges of integration programs in the post *Parents Involved* legal context and in

the context of increased racial, ethnic, national, and economic demographic diversity. I

suggest a conceptual model in which policy design is mediated through contextual

factors, namely the regulatory context and the role gentrification plays in the school

community to shape the outcomes of the policy. I use evidence from two schools

participating in the pilot; one successfully changed the composition of the school and

another that is struggling to meet the policy goals. I show that the struggling school

suffered from a flawed policy design that did not consider the fact that it is a zoned

neighborhood school, and thus is restricted in the pool of students that fit the policy

criteria. Additionally, I argue that since this school is a zoned neighborhood school in a

gentrifying neighborhood, the school is a battleground for questions of ownership given the tensions and animosity gentrification breeds. This characteristic of the school also restricted its ability to meet its policy goals.

The other school, in contrast, was better positioned in terms of the regulatory environment and questions of gentrification to succeed in the policy. It enjoyed a match between the school's choice status and the criteria of the policy that together cast a very wide net over a vast geographical area, yielding a substantial increase in the share of low-income students in the school. I also argue that because it is a choice school, it is not subjected to the same ownership questions and contentions over gentrification as the other school. Thus, achieving the policy's goals was not shaped by tensions around neighborhood gentrification. I contribute to existing literature by arguing that under certain circumstances school choice supports, rather than hinders, integration. Further, the article provides guidelines for policymakers interested in school integration about how to design economic-based integration policies in a way that fits the specific context of the schools. In an age where school integration is a local, grassroots effort, these guidelines are important for successful outcomes.

The first article engages with schools' ability to meet the policy's numeric goals and maintain or increase their diversity. The second and third articles engage with questions of substantive school integration, or the processes that underlie creating not only sociodemographic diversity, but also inclusion. The second article is titled *"Pathways to Substantive Integration: Patterns of Conflicts in Integrating Schools".* In this article, I extend our understanding of substantive school integration by comparing two schools in my study and showing how dynamics around school policies in the period

after implementation were similar despite their different demographic compositions. I show that when policy-related conflicts emerged in these schools, school leadership drew boundaries of moral worth, and the moral 'us' and 'them' of the school community. Then, I show that despite the heterogeneous demographic composition of the parents on the different sides of the conflict, school leadership understood and handled the conflict through a dispositional approach that tied parents' actions to values and perspectives stemming from their demographic background. School leadership's association between parents' values and their sociodemographic positions prevented a constructive dialog between school leadership and parents around school policies and made school conflicts difficult to address. I argue that the dispositional approach to school conflicts challenged substantive integration because it labeled parents and made them feel excluded in a way that was related to their demographic background, and to the schools' integration efforts.

The third article, *"Progressive First or Diverse First: Organizational Imprinting and the Actions of Schools' Diversity Committees"* continues the engagement with substantive school integration by studying the parents' diversity committees in two of the schools. Here, I build on differences between the schools, rather than similarities, to extend our understanding of how and why critical, power-oriented frameworks of group difference and inequality develop into different patterns of action. I show that while in both schools, the racially diverse mothers on the diversity committee employed a power-oriented framework that focused on institutional racism to explain within school inequality, in one school, the committee engaged in action that was symbolic in nature, while in the other school, the was committed to upholding the rights of students of color while questioning the privilege of white students and families. I employ the concept of

organizational imprinting to argue that these differences stem from different founding histories, and specifically from the vision of what types of families the school was founded for. I argue that the school where the diversity committee is only symbolic in its action was founded by white progressive gentrifying parents to serve their children, prioritizing progressive education over diversity goals. In an environment that priorities progressive ideals, the black parents on the diversity committee found it difficult to engage with actual change. The second school, however, was founded by a black woman to serve students of color in a rapidly gentrifying neighborhood. In this school, diversity and integration took priority over the pedagogical agenda, and parents on the diversity committee could openly and freely engage with changing school practices. This article contributes to our understanding of the conditions under which diverse spaces can become places where whiteness and existing social hierarchies are challenged. Taken together, the three articles advance our understanding of school integration in the era of growing population diversity in the United States that is coupled with increased top-down questioning of the utility of the school integration model.

ARTICLE 1

From 'Brown' to 'Parents Involved':
Implementation Challenges of Economic-Based School Integration

The 2007 'Parents Involved' Supreme Court decision declared that public schools should refrain from using students' individual racial and ethnic characteristics when designing school integration programs (Ryan 2007; Supreme Court of the Unite States 2007). Following this decision, those who sought to create school integration policies turned to using economic criteria instead of racial and ethnic ones when designing integration programs[1] (Kahlenberg 2007). The idea was that because of the strong link in the United States between race/ethnicity and class, switching to economic criteria would still meet the goal of racial and ethnic integration, without posing legal challenges (Diem et al. 2014).

Studies evaluating the success of economic-based integration programs in achieving racial and ethnic integration generally find that economic-based integration programs are not effective in changing racial and ethnic school composition (e.g., Reardon and Rhodes 2011), and some argue even re-segregate schools (De Voto and Wronowski 2019). Evidence regarding their effectiveness in changing the economic composition of schools is also mixed (for review see Frankenberg 2018; Reardon and Rhodes 2011; Siegel-Hawley, Frankenberg, and Ayscue 2017). While these outcomes fall short of delivering the desired policy goals, economic-based integration programs are still

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[1] It is important to note that while policymakers are choosing to avoid any engagement with racial and ethnic criteria since the Parents Involved decision, there is an ongoing debate about the concrete implications of the decision for how integration programs should be designed and whether and to what extent the Court abolished these criteria from use (see Ryan 2007; The National Coalition on School Diversity 2017).

widely used by those seeking school integration (Kahlenberg et al. 2017). To better fit this policy tool to its desired outcomes, there is still much to learn about the contextual conditions under which such programs succeed or fail to understand why they have difficulty in meeting their goals (Frankenberg 2018).

The current research addresses this gap by studying the implementation and outcomes of one voluntary school-level economic integration program. I study the case of the Diversity in Admission (DIA) policy in New York City (NYC) public elementary schools. The DIA policy began in 2015 when seven public elementary schools piloted a change in their admissions' system. The DIA policy sets-aside a specific percent of seats in each schools' incoming prekindergarten (pre-k) and kindergarten (KG) classes for students based on economic and 'cultural' criteria, such as home language, free or reduced-price lunch eligibility, and temporary housing. The type of criteria and set-aside percentage varies across schools. The program currently includes 78 schools.

I use demographic data from five schools to explore the initial numeric results of the policy in changing schools' racial, ethnic, and economic composition. I then supplement the demographic data with interviews and observations from two pilot schools to provide an account of the on-the-ground dynamics that shaped these results. I find that comparable to other economic-based integration programs around the country, the DIA did not change the racial-ethnic composition of the schools. As for economic composition, the policy had mixed results with some schools seeing an increase in the share of low-income students in their incoming grades and some seeing no change, or even a decrease. My qualitative data suggest two contextual factors that work as constraining and enabling factors in producing the policy's outcomes: the regulatory

context of the policy and the historical-cultural context of the school and the neighborhood where the school is located.

The current study provides a new outlook into economic-based integration. In contrast to existing literature, I not only examine the ability of these programs to change school composition but also use in-depth qualitative data to explore the challenges school leaders face when they work to implement such policies and integrate their schools. To the best of my knowledge, this is the first study exploring the conditions shaping the ability of individual schools to meet their economic-based integration policy goals (but see Diem 2012, 2015, 2017; Diem et al. 2014 for meso-level analysis of economic-based integration programs). This approach expands our understanding of how to better design economic-based integration programs to fit the contexts of schools. Specifically, it provides an important intervention in existing literature on the relationship between school integration, school choice, and neighborhood and school gentrification. As the specific case of the policy I study shows similar patterns of change to school composition as other such programs that were previously evaluated, I believe that a qualitative evaluation of the implementation process is valuable for understanding the challenges these policies face nation-wide.

BACKGROUND

Economic-Based Integration Plans

In 2007, the United States Supreme Court declared that public schools seeking to integrate should refrain from using race-based criteria in student assignments (Supreme Court of the Unite States 2007). This decision, named 'Parents Involved', marked the height of a legal and political shift. In 1954, the Supreme Court decision in Brown v.

Board of Education had started the era of school desegregation. School districts were court-ordered to racially integrate. The effect of Brown lasted through the 1980s, but in the 1990s court mandated desegregation orders expired and school districts were no longer required to integrate. School integration became voluntary based on the action of local activists and policy makers (Gamoran and Long 2007; Kahlenberg 2001; Logan et al. 2017; Reardon et al. 2012; Reardon, Yun, and Kurlaender 2006).

As school integration policies became voluntary, local court rulings increasingly curtailed the ability of school districts to design and implement race-based integration plans. The 2007 "Parents Involved" Supreme Court case was a test of the constitutionality of race-based local integration policies. The decision declared that school districts seeking to integrate must refrain from assigning students solely on the bases of their individual race and ethnicity to achieve 'racial balance' across schools (Supreme Court of the United States 2007). In the face of receding federal intervention in school segregation and the curtailment of race-based integration plans, those who sought school integration searched for new legal pathways to try to achieve their goals.

In this legal context, the use of economic status became the most common 'race-neutral' basis for designing integration programs (Kahlenberg 2007; Reardon and Rhodes 2011; Siegel-Hawley et al. 2017). Economic integration became popular for three main reasons. First is that race and class in the United States are highly correlated, and as such, using economic markers in integration plans should theoretically produce the desired racial and ethnic integration (Kahlenberg 2007; Paige and Marcus 2004; Wells and Frankenberg 2007). Second, and to lesser extent, some policymakers and scholars (e.g., Kahlenberg 2001) believed that economic integration is an important substantive goal in

and of itself. They argued that the achievement gap in education is a result of concentrated poverty in schools, and not of schools' racial and ethnic composition. If economic factors cause the performance gap, then economic integration is the way to address this persistent problem. Finally, for legal and normative reasons, individual economic status is considered less vulnerable to the legal challenges against race and ethnic school integration plans (Kahlenberg 2001, 2007).

Currently, there are about 100 schools and school districts in the United States implementing some variation of a voluntary economic integration program (Kahlenberg et al. 2017). The most common criteria used in such programs is free or reduce-price lunch eligibility, the federal designation of students' financial needs (FRL hereafter). Other programs build on individual criteria such as parental education, eligibility for government assistant or housing programs, participation in Head Start programs, and student's academic achievements. A different and less popular approach looks at aggregate information on neighborhoods and school catchment areas and balances schools according to the characteristics of where students live (see Frankenberg 2018 for review of existing programs).

Existing studies of the numeric outcomes of economic-based integration programs point at several notable trends. First, it is widely agreed among economic-based integration scholars that these programs are mostly aimed at increasing racial-ethnic integration through presumed proxies, but this goal is rarely met. Most economic integration programs do not alter the racial-ethnic composition of schools (Frankenberg 2018; Reardon and Rhodes 2011). Second, scholars agree that whether programs succeed in changing racial and ethnic school composition depends on contextual factors, such as

the correlation between race and class in the school district and the degree of residential segregation in the district. This form of success also depends on design factors, such as the type of criteria used in the program, and the fit between the integration efforts and other district policies (Diem 2012, 2015; Frankenberg 2018; Reardon and Rhodes 2011; Reardon et al. 2006; Siegel-Hawley et al. 2017).

Given the notable inadequacy of these programs in providing consistently successful outcomes, and the fact that despite the inadequate results school districts around the country are still adopting this policy measure, there is a need to better evaluate the conditions under which such programs can succeed. In the current article, I build on two years of field work in schools implementing a voluntary economic-based school integration program to contribute to our understanding of these conditions and provide evidence about how changes might be made to address them.

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

To study the conditions that enable and constrain the ability of economic-based integration programs to change schools' composition, I draw on theory of policy implementation in context. Policy implementation in context emphasizes the role of contextual factors, and their interaction with policy design, in shaping policy outcomes. The idea is that to understand policy outcomes, we must understand how the policy design interacts with people and places to produce particular results (Diem 2012; Honig 2006). Specifically, I address two types of contextual factors that shape implementation and outcomes. The first context is the regulatory environment, and specifically, the rules that govern school zoning and choice policies. The second is the historical-cultural context of the neighborhood where the school is located, and specifically, how it is

impacted by gentrification. In this formulation, I bring together two key features of school context, neighborhood characteristics and the organizational/institutional environment (Arum 2000). Figure 1.1 describes the model.

Figure 1.1: Contextual Factors that Shape Policy Outcomes
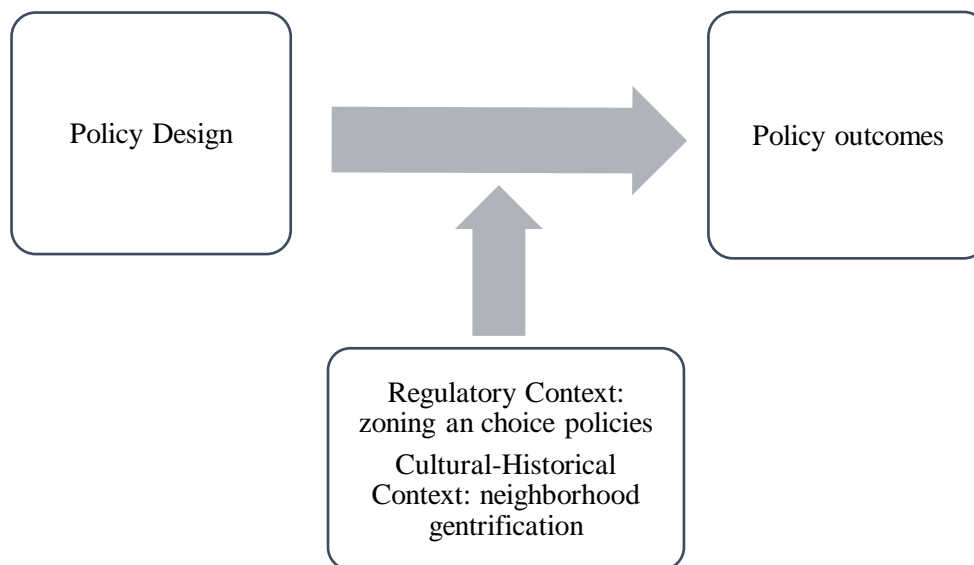
Regulatory Context

Scholars have long argued that one of the main challenges facing policy implementation is conflicting law, regulations, procedures, and policies. The policy field is never one dimensional, and any new policy is implemented alongside other existing policies that ascribe the organizational environment within which organizations operate (Sabatier 2007). Existing laws and regulations define the structure of possible action and incentives. The regulatory environment prescribes what organizations can or cannot do and the space organizations have for action (Marquis and Battilana 2009). Arum (2000) emphasized this approach in addressing school level processes. He argued that education scholars must give attention to the organizational and institutional environment within

which schools operate, among which are laws that govern the education system, that can affect school-level processes and outcomes.

The specific regulatory context I address is that of school zoning regulation and school choice. The relationship between school segregation, zoning, and choice has long been a core issue for education scholars, and specifically for scholars of school integration policies (see Diem 2012). Zoning and choice regulations prescribe which public schools are available for students to choose from and attend. Zoning policies shape school integration by tying school composition to residential patterns. If school composition is shaped by zoning, then individual schools have a limited pool of students to draw from and school segregation reflects residential segregation, and more specifically, school district segregation (Bischoff 2008). School choice policies are sometimes considered the answer to this problem. Instead of tying families to schools in their neighborhood, choice policies allow families to choose to have their children attend schools beyond their residential environment. In that way, patterns of school segregation linked with residential segregation can be broken (see Kahlenberg 2004; Wells 1993 for review of the ideas of school choice).

But opponents of school choice argue that giving families choices does not break residential segregation, but rather functions as an additional mechanism of self-selecting into different segregated environment. This is because it allows families to choose schools based on selection criteria that potentially involve avoidance of other racial and ethnic groups (e.g., Bifulco, Ladd, and Ross 2009; Roda and Wells 2012; Saporito 2003; Schneider and Buckley 2002). Thus, some hold that choice is beneficial for integration, and other scholars argue that choice works against the goal of integration. In a recent

report, Potter (2019) bridges these two approaches suggesting that choice and integration might work well together, under certain conditions. In this study, I evaluate how economic-based integration policies interact with existing zoning and choice regulations to shape the outcomes of an integration policy, and to assess when choice and zoning support or hinder integration.

Historical-Cultural Context

Another aspect of the environment I explore is the historical-cultural context of the community where the policy is implemented. Schools, especially in the United States, are organizations that are rooted in communities (Arum 2000). Sociologist have paid much attention to the demographic composition of neighborhoods and their level of poverty as the core factor shaping schools and school outcomes (e.g., Jencks and Mayer 1990). But communities have unique historical and cultural developments and identities that go beyond their demographic characteristics. These include factors such as how the community was initially developed, who lived in the community and when, group relations and hierarchies within the area, and the traditions, morals, and cultures of different groups in the community. This cultural historical aspect is important for how people interact in local organizations, as it informs discussions that take place in local organizations like schools, and shapes conflicts surrounding these organizations (Marquis, Lounsbury, and Greenwood 2011) 2009).

The specific cultural historical context I address here is that of population change, or specifically gentrification, within the community where a school is located. Gentrification is the process by which socially, economically, and physically marginalized neighborhoods transform into middle- and upper-class residential areas.

New residents, usually with higher education levels and a higher median income than existing residents, move into neighborhoods and change their demographic composition and social and cultural character. While the motivations and choices of gentrifiers vary, the cumulative result of their actions tend to be increasing rents and prices of services as well as the displacement of groups who previously resided in the neighborhood (Brown-Saracino 2010; Pérez 2004; Zukin 1987).

Gentrification has significant effects both for population composition and for the social and cultural fabric of communities. Demographically, gentrifying neighborhoods typically become whiter and more affluent. Culturally, gentrifying neighborhoods frequently become a hotbed of tensions. Newer and previous residents have divergent view about the meaning and consequences of change in their community (Brown-Saracino 2010). Gentrification often breeds tensions around local neighborhood organizations, among them schools, raising questions of ownership and control (Nyden et al. 1998; Posey-Maddox 2014). Gentrification can be perceived by the longtime residents of a neighborhood as destructive and dangerous, raising red flags for existing residents regarding their future, and raise contentions issues of ownership of neighborhood community and organizations (Abu-Lughod 1994; Nyden et al. 1998). But the changes can also be perceived by residents as a potential for improvement. Among gentrifiers, there can be narratives of presence in the neighborhood as an 'improvement', as progress with them being pioneers of change. However, gentrifiers can also be respectful of what was in the neighborhood before gentrification, mindful of the changes they bring, careful with their actions, and cooperative with those who inhabited the neighborhood for generations (Berrey 2005; Brown-Saracino 2010; Nyden et al. 1998). I explore how the

history of gentrification in a neighborhood, the varying narratives of it that are expressed, tensions around it, and the place of the school as a local organization working within these tense conditions affect how schools implement an economic integration policy, and how the interaction of gentrification and the policy's design influences the policy's outcomes.

Building on the framework evaluating policy outcomes as the result of the interaction of policy design with implementation context, I ask the following questions:

1) What policy design issues arose when schools were implementing the DIA policy?
2) How did the elements of policy design interact with contextual factors in affecting the outcomes of the policy?
3) What the constraining and enabling conditions are that shape the success of economic-based integration programs and need to be considered when designing such future policies?

CASE

New York City School Choice System

I study the implementation and outcomes of an economic-based integration program in the New York City (NYC) public school system. The NYC public school system is the largest in the United States, serving upward of 1.1 million students. It is headed by the NYC Department of Education (DoE). The system is divided into 32 Community School Districts (and one additional special education district) for elementary and middle schools. Each school district has a superintendent and a governing elected board. School districts are important as zoning and choice policies are regulated within their boundaries.

In addition to being extremely large and organizationally complex, the NYC school system presents a multifaceted choice structure. Here, I focus on the public

elementary school choice process and exclude middle and high schools as well as charter and private schools from my discussion. Until the beginning of the 2000s, there was very little oversight on how schools managed their admissions. In the early 2000s, the city schools, and DoE, went through an extensive organizational reform. Part of the reform changed school assignment and enrollment processes and centralized the admission system. Instead of local school control, admissions policies and administration moved to the hands of a new Office of Student Enrollment and families. The rationale for the reform was to increase parental choice and principals accountability, create leadership in the city's schools, and allow families who are served by failing schools to choose better options for their children (O'day, Bitter, and Gomez 2011).

There are several types of public elementary schools serving the city's children. First, there are zoned schools. Zoned schools have a specific catchment area, usually several city blocks, and must accept every student living in their zone. Families, on the other hand, are not required to attend their zoned schools and can utilize the choice process to send their children to other schools. The second type are public choice schools. Choice schools are geographically open to students from bigger areas than school zones, and they are not required to accept any student. Parents must actively seek admission to them and cannot be assigned to them by default. Finally, there are choice districts. Choice districts are different from other school districts as they do not have any zoned schools. Instead, every student within the district can apply to attend any school in the district. In

all types of schools, once a school has more students applying to it compared to the number of seats it can offer, a blind lottery is used to assign the seats[2].

The NYC DoE choice system relies on families' active participation in the application process, even if families want to attend their zoned school. In the winter/spring prior to the year when their child starts prekindergarten or kindergarten (or nine full months before school starts), families must apply for a seat in the public-school system. Parents can rate to up to 12 schools on their application and can put any public elementary school in the city on their list. The Admissions and Enrollment office at the DoE then assigns students to schools based on a formula that combines zoning policies, family preferences, and available seats. Once families are assigned to a school, they have several weeks to register their child in the school. Parents who received a seat in a school that was not their top priority are automatically placed on the waitlist for the schools they rated above the one they got. Between the assignments in April and the closing date for school attendance at the end of October parents can change their school registration if a seat becomes available in a school where they are on the waitlist, or if they decide to opt-out from the public system to enroll in a charter or private school. If parents do not participate in the application process for some reason, they can approach their zoned school at the start of the school year, but the school will accommodate them only if it has open seats. If it does not have available seats, the DoE is mandated to find the family a seat in a different school. A recent report on NYC's choice system indicates that 40% of kindergarten students (upwards of 27,000 students) utilize their choice options and study

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[2] In the school year 2018-2019 the DoE initiated a 'controlled choice' policy in one of its choice districts to include in the admissions formula [finish describing]. I do not address this program here as it was not available when I conducted my study.

in schools other than their zoned schools, with black non-poor families opting-out of zoned schools at the highest rate (Mader et al. 2018).

Diversity in Admissions Pilot

In parallel to what Mader and her colleagues (2018) call 'the explosion of school choice' following the changes in the city's choice and admissions policies, NYC was also seeing substantive transformation in its population. Since the middle of the 1980s, many of the city's neighborhoods experienced rapid gentrification in the form of increases in the share of white residents, and relatedly, increases in average rents, household incomes, and residents' educational attainment (Austensen et al. 2016). This process of gentrification has had implications for neighborhood schools. While in earlier days of gentrification in NYC gentrifiers avoided the public school system (DeSena 2006), gentrifiers gradually started attending local public schools. However, gentrifiers do not attend any public school. As scholars of gentrification and schools in other cities have shown, gentrifiers tend to flock collectively to specific public school that are considered as good public school options (see Posey-Maddox, Kimelberg, and Cucchiara 2014 for review). As a result of the combination of a blind lottery system in popular schools and the growing share of white and wealthy families in gentrifying neighborhoods, some schools that were previously serving either diverse or black and Latinx populations started to see their population change becoming whiter and wealthier.

This change is what triggered the DIA pilot. In 2014, a group of principals and parents from both zoned and choice schools in gentrifying areas of the city approached the NYC DoE asking that the city intervene in the changing demographics of their schools. They argued that their schools, which used to serve either a diverse student body

or mostly black and Latinx low income students, were seeing a flow of white and affluent families into them. They wanted the DoE to help them stop the flow by changing how seats are assigned in their school in a way that would reintroduce more racial and ethnic diversity.

According to the schools' principals, after they proposed the changes, they waited for a long time, and then they were called into a meeting with the Chancellor of the DoE and their districts' superintendents. In this meeting the principals were told that the DoE cannot accommodate their requests for changes in admissions due to the Supreme Court ruling restricting the use of racial and ethnic characteristics in school admissions practices (i.e., the Parents Involved decision). However, they were asked to submit proposals detailing what changes they would want to make to their admission system if they could to capture their target population, using criteria other than race and ethnicity. Eighteen schools submitted such programs. In November 2015, seven schools were selected to participate in the DIA pilot.

The DIA policy sets aside seats each year for students entering pre-kindergarten and kindergarten who are FRL, English Language Learners (ELL), part of the NYC welfare system, live in temporary housing, or have an incarcerated parent. The specific criteria and the percent of seats prioritized varies by school. The DoE controls the admissions through the central admissions and lottery system. If a parent marks one of the pilot schools as one of their 12 options on the public-school applications, a pop-up question (on the online system) asks the parent to check any criteria they fit. If the parent marks any of the boxes applicable for the specific school, then the child gets priority in the lottery over students who are not eligible based on the criteria. The one exception is

that the siblings of students who are already attending the school always have priority in NYC admissions.

While the DoE manages the admissions system, schools oversee recruiting, registering, and maintaining the student body composition they seek. Beyond applying the priorities to the school-assignment portion of the policy, the DoE take a hands-off approach to the DIA policy and its outcomes[3]. Through the process of recruiting, schools work to increase the share of policy target families in their application pools. Through registration and retention of students, schools work to make sure that these students attend the school and stay in it. This is important because these stages of recruitment, registration, and retention are where the actual implementation of the policy comes into play, and where school context can affect whether the numeric outcomes of the policy are achieved.

METHODS AND DATA COLLECTION

The article relies on two types of data. The first is data on school demographic composition. I use these data to show trends in school composition prior to and after the DIA implementation for the seven schools that participated in the pilot. Demographic information for the schools comes from student data collected by the NYC DoE. Parts of the data were analyzed by me for this study and parts were analyzed by the Center for New York City Affairs for their evaluation of the DIA policy's numeric outcomes.

In the second part of the analysis, I build on qualitative data from in-depth qualitative case studies I conducted in two schools, Children's Academy and New World,

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[3] Information on the DoE's approach to the policy is based on an interview done with a DoE Enrollment official for this study.

during the 2016-2017 and 2017-2018 school years. I use these data to detail the factors

constraining and enabling the successful implementation of the DIA for the two schools.

The two schools are part of a larger study I conducted in three schools to evaluate the

implementation and outcomes of the policy. The three schools were selected out of the

seven based on the principals' willingness to allow me a constant presence in the school.

I focus in this article on these two schools for two main reasons. First, for theoretical

reasons. The two schools present the ends of the variation in the choice/zoning

continuum. Children's Academy is the only zoned school in the pilot, and New World is

the choice school with the widest capture area. Thus, these schools are valuable for

understanding the interaction of zoning and choice policies in affecting how integration

programs operate. Moreover, as I consider gentrification to be an important feature of the

implementation of the policy, these schools provide another important contrast. New

World is the only pilot school that is not in a rapidly racially and ethnically gentrifying

neighborhood. While, as I will shortly show, the school's area is experiencing economic

change, it is not in a neighborhood that is fighting over its identity as is the case with

other schools. These contrasts between these two schools and the other pilot schools

make them good cases for comparison. Second, the third school in my study joined a

district-wide controlled choice program two years into the DIA policy. While the

controlled choice program manages admissions the same way the DIA does, and the same

criteria were kept in place, the program changed the dynamics around school admissions

in its entire district[4]. As such, I exclude it for the current analysis that focuses on school-level challenges to the implementation of a voluntary integration program.

Studying how schools implemented the DIA policy and the enabling and constraining conditions that they face, I focus my attention on principals and parent coordinators (PC). Principals were the ones who initiated the policy and advocated for control over admissions with the DoE. They submitted the request and shaped the imagined policy target in each of the schools. Parent coordinators are not always involved in policymaking. Their role varies between schools and depends on the relationships between the principal and the PC. However, in all seven schools the PC oversees recruitment, admissions, registration, and management of the school's waitlist. As such, the PC provides crucial insight into how the policy plays out on the ground. In some respects, the principal and PC present two different perspectives on how the policy plays out. The principal provides the vision, and the PC manages the numbers and encounters parents as they come to tour the school or register their child. Further, in their interactions with parents, and the position they hold in the school, the principals are the prime authority figure while the PCs are more approachable to parents and are supposed to represent and promote families' issues and perspectives. Therefore, information from principals and PCs complement one another in addressing the admissions policy's intention, design, and implementation.

The case studies included interviews and observations. In each of the schools, I repeatedly interviewed the principals, the assistant principals (AP), and parent

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[4] As noted above, NYC is divided into 32 school districts and an additional special education district. Each of the three schools in my study is in a different school district, and thus they are subjected to different regulations.

coordinators (PC), a unique NYC role of parent liaison in schools that includes overseeing the school's admissions process. The interviews with principals and PCs took place approximately every three months throughout the school year and lasted between 45 and 120 minutes. In each school, I conducted one interview with the AP. APs tended to be less involved in the DIA policy in the two schools, and were largely more focused on the schools' everyday flow than on policies or vision; they were also not in constant contact with parents as was the case for principals and PCs. Therefore, I conducted only one interview with an AP. At Children's Academy, the parent coordinator changed between the two academic years of my fieldwork and I interviewed both parent coordinators at this school. In total, I conducted 13 interviews with the principal, AP, and PC at Children's Academy and 16 such interviews at New World. The interviews with the principals followed a similar structure. In the first meeting with the principal, I asked them to describe the school, its history and vision, the diversity pilot, how it came about, and their goals and expected outcomes for the program. In the follow-up interviews, I started by asking about the current numeric outcomes of the pilot, whether they were meeting their goals, and what they plan to do moving forward. I then asked about challenges related to the pilot and generally at the school that arose during the months since our previous interview. I used information from my observation data to inform my questions to the principals. Interviews with PCs followed a similar structure but were more focused on the nuts and bolts of admissions and school composition, since that is their area of expertise. I asked about how the recruitment, enrollment, and registration processes were going and how they were informed and changed by the admissions pilot. I also asked PCs about the challenges that arose with parents and the PC's views of the

policy and how it was unfolding. With APs, that in both schools were less directly involved with the DIA policy, I talked about issues of diversity and integration in the school, and their understanding of the DIA policy.

In addition to interviews I conducted observations of the schools' School Leadership Team (SLT), Parent Teacher Association (PTA), and Diversity Committee meetings. The SLT is a state-mandated forum, including the principal and teachers as well as parent representatives, who set school priorities and goals, decides on policies, and discusses urgent or continued problems. PCs in both schools always participate in SLT meetings although they are not mandated to do so. In SLT meetings, I observed discussions of the DIA policy, how the different actors perceive it and its challenges, and what efforts were taken to implement it. Observing PTA (formally known as Parents-Teachers Associations but which had no teacher presence) meetings allowed me to see how parents responded to the DIA policy and their role in its implementation. In addition, I observed meetings of the diversity committee at each school. At Children's Academy, this was a parents' committee that the principal frequently attended, and at New World it was a staff committee. The diversity committee in both schools engaged with issues of integration and discrimination. As part of their work, the committees occasionally discussed the DIA policy, its implementation, and challenges. These three settings provided information on how the principal and PC engaged with others in the schools around the DIA policy, the tensions and disagreements that arose, and how they were addressed.

To analyze the data, I first conducted open reading of the interviews and observations to come up with themes and coding mechanism. I then systematically coded

the interviews using Nvivo software for qualitative data analysis. I coded the interviews for accounts of the history of integration in the school, descriptions of the imagined policy target, and narratives about the relationship between integration and school choice, as school choice is paramount to the NYC school admission system. I also coded for direct aspects of the policy: the policy intentions, the policy criteria, and policy results and outcomes. Another important theme the analysis uncovered was the relationship between class, race, and ethnicity on which interviewees had different perspectives, and how ELL students played into the dynamics around the DIA policy. After coding the interviews, I coded the observation data for instances where the DIA policy was discussed, what was said, and by whom.

FINDINGS

DIA Policy Outcomes

Table 1.1 below presents data on characteristics of each of the seven pilot schools. I include the school choice/zoning status, set-aside criteria and percent, and the percentage point change (PC) in the share of FRL and black and Hispanic students in their kindergarten (KG) from the last year before the policy began (school year '15-'16) and the '17-'18 school year, the last year for which data are available from the NYC DoE. I provide data for the KG class as the policy was meant to create a gradual shift in school composition, and the KG class is the best reflection of the policy's success in controlling school composition[5]. While the seven schools are publicly recognizable for being the 'pilot schools', the two schools I describe in the case study section remain

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[5] I look at KG, rather than pre-kindergarten classes, because the latter, while part of the DIA policy, is a separate organizational process in the admission system. Regardless of where students go to pre-kindergarten, they have to apply for KG again, and their KG school is what determines where student can (but they might leave the school, right?) spend first-fifth grades.

confidential. For that reason, I do not present schools by their names in table 1. The two

case study schools are highlighted and will be discussed in further details in the following

sections.

**Table 1.1: Pilot Schools Characteristics and Composition Change,
2015/16-2017/18 School Years**

Zone/Choice Status	Set-Aside Criteria	Set-Aside Percent	FRL PC 15/16-17/18	Black and Latinx PC 15/16-17/18
Zoned	ELL, temporary housing, and welfare	20	-9	0
Choice, 4 districts	FRL	100	18	3
Choice district	FRL and ELL	45-50-67*	10	-14
Choice district	FRL	45-50-67*	-4	-5
Choice, 1 district	FRL and incarcerated parent	60/10**	12	-1
Choice, 1 district	FRL	40	19	-5
Choice, 1 district	FRL and ELL	33	18	4

** The percent set aside was increased from 45 to 50 in the second school year, and then increased to 67%
when the schools were included in a district-wide controlled choice plan.*
** This school had different set-asides for the two criteria.

Like other economic-based integration programs around the country, the DIA pilot

schools saw little to no increase in their minority racial and ethnic composition in the

years after the policy was implemented, with some experiencing decreases. On average,

the seven schools saw a decrease of 3% in the share of black and Latinx students in the

first two years of implementation, with the range from a 4-percentage point increase to a

14-percentage point decrease. Children's Academy saw no change in the share of black

and Latinx students in the KG class and New World had an increase of 3 percentage

points. Similar trends were evident in the schools that joined the DIA policy in its second

year: A recently released report on the DIA policy found no statistically significant

increase in any racial or ethnic group in all participating schools (Mader, Kramer, and Butel 2018).

In terms of economic changes (the design of the policy), similarly to other policies around the country, schools saw mixed results. Figure 1.2 presents the changes in the share of FRL students in the KG class of the seven pilot schools prior to and after the implementation of the policy. The dotted vertical line presents the year of policy implementation. Although schools had different criteria for their set-asides, FLR remains the central way to measure students' economic status. On average, between school years 2015-2016 and 2017-2018 schools saw an increase of nine percentage points in the share of FRL students in their KG class after the implementation of the policy. However, there was considerable variation between schools in terms of results. Most notably, Children's Academy saw a decrease of 9 percentage points in the share of FRL students in KG in the two years following the policy. In contrast, New World, like two other schools, saw an increase of at least 18% in the share of FRL students.

While, as expected from the literature, the schools struggled to achieve gains in racial-ethnic diversity, some did increase the share of low-income students in their kindergarten class by implementing this policy. To discuss the implementation of the economic criteria, I now turn to evidence from one of the most successful schools, New World, and the least successful, Children's Academy, to discuss how the interaction of the policy's design with contextual factors shaped the policy's outcomes, and the challenges the schools faced following the implementation of the policy.

Figure 1.2: Percent FRL Students in Kindergarten, School Years 2006/07-2017/18
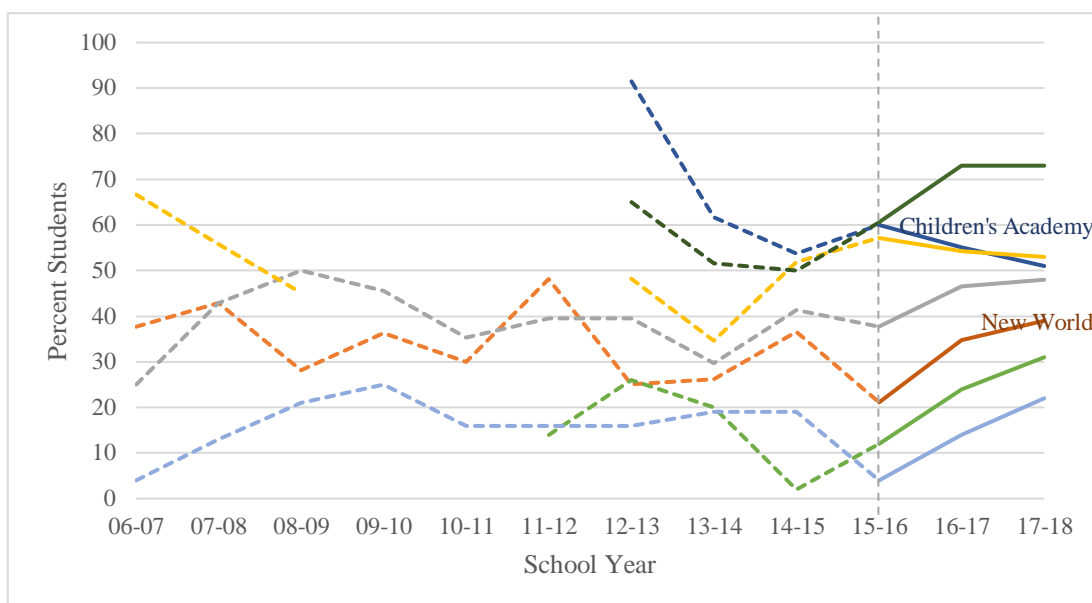
The school represented in yellow dots is missing data for the 2009-2010 to 2011-2012 school years

Children's Academy: Constraining factors

Children's Academy is a relatively new school (established in 2012) in a rapidly
gentrifying neighborhood. Gentrification in the area surrounding the school is both
economic and racial. From 2000 to 2015, the census tract where the school is located saw
an increase of 35.8% in its share of white residence, and an increase of 136.25% in its
median income. Children's Academy is a zoned school, meaning that there are several
city-blocks it officially serves. But because of the way the city's choice system is
structured, the school serves many students who travel from out of the zone, and many
zoned students attend other schools. Children's Academy was established to replace a
previous neighborhood school that was closed due to failing grades and security
concerns. It originally served mostly black and Latinx children from low-income families
who attended the previous, failing neighborhood school. However, from its inception it
also attracted some children from gentrifying families that were mostly white and more

affluent, and a small but significant group of black middle-upper class families. While it served a vast majority of disadvantaged students in its first years, its student composition quickly started to change and the school became what is known in the literature a 'gentrifying school' – an urban school that experiences an influx of white and wealthier students in a way that substantially changes the school composition and culture (Posey-Maddox 2014). In just three years, the school saw the share of FRL students drop from 82.4% to 69.2% and its share of white students increase more than 7 percentage points, from about 7 to 15%.

Following these rapid changes, the school administration and parental leadership were concerned that the school would lose its federal Title-1 funding[6], that in some parts of NYC requires 60% of school students to be FRL. Wanting to keep a diverse school, and their Title-1 status, the principal together with parents applied for a change in admissions criteria. When I first met with the principal of Children's Academy and asked about her goals in entering the pilot, her answer was very clear:

> help students of color get into good NYC high schools and stop the educational pipeline into bad schools; close the achievement gap between black males and other students.

When I pressed for a more concrete answer on the short-term goals, the principal said that she wanted to halt the rapid decrease in the share of low income black and brown children in her school.

Although the principal clearly perceived the problems she was facing as being about race, when the DoE said that she could not admit students using race and ethnicity-

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[6] Title-1 is a federal funding program of schools based on the percent of FRL students and is a major source of resources for schools.

based priorities and asked her to choose proxies, she asked for the criteria to be English Language Learners (ELL), hoping to admit Latinx students, and students who live in shelters or are part of the NYC welfare system, hoping to admit low income black and Latinx children. Interviews with the principal revealed that the later criterion was chosen for two reasons: first, it was her understanding that she is not allowed to use FRL as a criterion. Second, she believed that as an educator, her mission was to serve these kids. While the principal sought to keep her Title-1 status, which meant she wanted a set-aside higher than 60%, Children's Academy only received 20% of its seat prioritized for the policy. My findings indicate that the schools and the DoE disagree about the level of school involvement in setting the criteria. DoE officials claim that schools were consulted in the process and that the criteria were tailored to the circumstances and needs of each school. School principals, and especially the principal of Children's Academy, claim that they had no idea why the DoE set the criteria it did and that they were not informed about how the new admissions process works. In the specific case of Children's Academy, the DoE was unable to provide answers as to why the principal thought she could not use FRL as an admission criterion, or why the school was limited to a 20% set-aside.

Having only 20% of its seats set-aside for target populations was clearly a problem in terms of increasing the share of FRL students in the school, but it was not the only challenge for Children's Academy. The case of Children's Academy showed a mismatch between the DIA design and the city's choice and zoning policies. This was a problem of lack of fit between the new policy and its regulatory environment that led to difficulties in implementation: Despite the centralized system that requires parents to apply for school almost a full year ahead of time, some parents still show up in their

zoned schools during the summer or fall asking for a seat. Families who show up in the school asking for a seat tend to be from Children's Academy target group of children served by the welfare system and live in temporary housing. In an interview during the first year of the policy the PC at Children's Academy described the problem that follows:

> Those [target families] are families that aren't interested in touring in April. They want a spot in September. Seats all get filled quickly, automatically by the DOE; when we have those parents, and those families that we're trying to attract; walk in September or the week before school starts because they're just now in temporary housing nearby.

These families the PC describes are what is colloquially known in NYC schools as 'over the counter students' (Jennings 2010). These are students that do not participate in the official admission process, but rather directly come to the school to look for a seat after the school year has already begun. Typically, unless it is due to work relocations, these students come from low-income families.

Other schools also experienced challenges regarding 'over the counter' students, but this issue was especially problematic for Children's Academy. As mentioned above, the Children's Academy's policy criteria targeted children living in shelters or that were in the city's welfare system. According to the principal, those groups were even less likely to commit to a school a year ahead of time:

> The families that come looking for placement here are families who have the time and the resources to be researching where they want their child to go almost a year from now […] What does happen, unfortunately, and this is something maybe I need to speak to the enrollment office about is I will get people who meet our target over the counter in September […] Meaning they have not participated in the application process that's open right now but they will come, they'll walk in, in September looking for a seat for their child. By then, I will have had to have filled all of my seats with people from the waitlist or risk having central fill the seats for me.

In a later meeting of the diversity committee to discuss issues of school diversity, the new PC told parents that the principal has indeed contacted the Admissions and Enrollment office to try to address the problem and asked that they leave some of the seats to her discretion, to be filled in the fall. The PC said that while the DoE sounded responsive, they ended up leaving only two open seats, a number that could not help the school significantly change the share of low-income students in the school. Thus, the city's choice system was working in a contradictory manner for achieving the defined target of the policy.

Another challenge the school faced was a mismatch between the defined priority and the school's zoning designation. While the school was targeting students who live in temporary housing or are a part of the city's welfare system, the school's zone did not include any public housing projects or shelters. This made it especially hard to meet the target, as low-income students in NYC are less likely than other students to leave their zoned schools for other alternatives (Mader, Hemphill, and Abbas 2018). To overcome this problem, the school engaged in active recruitment at nearby shelters (that were geographically close, but not zoned to the school). The school had an intern in the 2017-2018 school year who came from the city's Administration for Children Services whose job was to oversee target family recruitment efforts. The intern, together with the PC, went to speak to parents at school open house night events at nearby shelters. But these attempts did not yield enough students to change school composition. Thus, not only did the DIA policy design not match the city's choice policies, it also conflicted with the school's zoning status.

In addition to the issues the school dealt with in terms of policy design and the contradictory nature of different policies, the school also dealt with constraints related to the environment it was working in. Like many other urban schools in gentrifying neighborhoods, Children's Academy was struggling with its identity, with questions about who the school belonged to, and dilemmas around who the school represents and serves. In an interview, the recruitment intern who was working with the PC on meeting the DIA's goals, characterized the shelter meetings as an attempt "to send the message that 'the neighborhood is changing, but the school didn't forget these students and welcomes them". This statement reflected the tensions around the school, which the principal and PC believed to be hindering their ability to meet their policy goals. Children's Academy became known as the school serving the new gentrifiers, and the school was struggling with the tensions around gentrification in the neighborhood. The PC, an old-time resident of the neighborhood, described the problem by saying that the longer-term neighborhood residents felt like the new, gentrifying families in the school were implicitly saying 'now that we are here this failing school is a good school'. And this is a narrative people in the neighborhood resented and rejected.

The PC then added that "…with new people moving in, which brings a certain amount of confusion and tension anyway in the neighborhood naturally, a lot of parents opted for charter schools..." And indeed, upstairs from Children's Academy there was a charter school (NYC schools commonly share buildings with other schools). Along with Children's Academy, it opened in 2012 to replace the previously failing school. But in contrast with Children's Academy, the charter school had no problem keeping its low-income and non-white students. In the 2017-2018 school year, the school had no white

students, and 78% of its students were FRL. This contrast between the downstairs gentrifying school and the upstairs school suggested that Children's Academy's challenges were not only the lack of low-income students of color in the school's area, but also its positioning in the neighborhood as the new school for gentrifying families.

The combination of a low set-aside, a set-aside criterion that does not fit the existing choice system of the neighborhood or the school's zone, and tensions about the identity of the school in a changing, gentrifying neighborhood, created big challenges for Children's Academy's attempt to successfully implement the DIA policy. The school struggled substantively with meeting its defined policy goals, both the intended racial-ethnic and the designed economic ones. Interestingly, while the share of low-income students in the KG class continued to drop as the school moved into the 2018-2019 school year, the overall share of FRL students in the school saw the first increase in many years. There were two related reasons for that outcome. The first was that by the time students reached 4th and 5th grades, there was very few white gentrifying families left in the school. This trend is also typical in gentrifying schools that tend to see more energy invested in their lower grades. The second was that the same type of over counter students that the school lost in the official application process, increased the share of policy criteria eligible students at the higher grades. In school year 2016-2017, when the school was barely holding on to its Title 1 status, the principal said in an interview that they actively enrolled new target student to increase the number of FRL students in the school. When I asked her where they found those students, she said:

> …people who come after enrollment closes, we keep track and we keep those emails or we keep their phone numbers and names, and throughout the year people want to come […] We were only capped at kindergarten, we had room in first grade, there were a couple of other grades where we

did have room. So, though the pilot targets your main entry points Pre-K and kindergarten, we still tried wherever possible to still bring in at the upper grades, because sometimes they have siblings who will come in later, or cousins, or friends. So, wherever we could we filled seats.

Thus, with regards to the policy design, these trends in enrollment suggests that school racial, ethnic, and economic composition is not only set by the composition of incoming classes, but also by that of higher grades, where students' leaving and entering schools depends on family and school discretion, independent of the DoE. This raises more questions regarding the ability of the DIA's design to shape the composition of zoned, gentrifying schools.

New World: Enabling factors

New World presents a contrast to Children's Academy in several important ways. New World is a much older school that was established in the end of the 1980s as a choice school. As a choice school, New World never had a specific community it catered to, but always attracted students from a vast geographical area. New World is in a neighborhood that was traditionally white and was experiencing income gentrification. Unlike Children's Academy, the share of white residents in the census tract surrounding the school increased only by 0.1% between 2000 and 2015. But the median income during the same time increased by 179.66% and the neighborhood transitioned from solid working and middle-class to wealthy.

New World was established with a mission to be a diverse school catering to both white and non-white students. Until the changes to the NYC admissions system, New World held an independent lottery admitting students by their race and ethnicity. Very simply, each applicant had to identify their racial and ethnic characteristics, and applicant names were put into three buckets, one for blacks, one for Latinx, and one for other,

mainly white students. Then the school administrators would pull out names from these buckets to create a balanced school. Prior to the DIA policy the school did not have class-based priorities in its independent lottery.

Once the city implemented a centralized lottery system, and as income gentrification in NYC increased, New World started to see an increase in the share of white and wealthy students in the school. In 2006-2007 school year, just after the new centralized admission system was implemented, a third of the school was FRL students. By 2015, this was reduced to 23.5% of the student body. The share of white students increased over the same time period from 30% to 42.6%. The school leadership wanted to stop these changes, before the school became majority white and extremely wealthy.

Like Children's Academy, the principal at New World stated several times that her intentions going into the policy were to create race and ethnic diversity. In an interview during the first year of the pilot she said that

> …the original goal was to have this ethnic diversity. Income became a way of getting us there […] when we first went for economic diversity, we went to maintain our ethnic diversity

Also similarly to Children's Academy, New World leadership settled for economic criteria because that is what the DoE allowed them to do. When they were asked by the DoE to suggest criteria that would proxy race and ethnicity, New World asked to prioritize students by specific address – that of public housing complexes in nearby struggling neighborhoods, and siblings of the Title-1 middle school upstairs from their school. These requests were refused, and instead 100% of their seats after siblings were prioritized to FRL students. This means that any student who has FRL status receives priority for seats in this school, after siblings, and after students who were enrolled in the

school's pre-k program.[7] New World was the only pilot school that received a 100% set-aside.

The combination of the target definition and scope and the school's choice status made it easier for New World to increase the share of FRL students in the school. FRL status captures a much wider population of students compared to students who are in the welfare system, are in temporary housing, or are ELLs. For comparison, 13.5% of the city's students are ELLs, while 74% are FRL[8]. Because of its choice status, New World's applicant pool was not limited to the composition of the school's immediate surrounding, as Children's Academy was, which allowed for a greater share of FRL students in its applicant pool regardless of the neighborhood's increasing wealth. Further, as New World was a choice school that was drawing students from vast areas of the city, it did not experience similar tensions around its community identity and gentrification. While some parents did express their chagrin about the increased presence of wealthy parents in the school, the school was not a center of a heated gentrification debate concerning the cultural and historic character of the neighborhood. As such, it did not serve as what Nyden and his colleagues (1998) call a 'red flag' of gentrification for long-time residents, which was the case at Children's Academy.

Going into the pilot, New World's administration, like that of the other schools, imagined its target population to be low income black and brown children. But one of the most striking things for the principal, AP, and the PC about the pilot in its first years of

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[7] For some of the pilot schools being enrolled to pre-k came before the set-asides and in some schools it did not. It is not clear how the DoE made the decision to prioritize current pre-k students.
[8] Data on citywide numbers is taken from https://www.schools.nyc.gov/about-us/reports/doe-data-at-a-glance

implementation was to discover that the nature of diversity in NYC was different from what they expected. While they were expecting that the FRL criteria would bring an influx of low-income students of color, they saw an increase in the number of ELL students. In the school year 2016-2017, their Kindergarten class had 15 ELL students, compared with 2 ELL students in the previous cohort (now first graders). Another thing that surprised the administrators at New World was the languages that these students spoke. They spoke not only Spanish, but also Chinese and Arabic. When the PC described the parents who came to the school to register for the following school year, the second year of the pilot, she expressed this sentiment:

> …with the income issue [the policy criteria], the parents, the families were very diverse. There are Spanish speaking families and Arabic speaking families and Chinese speaking families. That kind of diversity is here, is present, and that's really exciting too.

Reflecting on her surprise by this unexpected consequence of the policy, the principal discussed how NYC has changed, and the root of why she did not expect this outcome:

> I think NYC has changed, or at least NYC that goes to New World has changed. When my children went to this school there were the black kids that were predominantly from [name of poor neighborhood] and then you had a group of black kids who came from [name of middle class neighborhood] and you sort of knew, if they were middle class black kids, and I am generalizing now, they came from that area […] if they were low income they were probably from that area. I was sort of like, you could just say that. Latino same thing, there were kids from [name of poor neighborhood], and that was generally low income. So, you can sort of make those kinds of presumptions on people, based on what we knew about neighborhoods. NYC has changed so much in the last 20 years that I don't think you can do that easily anymore. […] and also, in those days, back in the early 1990s, the low income was predominantly folks who lived in the projects, in the housing over here, and there were black and Latino, there weren't the Chinese immigrants…

The unexpected outcomes of the policy had real implications for the school's practices.

The school is required to give ELL students special instruction with a language teacher.

This creates additional burdens on the current teacher and requires shifting budgets around to accommodate the needs of these (unexpected) students. Teachers in their classrooms also need to adjust their practices for the growing number of students who do not speak English as a first language. By the 2018-2019 school year, the number of ELLs in the school overall increased to 29. Most of the new ELL students who came in that year who had no English knowledge at all were recent Chinese immigrants. According the school's assistant principal, at the beginning of the year they were 30 ELL students, which would have promised funding for the next school year for more ELL support, but then one student left, and they remained with 29, unfunded, ELL students. One Mandarin speaking paraprofessional at the school served as the unofficial go-between parents and school staff. Thus, while the school saw the DIA pilot as a success, they were working to accommodate their perceptions of diversity to the changing landscape in NYC's FRL students' population.

A note of changing racial composition

While it was not the core focus of this article to discuss why the DIA policy failed to change the racial and ethnic composition of the schools, there is one important factor that needs to be addressed, that relates to the nature of the policy design, its interaction with choice, and the context of NYC, that also might help explain the policy's lack of ability to meet its economic goals. As mentioned above, a recent report on school choice in NYC found that the group that is most likely to exercise school choice in the city by not attending its zoned school is that of non-poor black families, 60% of which do not go to their zoned schools (compared with 28%, 29% and 39% among Asians, whites, and Latinx students, respectively). I use non-poor, rather than middle or middle-upper class as

the only thing statistically known about these families is that they are not eligible for FRL.

If the policy was designed to create racial-ethnic integration, these families might have been its main target. The principal of Children Academy, for example, saw the group of middle- and upper-class families of color as essential to her school:

> I always thought in the back of my mind that more affluent families of color would probably be my target audience, like this school's general appeal would be to those families […] Because, one, they don't have trouble identifying as black. They don't have trouble identifying their child as a child of color. So, there isn't that roadblock of, "Do I want my child sitting next to ..." Which, I think sometimes white families do have […] That's not as big of an issue for families of color, if they feel the program at the school is going to provide what they want for their children, and they want very much the same things that white families want. They want a progressive education. They want rigor.

These families are left out of the mix, however, both in the way the policy is imagined by school leaders, who sought the policy to increase the share of black and Latinx low income students, and the policy design, that looks at economic criteria. In her commentary on 'The Problem of Integration', Pattillo (2014) argues that black middle class families are overlooked by policymakers and scholars generally, and more specifically in the school integration project. She argues that these families are left out of the guiding principal of school integration that targets at poor black and brown students, as reflected very clearly in the words of both Children's Academy and New World principals.

In practice, black and Latinx middle- and upper-class families find their way into these schools by taking advantage of the city's elaborate school choice system. Although zoned families have priority over seats by address, many schools end up receiving

students coming from far away, many times over the summer off the waitlist. For example, the PTA president at Children's Academy during the first year of the DIA pilot was a college educated, middle-upper class black mother who traveled with her daughter almost 45 minutes every morning to the school from a different school district that is far away. Thus, what the policy design fails to address, and see, is the potential role these families can play in school integration.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

In this article, I sought to address the conditions that constraint and enable the ability of economic-based school integration programs to change school composition. Here, I summarize my findings and discuss their implications for future economic-based integration plans. In terms of policy criteria, it seems that a more inclusive criteria makes it easier for the policy to meet its specified goals. Further, the school's catchment must include students who meet the criteria included in the program design. While the latter seems self-evident, this criterion was not considered when the policy criteria for Children's Academy was designed. Thus, when developing an income-based integration program, policymakers must clearly formulate what population is the target of the policy, and whether this formulation adheres to the geographic unit where the program is to be implemented. Further, there needs to be collaboration between those who are seeking integration on-the-ground and the policy makers. Both schools in my study did not receive any guidance in suggesting criteria or explanations on why their criteria were set as they were. While Children's Academy's principal had a vision of serving students who reside in temporary housing, it was the role of policymakers, I believe, to observe that there are no temporary housing units in the school's zone, which made the policy criteria

irrelevant to the policy's goals and almost impossible to meet. Including the perceptions, perspectives, and grassroots policy actors in policy formation processes is crucial for making policy that is relevant (Cornwall 2008). However, grassroots policy actors are not, and cannot be expected to be, experts on the different and multifaceted aspects of laws and regulation, and the assistance of experts is needed to make sure that the policy intentions are translated to policy goals.

Another important aspect of integration policy design my study addresses is the relationship between zoning, choice, and integration programs. While previous literature argues that choice leads to segregation (e.g., Bifulco et al. 2009; Roda and Wells 2012; Saporito 2003, to name but a few), the current study suggest that under certain conditions, choice leads to better success in integration. As Potter (2019) recently argued, unchecked choice is what leads to segregation, but a design that allows for choice that is controlled with an eye for integration might be the answer. This insight aligns, and strengthen, the idea of controlled choice – in which families can choose a school but admissions are made within certain brackets of socio-economic composition in each school – that is currently implemented in one of the city's districts. My study shows that the choice school, rather than the zoned school, was better able to meet the policy's goals. It had a larger catchment area and thus could cast a wider net for meeting the desired application pool. This was reinforced by the fact that the policy was not a contested ground, because it did not 'belong' to any community. This issue raises a question that educators, parents, and policymakers need to engage with, especially when it comes to integration. To what extent should schools be a community organization that is rooted physically and symbolically in the demography, history, and culture of the area where it

is located? This is a long standing question in American education (see Arum 2000), and one that the schools in my study grappled with. This question is also important when designing integration policies, in terms of deciding what the school integration should reflect. What is the basis for integration? The composition of the city, the neighborhood, the school district, the country? On the other hand, if choice schools yield better integration under certain conditions, what does it say about what is possible for school integration? Is school integration only possible when families actively choose it? These questions of what schools should be to communities, what demographic frameworks should integration policies relate to, and who school integration is made for should be considered when designing integration plans.

This study presents several limitations. It is a case study of schools in New York City, the biggest school system in the country, and of a handful of New York City Schools that volunteered to participate in the first integration effort in the city for decades. Thus, as with any case study, generalization is a key issue. But there are several ways in which these cases are important for understanding school integration programs, especially in the post 'Parents Involved' era, where integration policy has become more grassroots, rather than a mandated, policy. I build here on previous work on case studies to assert the importance of these cases in understanding a larger social phenomenon (Harding, Fox, and Mehta 2002; Small 2009). First, a reality in which integration as a mandated policy is curtailed requires learning about those who present the necessary condition of wanting to integrate and creating a movement for integration. While these cases are the minority, they are the ones that could expand our understanding of how the social phenomenon of integration can happen. Second, these cases, in the variation of

school choice and zoning, allow for examination of the overarching theoretical claims in the literature on school choice and school integration that pit the two and develop a more nuanced understanding of the conditions under which choice and integration could work together. A case method allows for the specific juxtaposing of these 'variables' to gain a greater understanding of their work in interaction. As integration moves from being court mandated to being based on the will of local communities, it is important to understand the challenges that those communities that want to integrate face, and how to weave together the wishes of those communities with the constraints of laws and regulations.

ARTICLE 2

Pathways to Substantive Integration:
Patterns of Conflicts in Integrated Schools

Achieving integration and inclusion in diverse organizations is a hard task.
Scholars working across varied social and organizational contexts have repeatedly shown
that demographic diversity is a necessary but not sufficient condition for achieving the
beneficial outcomes of integration (e.g., Ahmed 2009; Jack 2019; Lewis 2003; Thomas
and Ely 1996). The question is how to transform organizations that are numerically
diverse into inclusive environments, where relationships and trust develop across groups,
and where everyone feels welcomed, heard, and safe. In the context of public education,
scholars have termed this process as the transformation from desegregation to integration
(King 1986; Lewis et al. 2015) or the development of substantive integration (Moody
2001).

Drawing on two years of fieldwork in two public elementary schools
implementing a voluntary integration program, in this article I further our understanding
of the day to day creation of substantive integration. I do so by exploring conflicts around
school policies between school leadership – the school administrators and the parents
who lead the school committees – and parents opposing the school policies to assess how
the conflicts shape parents' feelings of inclusion. I apply the concept of moral boundaries
(Lamont 1992, 2000) to show that when policy-related conflicts emerged, school
leadership drew boundaries of moral worth around themselves, and of the moral 'them'
(versus 'us) around the rest of the school community. Then, I show that despite the
heterogeneous demographic composition of the parents on the different sides of the

conflict, school leadership understood and handled the conflict through a dispositional approach (Lewis-McCoy 2014) that tied parents' actions to values and perspectives stemming from their race and class.

I argue that the dispositional approach to the conflicts produced feelings of exclusion among parents who objected to school policies, based on their policy perspective and demographic background. Further, adopting a race and class dispositional framework highlighted differences in values and priorities across demographic groups, differences that did not actually fall along those lines, and disregarded alliances that parents formed across groups. This, in turn, hindered substantive integration. In the cases I bring here, the supposed association between parents' values and their social-demographic positions prevented a constructive dialog between school leadership and parents around school policies. Importantly, while prejudice and bias were certainly at play in the cases that I show, they could not solely account for the dynamics observed. Similar patterns of conflict emerged in both schools although the schools and the school leadership differ in their demographic composition, as did the basis of the dispositional framing. In one school, the opposing parents were framed as non-progressive parents of color and, in the other school, as white elitist gentrifiers.

I advance existing literature on substantive integration in two ways. First, the schools that I study are intentional in their work towards integration. While others have studied schools that are intentional about diversity, they have found them to be lacking in their understanding of what substantive integration entails (e.g., Lewis and Diamond 2015). The schools in my study are well versed in the research about the struggles of demographically diverse schools, and know what obstacles typically stand in the way of

substantive integration. Thus, they provide a unique setting to study the relationships between parents and principals in integrating schools that work not only to implement demographic diversity, but also seek to achieve substantive integration. Second, this article takes conflicts around policies, rather than parents' demography, as its starting point. I argue that this contrasts with most of the literature on diverse and integrated schools that set out to observe how students and parents of different background are treated differently and how their experiences diverge. This different focus is important as it allows me to observe dynamics beyond race/class dichotomies when analyzing integrated spaces and to observe the complex nature of people's attitudes and values. Thus, this article provides more evidence for the need, both in scholarly work and among practitioners, to find the fine line between emphasizing race, ethnicity, and class as core aspects underlying social relationships and engaging with these categories in a way that is not all encompassing.

BACKGROUND

Substantive School Integration

School segregation, and the related disproportionate exposure of students of color to low-income peers, is strongly associated with achievement gaps between white students and students of color (Reardon 2016; Reardon, Kalogrides, and Shores 2019). School racial, ethnic, and economic integration continues to be considered by many as the solution to the persistent problem of educational achievement gaps (Orfield and Lee 2005). While scholars debate whether American schools are re-segregating or whether school segregation is stable (see Reardon and Owens 2014), school integration is not a negligible phenomenon. According to a recent study, 276 school districts in the South are

still under court-ordered desegregation orders (Fiel and Zhang Forthcoming). And approximately one hundred school districts across the country serving upwards of four million students are currently implementing some kind of a voluntary school socio-economic integration plan, compared with only two such districts just two decades ago (Kahlenberg et al. 2019). As a growing number of school districts in the United States are implementing voluntary school integration plans, and many are still under court-ordered desegregation, it is important to understand the issues that these communities face.

Ample research shows the challenges of effectively integrating school communities. Evidence suggest that there are many issues with substantively integrating schools including making everyone feel recognized and a valued part of the school community and achieving the beneficial student educational outcomes among all groups. Diverse schools often maintain internal segregation and students of different backgrounds are separated across academic tracks, special education classes, gifted and talented programs, and Advance Placement classes (Lewis and Diamond 2015; Lewis et al. 2015; Wells and Serna 1996). Students of different backgrounds in diverse schools are held to different expectations by school staff in ways that influence students' experiences and outcomes (Lewis 2003). Students of color do not receive the emotional and pedagogical support they require to succeed (Keels 2013). Low-income students struggle to obtain the help they need in order to succeed in socio-economically mixed classrooms (Calarco 2011), and are labeled, mistreated, and suffer psychologically (Crosnoe 2009). Black students are stereotyped, disproportionately disciplined and experience discriminatory practices (Ferguson 2010; Gregory, Skiba, and Noguera 2010; James 2012; Noguera 2003; Skiba et al. 2002).

Many scholars tie the challenges of substantive school integration to the role parents from different backgrounds play in schools. White and middle-upper-class parents enjoy cultural and economic capital that allows them to influence decisions pertaining to their individual child as well as school policies (Diamond and Gomez 2004; Lareau and Horvat 1999). White and middle-upper-class parents exert power over the school, taking over leadership and policymaking forums and marginalizing low-income and minority parents, thus maintaining and reproducing race and class hierarchies that benefit their children (Lewis and Diamond 2015; Posey-Maddox, Kimelberg, and Cucchiara 2014; Posey-Maddox 2014; Roda 2015). On their part, schools tend to yield to these parents' wishes because these parents' styles of interaction and communication are more in line with school administration and staff expectations (Lareau, Evans, and Yee 2016) and because schools view these parents as powerful choosers who can at any moment transfer their children to other schools (Wells and Serna 1996). Scholars also argue that the styles of interaction and communication of black and Latinx parents and their involvement attempts are discounted by school staff (Kim 2009; Lareau and Horvat 1999), and that black parents are considered in schools as beneficiaries while white parents are perceived as consumers, an approach that allows white parents greater voice in changing their children's circumstances (Lewis-McCoy 2014).

What all these studies show is that diverse schools struggle to create spaces that are inclusive, and that schools' interactions with parents are a central mechanism through which demographic diversity falls short of becoming substantive integration. In my analysis, I define substantive school integration through the concept of inclusion, and more specifically, the feeling of being included. Inclusion is an *active process* in which

individuals, groups, organizations, and societies value differences, everyone is empowered as full participants and contributors, and all members have the opportunity to feel connected to a larger whole without giving up individual uniqueness and identities (Ferdman 2017:238, emphasis mine). A core component of inclusion is how people experience it (Deane and Ferdman 2013; Lareau and Horvat 1999). Inclusion, in that sense, is 'people's belief that they can be safe, heard, engaged, fully present, authentic, valued, and respected, both as individuals and as members of multiple identity groups' (Ferdman 2017:239). Lareau and Horvat (1999) argue that schools are filled with moments of inclusion and exclusion. These moments, they argue, are based on the match, in the case of inclusion, or mismatch, in the case of exclusion, between parents' dispositions and school culture and the acceptable forms of interaction the school culture entails. Like Lareau and Horvat, I argue that moments of inclusion and exclusion in integrated schools are formed around negotiation of policies and values and whether parents fit with the school leadership's conception of the core values of the school. I depart from Lareau and Horvat by showing that parents' values do not necessarily align with parents' race and class. Nonetheless, school leadership explains parents' values as resulting from their demographic background. I argue that in integrating schools, conflicts around policies and school values are interpreted and managed as being about school integration. In this process, parents are being sorted by school leadership according to a framework of racial, ethnic, and class-based dispositions, regardless of parents' actual beliefs. This process, in turn, leads to feelings of alienation and resentment among parents, and in some cases to families leaving the school. In my empirical analysis, I show that this process, tying policy conflicts to inclusion, has two

components. In the first, the conflicts are constructed by school leadership as being about school values, and moral boundaries are drawn to define who takes part of the school's moral community and who does not. Then, in the second component, these moral boundaries are explained in demographic terms. This association between values and demography, which does not necessarily overlap with parents' backgrounds, discounts their policy grievances gets in the way of substantive integration.

Moral Boundaries and the Dispositional Approach

To account for the conflicts that I observed at the schools, I draw on the concept of moral boundaries. Michele Lamont conceptualized moral boundaries as lines that people draw to construct communities of worth, of a collective of 'people like me', and to distance themselves from others. Moral boundaries work in such way that they provide a 'cultural yard stick' for assessments of others as worthy or unworthy, and for inclusion of people within, and exclusion out, of social groups (Lamont 1992, 2000). As with other types of symbolic boundaries – those used by individuals and groups to categorize the world and to struggle over systems of classifications and the definitions of reality (Lamont and Molnár 2002:168) – moral boundaries are tightly linked to social inequality. Drawing moral boundaries is a process of social sorting, and analyzing dynamics of boundary-drawing is useful for linking micro everyday dynamics to broader symbolic communities of worth (Lamont 2012). Moral boundaries generate lines of inclusion and exclusion, of who gets to enjoy status, resources, and public goods, and who does not (DiTomaso, Post, and Parks-Yancy 2007; Lamont 2012).

Moral boundaries are often also used to draw distinctions across class and race lines, particularly in the American context. In "Dignity of a Working Men", Lamont

shows how working-class white men draw moral boundaries between themselves, the disciplined and hardworking, to upper class men who they say lack integrity, and poor men and the black working class, who they perceive as lacking work ethics. Similarly, she shows how black working-class men draw boundaries between themselves, the caring men, to the exploitive upper classes and working-class whites who lack compassion. In this way, moral boundaries serve to generate 'strong intergroup boundaries' (Lamont 2000:241). Thus, people tend to associate values and actions with demographic backgrounds. These are "institutionalized cultural repertoires or publicly available categorization systems" (Lamont 2000:243) that people employ to explain the differences between themselves and others, whether across different racial, ethnic, or class groups. Moral boundaries are a mechanism sustaining group differences and inequality.

Following Lewis-McCoy (2014), I address this tendency as the dispositional approach. While Lewis-McCoy uses this term to critique scholars of education, I find this concept useful for the analysis of school leadership. The dispositional approach considers behaviors and actions as stemming from values and perspectives that are rooted in demographic dispositions. One of the key features of this approach is that it describes people's actions and motivations as perfectly correlated with their demographic background. When employed, the dispositional approach provides a parsimonious explanatory approach to behavior that does not allow for variation in people's approaches, or intersections of race and class (Lewis-McCoy 2014:6). Analyzing the conflicts I observed from a dispositional approach show how school leadership tied parents' actions to demographic backgrounds in a way that excluded them. This approach is useful analytically because, as I will show, the dispositional approach was taken both

by white leadership to signal parents of color and by leadership of color to signal white parents. Thus, the story that I bring here is not only of racial prejudice and bias, but also about cultural repertoires and categories that arrange the world according to race and class.

Further, I argue that in these schools that are implementing a voluntary diversity plan, and that are interested in creating substantive integration, the dispositional approach was potentially even more salient than in diverse spaces that are not focused on their diversity and integration. Scholars from different arrays of social sciences suggest the idea that being intentional about equity creates biases. Social psychologists have shown that multicultural training aimed at reducing stereotypes and biases actually increases them (Bigler 1999; Wolsko et al. 2000). Organizational scholars have documented that emphasizing meritocracy leads to greater discrimination of women (Castilla and Benard 2010). Sociologists of education have found that in schools that have an intentionally integrated student composition, there is less cross-group friendships compared to schools that are unintentionally integrated (Shwed et al. 2018). What these studies suggest is that when people and organizations are focused on the goal of demographic diversity, they tend to highlight group-based differences more. I take cues from these studies to attend to the ways in which dispositional approaches to values and demographics shape school-parents' relationships in integrated schools.

STUDY CONTEXT

New York City School System and the Diversity in Admissions Pilot

I study conflicts over moral values and how they challenge substantive integration in the context of the New York City (NYC) public school system. Since the beginning of

the 2000s NYC public school system saw the confluence of several processes coming together to produce changes in the demography of some of its public schools. The city's school admissions policy became centralized in 2004 and began to emphasize school choice, even at the elementary school level. A new admissions system was put into place that prioritized parents' choices over automatic assignment to neighborhood schools. This means that parents can rank on their list schools all over the city, and depending on available seats, they will be accepted to them and not be sent to their zoned school. In addition to the implementation of a centralized choice system, at the beginning of the 2000s the city also prohibited schools that used to have their own admission system from using race, ethnicity, or income in student assignments. These two policy changes, combined with rapid gentrification in many of the city's neighborhoods, produced changes in the composition of many schools in gentrifying neighborhoods, which saw an influx of white and affluent students into their schools (for more information on the confluence of choice, integration, and gentrification see Posey-Maddox, Kimelberg, and Cucchiara 2014; Roda and Wells 2012).

For several years school leaders and community advocates demanded action from the city to curb the rapid demographic shifts in their schools. After first getting an official refusal and then 'long silence', in November 2015 seven NYC public elementary schools were selected by the city's Department of Education (DoE) to pilot a new 'Diversity in Admissions' (DIA) policy pilot[9]. The pilot set aside seats each year for entering pre-

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[9] In 2014, a report by the Civil Rights Project at UCLA declared New York State to have the most segregated schools in the country (see Kucsera and Orfield 2014). According to many in the field of NYC education, this report was what led the city's mayor and the school chancellor to initiate the first policy in decades to address school segregation. Another explanation for the policy shift it that the new mayor was elected on progressive agenda, and this was his way to address growing demands to keep his promises on progressive change in education.

kindergarten and kindergarten students (the key entry points to schools) who qualify for free or reduced-price lunch, are English Language Learners (ELL), are part of the NYC welfare system, or have an incarcerated parent. The specific criteria and the percent of seats prioritized vary by school. While the DoE administers the technical aspects of the admissions process, the individual schools' control how they recruit, register, and retain students and what they do to maintain the diversity and integration they seek. While this study focuses on the pilot schools, the DIA policy has expanded and will include 78 schools in the 2019-2020 academic year. Moreover, NYC has implemented structural changes to the admission systems in two of its school districts that are aimed at desegregating elementary and middle schools. Thus, this pilot represents the beginning of a growing movement in NYC working to desegregate schools through admissions.

The seven original pilot schools are, to different extents, educationally 'progressive'. Being progressive means that they contrast themselves with 'traditional' education by espousing project-based learning instead of lecture- and test-based education, extensive playtime, a focus on social-emotional skills, and an emphasis on social justice content in school curriculum. It also means that they encourage parental participation and that classrooms and school events are open or parents to visit. Principals, staff, and parents at these schools are proud of the extent of parental involvement in the schools. The original pilot schools also all enjoy good reputations among parents. On the popular NYC schools search website 'Inside Schools',[10] to which

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[10] "Inside Schools" is an online, non-governmental directory of all schools in NYC. Each school has a page with some information (which varies by school), school statistics, and a note from the website's staff. Parents I interviewed often mention this website as a main source of information when looking for schools for their children (https://insideschools.org/).

many parents in my study refer when discussing the process of choosing a school for their child, they all receive the 'staff pick' thumbs-up symbol.[11] The combination of their progressive educational approach and their well-established reputations is meaningful, as these schools cater to parents who hold strong opinions about their children's education, are interested in shaping their children's educational experiences, and are active and vocal around school policies, values, and culture.

Study Schools

The data presented in this article were collected during fieldwork in two of the schools participating in the admissions pilot program. The data were collected as part of a larger study of the implementation of a new Diversity in Admissions (DIA) policy pilot in New York City public schools. The larger purpose of the study was to evaluate the implementation and outcomes of this policy, and to understand how schools work to achieve integration both in terms of school composition and in terms of relationships and atmosphere. The larger study included three of the seven pilot schools, that were chosen based on the administration's openness to the constant presence of the researcher in the school (two additional schools agreed to participate in the study but were very restrictive in access, either to themselves or to school staff, and two out of the seven schools were not interested in participating in the study). In addition, the three study schools presented important variation in their choice and zoning policies, an issue I address in a separate article. I focus on two of the three schools that participated in the larger study. While the third school presented similar patterns of dynamics

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[11] The 'thumbs up' symbol signifies that these are "schools with strong leadership, effective teaching, a well-rounded curriculum, a welcoming atmosphere, a fair approach to discipline, and a good record of academic achievement" (Hemphill et al. 2018)

between parents and administration around school policies and values, the ways in which these dynamics played out, and the arenas where they were pronounced, added an additional layer of variation that is beyond the scope of this article, largely concerning the venues in which parents air their grievances in schools.

Table 2.1 below presents key characteristics of the two schools that are the focus of this article. The first school, for which I use the pseudonym 'New World', was established in the late 1980s by parents and educators who wanted a progressive alternative to existing schooling options in their neighborhoods. The current principal is one of the founding members. Several members of the staff were also part of the school in its first days. It is in a neighborhood that was historically composed of mostly working- and middle-class whites, with about one-third of residents identifying as non-whites; less than 10 percent of the neighborhood residents today are under the poverty line. New World is a choice school, a unique position for a NYC elementary school. Being a choice school means that the school has no specific catchment area but takes students based only on applications, without consideration of home address, from four different NYC school districts.[12] Until the mid-2000s the school maintained a system of race-based admissions. Parents were asked to mark their race and ethnicity on their application form, and the school principal, along with a parent and a school district representative, would pull names out of three hats, one for blacks, one for Latinx, and one for 'others', which included mostly white students. After 2004, due to the new choice

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[12] The NYC DoE oversees all public schools in the city; however, the elementary and middle schools' system is also divided into 32 Community School Districts (CSD) that are each governed by a superintendent and a counseling body of parents and community members. CSDs are especially crucial for school assignment and admissions, as their external (i.e., district) and internal (i.e., zone) lines set students' assignments to public schools.

system and gentrification, the school started to see a shift in its population to include more whites and affluent families. When the admissions pilot program went into effect, 44.2 percent of the students in the school were white and only 23.5 percent qualified for free or reduced-price lunch compared with 30.2 and 32.9 percent, respectively, a decade earlier. The policy priority for this school was set for students qualifying for free or reduced-price lunch.[13] After automatically accepting students with a sibling in the school and all current pre-K students, the school prioritized awarding all the remaining seats to students who qualified for free or reduced-price lunch. In the first two years of the pilot program, they met their target and the share of low-income students in their kindergarten class rose from 21% to 39%.

Table 2.1: School Characteristics, School Year 2017-2018

	New World	Children Academy
Year Established	1987	2012
Choice Status	Choice	Zoned
Percent Black Students	19.8	46.2
Percent Latin Students	21.4	30.2
Percent Asian Students	4.7	4.3
Percent white Students	42.4	18.1
Percent Low-Income Students	33.4	62.6

In contrast to New World, Children's Academy, the second school in my study, is grappling with its identity as a progressive school. Established in 2012, Children's

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[13] New York State eligibility guidelines define an annual income of $32,630 for a family of four as the threshold for free lunch and an annual income of $46,435 for a family of four as the threshold for reduced-price lunch (see http://www.cn.nysed.gov/book/export/html/2908). As of the 2017-2018 school year, New York City has made breakfast and lunch free for all children in NYC Schools (https://www.nytimes.com/2017/09/06/nyregion/free-lunch-new-york-city-schools.html). However, the DoE still collects the free/reduced-price lunch form, on which families report their income, to get an estimate of students' economic standing.

Academy replaced a failing school in a rapidly gentrifying neighborhood. As such, its first cohort of students were a combination of children transferring from the failing school (i.e., mostly black and Latinx children from low-income families) and some children from gentrifying families (i.e., mostly white and more affluent families) who loved the idea of a new progressive school in their changing neighborhood. The school was formed with a progressive-leaning focus, with an emphasis on inquiry-based learning and development of social-emotional skills.

Over the years, Children Academy has tried to find its footing in the balance between progressive and traditional education, still emphasizing social-emotional skills and project-based learning but also relying on test assessment and developing areas like math, writing, and science to better meet both New York State's core requirements and parents' concerns. Children's Academy is a zoned school. This means that it first prioritizes students who live in its few surrounding blocks, and then students who live anywhere else in the school district. But because of the elementary school citywide choice system, students also travel to the school from other school districts within NYC. When the admissions pilot program went into effect, Children's Academy was 14.5 percent white and 69.2 percent free and reduced-price lunch, compared with 7.1 percent white and 92.9 percent low-income four years earlier, in its first year. This school designated a priority for allocating 20 percent of its seats to students in the city's welfare system or in temporary housing. This means that after accepting siblings and zoned students, 20% of the seats would go to these students. In the first years of the policy the school successfully met this priority in kindergarten, but not always in pre-kindergarten.

In this paper, I compare these two schools, as they present a very similar dynamic of value conflicts while having starkly different demographic compositions and policy targets. In addition, these schools present different outcomes in terms of the type of parents who are alienated by the conflict and how school leadership discusses it. These differences underscore the significance of the value conflicts as a core process in integrated schools. They also underscore the strength of the race-class narrative compared with the composition of the parents involved in the conflict in shaping the conflicts' outcomes.

DATA AND METHODS

I conducted fieldwork in the two schools from September 2016 until June 2018 (academic years 2016-2017 and 2017-2018). The primary modes of data collection were participant observation and interviews. In each school, I observed the monthly PTA meetings, School Leadership Team (SLT)[14] meetings, and Diversity Committee[15] meetings. I also observed various kinds of race-awareness workshops that parents participated in. Throughout the data collection period, I conducted multiple interviews with principals and parent coordinators (a unique NYC role of parent liaison in schools). In total, in each of the schools, I conducted altogether between 12 and 15 interviews with the two principals and three parent coordinators (at Children's Academy, the parent coordinator changed between the two academic years of my fieldwork and I interviewed

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[14] School Leadership Teams (SLT) are a state-mandated school governing body composed of the school principal, teachers, and elected parents. The SLT oversees writing the school's Comprehensive Educational Plan (CEP) which entails the school's annual policy goals and evaluates their success in affecting students' achievements.

[15] A Diversity Committee is a voluntary organization within a school that deals with issues of diversity and race equity in the school community. There are no official guidelines for how this committee should work. Therefore, it has a different composition and goals in each school.

both parent coordinators at this school). Principals and parent coordinator were

sometimes interviewed together and sometimes apart. The interviews took place

approximately every three months throughout the school year and lasted between 45 and

120 minutes. In addition, I interviewed 40 parents, mainly mothers, in the two schools, 21

at Children Academy and 19 at New World. Table 2.2 present key demographic

characteristics for these parents, including gender and self-described race/ethnicity and

education and the intersection of race/ethnicity and education. Parents' interviews were

semi-structured, and the interview protocol developed as the study progressed to address

the main issues that came up in meetings and conversations. The interviews lasted

between 30 and 100 minutes, depending on parental availability and willingness to share

experiences. Most of the interviews were taped and transcribed, except for those of a

handful of interviewees who elected not to be recorded. In those rare instances, I took

notes during the interview.

Table 2.2: Characteristics of Parent Interview Participants

	New World (N=19)	Children Academy (N=21)	Total (N=40)
Gender			
Female	18	20	38
Male	1	1	2
Race/Ethnicity			
Black	6	11	17
Latin	1	1	2
Mixed	2	0	2
White	9	8	17
Asian/South Asian	1	1	2
Education			
Less than High School	0	1	1
High School	1	0	1
Partial College/Associates degree	3	2	5
BA	6	8	14
Graduate/Professional	9	10	19

My work focuses on administrators and parents, rather than on students and staff, for several reasons. Parents' collective involvement in school is an important aspect of education. It is important because, when parents are highly involved in schools, they shape school policies and experiences not only for their children, but for the entire student population (Cucchiara and Horvat 2014; Posey-Maddox et al. 2014). Further, parents who act collectively in schools often have conflicts with administrators, and these conflicts shape school policies in a way that affects all students in the school (Lareau and Muñoz 2012). But also important is how school administrators react to parents and their demands. As Jennings (2010) notes in her study of high schools in NYC, in the current era of parental choice coupled with growing principals' responsibility and accountability in NYC public schools, it is crucial to understand principals as key actors in shaping policies within schools.

More specifically, in this article I focus on the actions and reactions of 'school leadership' to policy conflicts. I use the term 'school leadership' to denote those who set the tone in the school and control the narrative, the administrators and the group of parents who make up what Small (2004) refers to as 'the vital few', the small group of parents who usually make up the PTA, SLT, and Diversity Committee, are in close contact with the principal (or 'have the principal's ear'), and have substantial influence on school policy. In contrast to studies that indicated that in diverse or gentrifying schools these are mostly white parents, my study includes a similar number of black and white parents (see table 2). Although the two schools have substantial Latinx population (21% at New School and 30% at Children Academy), Latin parents were all but absent from school leadership positions.

In interviews with parents, after asking about general demographic information, their educational biography, and how they came to live where they do, I asked them how they came to choose the school for their children, how their experience has been so far, what they thought were the greatest challenges facing the school, and, if they were a part of the PTA, SLT, or Diversity Committee, what these bodies did and how they perceived their work. I also asked all parents to define diversity, explain the diversity in admissions initiative in their own words, and give their opinion of it. When conflicts erupted in the schools, I added questions about the parents' understanding of each conflict and how it was handled. For principals and parent coordinators, I had a set of questions I asked every time we met, starting with how they evaluated the policy so far in terms of meeting its goals, the challenges they were facing, and what they plan to do next. I then asked about other issues their school faced that year and, when specific conflicts arose, I asked about those directly. I also asked about their personal biographies and the history of the school.

I used a sample of interviews both with parents and with administrators for a first round of open-coding with the purpose of generating field-grounded themes. Parents' interviews yielded codes such as 'priorities in school search process', 'managing racial-ethnic/class diversity', 'parents' interactions', and 'parental involvement in school'. Another set of codes was devoted to how parents define diversity, how they see diversity in the school, their understanding of the admissions pilot, and the challenges they see to the implementation of the policy specifically and for achieving integration in schools more broadly. For administrators' interviews, I used similar themes, such as managing racial diversity, and codes describing the admissions pilot program, but also added codes

for their accounts of school history and vision and their perceptions of parents. I then synthesized the codes from parent and administrator interviews with the major themes that came up from my observations to create a full coding scheme for all data. I used Excel spreadsheets for the analysis. Each theme was assigned a column and each interview or observation was assigned a row. This method allowed me to both summarize themes across speakers, events, and settings within the same school and compare subjects and events across the different schools.

POLICY AND VALUE CONFLICTS IN INTEGRATED SCHOOLS

In this section, I present conflicts around school policy in the period after the implementation of the integration plan. I present one specific conflict at each school to illustrate persistent, typical dynamics among parents and between parents and administration that I observed throughout my fieldwork. The specific conflicts I describe are the ones that were most salient. Additionally, despite the different compositions of the schools, the conflicts were patterned remarkably similarly. For each school, I present the policy issue that was debated, the moral boundaries that were drawn, and the dispositional framework that was used to explain the conflict in terms of race and class. I show that at New World a conflict that erupted around unlabeled bathrooms, was perceived as a conflict around progressive values, and was constructed as a conflict between less-educated parents of color and school leadership. At Children's Academy, a conflict erupted around the school's bullying policy, and was perceived as a moral conflict around the ideals of integration and social justice. Here also a dispositional approach was adopted. But at Children's Academy, the framework described white middle-upper-class parents as those who do not fit the school. In both cases, the

dispositional approach to the conflict did not necessarily align with the background of the parents challenging school policy; the parents who objected to the school policies in practice created cross-class and race alliances; and the framing of the conflict made dealing with the policy issue very complicated and created tensions around the school's integration attempts. I present the evidence by breaking the sections into the three aspects of the conflict: the core policy issues, the value aspect of the conflict, and the integration aspect of the conflict. Throughout the sections, I present the parents that were involved in the conflicts and what they were struggling over. I describe parents in general demographic terms of to protect their identity. If parents gave me complete information on their education, occupation, and economic status, I describe them in terms of socio-economic status. If they shared educational information or occupation information alone, I use it to describe them. 'College educated' means any type of college education, either undergraduate or graduate. In terms of race, I use black, white, and 'of color' to describe the parents and do not specify other details. This section conveys how the conflicts themselves, and how they were perceived and constructed by school leadership, presented obstacles to substantive integration.

New World – The Conflict over Unlabeled Bathrooms

The policy conflict

The policy conflict that most unsettled the New World community after the admissions pilot program went into effect was the struggle over unlabeled (that is, gender-neutral) bathrooms. In 2013, parents of a transgender child approached the principal requesting that the child be able to use the bathroom that matched the child's own gender identity. In a gradual process taken by school administration, that did not

include consultation with the larger parents' community, all bathrooms in the school except for one were labeled as 'students' rather than 'girls' only or 'boys' only. The full implementation of the bathroom transformation occurred during the 2016-2017 school year.

At the beginning of the 2017-2018 school year, parents started to protest this policy change. The disagreement became public in a PTA meeting in the fall of that school year. During the open-floor session, when parents can bring up issues that are not on the official agenda, Anna, a white mother, took the floor. Visibly upset, she stated that the community must discuss the 'transgender bathrooms' and, specifically, the lack of communication between school leadership and the parents about the full transformation of all bathrooms in the building into non-gendered bathrooms. She argued that the implementation of the policy was not working well for 4th and 5th graders who were experiencing puberty and menstruation and that kids did not feel safe.

In response to her claims, the PTA decided to hold a special meeting a month later to discuss the issue. On a regular basis, around 15 mothers attend PTA meetings at New World, that are held during school hours, almost all of whom are white. On the day of the 'bathroom discussion', however, more than 40 parents packed the room, and the room was much more diverse than usual. The principal, assistant principal, and parent coordinator were there, along with the PTA co-chairs, the DoE's LGBTQ Community Liaison,[16] and the mother of the transgender student who started the process of the bathroom transition (her child no longer attended the school, having graduated and gone

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[16] https://www.schools.nyc.gov/school-life/support/lesbian-gay-bisexual-and-transgender-support

on to middle school). For almost two hours, parents shared their perspectives and grievances.

The main concerns among parents objecting to the unlabeled bathrooms were for their children, mainly daughter's, safety when sharing the bathrooms with the other gender, and issues of privacy, especially as it related to girls' puberty. Parents said that their girls experienced harassment by boys in the restroom and felt uncomfortable using them, and boys were shy about using the urinals. For example, Jessica, a black mother of a higher socio-economic status, told her story as a child growing up in the NYC public schools. She said she was afraid of using the public bathrooms and that avoiding the bathrooms had a long-lasting impact on her mental and physical health. She was afraid that the same thing was happening to her daughter as she was avoiding using the gender-neutral bathrooms out of fear of boys seeing her there. Renee, a woman of color who works in a semiprofessional occupation, was the one bringing up the specific policy demands on the part the parents opposed to the unlabeled bathroom. Renee involved the DoE in this debate and argued forcefully that the school was not in compliance with DoE policies around bathrooms in schools, which required that un-labeled bathrooms be single-stall bathrooms. Her demand was that non-gendered bathrooms would be single-stall lockable restrooms. The GLBTQ liaison said that there must be lockable bathrooms, that there should be both gender neutral and gendered options, and that students should know where the kinds of bathrooms are located. The meeting wrapped up with a decision to form a committee of staff, parents, and students that would decide how to move forward. The principal declared that she was not committed to the gender-neutral bathrooms but would listen to what the committee decided. In a later interview the

principal, a white woman, she said that in hindsight she realized that not including the

parents in the decision was a mistake, and that is why she decided to not take a side in the

debate, although she herself supported the gender-natural bathrooms and wanted to keep

them as they were. Thus, the policy conflict at New World was over whether and how to

roll-back the gender-neutral bathrooms the school has implemented in the previous years.

The value aspect of the conflict

From the start, and during the months when 'the bathroom committee' was

discussing practical solutions to the issue, there were ongoing negotiations of what this

conflict was about. During the lengthy PTA meeting about the unlabeled bathrooms,

Jessica, one of the black mothers who spoke out against the bathrooms, tied the bathroom

issue to ideology and values at New World and said that

> If you go against what administration believes you are told to leave, and
> if you have problems that align with administration ideology your
> problem will be taken care of.

In this statement, Jessica referred to the strong progressive values the school, and

the administration, publicly and forcefully espoused. She felt like only parents

who ideologically align with the administration are heard. Later in the discussion,

Mia, a white teacher, said

> what we are seeing is what happens when you legislate change. You do
> something that you know is right for the future, but then society responds,
> and you need to work out the details. I'm for gender neutral bathrooms
> but I understand that girls [parents call in the background: and boys] need
> to be safe. what I hear is that I feel that we need to do better job of
> teaching feminisms. Boys and men should know that they cannot kick
> down [bathroom] doors.

Thus, Mia tied supporting, or understanding, the gender-neutral bathrooms to

having proper feminist education. While she acknowledges parents' worries about

safety, she also moved the conversations to be about the values that the bathrooms represent. Similarly to Mia, two other white mothers, one of them the mother of the transgender child, spoke about the bathroom safety issue as being about teaching boys how to behave, and about 'working on patriarchy'. But at the same time, they also acknowledge that all children need to feel safe. Important to note, that none of the safety issues brought up by the objecting parents were about the transgender students or any objection to their need of special accommodation. Parents who later in interviews said that they hold beliefs that contradict ideas of gender fluidity did not bring it up in the public discussion, nor did they ask the school to eliminate the accommodations altogether.

On their part, the school principal and parent coordinator professed in interviews and in interactions with parents that they perceived those who were against the gender-neutral bathrooms to be less socially progressive and not enlightened enough on social issues. In an interview, the principal described the parents objecting to the unlabeled bathrooms, and to a progressive agenda generally, as parents who were 'afraid' of the world and of changes, parents who wanted to cage their children from progress. In an informal conversation about the bathrooms that developed between mothers from the PTA and the parent coordinator after a PTA event later in the year, the parent coordinator, extremely frustrated with the prolonged bathroom conflict, said that 'parents need to be educated' about the bathrooms and what they mean. In this statement, the parent coordinator aligned with the teacher who spoke at the PTA bathroom meeting, who suggested that the bathroom issue is a matter of education.

Some of the parents who opposed the bathrooms indeed saw it as a value issue. Theresa, who is a racially/ethnically mixed mother from a lower socio-economic background, was, together with Anna, one of the parents who started the process to protest the unlabeled bathrooms. Anna and Theresa started their protest when they realized most parents in their children's class did not know about the change to the bathrooms, and they decided to take the issue to the PTA. When I interviewed her, Theresa, similarly to Jessica when she spoke publicly, tied the bathroom issue to her childhood experiences in NYC, where the bathrooms were a place of harassment. She felt that New World was neglecting her daughter's safety by allowing non-gendered bathrooms. But she also saw it as part of broader social issues. For her, the unlabeled bathrooms were a step back for women's rights. She asked, 'where are women supposed to go to get a break, a minute off to breathe, if the women-only bathrooms are taken away?' She perceived the bathrooms to an ideologically progressive choice, and she felt that by expressing her objections to the gender-neutral bathrooms, she was the one being labeled as 'queer' in the school. She was frustrated by the fact that her concerns of her daughter's safety were not being considered.

Daniela, a college educated black mom, shared a similar perspective as Theresa:

I wasn't for their [the administration's] pushing the agenda, whereas they didn't take into account if it conflicts with moral beliefs of the parents. It's like, if you are totally against this, against the whole same sex or whatever, like this whole progressive agenda that New World has, it's imposed on your child. So, you're not going to mind. There's no discussion.

For both Theresa and Daniela, the bathroom discussion was part of a bigger discussion of New World's progressive approach, that they had qualms with and felt as if their values are not being accepted in the school. Not all objecting parents professed value-conflict

with the gender-neutral restrooms. Renee and Anna, for example, cared only for safety, and not for values. But the school administration saw the conflict as one about values. In an interview with the principal, parent coordinator, and the AP in the following school year, after the bathroom issue was resolved, the AP framed the value issue, and the question of what to do with the opposing families, as such:

> I would say it as a question, like, how does an inclusive community
> include someone's belief system if their belief system is exclusive of other
> members of the community. Like that's the tension. The whole school is
> focused on making everyone feel welcome and a part of the community
> and if one member of the community feels a strong way that someone
> else's belief system should be excluded, like what do you do with that?

For the AP, the bathroom debate, and how to handle it, was about how to negotiate what she perceived to be the school's inclusive ideology (the progressive approach that led to establishing the gender-neutral bathrooms) and parents who were exclusive in their world views (the parents who objected to the bathrooms). This framing of the value-conflict, in terms of inclusion and exclusion ties directly to another aspect of the conflict -- school integration.

The integration aspect of the conflict

Both opposing parents and school leadership tied the bathroom conflict to the school's integration aspirations. Although the opposing group of mothers was racially, ethnically, educationally, and economically mixed, both the mothers and school leadership framed this conflict as being about demographic tensions and challenges to the school's attempt of becoming more racially, ethnically, and economically diverse.

In her interview, Daniela linked the bathroom debate with school integration. After spending five years at New World, she said she believed that New World was a

great community for white families, but not so much for non-white families like hers. She

tied the uncompromising political and pedagogical progressive agenda the school takes to

the school's inability to be inclusive. Referring to the bathroom debate, she said:

> If New World truly wants to be a diverse school, that should be their goal.
> That should be number one on their agenda. Initiative brainstorming,
> actively engaging families on how they could be more diverse instead of
> coming up with their own agendas and their own ways of doing things.

Renee, the mother who focused on the school's compliance with DoE policies, personally

experienced the bathroom debate as racist:

> So, and then it was like what are they trying to do? Get those people who
> disagree with stuff out of the school rather than work it out. Why? I felt
> like it was racist against us [the opposing parents] when they talk about
> leaving the school over a simple disagreement about the changes to the
> new bathroom.

Like Theresa who said that she felt that the bathroom debate was labeling her as 'queer',

Renee was frustrated that her basic concerns about safety were not addressed, but instead,

the school administration was being racist in the reaction to her demand, attacking her

position because of her race.

Anna, a white mom, added a class aspect to the discussion. Anna described her

background as holding a bachelor's degree from a state university. She then said about

the bathroom:

> Some parents 'in the know' who went to elite schools in the Northeast
> where gender-neutral bathrooms are the norm – they might know. But
> parents that went to community college, parents that didn't go to college,
> parents that went to state universities – that's not the way it is.

Anna resented the fact that because of her educational background, which she

considered to be non-elitist compared to other parents in the school, she was

excluded from discussions of the bathroom conflict. Through this statement, Anna

relayed her position as being on the excluded side of the conflict, and of integration, at New World. While she was white, she felt like she was being excluded based on her class.

Helen, a white college educated mother, narrated the bathroom conflict in a similar way, as being about school integration. She herself supported the gender-neutral bathroom policy, and was on the administration's side in this conflict, but she believed that the bathrooms presented a potential cultural clash between white educated parents and low-income families of color. She was worried that the bathroom conflict would prevent school integration. She was critical of how the principal and parent coordinator managed the conflict and argued that their biggest problem around integration was 'not understanding or appreciating the different perspectives that parents bring…". Thus, Helen also held a dispositional approach to the conflict that linked parents' perspectives on the bathrooms to their demographic background. But she was critical of the way the administration handled it, as she thought they were alienating poor families of color from the school. The role of Anna as a white college educated mother leading the protesting group was never brought up by Helen or the school administrators. When the school principal and the PC talked about families who opposed progressive education and related values, they always mentioned families of color. For example, in an interview the principal said that "teaching and learning through project and playing is more understandable for middle class parents". Similarly, the principal and PC have an exchange during an interview about how they expect the admissions pilot might change the school:

> Principal: I'd say that when it was only 20% free lunch that was
> an easy sell with the parents in this pre-k, I don't know what it

> would look like if its 50% free lunch. You know, when we take kids outside, we go out in the rain, we have rain gear for all the children, we go out in the snow, or... things like that could be different next year if it was 50% free lunch, it will be interesting. We ... with pre-k teachers and I think they, there only like 2 families that really struggle in this group. to the PC: are they low income these families?
>
> PC: Yeah, they probably are.
>
> Principal: And they have been a little like, uncomfortable.

In this description of parents and their approach to progressive education the principal demonstrated her dispositional approach that ties parents' actions and attitudes to their demographic background. In the case of New World, both school leadership and the opposing parents saw this conflict as being about racial, ethnic, and class diversity and integration, despite the cross racial, educational, and income alliances that were formed among the objecting parents.

Eventually, after months of negotiations, the DoE decided that the school indeed was not in compliance with DoE regulations that required unlabeled bathrooms to be lockable single-stalls. After the prolonged conflict, the principal and parent coordinator decided not to protest this decision with the DoE and the school went back to gender-labeled bathrooms, excluding one bathroom that remained gender-neutral. This outcome went farther than what the protesting parents ever requested, but the debate left them feeling excluded. While the outcome of the conflict was the elimination of gender-neutral bathrooms, it also resulted in one of the protesting families transferring to a different school. The bathroom issue was the last straw in a pile of issues that bothered them about the school's progressive approach, such as parents' free access to school grounds, which is atypical for a NYC school, and what they perceived to be weak math curriculum. Although the mother who left the school eventually had the upper hand in determining

the bathroom policy, she expressed frustration and pain about how the conflict unfolded and how she was treated. In the end, the bathroom conflict hindered New World's attempts at achieving substantive integration, as a group of parents felt excluded, unheard, disenfranchised, and unwelcomed, and to a great extent though that this exclusion was related to their race and class.

It is not easy to decipher when people's perceptions and attitudes are racist, or have racial undertones, and when it is perceived as racist. The case of New World mixes the both. There was a racially and ethnically mixed group of parents who objected to a school policy that was foregrounded in progressive values. These parents felt that the reaction from school leadership was condescending, racially insensitive, and classist. And it might have been. But the ways in which school leadership treated the bathroom debate as being about dispositional values of parent and not as a policy debate, made the bathroom conflict much harder, and more painful to resolve.

Children's Academy – The Conflict over Bullying

Like New World, Children's Academy also experienced turmoil in the 2017-2018 school year. At Children's Academy, the central conflict was about the way school handled bullying and other disciplinary issues. The boundaries of the conflict were drawn around commitment to values of social and restorative justice. The demographic make-up of parents on both sides of the debate at Children's Academy was as mixed, or even more so than at New World. However, the school leadership took the same dispositional approach that explained parents approaches as the result of their race and class positions. Specifically, school leadership believed that white gentrifiers were more likely to reject social justice values and be lacking empathy. Similar to what happened at New World,

this conflict presented challenges to substantive integration as it left a group of parents in the school feeling unheard, disrespected, and disenfranchised.

The policy conflict

The conflict at Children's Academy became public halfway through the school year when, as at New World, a white, college-educated mother – here named Linda – got up to speak at the PTA's open-floor session:

> I'm a parent for a child in 4th grade, and there is a problem of bullying [in the school] and people don't know about it [...] it's like our hidden little secret, here is our beautiful school, look we are diverse, keep getting the funds in, and not talking about the bullying problem that we have […] And two kids[17] left [the school]. And kids been harassed, thrown to the wall, my kid was piggy backed while peeing. And there are the same perpetrators that's been doing that, and De-Blasio [NYC mayor] took down the suspension because of it tends to be to certain pockets of economics, and I am aware of the socioeconomics of the school.

In this opening statement, Linda detailed the terrain of the conflict. She argued that her son, and other kids, were being bullied. But the bullies, whose race or class she never directly mentioned, were being protected by the principal and by the mayor's new NYC DoE policies, which were aimed at reducing the high rates of suspension of black and brown low-income boys.[18] Without stating it explicitly, Linda said that boys of color were bullying her child, and because of the push for diversity, the principal is not doing enough about it.

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[17] The mother claimed in her statement that two children have left the school because of bullying, but only one instance of a student leaving due to bullying was reported by the principal to the SLT at that point in the year.

[18] Mayor DeBlasio, who ran for mayor on a progressive agenda, changed the suspension policy to answer concerns by many civil rights activists and student's advocates that suspensions overwhelmingly penalize and harm boys of color. See here for short coverage of the policy change in the *New York Times*: https://www.nytimes.com/2015/02/14/nyregion/suspension-rules-altered-in-new-york-citys-revision-of-school-discipline-code.html.

This conflict could have been labeled as a typical white parents' concerns about integration pronounced as the worry of 'troubled students' (Farkas and Johnson 1999). But such explanation would discount the fact that the opposition group at Children Academy was a mix of white, multiracial, and Latinx families. Like at New World, Linda's opening statement led to another discussion in the following month's PTA meeting. In later interviews, the opposing parents stated that they came to talk to the PTA because several previous conversations they had with the principal did not yield any progress on the matter. They wanted action to be taken to address the bullying problem. In this meeting, Sarah, a white mother of a higher socio-economic status painted the problems similarly to how Linda had portrayed it a month before. She argued that the principal presents a 'tone of how to create a community of victims', meaning the principal is focused on the problems of the alleged bullies instead of taking care of the fact that they are bullying other children. The principal was not present at either of the discussions at the PTA meeting, and the opposing parents commented during the meetings on how they saw the principal's absence as an intentional move on her part, to avoid discussing the bullying issue.

The opposing parents were very clear in their demands. They wanted the PTA and the school to invest in an anti-bullying program to train students and parents on school climate. They also involved the school district, and they wanted, to some extent, to remove the perpetrators from the classrooms. The school's leadership, however, was not supportive of spending money on an outside program and was resistant to the removal of students from the classroom. At the same time, the principal had no choice but to subject

the classrooms to the district's inspection, once the parents got the district involved. The

principal, in an interview, describes how she saw the school's discipline policy. She said:

> [We] have a [school counselor with a] PhD in social work that heads up
> our social work team because she has the capacity to supervision. We have
> a cadre of interns who come in every year, usually around 6 interns work
> here more than a few days a week […] I have someone who is just
> intervention specialist […] we also partner with New York psychology
> analytic […] We have a psychology intern who also comes, and he offers
> support too if a family wants to come to therapy. […] We have done a lot
> in terms of sending teacher out of professional development also in how to
> de-escalate situations if they arise in the classroom.

In this statement, the principal described all the emotional and professional

support she has put in place to help students with behavioral and emotional

problems. The school leadership believed and invested in social-emotional

support, while the opposing parents wanted to see more disciplinary, rather than

therapeutic, interventions, and wanted to implement programming for the entire

community, not only for the alleged bullies.

The value aspect of the conflict

As in New World, the debate around discipline and bullying did not only

center on the specific policy issue, but was a debate about values, and specifically,

about commitment to values of social justice. This approach to the conflict was

especially evident in the discussions of the diversity committee, where the parents

who held grievances about bullying were framed as not being committed enough

to integration and social justice values. After several months of ongoing conflict,

the participants in the diversity committee drew a clear line between those who

were committed to integration and social justice values and those who were not.

The principal, who identifies as a black-Caribbean woman, or a woman of color,

and frequented the diversity committee meetings, opened the discussion:

> Everyone are in different place in their journey [toward integration]. As a school we are in a specific place but parents in their specific place don't always understand that there are costs. It [integration] is an idealistic idea that people love and there are intentions, but when the rubber meets the road people need to understand that there is negotiation around your values, that you have to let go of. How do we have that hard conversation when we have conflicts? […] in a community like ours, some people come in with a private school attitude, that if they don't like something, I will just get rid of them. But I can't, I have to attend both sides, and people need to understand that some kids behave a certain way because of systemic issues. People want to see blood, they want suspension, but there is a criminalization, specifically of our black students, and when I am accused of defending black students, I plead guilty.

The mention of a 'journey' (the principal's word) refers to the road toward school

integration. For the principal, this journey entailed teachers and parents acknowledging

racial and class biases and privilege and addressing them in school practices and parents'

behaviors. The value question for the principal regarding bullying is whether parents are

willing to put integration, and the social justice practices she believed it required, first, as

she was.

The mothers leading the Diversity Committee, a racially- and ethnically mixed

group of women, followed suit and questioned whether the instances the opposing

parents referred to when speaking about values were actually bullying or simply instances

of conflict blown out of proportion due to the identity of the kids involved. They also

doubted that the anti-bullying training the parents were planning for the school was what

the school needed. Erin, for example, asked about the workshop: 'Did anyone talk to

them about who we are? Did anyone ask them if they ever serviced a socio-economically

diverse community?' In this comment, Erin, a white college educated mother repeated the

notion that first and foremost, for school leadership, Children's Academy was about integration. Some of the mothers expressed empathy for the mothers who were agonizing over their children being bullied for months. Mellissa, a white college educated mother said it was unconceivable that parents claiming there was bullying went without an effective answer from the principal or the PTA for so long. But the overall tone of the meeting was frustration over the opposing parents' lack of understanding of what it means to be a part of a school committed to social justice.

As response to the opposing parents demand for an anti-bullying training, toward the end of the school year the diversity committee organized a workshop that was described as about 'school climate' but was led by an organization that trains school communities on racial biases, equity, and empathy. Only two of the opposing parents participated. As part of the training, the facilitators were teaching about the concept of equity and how to create differential opportunities for students of different social backgrounds. In response, James, an opposing father of Latinx background said that he thinks that letting boys of color get away with their actions because their life circumstances were harder than those of others was a discriminatory practice. He believed that this practice was not holding these students to the same standards as other students in a way that is harmful for them. In his interpretation, James suggested an alternative framework to the leadership's social justice perspective. When James made these comments, although the principal and members of the diversity committee were present, no one responded.

In an interview, Sarah took a similar stand to James' and saw the bullying problem as stemming from misguided pedagogical priorities. She said that initially, the

school had what she perceived to be a different policy regarding discipline, where students were held accountable. Explaining what changed, she tied the disciplinary transformation specifically to the Diversity in Admissions pilot, though not for its demographic implication:

> […] so, when the diversity policy went into place […] That's when things, to me, started to change. And I will tell you that I think it is less about the fact that there were maybe technically more ... I don't even think that it changed, necessarily, the student body. It changed [the principal's] mentality […] Because she developed a real mission for being seen as a school that was about diversity. And what happened during those few years that she put so much energy into helping all of the children, she neglected a lot of children.

Thus, Sarah saw the shift in discipline to be a result of the principal's change in priorities to become 'a school that was about diversity'. For Sarah, the school used to be a place where everyone was held to high standards, but now students' life circumstances determined what standards would be set for each child. For her, as for James, this approach to education was harmful, and strayed from where she thought the school should be.

The integration aspect of the conflict

Unlike New World, at Children's Academy the conflict was explicitly about race and integration. Parents blamed the principal for protecting black boys who were allegedly hurting other children and blamed the principal for doing that she prioritized diversity over everything else. They also thought she had a misguided approach to social justice. But the conflict was about integration from yet another perspective. Like at New World, the school leadership adopted a classed and racialized scheme to explain the conflict, and this scheme had consequences for how parents at the school felt.

Sharon was a college educated black mother who was very active on the diversity committee and the PTA. She understood the bullying conflict in racial terms although she did not know the involved parents:

> …a group of parents are very concerned […] I don't know them, but according to everything I heard, I assume that the parents who are raising the issue are white and the parents of the kids who are 'bullies" [air quote with her hand] are black. I heard one of the parents said that the intent on diversity and integration is not their thing.

These clear racial lines of the conflict were also the case for the principal. In an interview, the principal explicitly narrated the conflict to be about race and class. She described the parents raising the problem as white parents turning this conflict into a power play with her, a woman of color, threatening her by saying that 'we'll go to the media' or 'we'll go to the superintendent'. She argued that parents of black students who were affected by the same alleged bullies did not talk to her the same way. She also argued that black parents show empathy in these situations, unlike the white parents with whom she was dealing. She said, "I do find that parents of color... still advocate for their child but at the same time can have empathy", thus explicitly drawing race lines around the conflict. The principal held to this approach although her most vocal allies on the diversity committee were white, college educated, gentrifying mothers.

The principal did not hide from parents that this is how she saw the conflict. In an interview, Linda told me about how the school handled the conflict that she felt that 'I'm the evil gentrification, that's the feeling I get from the school'. In an interview, Sarah also discussed the feeling she got from the school, that she was complaining about bullying because she had a problem with the racial composition of the school. She disagreed with that notion, because when she chose the school for her children, it was much less white

than it was now, when she is having problems. Sarah also contrasted herself and the mothers on the diversity committee, saying that she cared about diversity, but in a different way from them, and that she did not like their approach to school integration.

Eventually, after several months of back and forth, the PTA allocated a substantial amount of money for an anti-bullying training program that Linda and Sarah chose. But the workshop never took place. The school district, as a result of their inspection, advised the principal to find more systematic ways to deal with the disruptive students, suggesting that the parents' claims were not unfounded. As a result, the principal decided to invest a big part of her budget for the next school year in hiring a full-time guidance counselor to join the existing counseling team. Toward the end of the year, she said in an interview that some classrooms indeed had climate problems and that the school needed to figure out how to deal with it. She still rejected the notion that this was bullying and held firmly to her narrative that anyone who opposed her on bullying also opposed her on embracing integration and social justice. In contrast to New World, where the opposing parents were eventually able to change school policy, at Children's Academy the results of the protest in terms of policy changes were mixed, and not many changes were implemented to the school's practices. And the conflict left a group of very frustrated parents that felt utterly disrespected and unheard by school leadership. Like the family at New World who left because of the bathroom conflict, a family at Children Academy transferred the children to a different school as a result of the bullying conflict. And similar to how parents at New World were angry about the racist way the school dealt with what they saw as a policy issue, white parents at Children Academy were frustrated with how they were

treated and with the failure to address their concerns. In an interview, Linda said about the principal:

> She was putting me into that pot […] She was labeling. She was labeling me […] Why try to explain myself other than being a concerned parent?

In the case of Children's Academy, as it was with New World, it was not a trivial issue to observe when a parent was being biased or racist, or when school leadership was. But again, the dispositional approach with which school leadership approached the conflict made it very hard to solve. A scheme of race and class that labeled parents, on both sides of the debate, made the conflict around bullying an obstacle to the school's attempt to create substantive integration.

DISCUSSION

In this article, I set out to expand our understanding of the everyday dynamics that challenge substantive school integration. I defined substantive integration as an environment where people feel included, safe, heard, connected, and respected. Building on observations and interviews in two schools participating in a voluntary integration program, I showed that, in one school, the leadership narrated an 'us' that was devoted to politically progressive values, labeling parents of color and low-income or less educated parents as objecting to such values. In the second school, leadership defined the mission and core of the school as the achievement of integration and equity and drew a boundary of morality around embracing social justice values as the top priority. The leadership narrated rejection of integration as a characteristic of race and class privilege. In both schools, regardless of the actual policy outcome of the conflict, and parents' demographic background, parents who did not agree with the core definition of worthiness felt that

their voices were not heard, that they were not respected, and that they were disenfranchised.

The dynamics I observed at New World and Children's Academy lead to several conclusions. First, race and class do not necessarily predict where a parent will be with respect to conflicts around values or the parent's power to set policies in a school. At Children Academy, for example, white educated mothers stood on both sides of the line, and the group of parents who was described as 'not enlightened' due to their white-privileged position included a Latinx father from the neighborhood and a white mother of biracial children. At New World, a racially mixed group of mothers with varying degrees of education fought against administrators. Second, the dispositional approach of school leadership to the conflict had consequences for substantive school integration. Regardless of the lack of alignment between race, class, and position in the conflict, school leadership, made up of principals, parent coordinators, and PTA-committees involved parents, understood the conflict as falling along clear lines of race, ethnicity, and class. At New World, those who were against the gender-neutral bathrooms, and political progressive ideology more broadly, were collapsed together as low-income, or less-educated, parents of color. At Children's Academy, those who were against how bullying and discipline were handled, and more broadly against the school leadership's perceptions of integration and equity, were labeled as class- and race-privileged people. And these perceptions of the parents created resentment and feelings of alienation among these parents, to the extent that some of them left the school.

From these conclusions, I extrapolate that substantive school integration necessitates adoption of heterarchies, or the multiplicity of acceptable values (Girard and

Stark 2003; Lamont 2012). Lamont (2012) argues that heterarchies might be the way to break the link between moral boundaries and inequality. If morality is not a definitive characteristic of racial and class group identity, then sorting according to values would not be a micro-dynamic of macro group differences. This requires learning how to challenge the reproduction of race and class hierarchies while allowing a plurality of opinions and values. Importantly, I am not arguing for the moral legitimacy of blaming boys of color for bullying or rejecting solutions to transgender students' needs. Instead, I am arguing that schools, and communities generally, that want to promote substantive integration, which does not only include like-minded people, should learn how to include opinions and values that do not necessarily adhere to the leadership's positions, or the leadership's perceptions of how things are. While this might sound trivial, I found that this task was tremendously difficult for the schools I observed.

One might ask how these two cases provide a larger lesson for schools nationwide. These are, after all, progressive schools in NYC that voluntarily asked to integrate. There are several answers to this question. It is important to note that by the 2019-2020 school year, 78 schools, not all necessarily progressive, will voluntarily be part of this program.[19] In addition, two Community School Districts in the city are in different stages of implementing a district-wide admissions programs that will create more integrated schools across the entire city at the elementary, middle, and high school level. These developments make the schools I studied leaders of a growing movement.

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[19] http://www.nydailynews.com/new-york/education/ny-metro-city-expands-school-desegregation-programs-20180802-story.html

Rather than being exceptions, they are setting new rules. The dynamics they experienced

and the dilemmas they faced are important for understanding this movement going

forward. In addition, I find that exactly because they are intentionally integrating, these

schools are good cases from which to learn. If we understand the challenges faced by

communities integrating willingly, we can be better prepared to address the issues other

communities struggling with integration face, as we know the most fundamental issues

they would face after they overcome race and class avoidance. Finally, NYC has the

biggest educational system in the country, and one of the most diverse in its racial and

ethnic composition. But it also has one of the most segregated systems. And it is facing

many struggles resulting from patterns of gentrification. With the growing diversity of

the United States population, the diversification of the suburbs, recent increases in school

segregation, and the patterns of gentrification across many American cities, the

challenges these schools in the city face are far from unique. The barriers these schools

face in their journey to substantive integration can teach us a valuable lesson on how to

confront school segregation everywhere it might occur.

ARTICLE 3

Progressive First or Diverse First:
Organizational Imprinting and the Actions of Schools' Diversity Committees

Scholars have paid considerable attention to the different frameworks individuals and organizations employ to explain and manage group differences, inequality, and the role of race in society. They differentiate between color-blind approaches (Bonilla-Silva 2006), diversity and multiculturalism (Bell and Hartmann 2007; Berrey 2015; Modood 2014), and power-oriented frameworks (Bonilla-Silva, Lewis, and Embrick 2004; Warikoo and Novais 2015) as different ways in which issues of group differences and inequality are framed, discussed, and practiced. In the current article, I add to this literature by investigating how these frameworks interact with contextual factors to produce actions to address school diversity and inclusion that vary by context. Specifically, I ask what contributes to variation in action despite similar evaluative frameworks.

I address this question by comparing the work of parents' diversity committees in two urban elementary public schools – here called Children's Academy and Community Friends – implementing a 'Diversity in Admissions' policy pilot. During two years of fieldwork in these schools, I observed the monthly meetings of the diversity committees, a voluntary group of parents who, together with the school administration, engaged with questions of diversity, integration, and inclusion in the school. I find that the committees commonly employed a 'power analysis framework' (Warikoo and Novais 2015) to their understanding of demographic diversity within their schools, focusing on institutional racism as a central force affecting patterns of

discrimination within the school and in society at large. However, the committees differed in their action, and specifically, in whether their engagement with school diversity was more symbolic in nature or aimed at making practical changes that seek to undermine power hierarchies. Berrey (2015) defines diversity and inclusion policies as symbolic if they do not 'upend power dynamics or require those with privilege to relinquish their comfort in how things work' (Berrey 2015:9). I follow her definition to argue that the schools differed in whether their common 'power analysis framework' did or did not translate to engagement with upending power dynamics.

To account for the variation, I build on the concept of organizational imprinting. The idea of imprinting suggests that current organizational characteristics and variation between organizations can be accounted for by the characteristics of organizations and the social actors that created them in their founding periods. When organizations are founded, or in other periods of instability, the actions of the founders and their interactions with their environment, shape the organizations' characteristics. Then, through the organizationally embedded actions and interactions of organizational members, some characteristics of the founding period are reproduced into the organizational future, remaining significant to its current form. Thus, current variation in organizational behavior and characteristics are embedded in the organization's history (Johnson 2007; Marquis and Tilcsik 2013; Simsek, Fox, and Heavey 2015). I build on the idea of imprinting to show how school history and story of establishment, and specifically *who founded the school, for what population and purpose, and with what vision*, is relevant to how the diversity committees address questions of group inequality and power dynamics in the contemporary period. I then address the role of

the principals, their actions and interactions with the parents on the diversity

committee, and the actions of parents in the school as the mechanism that supports the

persistence of elements from the founding period into the current actions of the

diversity committees.

The analysis is twofold. I demonstrate that despite their shared frame, the

diversity committees were engaged in different types of discussions and activities. I

suggest that this variation is rooted in the schools' foundation. Doing so, I make three

contributions to existing research on frameworks of race and inequality, and to

literature on organizational, and school-specific, diversity. First, my study complicates

our understanding of the power analysis framework that underscores the systematic and

institutional nature of inequality. Previous scholarship has focused on understanding

when, in what context, or by whom a power analysis framework in adopted (Berrey 2005,

2015; Bonilla-Silva et al. 2004; Warikoo and Novais 2015). My study seeks to

understand variation in how this framework is translated into action and when it leads or

does not lead to discussions and practices that challenge the status-quo. This analysis also

reveals conditions under which such challenges to the status-quo of power relations might

occur. Second, to the best of my knowledge, school diversity committees have not been

studied before (but see Posey-Meddox (2014) for a short description). This is despite

the fact that diversity task forces in organizations are relatively efficient tools for

increasing organizational diversity, unlike other more popular tools, such as bias

trainings, that do not show success in promoting diversity (Dobbin and Kalev 2016). As

such, studying school diversity committees contributes to existing literature on school

integration and organizational diversity that attempt to understand what actions are

needed to transform schools and organizations from being numerically diverse to substantively integrated (Deane and Ferdman 2013; Ferdman 2017; Keels 2013; Lewis and Diamond 2015; Lewis et al. 2015). Third, by employing the concept of imprinting, I suggest that future studies of organizational diversity and inclusion should include an evaluation of organizational history to understand its current practices. This perspective can help evaluate the organization-specific root causes of discriminatory and exclusionary practices and thus aid at addressing within-organizational exclusion and inequalities. Understanding both the idiosyncratic root-causes of exclusionary practices and the conditions under which such practices can be undermined can help advance equity in organizations.

BACKGROUND

Frames of Group Differences and Inequality

For decades, social scientists and political activists have been thinking about the ways in which individuals and organizations understand group differences and inequality and act on them. Central to this work has been the identification of the color-blind and the diversity/multicultural frameworks, as well as the criticism of these frameworks by scholars who instead put forth a power-oriented framework. The color-blind approach to group differences holds that racial and ethnic groups and group identities are irrelevant in the post-civil rights era. Instead, relationships and policies should be blind to racial and ethnic identities, and not take them into account. The color-blind approach is often criticized by critical scholars for not acknowledging the concrete ways in which racial and ethnic backgrounds shape individual and collective outcomes and for blocking

policies such as affirmative action that use group characteristics to advance individuals (see Bonilla-Silva 2006; Feagin 2010).

The diversity and multiculturalism framework diverge from color-blind approaches by acknowledging the importance and continuing relevance of group differences. This framework suggests that demographic diversity is beneficial and holds positive contribution for societies and organizations by broadening the scope of identities, experiences, and perspective brought into them (see Bell and Hartmann 2007; Hartmann 2015; Hartmann and Gerteis 2005). However, the diversity and multiculturalism approach is criticized by some scholars for ignoring power relations and contentious racial and ethnic conflicts, and for ultimately supporting policies and organizational procedures that sustain the status-quo of group differences (Ahmed 2009; Bell and Hartmann 2007; Berrey 2015; Warikoo and Novais 2015).

An alternative framework is what Warikoo and Novais call the 'power analysis frame' (2015). This approach to group differences and inequality emphasizes the institutional, rather than personal, nature of group-based inequality. It focuses on the systematic problems of resource distribution and access to opportunities, and the inherent structural injustice that underlies inequality. Moreover, it puts a specific emphasis on race and racism as the fundamental problem of the American social system and the inequality that plagues it (see also Bonilla-Silva et al. 2004; Feagin 2010; Kendall 2012; Omi and Winant 1986). The power analysis framework also departs from the longstanding American tradition of individualism when engaging with public activism and discourse, and instead presents a more collective, political approach to social issues (Eliasoph 1999; Eliasoph and Lichterman 2003).

Berrey (2015) conceptualizes the differences between the diversity/multiculturalism and power-oriented frameworks in terms of whether actions taken by organizations to address group differences and inequality are symbolic or whether they challenge existing social hierarchies. She argues that symbolic diversity, which she attaches to the diversity and multiculturalism framework, commonly occurs when elite, exclusive settings attract and include high-achieving and high-status people of color but do not change their practices or question their underlying structural characteristics as they relate to inequality. An example of symbolic diversity efforts would be when a university implements a diversity in admissions policy, but does not evaluate its curriculum, its faculty composition and attitudes, or the practices it employed to include minority and low-income students in campus life and to ensure their academic success (see also Jack 2019). Given Berrey's analysis, we might speculate that in spaces where the power analysis framework is acted upon, diversity would become non-symbolic. However, extended work by Lewis suggests that that is not necessarily the case (Lewis 2003). Lewis argues that in schools were the curriculum is implicitly and explicitly considered in terms of race relations and representation, and the multiracial nature of the school is pronounced in school culture and values hierarchies can *potentially* be challenged and whiteness can be *potentially* questioned as the dominant force underlying school structures and practices (Lewis 2003:8). However, such schools do not necessarily become places where social hierarchies are challenged in practice.

Berrey's analysis suggests an important reason for why diversity remains symbolic even in multiracial/non-white spaces. She argues that symbolic diversity is 'low-risk' for high-status white people as it allows them to remain in control of

organizational practices and decisions. Symbolic diversity, she argues, does not carry the 'risk' of radical transformations of existing group configurations and thus does not threaten the status quo in which whites enjoy taken for granted benefits (Berrey 2015:8). Following Lewis and Berrey's work, in this article I ask what contributes to the transformation of spaces that employ a power analysis framework into ones that undermine existing social hierarchies and challenge whiteness. Specifically, I explore why in some cases the power analysis framework translates into a challenge of the status quo but in others it does not.

Organizational Imprinting

In my analysis of variation between the two diversity committees, I argue that an organizational imprinting process shapes whether the 'power analysis frame' is translated into questioning of hierarchies and of the status-quo that benefits whites. In the process of imprinting, schools' history during its founding period, and especially who founded it, with what vision, and for whom, shapes present-day differences in the actions of the diversity committee. A central current mechanism in this imprinting process rests on the actions of the school principal and their interactions with parents.

Organizational imprinting, broadly, is a historically embedded understanding of variation in organizational behavior that ties current organizational practices to its localized, contextualized history. The idea of imprinting draws connections between the founding moments of an organizations and its early context to its current practices and characteristics (Johnson 2007; Marquis and Tilcsik 2013; Simsek et al. 2015). Imprinting does not mean that organizational characteristics at foundation persist as-is, or are the direct cause to how organizations operate in the present, but that foundational

characteristics provide an important key for understanding variation between organizations in their current form (Marquis and Tilcsik 2013). Important for the case at hand, scholars of imprinting argue that this process can shape not only organizational forms and procedures, but also organizational vision, paradigms, norms, and identities (Simsek et al. 2015).

The process of organizational imprinting is made up of three separate processes, or stages. First is the establishment phase of the organization. The establishment phase is when the initial characteristics of the organization are set. According to Johnson (2007), who writes about the Paris Opera and how its founding process persisted into its current characteristics' centuries later, the initial stage of imprinting is constituted from an interaction between local entrepreneurs and their environment. She argues that environmental resources, whether technological, economic, cultural, or political, make certain structures and practices seem desirable and possible, and interact with the vision and actions of founding entrepreneurs to create specific organizational forms that have long lasting impacts. In the case of the Paris Opera, the vision of the founding entrepreneur drew on existing forms of performance arts and interacted with the political interests of the ruling king to create an institution that was both elitist and public, a hybrid form that did not exist prior to the Opera and lasts until today. The imprinting theory is an agent-focused theory that emphasizes the role of organizational founders, with their particular vision, background, networks, personality, and identity as an important and crucial part of the process of organizational imprinting (Johnson 2007).

The second phase of imprinting is the process through which some aspects of the establishment period persist into the organizational present. In other words, this is

the part of the analysis that addresses the mechanisms that account for persistence and the maintaining of some characteristics and vanishment of others (Simsek et al. 2015). According to Johnson, understanding what elements of the imprinting process persist requires an "analysis of how the embedded actions and interactions of organizational members and stakeholders contribute to the persistence of elements imprinted at founding" (Johnson 2007:121). The mechanism Johnson suggests is that of on-the-ground interactions between organizational members through which aspects of the organization become long lasting and influential. The third phase is what Simsek and his colleagues call the 'manifestations' aspect of imprinting. While they do not elaborate on this part, as they argue most empirical work does not distinguish it from the process of imprinting, the manifestations of imprinting are the impact that the imprinting process has on organizational behavior and outcomes. As the literature is focused on market organizations, they say that the impacts are in organizational performance, survival, and adaption to changes (Simsek et al. 2015:301). Here, I extend the impact of the imprinting process to how organizations, in this case schools, deal with internal inclusion and integration, and what type of action the school's diversity committee develops.

Chucchiara and Horvat (2009) suggest a possible example of the analysis I propose in this article in their explanation of the different frameworks of diversity, and related actions, taken by middle class parents in demographically diverse schools. They account for the difference between types of parental involvement in two schools by suggesting that the differences between the two schools are rooted, in part, in the values and ideologies that prevailed in the political era of the schools' founding. In one school,

the parents perceive diversity as beneficial to all children and employ a collective approach to parental involvement, investing in changes and policies that would serve all students. In the second school, parents perceive diversity as beneficial to low-income students as employ an individualistic approach to school policies, investing in changes that will benefit their own children. The collective approach, they argue, is rooted in the school's establishment in the era of the 1960s with idealistic social justice ideas that were central to how the founding parents perceived the school. The other school, however, was established in the neo-liberal, individual-oriented 1980s, and that is its legacy. Thus, they suggest that the difference in the framework of group differences expressed and in the types of actions parents currently take are rooted in the schools founding ideology, thus suggesting an imprinting story. While their analysis is useful, I depart from them in two ways. Cucchiara and Horvat's analysis resembles the literature on inequality and group differences frameworks in that they explain the differences between two frameworks rather than variation in action within one. Second, because they do not theorize this process of imprinting, they give less attention to how the characteristics of the founding era are carried in the present by organizational members. In my analysis, I account both for the founding period, and to the ways in which some aspects of it persisted into the current diverging actions of the diversity committees.

Diversity Committees as the site of action

My analysis focuses on parent diversity committees in diverse schools to explore variation in action within the power analysis framework. I argue that diversity committees fit Dobbin and Kalev's (2016) description of an organizational diversity task force. Dobbin and Kalev describe and evaluate the different organizational forms that

organizations implementing diversity programs used to enhance diversity and their usefulness in achieving organizational diversity goals. The diversity task force is internal body made up of department leaders, volunteers, and members of underrepresented groups that inspect the organization in terms of diversity in numbers and in practices and come up with solutions that can be implemented in different area of the organizations.

Unlike many other organizational practices such as bias training, Dobbin and Kalev find that diversity task forces are effective in increasing diversity in organizations (Dobbin and Kalev 2016). The underlying reason they suggest for their effectiveness is that organizations, and people in them, face a multitude of tasks and assignments. When a diversity committee is established, diversity becomes someone's specific responsibility, rather than a vague organizational goal. This means that one or more people are engaged with thinking about the goals for diversity, how to reach them, and how to evaluate whether they are successful. As a result, it is more likely that diversity will not fall by the wayside and will become part of the organizational practices. As diversity task forces, here diversity committees, have been found to be among the only organizational forms that contribute to organizational diversity, gaining a better understanding of how and why they work advances understanding of how to successfully achieve diversity and inclusion in organizations.

DATA AND METHOD

The data presented in this article were collected as part of a study of the implementation of a new Diversity in Admissions (DIA) policy pilot in New York City (NYC) public schools. The larger purpose of the study was to evaluate the implementation and outcomes of this policy, and to understand how schools work to

achieve integration and inclusion in school composition as well as in school practices and environment. The schools examined here are two of seven original NYC pilot schools. In 2015, seven schools were chosen to implement a policy that would change their admissions criteria to include socioeconomic characteristics of the students such as free or reduced lunch eligibility and home language. Participation in the pilot was voluntary and all the schools that were selected previously requested such interventions in their student body composition.

The larger study included three of the seven pilot schools, sampled based on the principals' willingness to participate and subsequent openness to my presence in the school. The three study schools exhibit important variation in their choice status and zoning status, i.e., whether they were choice schools or zoned neighborhood schools, and in their composition. Among the seven pilot schools five were established as diversity-by-design schools that intended to include a demographically mixed student body, and two were schools serving predominantly non-white students that were becoming whiter and wealthier due to gentrification. One of the schools analyzed here are of the first type, diversity-by-design. White students make up the biggest group in the school, at 46%. The second school is of the second, gentrifying school, with the largest group of students being black, also at 46%. The two schools I compare were chosen because they have a parent diversity committee that was consistent and frequent in its activity and was shaping larger school activities for parents and children and school-level conversations. I refer to the schools with the pseudonym Community Friends (the symbolic-diversity school) and Children's Academy (the gentrifying school). The third school in my study had an active staff, rather than parent, diversity

committee, so I exclude it from this analysis as the different position of staff in the school, as compared to parents, adds another layer of variation and complexity that is beyond the scope of this article.

The data collection consists of observations and interviews conducted between September 2016 and June 2018. In both schools, I observed the monthly meetings of the diversity committee that took place on a school day morning and lasted between one and two hours. Between 7 and 12 parents attended the diversity committee at Community Friends (except for one meeting that had about 20 participants). The diversity committee at Children Academy had about 12 members at the beginning of 2016, though the number later declined to a core group of about seven members. The committee's chair (a parent) usually prepared an agenda ahead of time and guided the discussion. I discuss the content of the agendas and conversations in the findings section. At Community Friends, the principal was a regular member of the committee and attended almost all meetings (although she frequently left before the meeting ended to attend other meetings). At Children Academy, the principal was not officially a part of the committee, but she frequently attended its meeting which shaped the content and direction of the conversation. At Community Friends, the parent-chair was supposed to have a co-chair from the staff, but in the two years of observations the two different teachers that were holding the position did not attend the meetings regularly, due to schedule conflicts or for personal reasons. In both schools, the committee was made up almost exclusively of mothers, and all the mothers on the diversity committees had at least some college education. In both schools, the diversity committee was a mixed group of mostly white and black mothers (details of the racial breakdown below) and

the principals both identify as women of color, although of different racial and ethnic backgrounds.

In addition to observing the meetings, I observed in several other settings. At Community Friends, I observed the diversity committee's biannual potlucks dinners, which drew a larger crowd of participants and were dedicated to discussing personal issues rather than committee business. In both schools, I observed bias-training workshops for parents (with different outside facilitators) organized by the diversity committee. At Community Friends, I attended an educational-political activity the committee organized on a Saturday in the fall of 2017. At Children's Academy, I attended the annual Black History Month event that was under the direction of the diversity committee. In both schools, I also observed school tours for prospective parents. In these tours, the schools presented their vision and curriculum and shared what they should expect if their children attend the school. At Children's Academy, I also observed a tour that presented the school to members of a national organization advocating for school integration. The tour was held as part of their annual conference that met in NYC. Finally, the diversity committee at Children's Academy included me on their very active email list-serve, which parents used to share article, ideas, grievances, and to organize Black History Month events. The principal at Community Friends, while allowing free access to all meetings and events on school grounds, refused to give me access to school-based list-serves.

In addition to observations, I conducted formal interviews as well as informal field conversations with parents at the school and with school principals and parent coordinators. Since the focus of my study is on how the school worked to create

diversity and integration, I interviewed the parents who made up the core of the

diversity committee in both schools. The study included 60 parents' interviews, 18 of

which were members of the diversity committees; only one of the members a father.

Table 3.1 shows the self-described racial-ethnic and educational background of the 18

parents from the diversity committees. Due to the small number of interviewees, I

include count rather than percent data.

Table 3.1: Characteristic of Diversity Committees Parents' Participants

	Community Friends	Children's Academy	Total
Race/Ethnicity			
White	3	2	5
Black	3	5	8
Latinx	1	0	1
Afro/Latinx	0	1	1
South Asian	0	1	1
Mixed	2	0	2
Education			
Some College	1	1	2
BA	3	3	6
Graduate	5	5	10
Total	9	9	18

The interviews with parents lasted one to two hours. Each interview started with

general biographical questions about place of birth, childhood, moves to the specific

neighborhood, education, and occupation. I then asked how they came to choose the

school for their child and their experience in the school thus far. I next asked about

diversity in the school and the work of the diversity committee, including why they

joined, what they saw as the purpose of its work, and what they did in the committee.

As the fieldwork progressed, I added questions addressing issues that were coming up

in the school during the field work, especially if these issues came up at diversity committee meetings and were addressed by the diversity committee. All the interviews except one were recorded and transcribed. One participant refused to be recorded and I took notes during the interview. One additional interview was conducted with a former parent at Community Friends who was a prominent neighborhood activist, involved in shaping choice and diversity policies throughout at least two decades, and a familiar figure in the field of school integration in NYC. I use the data from the interview to tell the story of the school's development. In addition to presenting evidence from the formal interviews, I also build on data collected during my field work. The informal field conversations with parents usually took place before or after the committee meetings or during other school events, when I talked with the parents about the issues that came up in the meeting, their perspective on them, or other issues that bothered parents and they brought to my attention.

A key interest in this study was the role of principals and parent coordinators in shaping the DIA policy and its outcomes, and the interaction of parents with school administrators. Parent coordinators (PC hereafter) is a unique NYC DoE role of a parents' liaison in the school. I observed the principal and the PC when they participated in diversity committee meetings and other school meetings and events. I also conducted repeating interviews with the principal and PC in each of the schools. The interviews with principals and PCs took place approximately every three months throughout the school year and lasted between 45 and 90 minutes. At Children's Academy, the parent coordinator changed between the two academic years of my fieldwork and I interviewed both parent coordinators at this school. In total, I conducted

12 interviews with the principal and PC at Children's Academy and 11 such interviews at Community Friends. The principal at Community Friends refused to be recorded so I took notes during our interview. In my interviews with the principals, I focused on school history and vision, how they saw the DIA policy fit with that history and vision, and the main challenges they were facing in the implementation of the policy specifically, and in running the school generally. The PC at Community Friends and the first PC at Children Academy were important key sources for the analysis. Both were women of color who either lived their entire life or many years in the neighborhood where the school was located and had a strong sense of where the DIA policy fits in the history of the school and its current character. My interviews with the PC focused on school history and their perceptions of it, as well as their work in serving a diverse student body and in implementing the DIA policy.

I started the analysis for this article by coding the notes from the diversity committee meetings. I first annotated all the notes for the issues that were brought up, the ways that were suggested to address them, and the participants and their interactions with each other. From these annotations, I focused on themes of school issues and committee actions and created a new scheme of categories including these discussion topics, such as 'inclusion', 'awareness', 'mission', and 'within segregation', as well as school-specific issues such as 'discipline', 'curriculum', ' dual language program', and 'opt-out', and the different actions that the diversity committee took, such as 'bias-training', 'weekend event', and 'discussion with the principal'(I expand on these themes in my analysis). Then, I used the themes from the diversity committee meetings, to read and analyze the interviews with parents and principals. In the final stage of the

analysis, I incorporated the theoretical stages of the organizational imprinting process into my analysis. I read the interviews with parents, principals, and PCs, as well as my notes from informal field conversation to evaluate the role of school founding and of current school interaction in shaping the work of the diversity committee. In the findings below, I provide evidence from interviews, observations and notes, as well as from historical secondary documents, to show the imprinting process and how it persisted into the work of the diversity committee.

FOUNDING, IMPRINTING, AND SYMBOLIC DIVERSTIY

In this section, I provide evidence for the organizational founding and imprinting process that shaped the divergent actions of the diversity committees and the impacts of imprinting in the nature of the diversity committee's work. In short, I argue that Community Friends was established as a progressive school by white gentrifiers that due to their progressive political values, also included a component of diversity. Community Friends was first progressive, and then diverse. In contrast, Children's Academy was established by a woman of color with the aim of serving the children of a gentrifying neighborhood, in a new neighborhood school that would have progressive components but mainly aimed to cater to families of color. Children's Academy, then, was diverse first, and then progressive. This difference in foundation persisted through the actions of the principals and their interactions with the parents of the diversity committee, to shape the ways in which the diversity committee at Community Friends engaged in symbolic diversity, while the diversity committee at Children's Academy questioned school practices and the way these practices favored white and middle-upper class parents. At Children's Academy, the imprinting process 'locked in' the importance of continuously

serving the needs of students of color while also catering to white families. In contrast, the imprinting process stemming from the foundation of Community Friends 'locked in' progressive ideals as the premise of the organization; diversity goals were secondary.

The finding section advances as follows. First, I tell the story of how each of the schools was founded and detail the differences at this initial imprinting stage that shaped the current variation in action. Then, I describe the characteristics of the schools that persist, and how the principals and parents, through their actions and interactions, sustain the progressive/diversity components of foundation into the present. Next, I describe the work of the diversity committees, and show that while both articulate a power analysis framework that focuses on institutional racism, the committees diverge in whether their work is symbolic or acts to question existing hierarchies in the school. To protect parents' identity, I describe them in general racial and educational categories. 'College educated' refers to any level of higher education.

Founding and Imprinting

Community Friends

Community Friends was established in 1991, at the height of a gentrification wave in the school's neighborhood. The gentrification at that time was characterized as the move of young white artists into a poor neighborhood that was disproportionately Puerto-Rican as well as having residents from other ethnic groups[20]. The local activist I interviewed, a white woman who was part of the movement into the neighborhood of

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[20] Source suppressed to protect school's identity.

these young 'hippies and hobos' as she calls them, describes how the idea of establishing

a school came to be:

> The schools [in the neighborhood] were emptied out, people weren't
> attending them, and those who could went to private parochial schools.
> So, these people [the gentrifiers] said, 'let's figure out why they are not
> working', and they had progressive ideology, they started reading
> things and they said 'hi lets create these new schools that will attract
> people back to the public schools'. And so, they have very childhood
> centered philosophy, what turned into Community Friends.

This activist tells a 'classic' gentrifiers' story, where the new white gentrifiers present

their actions as pioneers in an 'emptied land' that toil to improve it (Brown-Saracino

2010; Smith 1996). But, while these gentrifiers were establishing the school, she says,

they also wanted to keep it diverse. They were worried that "the schools would appeal to,

naturally, the new gentrifiers, and they didn't want to create that kind of dynamic because

the district was less than 10% white at that time." 'The kind of dynamic' she referred to

was one where because of the school's progressive ideology and the makeup of its

founding members, the school would be home only to children of white gentrifiers while

the neighborhood was predominantly non-white. To address this concern, school

founders created racial and ethnic components of the school's admission policy. The idea

was to keep the school no more than 30% white. While they knew the school would

never resemble the neighborhood in its demographic composition, they were trying for it

to not become all white.

But in 2004, NYC changed its public-school admissions laws. In a dual move, the

process of admissions was centralized, schools were no longer allowed to conduct their

own admissions process, and the city eliminated any use of race and ethnicity in

applications (O'day, Bitter, and Gomez 2011). As result, the share of white students at

Community Friends began to increase, and the share of low-income students decreased. Figure 1 below presents the demographic composition for Community Friends from school year 2006-2007 (the first school year for which data are available) until 2018-2019. As the figure shows, the end of the racial-ethnic based assignment led to an increase in the share of white students in the school, and the school always remained remarkably different from the school district. A report prepared in 2015 for the district's Educational Council showed that while only 13% of the students in the district were white, 43% of Community Friends' students were white. Data from the Department of Education shows that at the same year, the school was considerably economically privileged compared to the district with 39.1% of kindergarten students receiving free or reduced-price lunches compared to 67% of kindergarten students in the school's district[21].

Following the story of the school's establishment, and the later trajectory of its demographics, I argue that in the case of Community Friends, entrepreneur parents who were gentrifiers established a new organization (the school) that is both demographically (white) and culturally (progressive) distinct and distant from the neighborhood around it. Community Friends was an institution meant to serve these gentrifiers and their children, albeit with the political will that this school would not be completely different from the neighborhood. I argue, and will shortly show, that while Community Friends was created as a diverse school, it was first and foremost a progressive school, a founding characteristic that persisted through its history to shape the diversity committee's current engagement with diversity.

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[21] Source suppressed to protect school's identity.

**Figure 3.1: Demographic Trends at Community Friends,
School Years 2006/07-2018/19**
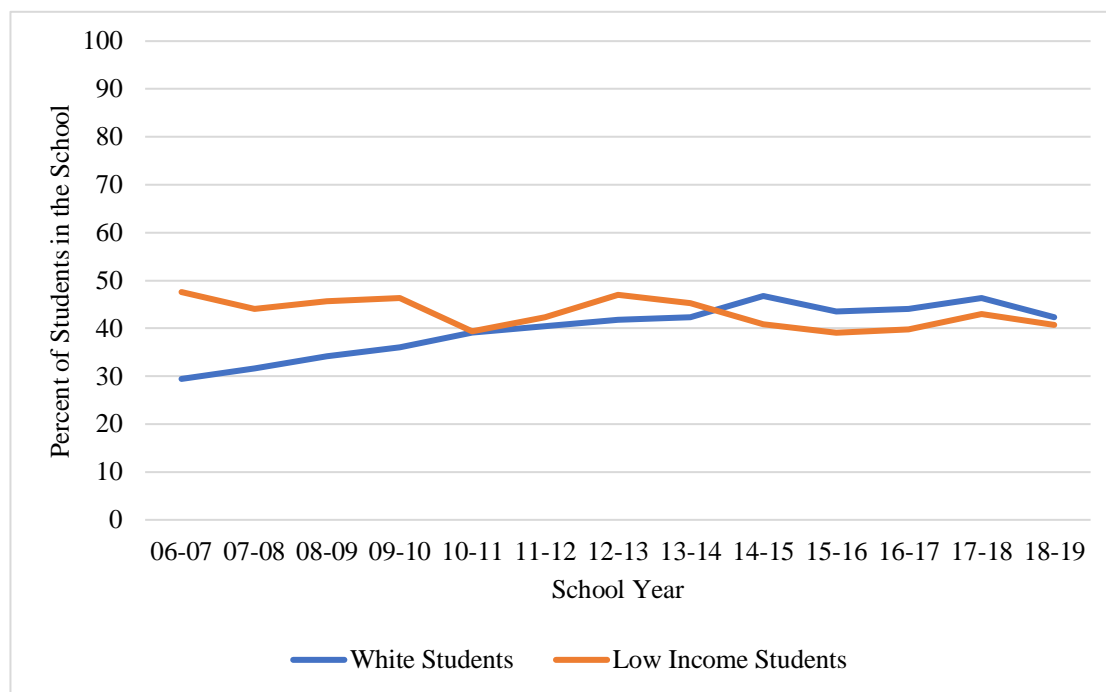
Children's Academy

Children's Academy was established in 2012. I argue here that the school was
born out of the tension between replacing a closing neighborhood school that served only
low-income students of color and serving the newly emerging diverse, gentrifying
community. Children's Academy was established to replace a neighborhood school that
served low-income students of color from the neighborhood and was considered failing
based on test scores and physical safety. The founding and then principal, in her address
to a tour group from a national school integration advocacy organization – who visited a
handful of integrated schools around the city as part of their annual conference – said that
her idea in opening the school was to give children of marginalized background services
like arts, dance, and fencing, that schools serving marginalized student do not usually
give. But despite this dream, she quickly found out that marginalized children are not

going to be her only constituency. Children's Academy is located in a neighborhood that is one of the currently most rapidly gentrifying in the city, both in terms of increasing housing costs and household income and in terms of the increasing white presence and a decreasing number of black residents (e.g., Austensen et al. 2016; Lewis and Burd-Sharps 2019). The demographic composition of the school reflects this trend. Figure 2 presents the percent of white and low-income students from 2012 when the school was opened until 2019. In the seven years since it was opened, the share of white students rose from 7% to almost 20% of students. The share of low-income students decreased from 82% to 67%.

The intersection of the closing of a 'failing' neighborhood school with rapid gentrification was important for the foundation of the school. During a meeting of the diversity committee, Maria, a college educated Black woman told this story:

> it's important to know the history of the school. There was [name of previous school] and then this school and there was a lot of animosity – 'you came here and took our school from us and there was no reason for that'. [name of staff member] heard that many times in the neighborhood […] And its related to gentrification, we got kicked out of school, the principal got kicked out.

Maria and other parents cited animosity between the families that remained from the closing school, the school principal who opened the new school, and the new gentrifying families as a key characteristic of the school in its first years.

**Figure 3.2: Demographic Trends at Children's Academy,
School Years 2012/13-2018/19**
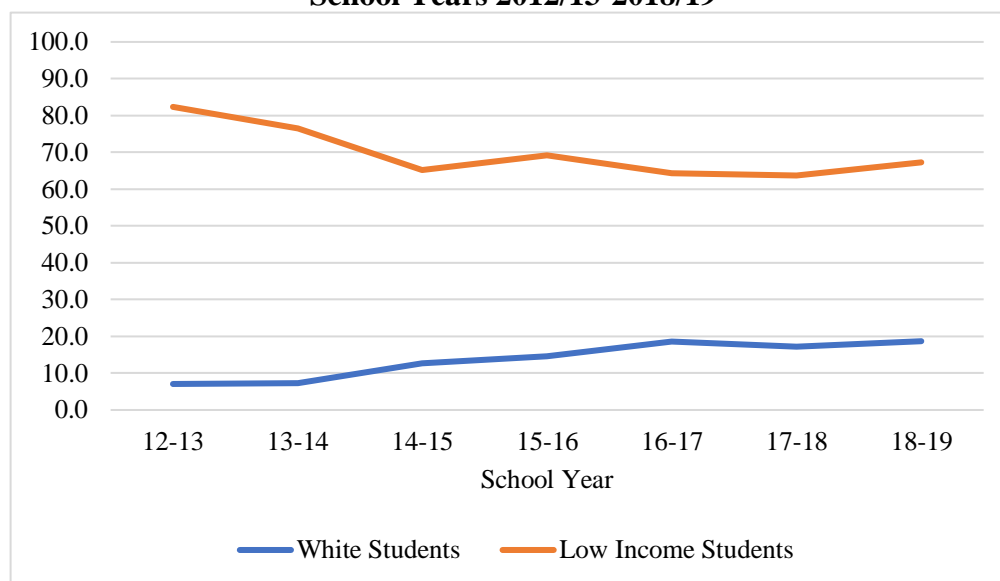
This story of establishment, I argue, is one where an entrepreneur principal who was a

woman of color established a new organization (the school) that struggled from the day it

opened its doors with its identity vis a vis the neighborhood where it was located.

Children's Academy was an institution meant to serve the perceived low-income black

and brown neighborhood children, while the neighborhood around it was rapidly

changing. I argue that Children's Academy was born out of this tension and the

imprinting process, which I shortly address, cemented its characteristics as a school that

is first and foremost diverse.

Imprinting Process: Principals and Parents' Actions and Interactions

The second stage of imprinting is in the process where certain characteristics of

the founding period persist into the organization's present. Following Johnson (2007), I

provide evidence of how actions and interactions of organizational members contribute to

the persistence of elements from the founding period. I focus on the principal and on

parents on the diversity committee to show what characteristics were maintained in the

school. I argue that these actions and interactions sustain the identity of Community

Friends as a progressive school, and Children's Academy as diverse school.

Community Friends

As mentioned above, one of the founding aspects of Community Friends was its

establishment by white gentrifiers in a then low-income neighborhood and that later

policy changes at the city level made the school even more distinct in its demographic

characteristic in comparison to the neighborhood. But evidence shows that Community

Friends was not only demographically different, it was perceived as different, and as

elitist, by parents in the neighborhood and parents in the school. In a New York Times

article about school choice and segregation in the school's district, a Hispanic mother

from the neighborhood who chose not to send her child to Community Friends was cited

as saying that at Community Friends "I feel like I have to talk a certain way or express

myself a certain way, because I feel like I'm being judged.*"[22]*

Liliya, a college educated ethnically mixed mother expressed a similar sentiment

to that of the mother cited in the *New York Times* article:

> There is too much things happening with parents, too many activities,
> its overwhelming and there are specific parents in charge and people
> feel that if they are not connected to them, they can't be a part […] I
> mean it's not a space that's welcoming to lots of people of color. Of
> people from the neighborhood […] I think its cultural. I think it's the
> culture of the school.

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[22] Source suppressed to protect school's identity.

Liliya made it a point to tell me how much she loved the school and felt bad about

criticizing it. But still, she felt that there is a distance between people like her, who were

relatively low income, and people who run the school, and that distance frustrated her.

'The people who run the school' that Liliya referred to are the parents, and mostly

mothers, on the PTA. The distant characteristics of the PTA came out when I asked

different parents on the diversity committee about where they would raise issues about

school, if they wanted to change something. Jamie, a college educated black woman, said

that "PTA is very prim and proper. Although it's NYC, PTA is how you would imagine

PTA. They don't like talking about issues, just focus on fundraising." When I asked

Dana, a white college educated mother the same question, she said that the culture of the

school was to bring up issues in personal conversations with the principal, the parent

coordinator, or teachers. But she also said that this works for her as she is conformable

with bringing up her issues, but she is not sure it works for everyone.

And indeed, on several occasions, parents of color described the principal as

someone who is not open to conversations or opinions. Eda, a college educated black

mother, said about the principal that

> She is not transparent about anything. She doesn't explain why she
> does things. When she talks about progressive education it is so
> flowery, in such big terms, how can you say anything about it
> later?

She also said that the principal brushes things off and that she, as a mother at the school,

felt unheard. Overall, Eda and other parents of color were concerned about whether the

progressive model is serving their children well. This tension between diversity and the

progressive model was increasingly discussed after the implementation of the DIA. Some

parents, of different racial and ethnic backgrounds, but mostly white, professed worries that the DIA pilot will bring many parents of color to the school who do not support the progressive education model, and that these parents will become influential and change the school's culture. I brought up this issue in a conversation with a racially mixed group of mothers after a diversity committee meeting. I asked what they thought about this tension. In response to my question, first, the mothers celebrated the progressive model. They talked about how wonderful it contrasted with traditional education, and how just having conversations about race and diversity is something that they find unique about Community Friends. Then, Jamie suggested that the problem is that the school, and the principal specifically, did not communicate well with parents, and did not acknowledge their worries, but rather brushed them off. In a short exchange with Joni, a white mother who holds a graduate degree, Jamie and Joni figured out that while Joni has been having these conversations with parents at the school, no one has mentioned it to Jamie. Jamie said she was not surprised that no one spoke to her, a black woman, about these issues. The mothers summarized the conversation saying that Community Friends is first a progressive school, that's the priority. They want diversity, but they all came for the progressive educational model. They believed that the tension should and could be solved by better communication with parents about the progressive model.

The principal, on her part, was also considering the perceived tension between diversity and the progressive model. In our first interview when the policy just started, I asked her if there are tensions arising from leading a diverse school. She gave the following example.

Principal: We are moving in the direction of viewing curriculum through social justice and social activism. That is the curriculum of 4th and 5th grades and we are looking into how to do it in the lower grades also. In one of the classes after the Women's March kids had a discussion about the pink hats and pussy hats, and the teachers explained but then kids asked things like what is pussy. So the teachers explained. And then a Black mom called me, she was appalled that teachers are talking with kids about pussy. And the teachers wrote very detailed letter to parents about what happened in the class and how the discussion unfolded. And most parents were so excited, put it on Facebook, 'look at my kids' school!'. But this mom was very angry.

Interviewer: What did you do?

Principal: Mostly just listened and said that the kids brought it up […] Her response was like 'this crazy white kids' school' although one of the teachers in her class is African American. So, we need to learn how to communicate hard topics.

The principal brought up several issues in this example. First, the tension she perceived between progressive education and diversity. In her example, she directly talked about a case where a black mother was struggling with a classroom topic that was in line with progressive values, both in the fact that it was discussed because the children brought it up, and in the topic itself, that was around a central political event for the American left.

Second, like the parents from the diversity committee, she mentioned the need to better communicate the progressive model. In a later interview, two years after the pilot has started, I asked the principal the same question about tension I heard from parents, about worries regarding the progressive model given the DIA pilot. The principal's reaction was layered. On the one hand, her response is to say "we are a progressive school and we are going to stand by it, and we are going to continue the messaging to parents of the values and practices that align with our school.". But then she also said

> I am disturbed by the fact that people are othering the parents who are aligned against progressive education: The idea that people that are coming from the pilot will change our school makes me uncomfortable and there is classism and racism in that belief.

Thus, the principal of Community Friends was aware of, and concerned by, the perceived tension between the progressive model and diversity. But like the parents on the diversity committee, she was adamant that the school is first and foremost progressive. And as I mentioned above, parents, like Jamie and Eda, understood that this is the principal's priority when they talk about how she 'lectures' to parents about progressive education. In addition, this approach was evident in the school's tours to prospective parents, where the principal did not mention the DIA pilot at all, unless parents asked about it directly. While this might have been because of lack of will to be attacked with questions by parents concerned for whether their children will get a seat in the school, this was in stark contrast to the principal of Children's Academy, who started the prospective parents tour presenting the pilot and the priority the school puts on low income students. Community Friends principal's actions, her interactions with the parents, and the priorities and actions of the parents on the diversity committee, I argue, worked as a mechanism carrying the founding characteristics of Community Friends as a first and foremost a progressive school into the school's present.

Children's Academy

As I discussed above, Children's Academy was founded with an inherent tension between serving low income students of color from a failing school and serving the children of gentrifying families. In its first years, according to the principal and parents, the school was becoming a typical 'gentrifying school': The PTA was led by white middle class parents, parents' efforts were invested mainly in the younger grades where children of gentrifiers tend to be when schools start changing as gentrifying families are usually young families, and there was great resentment between longtime neighborhood

parents and new parents (Cucchiara and Horvat 2009; Posey-Maddox 2014; Posey-Maddox, Kimelberg, and Cucchiara 2014).

But two years into its existence, in a moment that is described by the principal and parents as a watershed for the school, a group of black parents called the principal, the assistant principal, the social worker, and the white mother who was the PTA chair at the time to a meeting. In the meeting, these parents protested the ways in which the white parents have taken over the school's culture and communication and demanded an immediate change in direction. This meeting according to the principal, the PTA chair, and the assistant principal brought great realizations, and lasting changes to the school.

This change was reflected in what black moms had to say about the PTA and the diversity committee. Ambar, a college educated mother of color, said in an interview that she had reservations about interactions with individual white parents in the school, giving examples of their biases and micro-aggressions. But she also said that "at least with the PTA ones that I talk to [are really trying]. They try to just learn and make it more inclusive." Denesha, a black mother coming from a lower socio-economic status in her education and income, was critical of the PTA similarly to Lilia at Community Friends, for creating a lot of work and events. But at the same breath, unlike Lilia, who was describing the PTA as distant, she described it as trying to be inclusive:

> I feel like they try, even the PTA, they have in the morning, they have it
> in the evening, and the basketball, and the diversity committee is
> meeting on Saturday. They may think 'these parents don't want to
> come'. Sometimes we're just tired. I run every day to [name of a
> different NYC borough].

Both Ambar and Denesha had issues with the school principal and staff feeling that they are being treated badly because of their background. Denesha also felt that the diversity

committee did not address inter-racial conflicts her child had experienced in the school. Thus, Amber and Denesha's attitude towards the school's engagement with diversity was complicated. They felt discriminated in some respects but included in others. But unlike Community Friends, they did not feel distance between them and parental power, or that white parents were in control of the school.

One possible explanation for why they did not feel this way was the intentional transformation of the teaching staff and the PTA from majority white to almost exclusively black after the implementation of the DIA pilot. During the 2016-2017 school year, the principal made racial and social justice the core theme of teachers' professional development. This focus, according to the principal, made some of her white teaching staff disgruntled and unhappy. By the end of the year, most of the group of white dissatisfied teachers either quit or were let go. The next year, when the principal presented the teaching staff to parents in the school's open night event, the staff was very different, and overwhelmingly non-white. Similarly, after the breakthrough meeting described above, the PTA changed direction, and PTA presidents were only black mothers. By the time the 2017-2018 school year came around, all PTA elected officers but one were black or Latinx mothers. Thus, while on personal relationships, either within parents or between parents and administrators, Children's Academy was struggling around racist and discriminatory issues, at the institutional level, the school – the principal, and the black and white parents heading the PTA and the diversity committee – made a visible priority, and demand, to make the school a nonwhite space first. These actions, I argue, made the feature of being a diverse school the salient feature that persisted from the founding period into the present.

Imprinting Outcomes: Symbolic Diversity vs. Challenging Hierarchies

In this section, I address the work of the diversity committees. I bring evidence both for the salience of the power analysis framework in their work and to the ways in which their actions differed, despite their shared framework. I aim to show how in both schools the diversity committee members thought about the issues they dealt with in terms of institutional racism. However, at Children's Academy this perception translated into a questioning of how the school perpetuates discrimination and suggesting that of alternative practices be implemented, while at Community Friends such questioning of school practices was mostly outside of the purview of the diversity committee's work.

Community Friends

The diversity committee at Community Friends was very deliberate in how they talked about power and race. Here, I bring a detailed example from a conversation that took place at the end of the 2016-2017 school year, after the parents' anti-bias training workshop. Together with the principal, the diversity committee brought to the school an organization to conduct anti-bias training for teachers and parents that dedicated much of its time on teaching participants about institutional racism, and how racism exists as a system of interpersonal relationships, in organizational practices, and in the underlying logic of society. A conversation between the members of the committee and Adrian – a father of color of lower socio-economic background – in the meeting following the workshop, highlights the meaning of race and use of the power analysis framework in the committee. Adrian, who was not a member of the committee attended the workshop and then joined the diversity committee meeting that followed the workshop (after which he only attended once again). During the meeting he marveled to the group about the type of

discussions the workshop, and the committee was having. Especially, he was talking about how the workshop brought up issues of police violence and discrimination in job attainment in NYC. He said "we talked about things nobody talks about. Our community changes, there is gentrification. Things I couldn't talk about as a child, we are talking about them now". In this comment, Adrian emphasized how different he felt the conversation at Community Friends was from that in the world outside, a point mothers on the diversity committee made as well in our conversations.

After his comment, the conversation about the workshop continued. The main issue the members of the committee were worried about is that the workshop, that took place on two different occasions, was segregated between white parents and parents of color. The Saturday afternoon workshop had mostly white parents and a handful of parents of color, and the weekday evening meeting had mostly parents of color. The committee discussed the schedule, the reasons for the different turnout, and the way the different racial compositions of the meetings shaped the conversation. Then, a heated exchange flared up between Adrian and Jamie.

> Adrian: I don't like all this talk about race. We are all human race. Let's talk   about culture.
>
> Jamie: I know you believe that, but race is a political thing, in the world of America there is a hierarchy of race.

After this exchange, the conversation continued. Juliana, a racially mixed college educated mother, said to Adrian that race is the common language the committee employs to talk about these issues. Joni, a white college educated mother said in response that they should be talking about culture, not only race, because there are differences between communities of color that are important. But Juliana pushed back and said again

that race is the common language, and the conversation then moved on. At the end of the conversation they circled back to the question of what to do with the timing of the workshop. Juliana suggests that it might be that people are not coming because they are uncomfortable with the work being done by the diversity committee, and instead, she suggested, the workshop should be under 'multicultural day'. Jamie, in response, said "no, that would really bother some people, they will be like 'why do we need to call this multicultural??". Jamie referred here to parents of color at Community Friends that think about race and inequality in terms of power and institutional racism and would be offended if the committee used the word 'multicultural' that is perceived to be denying the power aspect of group differences. Jamie's stance was accepted, and the workshop remained under the name of the diversity committee.

The diversity committee at Community Friends presented in its work elements of the power analysis framework where it focused on race and the structure of inequality. But although the language in the committee was focused on the centrality of race and power, the committee followed with actions that were symbolic in nature. Brooke, a black mother with no college degree, described how she perceived parents at Community Friends and their approach to diversity

> …I don't think diversity is important to all of these parents who are
> sending their kids somewhere for school, and that's fine, because
> it's a reflection of the world. Not everybody gives a shit. I'm also
> not in the business of trying to convince people as to why they
> need to give a shit.

Brook also talked about how black parents overheard white parents talking disgruntledly about how the diversity committee was all about race and nothing else and about the

demeanor of the committee's chair that was too angry. A white mother who used to participate in the committee but left told me in an interview that she did not appreciate the fact that she was the one to execute many of the committee's ideas, as she did not feel as that was her job as a white person. This disgruntlement among white parents, I argue, is important as it signaled the lack of willingness of white parents at the school to have the diversity committee as a place where whiteness is questioned.

In addition to these issues, parents at Community Friends also felt that the committee had no real impact. Brook, for example, said that she felt like the committee has no impact over curriculum. Like Brooke, Jamie told me in an interview that her main goal in being the chair of the diversity committee was to shape school curriculum:

> The reason why I decided to take on the role [is] because I want to make sure that our school is always reflective in its curriculum and activities, what the student body actually looks like.

However, she never brought up this issue during a diversity committee meeting. Similarly, Eda was very concerned about the school's math curriculum. While she acted through other channels, this issue was never discussed by the committee. The black mothers that had issues with it never brought it up during committee meetings, even when they were chairing it. The committee's lack of engagement with school curriculum signals, I argue, the symbolic nature of the committee's work and the lack of action that presents any challenge to social hierarchies in the school.

Where parents did bring up issues was during the biannual potluck meetings. The potlucks, in contrast to the diversity committee meetings, were in the evening, informal, and mostly without specific agendas. The type of conversations that took place in the

potlucks serve as an illuminating contrast to what never happened in the committee itself.

Carol, a white mother with a master's degree, was one of two mothers who started the

potlucks. Here is how she recounted, in writing, the story of how the potlucks began and

developed:

> We started having potlucks at Christmas of 2015 […] and there were
> about 7-9 of us, all women (maybe two white men were there too), I
> think all women [on the committee] were parents of color but me, and
> we talked about child rearing and race and everything really and then
> we began having more potlucks -sometimes Diversity [the diversity
> committee] based, sometimes ECO [a parents' committee dedicated to
> ecological issues] […]   But at that time in December 2015 it was the
> time of Black Lives Matter being born and people taking to the streets
> and when the Eric Garner verdict came out - people took to the streets.
> We had two meetings with a social worker to discuss and that really
> unified the POC [parents of color] at Community Friends because a lot
> of feelings came up and were open wounds and some very powerful
> conversations emerged from people who were not necessarily part of
> "diversity" and that propelled conversations about workshops
> specifically dealing with diversity. And eventually as more black
> people (much more than Latina) had issues with the school structure,
> the books, the racist world outside Community Friends […] they
> started coming to Diversity to TALK and then Diversity really came
> alive - always with some white people but many more POC.

Thus, to begin with, the potluck was a space that was less white, compared to the PTA.

Jamie described the potlucks meetings saying: "[they] were amazing and had so much

energy, discussions around difficult topics that we don't get to discuss in the meetings

when we are organizing things". And indeed, the potlucks were the only place where a

conversation about curriculum ever happened. In the last potluck meeting of 2017-2018,

parents brought up that they wanted 'race in the curriculum'. Here, I do not identify

parents beyond their race as the potlucks were a very intimate, informal event, where

parents talked openly and candidly. In the conversation that developed in the potluck,

several black and white mothers suggested that the curriculum should include teachings

on black history, on slavery, about safety and how it is a different issue for black and white children, and materials special for Black History Month. A white mother complained that her children's friends who attend traditional, non-progressive schools, had more Black History Month content in their curriculum than her children at Community Friends. A black mother said that she asked the principal why they do not celebrate Black History Month, and shared that she perceived the principal's response, that Community Friends 'does not celebrate any holiday', as racist. She said she felt like Community Friends was practicing color-blind racism in its approach to curriculum.

But although the issue of curriculum came up at the potluck, it never filtered out from the potluck into diversity committee meetings, or into policy and pedagogical change. In terms of curriculum, parents tied the lack of change directly to the progressive model of the school. They blamed the principal's emphasis on complete teacher autonomy in the classroom, which is a core value of progressive education as the principal practiced it, for the lack of willingness to change. Jamie also addressed this issue in our interview. When I asked her what Community Friends is doing about diversity, she said

> the school gives a lot of autonomy to the teachers, which I love and it's one of the reasons that I chose the school, but in doing that, a teacher has the discretion as to whether they would like to teach something ... Teach different things during Women's History Month or during Black History Month, or they may leave it out completely. Whereas the class next door may be completely engrossed in curriculum that is introducing kids to these concepts and ideas and practices and things. I would love if it were, as far as diversity goes, some sort of across the board standard that when these things come up, teachers will have some sort of lesson plan in place.

When I asked if she ever brought this up with the principal, she said that she hadn't.

Thus, even when parents did bring up changes they wanted to see in school practices, as

for example in the potluck that was a more open, less white space, it did not translate into

action, or filtered down to the principal. This, I argue, shows that the committee's

activities remained symbolic, and unchallenging to existing power hierarchies in the

school. Further, the lack of change was tied to the progressive characteristic of the

school, where teachers had complete autonomy over classroom content and the principal

was greatly focused on the progressive components of the curriculum.

Children Academy

Like the diversity committee at Community Friends, the diversity committee at

Children Academy focused on race and took an institutional approach to group

differences and inequality. At Children's Academy, according to the principal, the

diversity committee was established in order to inspect all school events with an eye to

diversity and inclusion. The principal tells a story about how and why the committee was

established during the 2013-2014 school year. This story, which the principal told me

more than once during my fieldwork, represented her perception that the diversity

committee should be the advocate of integration and inclusion in the school:

> There was a dance planned based on what a fifth grader wanted. "We
> really want to have a dance. Can we please?" And it was a child of color,
> and I brought it to the PTA. "The students really would like to have a
> dance. Let's organize something. We could make it a fundraiser, try to
> invite everyone, get everyone out. We have someone who could DJ, ..."
> When they presented the flyer to me, it was a punk rock […] I'm like, "No.
> No. We can't do this. We need people who will be thinking about these
> kinds of things before they roll out so that we can make sure we don't send
> a message out that's ..."

At the time, the PTA was entirely white, and when they were asked to organize a party, they created a punk-rock one. The principal, as a woman of color, she told me, found the idea of a punk-rock party for a school that was at the time more than 90% students of color absurd, and she made the parents change the theme. Then, she also established, together with two mothers, one white and one black, the diversity committee:

> So that's really how it started and, really, just started as a way to try to have people feel welcome into the community. They tried to plan different events. Some of the earlier events were also to raise some awareness and have some conversations, which was really nice. Bringing a panel or bringing facilitators that could talk about race. So that was what they did early on.

But the diversity committee evolved beyond awareness and 'some conversations'. Erin, a white college educated mother reflected in an interview about the frame of the committee's work:

> But I mean, I know the word diversity, even, is a fraught word. The whole thing. I don't know. I'll send you the thing that [another school's principal] sent out, but you know, they're going pretty far into the language of ... they don't have a diversity community, anymore. They have like, a Race and Equity Committee today. You know? And they are basically saying, "We support Black Lives Matter." They're being super intentional, and I think a lot of these communities are working on vocabulary and definitions, and we're among those.

And indeed, during the 2017-2018 school year, the diversity committee brought to the school and organization that taught parents about the concept of equity and what it means to give more resources to students who come from less advantaged backgrounds. Among the mothers on the committee, only one had qualms with this focus on race:

> …There is work for us to do talk about diversity as a positive, not just about equity, which that is the number one thing that drives me, but actually there is a benefit for your kid to be in a diverse environment.

In this statement this mother, who was not white but also not black, was suggesting that for her there might be an overemphasis on the power frame of relationship in the committee, that did not leave a place to talk about the good things about diversity. But she never brought up this perspective during the committee meetings.

In a contrast to Community Friends, the diversity committee at Children's Academy spent much of its time discussing school policies or practices, and explicitly talking about discriminating or unequal school practices, or practices that they perceived to be preventing integration and benefiting white more than other families. Among those issues were the Dual Language program, the school's discipline and bullying policy, and standardized testing. I use the Dual Language debate to demonstrate the type of discussions the diversity committee had and how it differed from those at Community Friends. Children's Academy had two types of classes: Integrated Co-Teaching (ICT), and Dual Language (DL). ICT is an inclusive special education model in which two teachers, one special education certified and one general-ed certified co-teach a class that is composed of special education and general education students. DL programs teach children in two languages – English and Spanish at Children's Academy – and the week is divided into different languages days, with the goal of helping non-native English speakers to acquire the language faster and provide English Language speakers with a second language.

The DL program had two original purposes. It was meant to preserve the community of Latinx families in the school after the closing of the previous school, and to attract Latinx families to the newfound school. But a few years into the school's work, parents started questioning who got a seat in the program and the relationship between

the program and school integration. The discussion first came up in the diversity committee at the end of the 2016-2017 school year. The committee was hosting a teacher from the school who was interested in the committee's work to discuss issues related to diversity in the school's curriculum and practices. The discussion started when the teacher said that one struggle she faced at the school was that "different classrooms have different cultures". She went on to say that she sees 'marked differences' between the classes and that the city's school chancellor considers DL programs to be equivalent to Gifted and Talented (G&T) programs because of their demands for English Language speakers. This reference was pertinent because G&T programs are increasingly debated as part of the problem of race and class inequality in NYC schools (Roda 2015). Raquel, a black mom holding a higher degree, talked about her frustration that her son was not getting Spanish lessons:

> I don't understand why kids with IEP [IF: Individualized Education Program] can't get a second language. They are sometimes good with test more than other kids, they are good in the class, but they have other difficulties, that's why they are in ICT class. They should have a second language.

Raquel was pointing out in this statement that not only are the classes different in their culture, they are also different in their curriculum, and the students in the DL program received instruction not found in the ICT classes.

The following year, this same issue came up on the committee's list-serve. Rachel, a college educated white mother with a master's degree started the discussion. She reflected about the striking differences she noticed during a school show, where the DL classes were diverse, and the ICT classes were predominantly black. Daven, a college educated black father wrote that they were having the same conversation at home and

were wondering what a family needs to do to get their child into the DL class. This sentiment was common among black parents on the committee's list-serve who participated in the conversation, and some parents described how they felt discriminated by not being able to get their children of color seats in the DL class.

The discussion continued in the following committee meeting. The parents talked about the history of the DL program in the school and how the program came to be segregated. The principal, who participated in the discussion, told the diversity committee in response that she is "not wedded to the DL model". And indeed, the principal has already offered this perspective about the DL program in the tour she gave to the national organization on school integration. After the tour, in the Q&A, one member of the group commented that the classrooms they saw were not diverse. The principal, in response, said

> the classes you see are not dual language. And that is part of the conversation, do we continue with it? We started it to get kids here, we were here to please, but then we realized what we've done in terms of diversity. So now we are thinking on how to manage that.

Thus, the principal was already considering the issue of what to do about the lack of diversity across the different types of classroom structures. Given a green light from the principal, the diversity committee decided to add a section to the parents' handbook describing exactly how families can get into the DL program, in order to mainstream access. In addition, the PTA followed a suggestion from the diversity committee and began fundraising for classroom and teacher support (for example for teacher appreciation week) for the entire grade together, and not at the classroom level, to address the inequality in parents' resources across the DL and ICT classes. In the 2018-2019 school year, the 4th and 5th grades had already been phased out of the DL program

because there were not enough Spanish speakers to sustain it. The closure of the program across the school was still under debate between the diversity committee, who wanted the program to be phased out completely, and several middle and upper-class families who were Spanish speaking (either from South America or Spain) who came to the school solely for that program and were advocating against the closure.

What the elaborate description of the DL program discussion shows is how the diversity committee at Children's Academy acted compared to what the committee at Community Friends did. As mentioned above, DL language programs are considered in the NYC context as maintaining racial inequality by being taken advantage of by white families to gain more resources within the public-school system. Working to phase out the DL program in their school, I argue, presents a challenge to power hierarchies at Children's Academy that is not evident in the work of the diversity committee at Community Friends.

Similarly, parents on the diversity committee at Children's Academy accepted the principal's request to not opt their children out of standardized testing. Opting out of standardized testing is a common practice among middle- and upper-class families in New York State (Casalaspi 2018). In progressive schools in NYC, opt-out rates range between 75 and 95% of students. According to my interviews, most white and black parents on the committee considered opting their children out of the standardized testing. However, the principal made a plea to parents at PTA and diversity committee meetings to not opt their children out. She argued that given the known correlation between socioeconomic background and test scores, if the middle- and upper-class families in the school, like those who mostly populate the diversity committee, opt out, the school's

overall scores would decrease, and the school would suffer the consequences. All mothers on the committee agreed and their children took the test. Thus, the discussion about race and inequality was not general but was focused on specific school structures and practices that parents perceived to be discriminatory and unequal.

DISCUSSION

In this article, I sought to show how diversity committees that hold a similar framework of group differences and inequality diverged in their action toward such issues in the school. One diversity committee, at Community Friends, acted in a way that Berrey (2015) calls 'symbolic diversity', meaning that power relations and white privileges where not undermined, while the other, at Children's Academy acted in a way that challenged existing school practices the committee perceived to be discriminatory and more favorable to white and middle-upper class families.

I built on the concept of organizational imprinting to account for these differences. I argued that characteristics from the founding period persisted into the current variation. Community Friends was created out of a tension between being a progressive white school that is both culturally and demographically different from the neighborhood around it. The actions and interactions of school actors made the progressive, and distant feature of the school, salient, and shaped the symbolic nature of the diversity committee's work. Children's Academy was founded out of a tension for replacing a school that served low-income students of color in a rapidly gentrifying neighborhood. It was struggling with how to serve these two purposes. The actions and interactions here, made the feature of the school as serving students of color particularly salient.

This article is also about the conditions that allow 'nonwhite spaces' to become places where whiteness is questioned (Lewis 2003). Not to say that Children's Academy is a haven of racial equity, it does present a case where the benefits of being white are questioned. In my analysis, the combination of an active principal of color who prioritized school integration over other values, a group of black parents who objected to, and called out the existence of white power in the school, and a group of white parents who were open to such criticism, made a condition in which discriminatory school practices could be actively questioned. In contrast, in Community Friends where the principal was very active in prioritizing the pedagogical model over other things, white parents were closed off to criticism, and black parents felt that they cannot publicly bring up critical issues, symbolic diverse was maintained.

These insights contribute to existing literature in several ways. I advance analyses of frameworks of group differences by showing the conditions, and context, under which the power analysis framework translates into actions that undermines hierarchies. While previous literature has focused on how frames vary across context, I show that action within similar evaluative frames can differ across contexts. Further, Berrey (2015) ties symbolic diversity to the diversity framework. I show that symbolic diversity also happens when a power analysis framework is adopted. The difference is not the framework that is articulated, but whether organizational conditions allow for diversity to be not only symbolic.

Second, this work contributes to our understanding of the possible strength and limitations of the diversity committee as an organizational form that supports diversity and inclusion in organizations. When the conditions permit, diversity committees, which

are in-line with diversity task forces in organizations (Dobbin and Kalev 2016), can be the place in the organization where practices are challenged. Being the place that is charged with inspecting organizational practices with an eye for inclusivity, as the diversity committee at Children's Academy was formed to be (and which is in line with Dobbin and Kalev's definition of a diversity task force), can truly be an organizational tool for questioning practices. In the continued search for practices that transform organizations, and schools, from diverse to integrated, the diversity committee, permitted that its work is not symbolic, can serve as a function that move organizations toward that goal.

CONCLUSIONS

This dissertation engaged with school integration in the current unique historical context. In three articles, I addressed the transition from racial to economic criteria in the design of integration policies, the role of school-community dynamics in shaping integration, and the everyday negotiations and tensions of integration and inclusion in an intentional context, focusing specifically on relationships between parents and administrators. In the following section, I detail the contributions of my work to existing literature and propose what future studies should do to increase understanding of school diversity, integration, and inclusion.

The first contribution I make in this dissertation is to our understanding of school integration after the 2007 Supreme Court decision in *Parents Involved*. A handful of studies have utilized quantitative methods to evaluate the outcomes of the transition from race-ethnicity to economic-based integration plans (e.g., Frankenberg 2018; Reardon and Rhodes 2011). However, no attention has been given to how this transformation has been experienced by schools, administrators, and parents. Building on rich qualitative data, I address this gap in the literature. The Diversity in Admissions (DIA) pilot, like other economic-based school integration policies, was unable to change the racial and ethnic composition of the schools. Changes in the economic composition of the student body were mixed, with some schools seeing substantial increases in the number of free and reduced-price lunch students (the common measure of low-income students) and some seeing no gains, or even decreases.

My findings account for these trends in several ways. I show an unexpected interaction between choice and integration, where a zoned, neighborhood school failed at

meeting its goals while a choice school was successful. This finding is a meaningful contribution as educational research traditionally ties school choice to segregation (e.g., Renzulli and Evans 2005; Roda and Wells 2012). However, choice might be constructive for producing integration when there is a combination of large geographical areas and wide criteria by which integration is implemented. These findings resonate with the idea of controlled choice, an integration system in which choice is not completely based on lotteries, but by-design includes components of control over admissions based on end goals of school composition (Fiske 2002; Kahlenberg et al. 2019). This type of integration plans has long history in Massachusetts and is starting to take root in New York City. My study lends further support to controlled choice as a model that supports school integration.

Further, my study suggests that choice might be constitutive for integration when there is a culture of choice, like there is in NYC, where parents are encouraged to be active participants in school assignments, and in circumstances where being a school of choice means being disentangled from local community struggles. These latter aspects bring up the idea of 'integration of choosers'. When integration is more successfully accomplished in a school that is a choice school, that fits the magnet model, it means that school integration is unrelated to a residential segregation, but rather is comprised of families who chose to send their children to integrated schools. This type of integration, I argue, is different from a residential based one. Children's Academy, the neighborhood school, faces different issues from the entirely choice schools, New World and Community Friends. Specifically, there is a question of constituency that is important. Who does the school serve and who it should serve is a question that plays out differently

in the zoned vs. the choice schools, and integration efforts are shaped by how this question is answered. If the school is committed first to parents who chose it for its pedagogical work, or whether the school is first committed to parents who live in the school's area, regardless of their perceptions of education, matters for how integration plays out, and whether it is a feature that attracts or distances parents. Thus, the design of integration policies should be different in choice schools compared to the neighborhood schools' contexts.

Another issue that lingers in the literature is why economic-based integration plans are unable to change the racial and ethnic makeup of schools. My main contribution here is to show the mismatch between the policy's intention and its design. Most economic-based integration programs, and the DIA is not different, are put in place with the intention and imagination of integration as about the inclusion of low-income black and, in the NYC case Latinx students, into white schools. But this starting point meets three obstacles. First, class and race/ethnicity to do not perfectly correlate, not in NYC and not in the United States more broadly. While scholars have noted that this assumption is problematic in the context of economic-based integration plans (Reardon and Rhodes 2011), policymakers and advocates continue making this implicit assumption when they design these programs. Second, demographically, the United States is changing, as is NYC, and economic criteria include students that are not black or Latin, but rather, for example Chinese and Pakistani. Thus, the notion of what integration is needs to be reevaluated given demographic changes, and the reevaluation needs to be done in very local terms.

Finally, who economic-based integration programs overlook are non-poor black and Latino families who are, at least in the New York City context, very active school choosers. The post 'Parents Involved' policies do not take these families into account and do not include them in the policy design, creating a disconnect between the goal of *racial* integration and integration policies. Evaluating the DIA schools, I suggest that policymakers will stop automatically turn to free and reduced-price lunch, or other economic criteria, when they design local integration programs. There should be a more deliberative process engaging with what is the geographical area across which integration is sought, what is the exact composition of students in this area, beyond black and white, and whether and to what extent class and race/ethnicity correlate. Further, as one of the parent coordinators in my school, who is a Latinx woman, said, the Department of Education's assumption of correlation between class and race/ethnicity is insulting. Similarly, Pattillo (2014) argues that the problem with school integration policies is that they assume, and perpetuate, black families as 'a problem' that needs to be solved. The DIA is not different, and by automatically adopting free and reduced-price lunch to create racial and ethnic integration, the NYC Department of Education further cements that perception. I would urge policymakers and advocates to consider this assumption thoroughly before designing integration policies.

The second area to which my dissertation contributes is to the understanding of relationships, especially between administers and parents, in integrating schools. I adopt a known distinction in the literature between diversity or formal integration, which is the creation of a numerically diverse student body, and the creation of substantive integration and inclusion (e.g., King 1986; Lewis et al. 2015; Moody 2001). I attend to these

concepts in two ways. In article 2, I discuss the creation of substantive integration through the lenses of inclusion, or of when parents feel heard, respected, and enfranchised in the school community. I contribute to existing literature by showing how school leaders who are focused on integration adopt a dispositional approach to explain school policy conflicts. School leaders understood policy conflicts as being about values that stem from parents' demographic background, regardless of the demographic profile of the involved parents. I argue that this dispositional approach, and its salience, made solving school issues and addressing parents' grievances much more difficult. In article 3, I distinguish between school integration that remains symbolic and school integration in which social hierarchies of power, and specifically whiteness, are being questioned. I show that in a school that was founded out of the will of white gentrifiers to have an alternative progressive educational environment in a low-income neighborhood, parents of color find it hard to publicly question school practices. I this school progressive ideals are prioritized over integration to form a community that is symbolically engaged with integration but avoids undermining school policies. In contrast, in a school that is founded out of the will to serve low-income students of color in the shifting reality of gentrification, and where a type of pedagogy does not underlie the identity of the school, there is room to question school practices in light of integration. Further, whether the principal provides a space for such deliberations, whether parents of color feel empowered to demand change, and whether white parents a receptive to criticism further sustains these differentiated environments.

While the two articles engaged with two different sets of literatures – in the first I build on concepts from cultural sociology and contribute to existing literature on

processes of substantive school integration and in the second I build on concepts from organizational studies to contribute to existing literature on frameworks of group differences and inequality – the two articles share a common theme. They both engage in issues of leadership priorities and how integration fits into them. At Children's Academy, the principal and parents who share leadership roles prioritize integration and values of social justice that emphasize inequality and the differential needs of low-income students of color. There, the role of white parents in the school is questioned and school practices that support white privileges undermined. But at the same time, parents who are not committed to this specific approach to integration, feel excluded from the school community. Children's Academy then raises the question of whether integration that is not symbolic in nature can be done only in communities that are committed to undermining of social hierarchies, and if so, how can school integration be achieved given the fact that only a small share of the America public carries such power-oriented perceptions of diversity and integration (Bonilla-Silva et al. 2004; Warikoo and Novais 2015). New World and Community Friends also raise the question of whether integration that is not symbolic in nature can be achieved in the context of integration of choosers, and specifically of elitist progressive choosers. When parents chose schools for their children based on some pedagogical and values matrixes, can integration in the sense of true equity be achieved? What all three schools together raise is the burning question of how to create not only inclusion of different race, ethnic, and economic backgrounds, but also integration of different ideas. In other words, can there be integration that is not only for the like-minded?

Following my study, I suggest several lines of future inquiry about school integration. First, the process of school integration and inclusion should be qualitatively compared between schools that are politically intentional about integration, like the ones in my study, and schools that are diverse but do not engage with questions of group relations and inequality. The latter type of schools were studied in the rich work of Lewis and others (e.g., Lewis 2003; Lewis and Diamond 2015; Lewis-McCoy 2014), but these studies did not compare across the variation I suggest. A recent study conducted such a comparison using friendship network data and showed that students had more friendships in the non-intentional school (Shwed et al. 2018). But as the study was based on survey data, it was unable to account for the reasons why these trends were found. A qualitative study that compares such schools would advance our understanding of the differences in how integration plays out in intentional vs. non-intentional context in a way that could support both better theoretical understanding of group relations and school integration policies.

Second, future studies should put more emphasis on how parents who are not involved in school leadership perceive and feel in the school environment. My study focused on parents who are active in school leadership given my interests in policy. In each school, I interviewed parents who were not involved in school affairs, but either because the policy was just starting or for other reasons, they did not have much to say about what is going on at the school with regards to diversity and integration. However, uninvolved parents also experience inclusion in a way that can be potentially relevant to the experiences of their children. Thus, a similar comparison as I suggest above, between diverse schools that are politically engaged with integration and diverse schools that are

not, that focuses on involved and non-involved parents can further expend our understanding of the daily experiences of integration.

Another important line of inquiry is the place of parents who are not white or black in school integration policies and processes. As mentioned several times in this dissertation, school integration, both in policies and in how it is studied, focuses heavily on the black-white divide (see Pattillo 2014; Reardon and Owens 2014). The same is true regarding parental leadership in the schools I studied. While there is a measurable Latinx community in each of the schools, Latinx parents were all but absent from school leadership, and discussions of integration were almost always about race. Given the changing demographic of the United States, and of integrating schools, it is important to consider how parents who are not white or black feel in and respond to integrated communities, and how different aspects of inclusion apply to them. Another line of research should be an evaluation of controlled-choice integration plans over time. Controlled choice, the model where parents have the liberty to choose schools, but the final assignments is orchestrated by a central body that looks at the overall demographic composition across schools seems to be a promising model of school integration, at least numerically. But this model has not been systematically evaluated over time to see whether it indeed yields more integrated schools, and whether patterns of avoidance emerge in controlled choice districts. New York City has just implemented controlled choice programs in two of its school districts, one for elementary schools and one for middle schools. Evaluation of these programs would greatly benefit our understanding of integration in the current context of choice policies.

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