Segregation in New York Schools: A Study of Complexity, Policies, and Psychological Factors

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Abstract

The paper examines the issue of segregation in New York schools, focusing on the complex dynamics that contribute to this persistent problem. The research delves into the various factors, including environment, policy, racism, and psychology, that act as attractors perpetuating segregation. Using the Dynamic System Theory (DST) and Conflict Resolution Strategies, the study highlights the multifaceted nature of the conflict and its potential intractability. Four primary attractor landscapes are identified: environment, policy, racism, and psychology, each playing a significant role in school segregation. The environment attracts residential segregation due to the school's location, funding concentration, zoning restrictions, and segregated projects. Policies, such as zoning programs, have been implemented to address residential segregation but have unintentionally reinforced disparities in funding and resources, perpetuating segregation. Racism, a latent conflict attractor, influences racial imbalances, creating an environment where certain racial groups receive preferential treatment in education. The historical roots of racism in New York contribute to fear, further deepening the conflict and making it difficult to resolve. Psychological factors, driven by fear and decision-making processes, are intertwined with the history of racism, creating reinforcing feedback loops that sustain segregation. The fear generated by segregation leads to decisions rooted in the historical context of racism, resulting in a vicious cycle. Policies emerge as a negative attractor capable of eliminating segregation. Anti-racism laws, activism, empathy, and integrated education policies act as outputs controlling behaviour and promoting equality in education. Effective policies protect vulnerable populations and ensure equal educational opportunities for all. In conclusion, this paper illustrates that segregation in New York schools is a complex and intractable conflict perpetuated by positive attractors.

Keywords

Segregation, Dynamic System Theory, The causes of segregation.

1. Introduction

The project that this paper reflects upon through the class resources is the segregation in New York Schools. As brought out by the project, the case of segregation in NY schools affects the manner in which the schools are occupied. The reasons for the segregation is more of a conscious thing that occurs in the school environs, and despite the various interventions, there is still the segregation effect felt. The project considers segregation in the NY schools as a conflict that requires a somewhat heightened intervention to end. There is a consideration of the Dynamic System Theory (DST) utilized through Dynamic Systems and Conflict Resolution Strategies that shows the complexity in the conflict, which in turn, leads to the probability of intractability. The project showcases latent conflicts and solutions that emerge through the efforts of dealing with the attractors to segregation in NY schools. The interventions and strategies utilized also lead to unintended consequences, which in the long run, still makes the

segregation more solid. The aim of this reflection is to bring out all the issues as shown in the presentation in light to the course contents.

2. Analysis of the Causes of Segregation

Segregation in the NY schools as stated above are caused by various issues and can be traced back to the past. There are four main attractor landscapes that the presentation focused on, which lead to the segregation. The landscapes include; environment, policy, racism, and psychological. Most of the segregation identified through the project is mainly caused by either of the stated attractors. Since the attractors are the cause of conflicts, the urge of solving the conflict leads to various interventions put in place, which as shown by the project map, continues to even generate ore conflict. As explained by Cobb (2018), conflict resolution strategies if not effectively evaluated and put in place, might lead to drawbacks and unintended consequences, which leads to unending conflict. For an effective reflection analysis, this paper will consider each attractor independently.

2.1. Environment

The environment is considered a current attractor to the conflict, as it leads to direct segregation, depending on the location of the school. As seen from the presentation, the main effect of the environment is residential segregation. The location of a school will definitely determine the children who will end up learning in such a school. The school location and funding concentration directly lead to segregation, For instance, a school located in a rich environment will be entitled to more funds from PTA findings since they will at first attract children from rich families, and the opposite is true for one in a poor area. Issues like zoning restrictions and segregated projects will also affect schools depending on their locations.

From above, it is clear that the environment in itself does not directly lead to segregation. However, through a DST approach, it is clear that the issue is complex, and relates to various things, including government policies in issues such as zoning, and availability of resources both for running the schools as well as for the projects. It is clear that dealing with the issue of the environment to do away with segregation goes a long way than just dealing with the places where the schools are set up.

One of the main interventions that the government has put in place to deal with the residential segregation issues includes the zone programs. However, as brought out above, an unintended consequence was drawn, which in turn, led to segregation still. Through the zoning programs, some schools are taxed higher than others depending on their location. In turn, enforcing stronger measures on other institutions than others is a form of segregation, as such will lead to higher chances that the schools will charge more than others. Such cases can be grouped under the inhibiting and reinforcing feedback loops as detailed in the course, through which, zoning measures, lead to a reinforcement of school measures, probably raising fees, and only allowing the rich to manage acquiring education from such schools, a form of segregation.

However, as seen from the presentation, it is only through a fair students' funding formula, that the segregation due to environment can be dealt with, thus, a latent solution to segregation, which according to Ryan (2017), might not have been seen, but can easily deal with the case of funding disparity. By solving the case of funding disparity, which is a current conflict leading to segregation; the issue of poverty concentration, from residential segregation is dealt with effectively.

2.2. Racism

Racism, as defined by Rattansi (2020), refers to the prejudice or antagonism, or the discrimination that is directed to others due to the difference in race. New York is a highly diverse city, and has people from different races from the Whites, Blacks, and Asians. Various

cases of racism in the city are often related to the white supremacists and the Neo-Nazis. In most cases, the whites believe that they are superior to the other races. Therefore, the cases of racism automatically lead to segregation in the society. In such cases, the superiority is taken to the education sector, and the whites are offered better chances for education, or take their children to high-end schools, where they discriminate against the blacks who have managed to go to such schools.

Racism, however, is classified as a latent stage of the conflict, as is a stage where the factors could become potential causes of conflict according to Ryan (2017). As seen from the presentation, racism is seen as the cause of the conflict, while the conflict does not affect it directly. The history of racism from the presentation leads to the segregation in the NY schools. However, as latter detailed in the paper under psychological cause of the conflict, there is an outlined case of reinforcing feedback loops, which is created by the history of conflict. Through the history of conflict, segregation occurs in the NY schools, which latter, leads to fear among those directly affected. The fear will lead to decisions which will again turn to the history of racism to be effective, manifesting the segregation in the NY schools more.

Racism, as brought out by the presentation, does not just lead to segregation alone, but plays a major role in making the whole segregation conflict to become intractable, an aspect of more complexity in a case of conflict (Fisher & Coleman, 2019). Through racism, there is the issue of racial imbalance. Such imbalances lead to the various decisions made to highly support other races, as well as offer more academic support to various schools affiliated to the 'superior race'. However, in some cases, people might have the thought that racial imbalances are part of the norms, through unconscious thoughts. Therefore, people stay in their comfort zone, and the conflict remains the same with no change experienced.

2.3. Psychological

According to Sternberg and Sternberg (2016), psychology is the science of behaviour and the mind. Therefore, as a conflict attractor in the case of segregation in NY schools, it is all based in the thoughts and minds of people. It is through what individuals think believe, that there psychology becomes part of support towards segregation in schools. Psychology can be viewed as a felt conflict, in the stages of conflict. As detailed by Ryan (2017), a felt conflict is the stage where "conflict is felt and cognized." Since psychology relates to what people think, it is something rooted in their minds, and people can cognize, by having the thought in their process. The fear manifested more so in the less fortunate individuals makes them to come up with decisions that automatically create segregation in the schools. For instance, fear will lead to people not to take their children to certain schools they perceive are not for people of their calibre.

As identified from the presentation, the psychological attractor is all tied to fear. However, fear does not just manifest itself from the air; it is something that through the DST theory can be derived from a far. Therefore, the case of segregation in the NY schools falls under a conflict that is tied around intractability. As detailed by Coleman, Redding and Fisher (2017), an intractability aspect of conflict relates to a conflict that has grown to be complex, to the extent that dealing or solving it might become a challenge. Therefore, the segregation at NY schools is a complex challenge, judging from the way in which the conflict is interrelated to various factors which are related from a far.

As seen from the presentation, fear is derived mainly from decision making, manifested by the history of racism. Therefore, the NY history of racism creates fear within the people who have been earlier affected by the acts of racism. There is a case of reinforcing feedback loop from the presentation, with regard to fear, and how it affects decision making. The whole case of segregation in NY schools leads to fear, despite it being created due to fear. With segregation, parents and children obviously fear certain schools. Such fear leads to decision making, which

relies on ensuring that the children do not learn in the schools. The decision making, however, is related to history of racism, in which, they will quote some kinds of negativities caused by racism, as a reason for their action. Therefore, the history of racism will still lead to segregation. As defined by Ma, van Duijvenvoorde and Scheres (2016), reinforcing feedback loops refers to a case in which an action leads to results, which latter yields results that lead to the same action. Therefore, the fear created by segregation, latter leads to decision making that base on history of racism, which still lead to segregation.

2.4. Policy

Policies are created with the aim of dealing with the segregation, which in the new age or time, are deemed as being against the human rights. With the advent of equality in the society, there is a high need to deal with segregation, which is at times viewed as an issue of colonialism. Therefore, policies which relates to anti-racism laws, as brought out by the presentation are brought out to light. It is clear from the presentation that the main way of dealing with the segregation in the NY schools is through policies, which in turn, creates various channels of inhibiting feedback loops. Inhibiting feedback loops refer to the cases where outputs are utilized as inputs of controlling certain behaviours (Ma et al., 2016). Therefore, policy outputs create various channels that are utilized in controlling the segregation in NY schools. Such outputs include; anti-racism laws, which inhibits segregation, anti-racism activism and policy, empathy, and integrated education policies. All the above works towards ensuring that segregation is effectively dealt with, or done away with by creating an equal chance and opportunity of education to every student in NY.

Despite the conflict case being complex and intractable as stated above, policy plays a major role in solving the whole issue. Policy is a negative attractor, which according to Cobb (2018), helps in eliminating the conflict case. With the other three stated attractors, environment, racism and psychological playing the role of positive attractors, working towards elevating the conflict case. Through effective policies, as brought out in the presentation, it is much easy to deal with the case of segregation in the NY schools, as the issues that stimulate the attractors are highly based on misunderstandings, mistreatments, and negativity fuelled towards the weak and vulnerable in the society. Effective and string policy measures works towards the protection of the less fortunate, as well as offering of opportunities to everyone equally in the society. Therefore, from the conflict issue, we can learn that most of the conflict on the society is fuelled by availability of perceived differences among people in the society, with little or no protective laws.

3. Conclusion

The above analysis has effectively utilized the project presentation on NY segregation in schools as a conflict issue through the DST, to detail the course readings and essential issues entailed in conflict management case. The segregation in NY schools is an effective case of an intractable conflict with both inhibitive and reinforcing feedback loops, as well as unintended consequences which leads to drawbacks unending conflicts. It is only through the negative attractor, policy, that the case of segregation in NY schools can be dealt with effectively.

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