Testing Segregation Measurements in Milwaukee: Reality vs. Perception

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Abstract

This study employs an index developed from each of Massey and Denton’s five categories of hypersegregation (evenness, exposure, concentration, centralization and clustering), evaluates residential segregation in the city of Milwaukee. At aiming public policy development, this study expands the Massey and Denton model by adding variables besides race, namely education, income, home ownership, distance to public transportation, and unemployment.

Dimensions & Measurements

Evenness - Measures segregation by comparing the spatial distributions of different groups among units in a metropolitan area.

Disparities Index - Measures the percentage of a group’s population that would have to change residence for each neighborhood to have the same percentage of that group as the metropolitan area overall.

Exposure - Measures segregation by determining the degree of potential contact, or possible interaction, between minority and majority group members.

Interaction & Isolation - Reflect the probabilities that a minority person shares a unit area or possible interaction, between minority and majority group members.

Concentration - Measures segregation by referring to the relative amount of physical space occupied by a minority group in the metropolitan area.

Relative Concentration - This index varies between -1.0 and 1.0, with positive values indicating a higher rate of segregation.

Dissimilarity Index - On a scale of 0.0 to 1.0, with 0.0 being complete integration and 1.0 being complete segregation, we found that from the data we have collected thus far that Milwaukee falls a at 0.67.

Relative Centralization - This index varies between -1.0 and 1.0, with positive values indicating that minority members are located closer to the center than majority, and negative values the reverse. This index of segregation was not as strong for us in indicating segregation in Milwaukee, with a value of 0.11.

Relative Clustering - This index equals 0.0 when minority members display the same amount of clustering as the majority. Our initial calculations have shown a result of 0.38. When we finish our calculations of all of the remaining Milwaukee suburbs we expect this number to steadily grow closer and closer to the 0.0 marker showing a high result of relative clustering.

Results

While our research is still not fully completed, we feel that interaction and isolation have shown to be the two most influential measurements of segregation when looking at the Milwaukee metropolitan area. However, we feel that when we factor in the calculations of the four surrounding counties of Ozaukee, Washington, Waukesha, and Racine, which are all included within the Milwaukee MSA, that relative clustering will become our most effective measurement, considering the high disproportion of Caucasians and African Americans in the surrounding Milwaukee counties. Regarding the school system, we feel that the voucher system has enabled segregation to occur within the Milwaukee Public School System, as well as the expensive suburban housing which many Milwaukee minorities are unable to afford. In turn this makes it almost impossible for them to send their children to the higher quality schools located in the suburbs.

Conclusions

While our research is still not fully completed, we feel that interaction and isolation have shown to be the two most influential measurements of segregation when looking at the Milwaukee metropolitan area. However, we feel that when we factor in the calculations of the four surrounding counties of Ozaukee, Washington, Waukesha, and Racine, which are all included within the Milwaukee MSA, that relative clustering will become our most effective measurement, considering the high disproportion of Caucasians and African Americans in the surrounding Milwaukee counties. Regarding the school system, we feel that the voucher system has enabled segregation to occur within the Milwaukee Public School System, as well as the expensive suburban housing which many Milwaukee minorities are unable to afford. In turn this makes it almost impossible for them to send their children to the higher quality schools located in the suburbs.

Images

Figure 1 - A freshly constructed house in a new Germantown subdivision. This housing is typical of the mid - upper class housing being built in the Milwaukee suburbs today. Houses in the area are regularly being sold around the $300,000 range.

Figure 2 - The new Germantown public library that was recently constructed. The village of Germantown is a German theme community that is centered around German architecture in order to maintain a common village theme.

Figure 3 - A map of the Milwaukee Metropolitan Statistical Area. The area encompasses Milwaukee as well as many surrounding middle and upper class suburbs.

Figure 4 - These photos are showing some of the private and parochial schools being offered through the MPS Voucher System. As you can see, many of these are on the suburban fringe, within rural areas.

Figure 5 - A current house located in the heart of Milwaukee. The house is encompassed Milwaukee as well as many surrounding middle and upper class suburbs.