

# Education a Institutional Battlefront

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## Introduction of Jim Crow in Education

Education can be used as a tool of oppression or a tool of liberation for the Black community.

Unequal schooling is a issue that still impacts the Black community in modern day society. Education being used as a tool of oppression takes root in the Jim crow Era, when racial segregation was upheld by the government leaving schools segregated as well as other institutions leaving Black children to receive unequal schooling if they received an education at all.

I examine the ways education has failed the Black community over time, while also exploring ways agency-laden education can be fostered for the Black community. My goals are to explore ways in education can be a tool of liberation for the Black community if agency laden institutions are created in these spaces of concentrated disadvantage.

To this end I use autoethnography, a cultural analysis of film and various literature to draw my conclusion .

## Tracking & Resegregation

The response of white folks to Brown v. Board of education was White flight. This response was the avoidance of integration. This response has long been a major factor in the decline of neighborhoods, schools, and the likely rise in concentrated neighborhood disadvantage in ghetto neighborhoods and concomitant rise in crime that is still impacting Black communities today.

Currently there are some scholars that examine education within the Black community after integration such as Ansley T. Erikson and Carla Shedd who reformulate Sampson's argument with their recent work published in 2015/2016.

Erickson brings in the perspective of desegregation being successful but desegregation seen at it's most successful still reinforced inequality. Chicago on the other hand is an example of a long legacy of racial and class stratification, discrimination and poverty as a result the integration of schools and division of the metropolitan.



## Autoethnography

I grew up on the west side of Chicago. Chicago being one of the most highly residentially segregated places to live. My neighborhood has concentrated poverty and is comprised of low income families. My neighborhood lacks access to job opportunities, resources and adequate schooling.

Systems such as Tracking where "High Performing Students" placed in Honor and AP Classes the entire high school experience, "Low Performing students" had their capability in education negatively impacted.

My School & Classroom Conditions consisted of a lot of classroom over crowding and limited in class engagement with the instructor. We suffered from lack of resources such as Books being limited/old, limited functioning computers (2-3 students per computer), no real science labs, no variety of AP courses stifling our preparedness for college...

John M Smyth Magnet school Chicago, IL



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## Multicultural education and Agency

The Freedom Writers Diary- A depiction of Multicultural education in the classroom fostering agency...

Amaryta Sen (a economist) links up the question of agency, education and development of human capabilities and well being .When people are not able to develop their capability their agency is diminished and usually their well being too.

\* The Coleman Report of 1966 argues education does not have a independent effect on a child's life is based on family's income, Sen argues that actually many educational institutions are not fostering agency. Education can have a independent effect if we allow it to.

Aldon Morris (a sociologist) explains what human agency actually is being human capability but he refers to it through social movements. Going even further to mention the Black Church under Jim Crow being agency-laden institution because..

The Black church was heavily involved in social movements during the 50's and gave opportunities for Blacks to have leadership roles, teach their own, and ways of social change to fight against racism. They funneled resources into the Black community and supported the civil rights movement. The way Blacks created agency for themselves through the Black Church this can be done where students have agency through education if given the resources.

## Conclusion

If we transform schools into more agency-laden institutions(institutions that foster agency) instead of institutions that reproduce inequality there could be more opportunity for upward mobility and agency for these children despite their economic background or race.

We can take the model of the Black Church and apply it to the education system; for example, providing equal care for all of its students, looking into their living conditions and factoring what needs they may have, provide programs that can better assist them, free counseling, get rid of the tracking system, and actually get to know the students they hold in their institutions. Accounting for some of these things can lead to schools becoming an agency laden institution instead of an institution the reproduces inequality when it comes to academic success and agency.