
Intergenerational Effect of School Desegregation¹

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In 1954, the United States Supreme Court ruled that separate schools for blacks and whites were “inherently unequal”. Previous literature has found that the implementation of the desegregation plans improved black students’ education, labor market, and health outcome. This paper studies whether the desegregation plans also benefit students’ birth outcome by exploiting information available through birth certificates from 1970 to 2002. It finds that school desegregation has induced both black and white students to be more likely to produce biracial babies. In addition, desegregation has improved infants’ health for the disadvantaged groups, as measured by birth weight and gestational age. This paper adds to the growing literature on the importance of school desegregation beyond academic achievement.

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