Research Paper:
Segregation or Not?

Throughout the semester, I have been working on the necessary steps to complete my research paper. As a student, I believe I was guided greatly by my teacher, Ms. Wood with whom provided me with the necessary time and focus to complete various steps of my research. Throughout my research paper, I will be reflecting on the research process. During the time of research I have completed an interview and integrated it into an essay. I have updated my teacher weekly on my research process, in which has helped me to stay focused on the task at hand. I was able to complete four research reports, of various types, and all of which will contribute to the depth of my paper.

The topic of my paper, specifically, was mainly concerned with sports and the university. I was looking into mini issues related to playing sports on campus. I was noticing different ways people interacted that didn’t bother me in the past, although it didn’t really bother me now. Since I started researching, I began to pay more attention to the way people reacted around and towards one another, mainly at the university’s recreational center. Normally, when I go to the gym I wouldn’t really pay attention to race or ethnicity. I’m a big basketball person, so when I go to the gym I mostly play basketball. As it became time to complete research reports and the interview, I started to pay more attention to the racial makeup of the basketball courts. I started to pay attention
to student’s behavior towards other races when playing basketball and how people reacted towards playing with people of the same race. After noticing several instances of separation, I questioned the existence of segregation. Segregation is the separation or isolation of a race, class, or ethnic group by enforced or voluntary residence in a restricted area, by barriers to social intercourse, by separate educational facilities, or by other discriminatory means. (Merriam-Webster, 642) I had now developed a new focus from a previous one that was limited to sports and race. Does segregation still exist? Honestly, I believe segregation still exists and not necessarily in a bad way, but in way that raises questions of racism possibly.

First, I interviewed my roommate, Hugo, to get a different perspective on how he feels about interacting with people on campus. The interview brought up questions of racism and segregation. I asked him some questions about race in connection to sports, living on campus, parties, fraternities and sororities, and racism. When I conducted the interview, I basically wanted to ask him shallow and less disturbing questions, to questions that were more in depth and slightly tougher. With that approach, I believe I was able to obtain some very good responses to all questions. His honest opinion is also great for my research paper because it allow me to argue for or against some unbiased opinions other than my own.

**Interview**

The first question I asked was: When engaging in sports and related activities, how do you feel about playing with people of different ethnicities? “I feel like in sports there are no races or ethnicities, only skill and teamwork can be talked about.” When playing with people of different races or ethnicities, I feel as if race or ethnicity doesn’t matter. It’s all about how skilled you are, and that’s how far you’ll go.
The second question was: Depending on the ethnicity of people you’re competing against, do you feel like you have more or less of an advantage than you would have while playing with people of the same ethnicity? “No, ethnicity doesn’t have anything to do with how an athlete performs.” I feel like there are people of all ethnicities who can play sports. When I go to the gym, I always see people of various races and ethnicities playing basketball. Everyone aren’t the best skilled necessarily, but everyone competes hard and that’s what counts.

The third question was: Are you more comfortable, less comfortable, or possibly at the same comfort level when playing with or against others of another ethnicity. “I am equally comfortable when playing with players of any ethnicity because, I do not distinguish races, they are all the same to me.” For me, I might be less comfortable. Sometimes I get the sense that people of different races look at me when I play and they probably think to their selves that he thinks he’s good because he’s “black” and so that’s the reason why I feel like that.

The fourth question was: How do you like living on campus with a bunch of people of different ethnicities and cultures? “I think it’s fantastic because, new things can be learned from different cultures.” I like living on campus with a bunch of people from different ethnicities. It’s a unique experience and we get to learn new things from everyone even if they are similar to you, ethnic-wise or racial-wise.

The fifth question was: How do you view the racial make-up of fraternities and sororities? “I think fraternities and sororities are very segregated and judge on race easily.” Some fraternities and sororities are race strict, in my opinion. Well maybe not race strict, but the reason I believe some fraternities and sororities are full of people of similar ethnicities is because, the people who
joined them in the past has some effect on who joins them in the present and future. Generally, the racial make-up tends to be the same over the years.

The sixth question was: When you go to parties, do you dance with people of different ethnicities? “Yes, because girls are girls no matter what color or race they are.” When I go to parties I definitely dance with all of the girls, if I can. I don’t believe that anyone would shy away from a girl if she is of a different race or ethnicity. Girls are great, well some are, but you be immature in that sense, because that probably would look racist.

The seventh question was: What is race? “Race is a false statement that makes people stand out and be vulnerable for isolation.” I believe race something that’s suppose to classify us, as people. I don’t necessarily think that it is false, because it exists whether we like it or not. I think race is what brings negativity to things. People get classified as this and that, but it seems as if people fail to realize that we were all created equally. Only difference that really matters to me is the differences in gender.

The eighth question was: How would you feel about eliminating race overall? “I would feel very happy, so people, for once and for all, can stop judging others on appearance.” I would like to eliminate race, but the fact of the matter is that people are always going to be classified as something based on their unique features. As the population continues to grow and more people form relationships with people who aren’t of the same ethnicity, people may start to look to similar even if they came from different lines of ancestry, and then race could possibly be eliminated.

The ninth question was: If you were to form a mutual relationship with a person, would his / her race matter? “No, because the race of a person doesn’t mean anything. It’s what the person’s like on the inside.” Honestly, I believe the problem, if a relationship was formed between
people of different races or ethnicities, would be how their views of life are. It’ll be based on how well they fit together, and that’s why we have interracial relationships to this day.

The tenth question was: How do you view racism on campus? “I think it’s a problem, especially with clubs, fraternities, and sororities.” Racism on campus is slightly evident to me. I believe the people here are very intelligent and we all understand that people tend to associate more with people in which they have the most in common. But that doesn’t mean that people shouldn’t associate with others, because that’s how we’re going to make an opening statement to get rid of race.

The eleventh and final question was: Do you believe racism still exists? “Yes, racism still exists because the world still focuses on different races and is fearful of new ideas from new cultures. The world, today, can easily judge someone because of appearance. It has grown smaller in recent years, but racism is still a strong problem in society. Nowadays racial discrimination is rare, but racial harassment and non-verbal sings of non-approval because of race are quite common.” I believe racism still exist but for the most part it’s not to evident to me. Racism is a negative aspect that comes with living at this time. Currently, it hasn’t been eliminated and it probably won’t anytime soon.

After interviewing Hugo, I obtained and stated some key information that agrees with my theory of segregation continuing to exist. We also acknowledged the fact that racism still exists and based on the results of the interview, I see that the campus is racially proportional to the country. With this being said, people seem to stick with people who are similar culturally or ethnically.
Next, I observed the atmosphere at the gym. The idea was to find out how the differences in time can, perhaps, change the makeup of the gym. First, I started by observing the gym, particularly the basketball courts, to see the racial makeup of people playing on the courts. Then, I noticed how the people were playing mostly with people of the same race. I didn’t really think anything of it. In the end, however, I came up with the fact that most people would like to play with their friends and the majority of the groups of friends are of the same race. Finally, I just made a second observation at a later date, to see if the dynamics at the gym would be different.

**Observations**

On Friday, February 27 I went to the gym earlier in the day, like around 2:00 P.M. I looked around for a while and just observed what was going on. Generally, when I go to the gym I don't really look into observing the racial make-up of the basketball courts. I normally just look to play on the courts with the best competition, but this time it was different. I went down to court 1 and I stood under the rim or whatever. From past experiences I noticed that court 1 was like the weaker court, competition-wise. On this day and at this time, however, it was different. There were more older men and they were mostly Caucasian and they were playing good, so competition-wise it was a better court to play on. But I also noticed something else about the court; the people who were waiting to play the next game were also Caucasian. So then I thought, why did they skip over the other courts? I came up with the reason that maybe they would rather play with people who are more similar ethnic-wise or culture-wise. On court 2, it was a mixture of mostly Asians, a couple of blacks and a couple of Caucasians. Just like court 1, it had a moderate amount of older people and one of the teams was all Asian. It was basketball competition-wise, but it went back to what I had observed earlier. I wondered why all of one team was Asian. Then a new thought came to me...that maybe they all were friends and wanted to play together. But I also questioned if they
were friends with any of the others who weren't racially similar to them. Finally before playing a little game myself, I observed the last court, court 3. It was the court with greatest diversity, but the competition was weak. The players were Black, Caucasian, Hispanic, and Middle Eastern. I wondered why this court was so diverse, although it's nothing wrong with that. Then I noticed that those people were the weaker of the people on all 3 courts. So for the game to be fair, the people who were on court 3 had to basically play against each other for the game to be fair. Honestly, on court 3 I don't believe that race had anything to do with racial make-up of the court. I think it was focused mostly on the skill level of the players on the court.

Then on Thursday, April 19 I went to the gym, for a second observation, like around 8:00 P.M. I looked around for a while and just observed what was going on. From past experiences I noticed that court 1 was like the weaker court, competition-wise. On this night and at this time it was the same. Seeing as this is the time I normally go to the gym. It was the court with greatest diversity, but the competition was weak. The players were Black, Caucasian, Hispanic, and Middle Eastern. They were all teen-aged men. I wondered why this court was so diverse, although it's nothing wrong with that. Then I noticed that those people were the weaker of the people on all 3 courts. So for the game to be fair, the people who were on court 1 had to basically play against each other for the game to be fair. Honestly, on court 1 I don't believe that race had anything to do with racial make-up of the court. I think it was focused mostly on the skill level of the players on the court. On court 2, there were all teen-aged men and they were mostly Black and they were playing good, so competition-wise it was a better court to play on. But I also noticed something else about the court; the people who were waiting to play the next game were also Black. So then I thought, why did they skip over the other courts? I came up with the reason that maybe they would
rather play with people who are more similar ethnic-wise or culture-wise. But, in this situation I knew everyone on the court and the peers all knew each other. This, in hand, made me believe that the games are more fun when you play with someone you know, even though they were all of one race. On court 3, there was a game with all Asians. They were all teen-aged men and competition-wise, it was just as good as court 2. The team that was lined up to play next was all Asian. Since it was the same situation as court 2, I sort of understood why things were set up the way they were. Like I mentioned before, people may want to partake in activities with people who are similar ethnically or culturally. Also like mentioned before, they could have possibly been friends and that very well could have been the reason why it was all of one ethnicity.

So from observing these three courts on this day, I learned that race can sometimes be a major component for the make-up of various activities that goes on, on campus. Race, to me, is sort of overrated; although it has its properties and components. From the data gathered, without making any assumptions, you may infer that there is a hint of racism, but I believe that people just align themselves to people who they have been around the most. For example, I went to a very diverse high school and I had some of the greatest times in high school. The school was segregated at points but, the great times weren't just with people who are similar to me ethnically or culturally, but with everyone who had similar interests and ideas as me.

Then, I analyzed the article called Growing Up, Growing Apart by Tamar Levin. This article was from The New York Times Series of How Race Is Lived in America. The How Race Is Lived in America series focuses on the troubling, challenging issues that Americans still face and if it hasn’t been faced it probably will be.

The article, Growing Up, Growing Apart, was written in 2000 and it talks about a few instances, of people’s experiences, with race, as they grow older. There were 3 girls who had been
closely knit throughout their whole time in middle school. The girls were named Aqueelah, Johanna, and Kelly. Their respective races are: Black, Puerto Rican and White, and White. They were the best of friends, and although they understood the racial issues that came with being different racially, they did not let that stop them from being good friends.

As younger kids, race did not have an effect in choosing who they wanted to be friends with. They were led by instinct and hanging out with people who were similarly ethnically and/or culturally was not a factor. But as they grew older, everyone seemed to align their selves by race. Before the changes, they spent a bunch a time together, including a time on New Year’s Eve when they celebrated at Johanna’s house. Soon thereafter, they were in a situation at Johanna’s house. It was Johanna’s birthday and they had invited all of their friends. Their school was mostly Black and White, so the occupants were either Black people or White people. The problem at Johanna’s house was that they couldn’t get everyone to socialize and gather as one, instead of two. The black kids stayed in the basement and danced, and the white kids went outside to the front stoop and talked. Johanna tried very hard to get them to coincide with each other but it did not work. Aqueelah tried to help, she claimed that she went up and down several times, before giving up and saying that it was boring outside. She ultimately settled by going inside and dancing.

The following school year was their first year in high school. In high school, the persona is sort of different than middle or elementary school and as they were becoming accustomed to high school, the girls, in this situation, sort of aligned to the people who were similar to them racially. According to the author, race was not a minor issue, but one that should not influence who associates with who. He also mentions how people become racially conscious in around 6th grade, especially as the practice of grouping students by perceived ability sends them on diverging academic paths; race becomes as much a fault line in their world as in the one parents
hoped to move beyond.

Ultimately, this article started to acknowledge racial differences the girls had, but not in a manner that was disrespectful or ill-mannered. They were growing up and apart, in which they sort of separated. Aqeelah and Johanna had met in kindergarten, whereas Kelly joined the group in fifth grade. At the end of their elementary school years they were voted as the class “best friends”. They had seen their classmates begin to divide among racial lines, and they refused to let race separate them. Sometimes people believe that’s just the way it is, because it is supposedly easier to be with your own kind. But in their high school years, Aqeelah sort of separated from the group. She began to feel pressure from other peers, because she was black and they say that she act white, labeling her with the term “oreo”. Then Aqeelah became good friends with a Black girl, and she eventually grew apart from Johanna and Kelly. In the end, Aqeelah was still the same person, but she was labeled different as grew older and that’s what pressured her associated herself differently.

Conclusively, after conducting various acts of research, I have learned racism and segregation still exists. Throughout the semester I have paid more attention to the various instances of segregation. In the past, it really never seemed like a big deal. Nowadays I pay more attention to the alignment of people and see I some groups of one race or ethnicity. Like I previous stated, segregation may not be intentional but, it may be offensive. The reason I say that is because people may try to make friends outside of their own race, but may not be fully accepted. What I mean by accepted, is being accepted to the point whereas they could hang at each other’s homes or be invited to engage in various activities. Also, the current world hasn’t really reached a point where people can eliminate race. As long as race exists, to the point where people will label themselves as different another types, there will always be segregation. The world will have to grow up and focus
on more important topics, such as improving the environment, so that we can make the world a better place to live; because if we continue to just worry about “our own race”, this will help with the downfall of the Earth.

Works Cited
