"How Far Is Too Far?": Gender, Emotional Capital, and Children's Public School Assignments

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Abstract
The authors analyze how gender and other individual and family characteristics shape attitudes toward children's school assignments. Using a mixed-methods approach, the authors analyze preferences for (1) diversity- and (2) neighborhood-based schools and three new dimensions of negative emotional capital: (3) parental challenge from student reassignments, (4) perceived dangers to children from reassignments, and (5) the uncertainty reassignment entails. Quantitative results indicate that emotional capital is highly gendered, with mothers perceiving more challenges, dangers, and uncertainty than fathers. We interpret these findings within the context of the division of household labor and how gendered work arrangements are reproduced at home.

Keywords
education, emotional capital, family, gender, social capital

Education is vital to adult placement in the U.S. stratification system (Hallinan 1988; Kerckoff 1995), making where children go to school a key issue for communities and families. Although some communities rely on neighborhood schools, thus creating a strong relationship between the choice of homes and schools (Lareau and Goyette 2014), this is not universally true (Yang and Kayaardi 2004). Other districts recognize diversity as a basis for school assignments and use policy to pursue it. Such policies can cause parental concern, as not all agree that such arrangements help children thrive, and/or they worry about whether government should be concerned with producing heterogeneous educational environments.

We believe that attitudes toward diversity and neighborhood schools are important because they underlie family decisions leading to "white flight" and middle-class choices for residential location, with attendant consequences for school systems and the children they educate. For parents, they also underlie the dynamics of school choice, which also affect diversity across schools. At the same time, we believe that parents, particularly mothers, exercise negative "emotional capital" to protect and advance their children's interests.

We conduct a mixed-methods case study of the social and political dynamics associated with the end of Wake County, North Carolina's, long-standing and successful public school assignment policy. Our investigation builds on a rich tradition of case studies tracing desegregation and resegregation in several cities, including Richmond, Virginia (Ryan 2010); Cleveland (Saatcioglu 2010); Austin, Texas (Cuban 2010); Rock Hill, South Carolina (Smith 2010; Smith et al. 2008); and Charlotte, North Carolina (Mickelson, Smith, and Hawn Nelson 2015). Grant's (2009) work is particularly important for us because he provides historical analysis of desegregation in Wake County but stops just short of events in 2009 that provided the impetus for our investigation.

A key limitation of these studies is overreliance on qualitative methods to study these dynamics. We innovate by adding to our initial qualitative work a subsequent representative survey of adult attitudes toward school diversity, neighborhood schools, and the specific issues surrounding Wake County's implementation of its school assignment policy. We believe that these attitudes and values provide an important avenue for understanding who favors diverse schools,

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and who opposes them, as well as illuminating new dimensions of emotional capital relevant to children's school assignments. Our quantitative work also allows us to estimate the effects of gender and key background characteristics on these important sentiments.

We began our study in 2010 with analysis of the Wake case via media accounts of parents and citizens expressing concern over the county's diversity policy and the strategies used to implement it. We then conducted elite interviews and two focus groups to further understand citizen sentiments. In early 2011, we used this qualitative work to field a opinion poll of more than 1,700 Wake County residents regarding attitudes toward neighborhood schools and diverse schools as well as considerable background information on respondents and their households. In this article we present results both from the qualitative and quantitative components of the study.

We begin by reviewing theoretical arguments suggesting that preferences for neighborhood schools and diverse schools are competing cultural models. We then integrate arguments on emotional capital, and suggest that exercise of emotional capital is gendered. After describing the Wake case, we summarize our qualitative methods and findings. This is followed by hypotheses, summaries of our quantitative methods, and findings. We derive inferences for theory as well as directions for future research and conclude with comments regarding the external validity of our case.

Neighborhoods and Diversity: Competing Cultural Models of School Assignment

In the neighborhood schools model, children attend schools that are proximate to their homes. Lareau (2014) argued that neighborhood schools are prevalent, promoting stability in educational venues. By tradition, families that reside in one location over time are assured that once their children enroll in a given elementary school, they attend that school until promoted to middle school. There is typically a well-defined set of elementary schools that feed into a smaller number of middle schools, which in turn feed into an even smaller number of high schools. Children from the same family will, as they age, successively attend the same schools. Families have the opportunity to become well acquainted with school administration and its teachers; younger children may be assigned to some of the same teachers as their older siblings. Parents have the opportunity to connect with an elementary school from the time their oldest child enters kindergarten to the time their youngest child enters middle school. In smaller communities, these relationships may even extend across generations. When there are stable or declining populations, these conditions continue in the twenty-first century. Even though teacher and school leadership turnover and household moves may lead to disruption of school-family ties, the model of the neighborhood school is well ingrained in our

society as a cultural ideal, one that is compelling and that many adults believe is "right."

Neighborhood schools also provide a strong basis for building "bridging" social capital between parents and schools (Putnam 2000), and for building social capital at home (Coleman 1990; Parcel and Taylor 2015). With parents relating to a small set of schools over a long period of time, connections parents build with administrators and teachers for their oldest children continue to pay dividends for younger children. Parents "learn the system" of each elementary, middle, and high school in succession and use this knowledge to benefit all children in the family. Moreover, geographical proximity between home and school facilitates parents attending school events, volunteering to help in the classroom, and visiting the school to meet with teachers, thus building social ties between families and schools, or bridging social capital. Reasonable proximity between home and school reduces time spent traveling to school, thus maximizing family time at home, or bonding social capital (Putnam 2000). And because neighborhood children often attend the same schools, connections from school reinforce neighborhood ties, and vice versa. This strengthens community social capital.

Families may also see neighborhood schools as a resource to help manage modern life. With increased rates of divorced and single-headed households, longer work hours and commutes, pressures to be actively involved in their children's education, for concerted cultivation (Lareau 2011) and intensive mothering (Hayes 1996), parents may see neighborhood schools as a strategy to manage both paid work and children at home (Bianchi and Milkie 2010).

But the advantages of neighborhood schools are less likely to accrue for racial minorities or for those from lower socioeconomic backgrounds, whose neighborhood schools typically lack the same resources as their wealthier district neighbors (Boger and Orfield 2005; Logan, Minca, and Adar 2012). Hence, neighborhood schools run the risk of maintaining or recreating segregation within schools and exacerbating economic and social inequality by neighborhood. Historically, court orders to desegregate schools have aimed to disrupt this reproduction of inequality, although some districts have resegregated (Boger and Orfield 2005; Mickelson et al. 2015; Smrekar and Goldring 2009). Under this model, districts assign students, at least in part, to achieve student-body diversity within schools. Mickelson (2014) suggested that schools with large poor or minority populations struggle but that student bodies mixed by race, ethnicity, and family income perform quite well (see Lauen and Gaddis 2013 for cautionary evidence regarding this conclusion).

Such policies also build social capital across racial and socioeconomic groups. Proponents of the diversity model view children's exposure to peers of different racial, ethnic, or socioeconomic backgrounds as an asset that boosts children's establishment of character, sense of worldliness, and acceptance for diversity (Wells and Serna 1996). Students

from all racial and economic backgrounds benefit socially from integrated schools because these experiences provide foundation for positive racial attitudes in adulthood (Braddock and Gonzalez 2010; Pettigrew and Tropp 2004, 2006; Stearns 2010), thus improving race relations across time. Relatedly, Allport's (1954) contact theory argues that when individuals from different races cooperate in pursuit of common goals and experience institutional supports so they are on equal footing, prejudice decreases and perception of common humanity increases. Wells and Crain (1994) argued that it is important to look at the long-term effects of school desegregation and that desegregated schools may provide social ties that enable minority (and, by implication, poorer) children to gain knowledge about higher educational opportunities they can pursue in the future. Thus, desegregated schools do more than facilitate short-term achievement: they facilitate positive social relationships and promote educational aspirations as well as upward mobility longer term.

School reassignment plans are an important vehicle for creating diverse schools. But parents may also have anxiety about these plans, which can also be used to manage district population growth, a feature of many southern and western school districts today (Parcel and Taylor 2015). When districts struggle with population growth and are also committed to diverse schools, children may attend multiple schools in a short amount of time despite having lived in the same location. These arrangements may create more difficulty for parents in maintaining constructive ties with school administrators and teachers because just as they become settled in one school, their children may be transferred to another. Capital must then be rebuilt, possibly for another short duration. Parents, moreover, cannot be sure the investments they make in networks at school on behalf of one child will pay off for younger children, who might be assigned to different schools. Additionally, population growth may mean that children live 10 or more miles from their schools, thus necessitating lengthy daily commutes.

Emotional Capital and School Choice

Parents have responsibility for socializing their children and preparing them for adulthood. Overlaying these dynamics is the fact that, as an institution, the family typically determines where children will live, where they will go to school, and how much financial, social and cultural capital will be invested in each child (Parcel and Taylor 2015), although poorer families may have more constrained choices. Well aware that children's schooling is consequential for family well-being, parents often take considerable interest in the characteristics of children's schools as well as in individual child progress. The labor involved with parents' management of children's schooling includes seeking out information about schools that parents perceive will fit their children's preferences; those in which siblings, friends, and relatives are also enrolled; or those that have a good

academic reputation and strong teacher-pupil relationships (Hammond and Denison 1995; Kleitz et al. 2000; Weiher and Tedin 2002). Parents may also spend time and energy detecting which schools to avoid, including those with a history of poor discipline, poorly behaved students, or subpar academic standards or those they believe are occupied by children of specific racial categories (Frankenberg and Orfield, 2012; Lacireno-Paquet and Brantley 2008; Saporito 2003).

We believe that parents' efforts to become knowledgeable about school choices can be conceptualized as one component of familial "emotional capital." *Emotional capital* refers to the stock of emotional resources that are established within families and that are activated to enhance or protect children's well-being and to facilitate positive outcomes (Allatt 1993; Nowotny 1981). Although Nowotny (1981) emphasized the importance of positive emotions such as love and affection, Reay (2000) highlighted parents' use of negative emotions, such as concern, anxiety, or guilt as mechanisms through which children's well-being also can be enriched. Importantly, parental concern can be a resource for children, as it reflects parents' investments in their children's well-being and because it may prompt action by parents to improve or protect their children's welfare. Emotional capital that is created through parental concern may even be an asset for children starting early in life, as many parents choose preschools selectively on the basis of their ability to provide social and cognitive "head starts" (Vincent and Ball 2001). Studying such parental attitudes is most likely to reflect acute and current experiences with school assignment policies affecting family life, as well as more general cultural values.

It is notable that many prior studies of emotional capital cited above are qualitative. Our interviewing follows in that tradition, but we innovate by linking these results to guide question wording on our survey. Thus we use qualitative findings in the first stages of our research to field our questionnaire later (Creswell 2014; Yin 2008).

The Role of Gender

We anticipate that the exercise of family emotional capital in children's school placements is gendered and that mothers will be more sensitive to the challenges and difficulties of school assignments than fathers. Becoming informed about schools, worrying about children's well-being in various school arrangements, and in other ways devising preferences for certain types of school arrangements may be a reflection of mothers' "total responsibility" for their children's emotional, social, physical, moral, and intellectual development (Griffith and Smith 1991). Research suggests that mothers are more likely than fathers to believe that they are the primary caregivers to children and that they are more responsible for making decisions regarding the surrogate care of their children while they are at work (Brannen and Moss 1998). Alternatively, men may be more likely to view

their participation in paid employment as their primary responsibility and to see school choice as another aspect of caregiving that falls under the responsibility of their wives (Reay and Ball 1998). Accordingly, children's school assignments may reflect "good mothering" (Hayes 1996). Thus, we view parents' managing of children's schooling as involving emotional capital, with the creation and use of emotional capital being primarily women's work. It has become one more task that may be added to the list of women's household labor traditionally studied by sociologists.

Predicting gender differences in support for diversity is more challenging because research findings are conflicting. For instance, some studies find that women are more likely than men to harbor antiracist viewpoints and to value fairness and helping others (Howell and Day 2000; Spanierman, Beard, and Todd 2012). However, other research suggests that neither white women nor white men are likely to engage in interracial relationships (Herman and Campbell 2012) and that gender differences in racial attitudes are modest (Hughes and Tuch 2003). It may be that mothers are more likely to identify stability in socialization venues as central to children's well-being and thus support neighborhood schools over diversity-based platforms. But it is also possible that women are more supportive of diversity as a basis for school assignments because some research suggests they are more likely to regard diversity as a cultural value.

Moreover, social class may condition the extent to which mothers experience a disproportionate burden of negative emotional capital regarding their children's education. Some studies suggest that middle- and upper-class parents are more likely to make decisions collaboratively and to view their children's well-being as a reflection on investments made by both parents (Echols, McPherson, and Willms 1990; Yorke and Bakewell 1991). With higher levels of educational attainment, some men may view traditional gender roles and divisions in household labor as an unequal and unproductive arrangement and likewise may see their own emotional investment in their children's education as being equally important as their children's mothers'. Other research suggests that it is primarily mothers who make school placement choices across social class boundaries (David et al. 1996; David et al. 1997). In addition, some research finds that the work of school choice can be exercised as a form of maternal gatekeeping, with mothers sharing only selective information about their children's education with their children's fathers, preferring to maintain their role as the household expert on their children's happiness and well-being (Reay and Ball 1998).

The Case of Wake County, North Carolina

Wake County provides an important site in which to study the dynamics of diversity versus neighborhood schools, as well as whether emotional capital surrounding these choices is gendered. Wake has long held progressive values on social and educational dimensions; it has never been under court order to desegregate its schools (for additional detail, see Grant 2009; Parcel, Hendrix, and Taylor 2016; Parcel and Taylor 2015). It is centrally located within North Carolina, and thanks in part to investment in high-tech industry beginning in the 1950s, by the late twentieth century it had become relatively prosperous, particularly in contrast to the eastern and western parts of the state. Educationally, prior to 1976, Wake included a central Raleigh city school district as well as a single district for the rest of the county. By 1976, motivated by interest in improving schools generally, responding to federal pressure to end school segregation, and achieving cost and administrative efficiencies, Wake unified these two school systems (Flinspach and Banks 2005). An extensive set of magnet school schools promoted both school choice and school desegregation, and student achievement improved over time. Magnet schools drew sufficient numbers of children away from the more segregated "base" schools (i.e., those reflecting neighborhood residence) to promote considerable racial mixing. Despite concerns with busing nationally, Wake parents supported these arrangements, even if they meant long bus rides for some children or requirements that parents provide children with transportation to and from school.

Before 2000, the county was reasonably able to keep up with population growth. However, at the turn of the twenty-first century, significant proportions of newcomers arrived from out of state, attracted by what they perceived to be a combination of low taxes, employment opportunities, a favorable climate and lifestyle, and strong schools. The county school board faced increasing difficulty in handling the influx of school-age children, which roughly coincided with several court orders in the late 1990s to disallow race as a basis for school assignment (Grant 2009:167–68). At that time the board changed the policy to focus on diversity by socioeconomic status (SES), and used as its implementation tool the standard that no more than 40 percent of any school would be composed of children who qualified for free or reduced-price lunches and no more than 25 percent reading below grade level (Kahlenberg 2007:11–12). Complicating policy implementation was that growth occurred disproportionately in the western part of the county. It was not possible to build sufficient numbers of new schools to accommodate these children, and at the same time, there was declining school-age population in other parts of Wake. In addition, the system through which schools were funded by the county commissioners was sluggish; despite the influx of thousands of new students, no additional funds for schools were forthcoming.

This led the board to use two other strategies to maintain socioeconomic balance in schools and make good use of existing resources. The first was to accelerate a system of student reassignment to different schools so that their rough rule of socioeconomic balance could be maintained. In practice, this meant that individual children with stable home

addresses might be moved among elementary schools one or more times during their first six years of schooling; reassignments during the three years of middle school also were common, with some in high school also reassigned. Although children were typically moved in "nodes," thus preserving some connections within the reassigned group, these reassignments caused considerable challenge for families. The second strategy was to essentially mandate that some children attend year-round schools, which had previously been populated through parental choice. These mandatory assignments, however, were not always consistent with parental preference. In particular, parents with children in year-round schools and high school–aged children in public schools automatically had children on different school calendars, because all high schools maintained the traditional school calendar.

Citizen unrest became more palpable, culminating in 2009 with a watershed election that dramatically shifted the majority of the Wake County School Board from liberal (Democratic) to conservative (Republican). One of the new board's first acts was to discard the former diversity policy, although actual student assignments changed only minimally over the next five years. Political contention continued as successive boards struggled to educate more than 157,000 children by 2015 and negotiate alternative preferences for diversity and neighborhood schools as bases for school assignment policies.

Qualitative Methods

We reviewed numerous media accounts of the debate beginning in 2009. This review continued well into 2015. To further ground our quantitative work in citizen sentiments, we interviewed 24 opinion leaders in Wake, including current and former school board members, members of the business community, and school activists. These respondents included those who favored diversity as well as a larger number who favored neighborhood schools. Our purpose was to understand parental and community themes of concern beyond what we could discern from media coverage and traditional literature reviews. These semistructured interviews included questions regarding how they came to be involved in the public schools' debate, the history of the divide between prodiversity and neighborhood schools' advocates, and their views on what lay ahead for Wake County given alternative policy choices. We also asked if they have or had children enrolled in Wake public schools, their analysis of why the school board election of 2009 changed board composition, and what they thought Wake assignment policy should be. Most of these interviews were one on one, although several were conducted by two coauthors. These interviews took between one and two hours each.

During this interval we also reviewed data from an older survey of Wake adults suggesting that African Americans in Wake were not uniformly behind the district's diversity

policy. This seemed puzzling, because given the association between race and income, the diversity policy was disproportionately in their interests. To explore this further, two coauthors conducted a focus group of five African Americans, including those who were prodiversity and those who were more skeptical of the diversity policy. To make sure we had sufficient prodiversity voices, the first coauthor conducted a second focus group of prodiversity activists. Although virtually all interview and focus group participants either had children currently or formerly enrolled in Wake schools, our purpose at this stage was to derive community sentiment generally, not solely confined to parents of currently enrolled students. All interviews and focus groups were recorded and transcribed. Participant comments were analyzed using line-by-line coding (Charmaz 2006). We organized the comments into broad categories reflecting themes we found in the interviews. These included preferences for diversity versus neighborhood schools, and concerns about reassignments reflecting worries about child well-being. The Appendix reports social characteristics of the interviewees quoted in this article (Table A1).

Qualitative Findings

Prodiversity respondents were concerned that decades of educational progress for minority and lower SES children would be rolled back if schools were allowed to resegregate. They, as well as members of the business community, clearly tied continuing the diversity policy to economic progress for the county as a whole. Prodiversity respondents feared that new businesses would fail to locate in Wake County if potential residents could not be assured of good schools throughout the jurisdiction. In contrast, interviewees who were in favor of neighborhood schools were primarily concerned with the disadvantages that school board implementation strategies entailed. They believed that moving groups of children among schools was disruptive to their education and friendships, that managing these reassignments was too hard on families, and that the process through which the board selected groups of children for moves was opaque, causing uncertainty in school assignments for large numbers of households. These comments were common among parents with currently enrolled students, parents whose children had attended Wake schools, and citizens whose children did not and had never attended Wake schools. Here we emphasize comments of parents of currently enrolled students.

Parental comments reflected sentiments in favor of both diversity and neighborhood schools. One prodiversity advocate expressed her views this way:

> It is not OK to segregate our schools. It is not OK to deliberately create high-poverty schools and claim that you are going to have all these fixes, whether it is funding or innovative programs, etc. It is just wrong, and that is why I am in this debate. My children will be fine regardless of where they go to

school because I have the ability to make it fine for them, but not everybody has those resources, and it is not OK with me to leave other kids behind.

Alternatively, diversity's opponents argued that the policy did not further the system's principal goal of providing children with a good education. One African American community leader stated, "I just don't think diversity, shipping kids around, really matters as much as them getting a good education, and at the end of the day, there is a job." Some comments reflected elements of social capital, with respondents indicating that moving away from neighborhood schools interfered with social connections between families and schools: "I do go back to when I was growing up," said one conservative activist. "We had ownership of our school system and we were proud of it. I don't get this sense of pride [here in Wake]." When children live far away from where they are educated, another argued, "parents are unable to play the kind of role that they want to . . . in their kids' schools. . . . They cannot be in PTA; they cannot involve themselves."

Additional comments reflected negative parental emotional capital focused on child well-being, which they perceived was threatened by having to take long bus rides. As a former superintendent noted in an interview,

> I was having a forum over at Moore Square Middle School and it was about 200 . . . predominantly African American parents . . . and I will not forget the parent who stood up and said, "Well, we do not understand why we have to put our five-year-old on that bus and ride for an hour and twenty minutes to a school that is a [significant] distance from the house," and they proceeded to talk about the hardships of things of that nature.

Others also suggested that having children attend school far from home challenged their capacity to meet parental responsibilities. One African American interviewee recalled an unusual storm Wake County experienced on January 19, 2005. Although only half an inch of snow accumulated, icy roads and early dismissals created traffic delays of many hours. Some students ended up spending the night at their schools. She said,

> But that assignment [plan], how far is [too far]? For the parent, how quickly can I get to my child? That was exhibited when we had that freak storm. How quickly can I get to my child in an emergency, from [my] workplace or home?

Here emotional concerns focused on how attending school far from home might, in exceptional circumstances, prevent parents from meeting their children's needs.

Indeed, regardless of a resident's preferences about the general assignment policy, there was a profound concern that moving children from school to school was not good for their education and social development. This is demonstrated by the views of an African American parent at a focus group:

> I will use the word *repulsive*, and the reason I say it is repulsive is because I am tired of all of this sitting on the backs of the children. . . . It is the children that you are busing; it is the children that you are manipulating. . . . It is not on their back to take the long bus ride or be pulled out of your class.

Other parents complained that the system of reassignment was confusing and that the board altered attendance areas, or residential nodes, for schools frequently and randomly. One involved parent stated,

> The discontent that I was hearing was the unbelievable inconsistency in feeder patterns. People would not know from one year to the next where their kid was going to school, and not only would they not know where they were going to go this year, they did not even have a sense of, OK, well, you will go to this elementary school, this middle school, and then this high school. It switched with no rhyme or reason.

Comments such as these reflect uncertainty that can lead to parental concerns regarding children's well-being.

We interpreted these comments as reflecting negative emotional capital. In this case, such capital was focused on issues of school assignment, worries about long bus rides, substantial distances between home and school or between parental workplaces and schools, as well as beliefs that children were being manipulated to suit adult ends. Parents also worried that the entire system of feeder patterns across schools, usually predictable as children aged, had become unpredictable and illogical, causing upset for parents and children.

These comments, as well as prior literature and study of media accounts, guided our question construction for our survey. Table 1 shows the questions we asked regarding these sentiments, which are either prodiversity or more supportive of neighborhood schools. Additional questions reflect negative emotional capital, including the challenge that respondents believe parents and children face when children are reassigned to new schools, fears that reassignments are disruptive both to child learning and friendships, and frustration with the processes that the board used to decide which groups of children would be assigned each year. We also show additional questions, many of which are used to construct measures we describe below.

Hypotheses

Based on our qualitative work, we developed hypotheses to be tested quantitatively. We expect that mothers will be more sympathetic to diversity concerns than will fathers, and this underlying value will trump the additional emotional labor that school diversity models may require. However, given the benefits of the neighborhood school model for building bridging and bonding social capital, we also anticipate that mothers will be more favorable to the neighborhood school model than fathers. In essence, we anticipate that mothers

Table 1. Survey Questions.

Variable	Survey Question(s)/Statement(s)	Response Choices
Diversity support	Children learn best in racially diverse schools.	Strongly disagree Somewhat disagree Neutral Somewhat agree Strongly agree[a]
	Children learn best in economically diverse schools. Children learn best in racially diverse classrooms. Children learn best in economically diverse classrooms.	
Neighborhood school support	Neighborhood schools are easier for parents. School bus rides over 45 minutes are too hard on young children. Children learn best when they attend school with children from their own neighborhoods. I am willing to pay higher taxes to build more schools so more children can attend	
Challenges of reassignment	Reassigning children even once during elementary school creates challenges for parents. Reassigning children even once during middle school creates challenges for parents.	
Dangers of reassignment	Reassigning children even once during elementary school inhibits learning. Reassigning children even once during middle school inhibits learning. Reassigning children even once during elementary school inhibits child friendships. Reassigning children even once during middle school inhibits child friendships.	
Reassignment uncertainty	The uncertainty surrounding possible school reassignments creates problems for children. The uncertainty surrounding possible school reassignments creates problems for parents.	
Sex of respondent	What is your gender?	Male Female
Age of respondent	What is your age?	Respondent inputs age
Race of respondent	What is your race?	Hispanic White African American Other
Annual household income	What is your approximate annual household income?	Under $25,000 $25,000–$50,000 $50,000–$75,000 $75,000–$100,000 $100,000–$150,000 More than $150,000 Don't care to say
Educational attainment	What is the highest level of education you have completed?	Some high school Graduated from high school Some college Graduated from college Postgraduate training or degree
Total household commute hours	Approximately how long is your commute to work on a typical day?	15 minutes or less 15–30 minutes 30–45 minutes Over 45 minutes
	Approximately how long is your spouse's commute to work on a typical day?	15 minutes or less 15–30 minutes 30–45 minutes Over 45 minutes
Total household work hours	Approximately how many hours a week do you work for pay?	Don't work for pay 1–20 hours 21–34 hours 35–40 hours Over 40 hours

(continued)

Table 1. (continued)

Variable	Survey Question(s)/Statement(s)	Response Choices
	Approximately how many hours a week does your spouse work?	Doesn't work for pay 1–20 hours 21–34 hours 35–40 hours Over 40 hours
School-age children	Do you have school-age children?	Yes No
Number of school-age children	Please key in the number of school-age children you have.	1 to 9 or more
Children in year-round schools	Is your youngest child on a traditional or year-round calendar?	Yes No
Children with reassignments	Has Wake County ever reassigned any of your children from one school to another?	Yes No
Length of residence in Wake County	How long have you lived in Wake County?	A year or less 1–3 years 4–7 years 8–15 years Over 15 years All your life
Area of residence in Wake County	Please key in the last three digits of your ZIP code [measure calculated on the basis of location of respondent's ZIP code].	Respondent inputs digits
Neighborhood percentage minority	Please key in the last three digits of your ZIP code [measure calculated on the basis of racial composition in respondent's ZIP code].	Respondent inputs digits
Perception of busing	Please enter the percentage of children in Wake County Public Schools that you think are bused for the purpose of the diversity policy.	Respondent inputs answer
Rating of WCPSS year-round calendar	On a scale of 1 to 9, how would you rate Wake County's year-round calendar for elementary and middle schools?	1 (most unfavorable) to 9 (most favorable)
Rating of WCPSS school board	On a scale of 1 to 9, how would you rate the job the current school board is doing?	1 (most unfavorable) to 9 (most favorable)
Trust in local government	Generally speaking, how often do you think you can trust the local government to do what is right?	Don't know Never Hardly ever Some of the time Most of the time
Trust in state government	Generally speaking, how often do you think you can trust the state government to do what is right?	Don't know Never Hardly ever Some of the time Most of the time
Trust in federal government	Generally speaking, how often do you think you can trust the federal government to do what is right?	Don't know Never Hardly ever Some of the time Most of the time
Involvement in organizations	Are you a member of any civic, religious, or political organizations?	Yes No
Number of organizations	Please key in the number of organizations to which you belong.	Respondent inputs digits
Attitudes toward Martin Luther King Jr.	Do you have favorable, somewhat favorable, or very unfavorable impressions of Martin Luther King?	Very favorable Somewhat favorable Somewhat unfavorable Very unfavorable Don't know
Conservative ideology	What would you consider your political ideology?	Liberal Moderate Conservative Don't know

[a]Response choices are *strongly disagree, somewhat disagree, neutral, somewhat agree*, and *strongly agree* for all items making up diversity support, neighborhood school support, challenges of reassignment, danger of reassignment, and reassignment uncertainty.

will appreciate the value in both models and therefore experience conflicting emotions when it comes to school venues. We also expect that some of these same factors may be at work in the prediction of other attitudes related to the diversity versus neighborhood schools debate. If mothers are more likely to be taking on the burden of managing school assignments compared with fathers, they may be more sensitive to the challenges that managing these assignments require; they may also be more likely to express concern for children's well-being within this context.

We also consider the role of other aspects of family, work, and household arrangements, as well as alternative explanations for both diversity support and aspects of negative emotional capital. We expect that higher numbers of school-age children will be associated with preference for neighborhood schools, given that these households are at risk for higher numbers of reassignments than those with fewer school-age children, and undertake higher levels of household work generally. We anticipate that dual-earner households will have more resources with which to manage these choices, which should increase their support for diversity. However, longer household work hours and longer household commutes should be negative factors that may promote preference for neighborhood schools.

Alternative Explanations

Studies of support for diversity versus neighborhood schools identify important alternative explanations for which we can control. Traditionally, it has been Democrats who have been favorable toward diversity-based school assignment models and Republicans who have advocated assignments on the basis of neighborhoods (Parcel and Taylor 2015). Additionally, because children of color are more likely to benefit from attending schools outside of their neighborhoods than are white children, racial minorities have often been more supportive of diversity-based models than whites (Bobo 2001; Tuch and Hughes 1996).

Regarding SES, research has shown that because policies promoting integration entail greater competition for resources, lower income whites oppose government efforts at racial integration more than do their wealthier counterparts (Branton and Jones 2005; Taylor and Mateyka 2011). Elevated levels of education, moreover, are traditionally associated with more liberal racial views (Banks and Valentino 2012; Federico 2004). However, greater education may coincide with longer and more demanding household work hours, which could leave parents with less time or emotional energy to support school assignment plans that place their children in schools farther away from home.

Those with more favorable racial attitudes generally should be more supportive of diversity. In addition, we expect those with well-developed social ties via organizational memberships would be less likely to favor neighborhood schools because their social connections were well established via other means, while those with less developed social ties might look to neighborhood schools to improve their stocks of social capital. Those with higher levels of trust in government generally should be more supportive of board-mandated reassignments. We also expected those with a reasonable threshold of interracial friendships and those from more diverse neighborhoods to be more supportive of diversity as a basis for school assignments.

Despite the heated local rhetoric framed as support for diversity *or* neighborhood schools, we do not necessarily expect that these sentiments are polar opposites. Both models have advantages and disadvantages, and parental attitudes are likely to reflect that reality. In addition, we believe that other dimensions of sentiment reflecting negative emotional capital are also relevant.

Quantitative Methods

The Survey

We conducted a survey of Wake County adults' preferences for school assignment policy, with an oversample of African Americans. Available funds made it possible to field this survey via an automated poll. Although public opinion polls are widely used in political science, they have been underused in sociology (Perrin and McFarland 2011). This is unfortunate, given their advantages. First, they are relatively inexpensive, costing far less per case than most interviewing techniques. Second, polls can reflect public opinion on school assignment, which matters a great deal because opinions reflect deeply held values that guide individual actions. For instance, understanding complex sentiments that underlie "white flight" is important because this dynamic has been a major factor in reducing the potential for sustained desegregation. Ryan (2010) argued that middle-class parents will get what they want, which makes studying attitudes of parents important. Events in Wake show the importance of parental attitudes toward school diversity as well as those of citizens generally (Parcel and Taylor 2015).

Third, using polls in conjunction with case studies fits into a larger body of mixed-methods work in social science (Jacobs 2005; Small 2011). Groves et al. (2009:264–65) argued that cognitive interviews, similar to those we conducted here, can help researchers develop good survey questions, while interviewer debriefings after question pretests are further helpful in improving questions before the questionnaire is fielded (see Axinn and Pearce 2006 for a different approach). Finally, polls can be repeated over time, giving the potential to chart trends, analogous to the General Social Survey (Parcel, Mickelson, and Smith, 2016). Yet despite their value, most case studies do not use surveys or polls to illuminate such sentiments and show how they vary by social characteristics.

The method also has disadvantages. Such polls have lower response rates than traditional interviews and are likely

to be biased in terms of the social characteristics of respondents. To address this, we used a procedure known as post-stratification weighting, or raking, also known as raking ratio estimation or sample balancing (e.g., Groves 2006). Additional detail regarding the weighting strategy and the survey itself are contained in the Appendix. In this article we report of data from 547 completed cases of parents with children currently in Wake County Public Schools.

Although the data were generally complete, a few of our measures contained missing values. For example, less than 3 percent of the sample did not provide valid answers for the items concerning political party affiliation and trust in government. About 9 percent of the sample did not indicate their household incomes. To address missing data, we use a data augmentation approach to estimate a multiple imputation procedure, which relies on a sequential chain of data augmentation cycles. We use a series of five imputations to predict the missing values of independent variables. The procedure estimates a set of plausible values for missing data and replaces the missing values with these estimates and produces appropriate standard errors. The estimates are analyzed using standard regression procedures, and then results from these analyses are combined. The resulting estimates reflect statistically valid inferences that take into account the uncertainty attributable to missing values (Allison 2002).

Measures

Table 2 contains all measures as well as means and standard deviations of the variables. To obtain measures of our dependent variables, we subjected the 26 survey items identified in Table 1 to principal-components analysis. Five dimensions met eigenvalue criteria: (1) school reassignments present *challenges* for parents, (2) *neighborhood schools* are best for parents and children, (3) children learn best in schools and classrooms that are racially and socioeconomically *diverse*, (4) there are *dangers* to child learning and friendships from reassignments, and (5) the *uncertainty* surrounding possible reassignments creates problems for parents and children. We created factor-based scales reflecting each dimension, which tap not only diversity and neighborhood schools but also three additional variables reflecting negative emotional capital.

As expected, we found that diversity and neighborhood schools loaded on separate dimensions, suggesting that they are not diametrically opposed, which would require they load on a single dimension at opposite ends of a single continuum. However, the two dimensions are negatively correlated ($r = -.47$), a finding we evaluate in more detail below. Studying the predictors of diversity and neighborhood schools allows us to comment on how parents view these two bases for school assignments. We interpret challenge, dangers, and uncertainty as reflecting other dimensions of negative emotional capital. Studying them allows us to place findings regarding diversity and neighborhood

schools in larger context. Following Jacobs and Gerson's (2004) arguments regarding the importance of looking at *household* workloads, we measured household work hours and total household commute time. We used sentiment toward Martin Luther King Jr. to tap generalized racial attitudes. The remaining variables are measured with dummies or reliable indices.

Plan of Analysis

We use ordinary least squares regression to predict several dimensions of sentiment underlying the school assignment policy debate for parents with children currently in Wake public schools. The issue of whether mothers or fathers are more supportive of diversity can be addressed through analysis of variance; introducing controls via analysis of covariance helps us provide a conservative estimate of gender effects. If covariates explain away the gender effect, then that is information regarding what other characteristics associated with gender account for the initial gender differences.

We first investigate the effects of gender and number of school-age children on each dependent variable. We then add variables measuring whether the respondent is in a dual-earner household, total household work hours, and total household commuting time. Finally, we control for SES, political party affiliation, racial attitudes, and connectedness to others via memberships in community organizations and trust in government. Because results did not differ across these three specifications, we display the models with full controls. We then analyze whether gender interacts with other key predictors to discover whether mothers or fathers are more or less concerned given characteristics of themselves or their households. We describe this strategy along with results below.

Results from the Survey

Additive Effects

As expected, the additive results in Table 3 shows that mothers are more supportive of diversity *and* neighborhood school arrangements. These findings provide additional support for the notion that support for diversity and preferences for neighborhood schools are not diametrically opposing values. Understanding preferences for school arrangements in ways that will protect and enhance their children's well-being is complex, and mothers may find themselves conflicted between these two beliefs. In addition, mothers perceive greater challenges, dangers and uncertainty with reassignments than do fathers. These findings further support our arguments that the exercise of negative emotional capital is gendered. Parents with more school-age children also perceive greater danger revolving around school reassignments, although numbers of children do not predict preferences for diversity or neighborhood-based schools. Dual-earner

Table 2. Variable Descriptions, Measurements, Means, and Standard Deviations (n = 547).

Variable	Description	Metric	Mean	SD
	Sample Estimates for Wake County			
Dependent variables				
Diversity support	Four items measuring respondents' support for racial and economic diversity in classrooms and schools (α = .94)	4–20	13.42	5.32
Neighborhood school support	Four items measuring respondents' support for neighborhood (α = .73)	4–20	14.56	3.56
Challenges of reassignment	Two items measuring the challenges that respondents perceive with elementary school and middle school reassignment (α = .93)	2–10	8.13	2.24
Danger of reassignment	Four items measuring respondents' perceptions of the dangers reassignment for children's learning and friendship experiences during elementary and middle school (α = .90)	4–20	11.23	3.48
Reassignment uncertainty	Two items measuring respondents' perceptions of problems for parents and children as a result of reassignment (α = .74)	2–10	8.35	2.02
Key concepts and independent variables				
Sex of respondent	Two dummy variables to indicate whether the respondent is male or female			
Male (omitted category)			.50	.50
Female			.50	.50
Number of school-age children	Continuous item indicating number of school-age children belonging to each respondent	1–7	1.92	1.09
Dual-earner household	Two dummy variables to indicate whether both adults work for pay			
Not dual-earner (omitted category)			.44	.50
Dual-earner			.56	.50
Total household commute hours	Continuous item indicating total number of household commuting hours	0–105	22.49	21.24
Total household work hours	Continuous item indicating total number of household work hours	0–100	43.02	31.59
Race of respondent	Three dummy variables to represent whether the respondent is white, African American, or Latino			
White (omitted category)			.73	.45
African American			.20	.40
Latino			.07	.26
Educational attainment	Four dummy variables to represent whether the respondent's educational attainment can best be described as less than high school, some college, bachelor's degree, or postgraduate degree			
High school or less (omitted category)			.27	.44
Some college			.18	.38
Bachelor's degree			.38	.49
Postgraduate degree			.17	.38
Annual household income	Six dummy variables to represent whether the respondent's annual household income can best be described as under $25,000, between $25,000 and $50,000, between $50,000 and $75,000, between $75,000 and $100,000, between $100,000 and $150,000, or greater than $150,000			
Less than $25,000 (omitted category)			.14	.35
$25,000–$50,000			.24	.43
$50,000–$75,000			.21	.41
$75,000–$100,000			.15	.36
$100,000–$150,000			.16	.37
≥$150,000			.10	.30
Political party affiliation	Three dummy variables to indicate whether the respondent identifies as Democrat, Republican, or unaffiliated			
Democrat (omitted category)			.40	.50
Republican			.31	.46
Unaffiliated			.25	.43
Racially diverse friendships	Two dummy variables to indicate whether the respondent reports having three friends of nonwhite race			
Do not have three friends of nonwhite race (omitted category)			.14	.35
Have three friends of nonwhite race			.86	.35
Racial diversity of neighborhood	Two dummy variables to indicate whether the respondent perceives his or her neighborhood to be racially diverse			
Neighborhood is not racially diverse (omitted category)			.34	.47
Neighborhood is racially diverse			.66	.47

(continued)

Table 2. (continued)

Variable	Description	Metric	Mean	SD
Attitudes toward Martin Luther King Jr.	Three dummy variables to indicate the respondents' attitudes			
Favorable (omitted category)	toward Martin Luther King Jr.	.65	.48	
Somewhat favorable		.26	.44	
Unfavorable		.09	.28	
Trust in government	Three items measuring respondents' trust in local, state, and federal government ($\alpha = .82$)	3–12	7.99	1.73
Organization involvement	Continuous item indicating number of organizations each respondent is a member of, ranging from 1 to 6, with 1 = zero organizations, 2 = one organization, 3 = two organizations, 4 = three organizations, 5 = four organizations, and 6 = five or more organizations	1–6	2.30	1.47
Marital status	Two dummy variables to indicate whether the respondent is married			
Not married			.47	.50
Married			.53	.50
Proportional Estimates for Wake County[a]				
Race				
White				.73
African American				.20
Other				.07
Sex				
Male				.50
Female				.50
Marital status				
Married				.53
Not married				.47
Annual household income				
Under $25,000				.14
$25,000–$50,000				.24
$50,000–$75,000				.21
$75,000–$100,000				.15
$100,000–$150,000				.16
≥$150,000				.09
Educational attainment (estimates from Wake County government health report, 2012)				
High school or less				.27
Some college				.18
Associate or bachelor's degree				.38
Graduate or professional degree				.17

Note: Our sample is weighted so that estimates for race, sex, marital status, income, and education levels reflect actual proportions in Wake County.
[a]Proportional estimates reported by the 2010 U.S. Census.

households are less supportive of neighborhood schools, and worry less about dangers from reassignments than single-earner households, possibly because they have more resources with which to address any dangers in reassignment that they do perceive.

It is notable that the gender effects are significant for all five dependent variables, even when we include numerous controls. Findings also show that African Americans are more supportive of diversity and less supportive of neighborhood schools, and they express fewer concerns with the challenges, dangers and uncertainty of reassignment. Findings for Latinos and those of other races are similar, although they do not differ from whites on challenge and uncertainty. Republicans and the unaffiliated are less supportive of diversity but more supportive of neighborhood schools, and Republicans perceive greater dangers associated with reassignments. Those with the least favorable attitudes toward Martin Luther King Jr. show less diversity support, more support for neighborhood schools, and more concerns with reassignments. There are some insulating effects of education and income, as well as for trust in government. In sum, mothers are more prodiversity than fathers. They are also more concerned with the challenges, dangers, and uncertainties associated with Wake's reassignment policies. These

Table 3. Ordinary Least Squares Regression Predicting Diversity, Neighborhood Schools, Challenges, Dangers, and Uncertainty (*n* = 547).

Variable	Diversity	Neighborhood Schools	Challenges	Dangers	Uncertainty
Sex of respondent					
Male (omitted category)	—	—	—	—	—
Female	1.14**	.620*	.711***	1.07***	1.40***
	(.387)	(.274)	(.193)	(.289)	(.171)
Number of school-age children	.277	−.124	.167	.426**	.162
	(.205)	(.137)	(.096)	(.144)	(.085)
Dual-earner household					
Not dual-earner (omitted category)	—	—	—	—	—
Dual-earner	.218	−1.39***	.036	−.879*	.237
	(.531)	(.393)	(.274)	(.416)	(.234)
Total household commute hours	.000	−.017	−.003	−.009	−.012*
	(.012)	(.009)	(.006)	(.009)	(.006)
Total household work hours	−.014	.028**	.004	.006	.005
	(.011)	(.008)	(.006)	(.009)	(.005)
Race of respondent					
White (omitted category)					
African American	1.45*	−3.69***	−.875*	−1.24**	−.648*
	(.577)	(.409)	(.278)	(.421)	(.249)
Latino	1.87*	−1.83**	−.141	−1.51**	.198
	(.722)	(.546)	(.380)	(.569)	(.338)
Educational attainment					
High school or less (omitted category)					
Some college	2.14**	−.247	.023	.665	.055
	(.614)	(.452)	(.315)	(.474)	(.278)
Bachelor's degree	2.11***	.677	.527	1.51***	.095
	(.559)	(.398)	(.273)	(.418)	(.245)
Postgraduate	2.35**	−.221	−.566	−.083	−.096
	(.678)	(.502)	(.348)	(.529)	(.311)
Household income					
Less than $25,000 (omitted category)					
$25,000–$50,000	4.22***	1.12*	−.516	−.152	.066
	(.687)	(.504)	(.349)	(.532)	(.312)
$50,000–$75,000	2.21**	−.146	−1.08**	−.921	−.170
	(.727)	(.543)	(.376)	(.571)	(.336)
$75,000–$100,000	2.33**	−.925	−1.15**	−1.33*	−.102
	(.816)	(.594)	(.412)	(.625)	(.368)
$100,000–$150,000	2.84**	−.439	−.904*	−1.29	−.627
	(.843)	(.624)	(.437)	(.655)	(.390)
≥$150,000	2.38**	−.520	−.379	−1.03	.043
	(.896)	(.665)	(.460)	(.699)	(.411)
Political party affiliation					
Democrat (omitted category)					
Republican	−3.85***	.940*	−.244	.969*	−.078
	(.583)	(.443)	(.334)	(.402)	(.284)
Unaffiliated	−1.38**	.785*	−.192	.569	−.288
	(.523)	(.391)	(.289)	(.323)	(.258)
Racially diverse friendships					
Do not have three nonwhite friends (omitted)					
Have three nonwhite friends	−.133	.746	.538	.717	.314
	(.613)	(.409)	(.286)	(.431)	(.254)
Racial diversity of neighborhood					
Neighborhood is not racially diverse (omitted)					
Neighborhood is racially diverse	1.42**	.296	.256	.226	.140
	(.433)	(.315)	(.220)	(.331)	(.197)

Table 3. (continued)

Variable	Diversity	Neighborhood Schools	Challenges	Dangers	Uncertainty
Attitudes toward Martin Luther King Jr.					
Favorable (omitted category)					
Somewhat favorable	−2.65***	1.28***	.032	−.159	−.174
	(.459)	(.342)	(.239)	(.358)	(.213)
Unfavorable	−2.77***	1.10*	1.18**	1.96**	1.10**
	(.729)	(.548)	(.388)	(.570)	(.340)
Trust in government	.420**	−.216*	−.243*	−.302**	−.082
	(.124)	(.105)	(.084)	(.108)	(.075)
Organization involvement	−.011	−.203*	.003	.074	−.083
	(.132)	(.098)	(.068)	(.103)	(.061)
R^2	.463	.326	.186	.217	.202
Model F	17.11***	10.08***	4.57***	6.09***	5.19***
Constant	6.60***	15.82***	9.46***	12.00***	8.01***

Note: Entries are unstandardized (metric) regression coefficients, with standard errors of estimates in parentheses.
*$p < .05$, **$p < .01$, and ***$p < .001$ (two-tailed tests).

findings provide strong support for our belief that the exercise of negative emotional capital is gendered.

Interactive Effects

We construct interaction terms composed of gender with number of school-age children, dual-earner households, household commutes, total work hours, as well as education and earnings and test the effects on our dependent variables using the full models (not tabled). We conduct each of these six tests for the five dependent variables for a total of 30 tests. We first assess the effect of each interactive term involving gender one at a time in the presence of our independent and control variables. Then, we assess the effects of interactive terms when entered into each model simultaneously with all other interaction terms. To measure SES, we created an interval estimate of education and an interval estimate of earnings by taking the midpoints of each earnings category. These interaction terms were also tested individually as above and then added to a total model including five interactive terms.

Our interactive tests provide additional nuance to the idea that negative emotional capital is gendered. We find 10 significant gender interaction effects across the five dependent variables, which are summarized in Table 4. Some household factors exacerbate women's concerns. Mothers in households with longer work hours support diversity less, while mothers with more school-age children favor neighborhood schools more. Similarly, mothers in these larger households perceive greater challenge in managing school reassignments, while mothers in households with longer work hours perceive greater dangers. Other factors insulate mothers from these concerns. Extra resources in dual-earner households protect against concern with challenge, dangers, and uncertainty, while higher income and education also mitigate these same concerns. These findings signal that for Wake

County parents who currently have children enrolled in public schools, there are a notable number of interactive effects. Higher levels of socioeconomic resources protect mothers against higher concerns with the challenges, perceptions of dangers and uncertainty, key dimensions of negative emotional capital. However, longer work hours and having more school-age children exacerbate differentiation between diversity and neighborhood schools; they also exacerbate mothers' perceptions of challenge and dangers.

Discussion

Our study innovates because we use qualitative findings to produce quantitative results measuring attitudes toward school assignments reliably; we also provide quantitative estimates of the effects of gender, family, and other background characteristics on them. We have found that gender, work, and family arrangements are important to understanding preferences for both diversity and neighborhood schools as bases for children's school assignments. Mothers are more supportive of diversity as a basis for public school assignments than are fathers. These findings contribute to long-standing debates regarding sex differences in support for diversity (e.g., Hughes and Tuch 2003). However, we add new findings. Parents from households with larger numbers of school-age children are less supportive of diversity. In addition, dual-earner households and those with longer commutes are also more supportive, while those households with greater working hours are less supportive. These findings emerge in the presence of rigorous controls for alternative explanations.

We have also found that preferences for neighborhood school assignments based on diversity and neighborhood proximity are not polar opposites. They are negatively related, but not perfectly so. For example, mothers favor *both* diversity and neighborhood schools more than fathers.

Table 4. Interaction Effects by Dependent Variable (*n* = 547).

Dependent Variable	Interaction Effect	β
Diversity support	Gender × Household Work Hours	−.053* (.022)
Neighborhood school support	Gender × Number of School-age Children	.981*** (.271)
Challenges	Gender × Number of School-age Children	.577** (.185)
	Gender × Dual-earner Household	−1.92*** (.541)
	Gender × Household Income	−.00001* (.000005)
Dangers	Gender × Dual-earner Household	−2.71** (.830)
	Gender × Educational Attainment	−.688* (.319)
	Gender × Household Work Hours	.042* (.017)
Uncertainty	Gender × Dual-earner Household	−1.16* (.467)
	Gender × Educational Attainment	−.417* (.181)

Note: Table entries are unstandardized (metric) regression coefficients, with standard errors of estimates in parentheses.
*p < .05, **p < .01, and ***p < .001 (two-tailed tests).

These findings clearly point to the reality that these preferences, although often described as diametrically opposing, are not polar opposites, and that mothers are particularly conflicted. More generally, these findings speak to the power of each of these cultural models, one emphasizing the value of diversity and the other pointing to the importance of neighborhood schools.

Focusing solely on predictors of diversity and neighborhood schools would miss a substantial part of the picture, however. We have identified three new and understudied aspects of negative emotional capital: (1) parental challenge in managing children's school assignments, (2) the dangers to child learning and friendships from school reassignment, and (3) uncertainty surrounding the process of school reassignment. Going even further, our quantitative analyses enable us to evaluate expectations regarding predictors of these outcomes.

Our findings suggest that these forms of emotional capital are heavily gendered. Mothers perceive more challenge in managing school assignments than do fathers; they also perceive more dangers for children attributable to reassignments, and they express more concern with uncertainty surrounding reassignment processes. These findings also obtain for parents with more school-age children and are robust to additional controls. In addition, mothers with more school-age children exhibit heightened concern for the challenge and dangers inherent in reassignments. They may be concerned with the potential for and the reality of reassignments for multiple children, which add an increased level of complexity to the management of children's school placements.

Our title reflects a question raised by one of our interview respondents: how far is too far for the distance between home and school, particularly for young children? Another parent reported concern regarding a five-year-old riding a school bus for close to three hours per day. However, a specific answer to the question is elusive. We do know that Wake County parents and voters tolerated distant school assignments for children for many years (Parcel and Taylor 2015).

Indeed, many Wake parents voluntarily transported their children to distant magnet schools and continue to do so today. It was only when school reassignments became prevalent, and when previously voluntary year-round schools became mandatory, that citizens voted to change school board composition to one more supportive of neighborhood schools. These findings suggest that it may not be the distance between home and school per se but rather disruptions to family and school ties that are more consequential. If so, these findings provide additional support for the importance of social capital, both at home and between families and schools, in social life.

In addition, the "pro–neighborhood schools" board was in power for only two years. Even when in power, they were not successful in implementing this agenda very thoroughly. In both 2011 and 2013, prodiversity boards were elected, although they took great care to slow down student reassignments and avoid new mandatory assignments to year-round schools. Thus, it appears that Raleigh citizens either tolerate or prefer diverse schools, as long as they do not entail too high a price in terms of student reassignments or unwanted school calendars (Parcel, Hendrix, et al. 2016; Parcel and Taylor 2015). Finally, recall that mothers of Wake public school children value both diversity and neighborhood schools.

A major question in our field has been why gender relations are reproduced over time. Ridgeway (2011) has argued that despite the significant progress women have made in educational and occupational attainment, gender continues to be a major frame through which people view social life. Although men are taking on more routine household duties and providing more care for children (Sayer 2005), households are still taking on new tasks, such as managing children's school assignments, which were probably not as time consuming in earlier eras. Our evidence suggests this task is gendered. Our findings fit with conceptions of mothering and care work; perhaps mothers are especially invested in school choice because they see it as their job to facilitate

children's learning and successful placement in adult stratification systems. So while men are taking on some household tasks that were previously shouldered by women, this development has not precluded mothers from taking on more of the burden of managing children's school assignments. Thus, gender relations at home are reproduced as new gendered tasks are added to household responsibilities.

Future research should take more seriously the workload that households experience when children do not attend neighborhood schools. We have learned a great deal regarding household division of labor from studies of household time use (Bianchi and Milkie 2010). However, it does not appear that such studies have explicitly considered the type of work implied in our study. Although we do not study household labor directly, our findings suggest that prior studies may have underestimated the extent to which women are still bearing a disproportionate burden at home and may have overestimated the extent of recent progress in reducing gender differences in unpaid work.

Our results also demonstrate that social class mitigates the concerns parents have about school assignments. More educated parents and higher earning households are less supportive of neighborhood schools. They are less worried about challenges of managing reassignments and the dangers of reassignments for their children; more educated *mothers* perceive fewer dangers than those who are less educated. In addition, dual-earner households and those with longer commutes are more prodiversity and less in support of neighborhood schools; dual-earner households are less concerned with dangers and challenge. This suggests that despite the schedule issues inherent in dual-earner households, having two earners may insulate these households from worries about the diversity policy. However, those households with longer work hours are *less* supportive of diversity and *more* in favor of neighborhood schools. These findings help contextualize the more familiar findings regarding effects of race, racial attitudes, and political party on diversity support.

External Validity of Conclusions

Critics may wonder whether our findings generalize beyond county borders. This is difficult to assess, because our focus on challenge, dangers, and uncertainty is new. Some prior studies are comparative but lack the detailed attitudinal and demographic data we use (Frankenberg and Orfield 2012; Grant 2009; Portz, Stein, and Jones 1999). As noted above, the strong population growth in Wake motivated many of the dynamics we study. While some other southern and western locations have also gained population rapidly, the Wake case has little applicability to many northern cities with high proportions of minority and lower SES residents where debates between diversity and neighborhood schools are effectively moot given decades of white and middle-class flight.

Alternatively, Montgomery County, Maryland, a locale that has used both housing and school assignment policies to promote strong educational outcomes, might be a place where discussions of diversity and neighborhood schools still resonate. Louisville, Kentucky, may also be an apt comparison because, like Wake, it has sustained diverse schools for a long time (Phillips et al. 2009). Smaller jurisdictions with prodiversity school assignment policies, such as Rock Hill, South Carolina, may also show similar dynamics (Smith 2010). Research to investigate the external validity of these dimensions of parental sentiment, as well as attitudes toward diverse and neighborhood schools, is currently under way (Parcel, Mickelson, et al. 2016).

We believe, however, that concerns reflected in dimensions of emotional capital such as challenge, dangers, and uncertainty may be very broadly generalizable. School choice is now relatively common nationwide. Having a choice in school assignments means that someone must undertake work to make what each household considers the right choice. It is likely that when households debate between neighborhood and magnet options, or among magnet options, or between traditional and year-round calendars, or between public and private schools, the exercise of emotional capital is relevant. Also, some families are choosing to home school their children, which almost certainly increases the workload of women in these households (Lois 2013).

Future research should take more seriously the negative emotional capital expended and the work it implies for households when children do not attend neighborhood schools. We need additional research that investigates whether challenges, dangers, and uncertainty operate more generally. We may have underestimated the extent to which women are still bearing a disproportionate burden of exercising negative emotional capital at home, and we may have overestimated the extent of recent progress in reducing gender differences in the total of paid and unpaid work (Sayer 2005). Surely these are important issues deserving attention by researchers studying the role of work and family dynamics, and their implications for educational arrangements, in the years ahead.

Appendix

The raking procedure assigns a weight value to each survey respondent so that marginal totals of the adjusted weights on specified characteristics match the corresponding totals for the population. A major advantage of the raking procedure is its ability to produce respondent weights that are simultaneously based on multiple control totals, such as marital status, race, sex, and SES (Battaglia et al. 2004; Kalton 1983). Parcel and Taylor (2015) used the same strategy, and their weighted means matched the 2010 census on the basis of the above noted dimensions. The poststratification weighting approach is well known in the survey research community and is used on major federal government-sponsored surveys, including

the American Community Survey, as well as the National Survey of Family Growth and the National Health Interview Survey. Groves (2006) showed that these procedures produce valid estimates. Although in-person interviews yield higher overall response rates, postweighting remains necessary, to address both design effects and differential response rates. Details for this work on the National Longitudinal Survey of Youth, General Social Survey, and other major surveys are typically conveyed in appendices; thus many users of these data sets may be unaware of these details. Using sample weights also enhances external validity by increasing the representativeness of analysis results.

Our survey was conducted using an automated poll during the second full week of March 2011 by Public Policy Polling, based in Raleigh, North Carolina. The survey of all respondents consisted of 55 closed-ended questions and took between 15 and 20 minutes to complete. In this analysis, to focus on the exercise of parental emotional capital, we study a sample of parents with children enrolled in Wake public schools (*n* = 547). These parents answered a few additional questions to allow future analyses.

The survey firm purchased two lists of phone numbers from Aristotle, Inc., in Washington, D.C. The first list consisted of a simple random sample of 20,000 identified as households in Wake County with land lines from the company's overall list of 200,000 Wake county numbers, for a sampling rate of 10 percent. The second list consisted of a simple random sample of 20,000 land line phone numbers in Wake County that Aristotle had identified as African American, which was 76 percent of their identified African American households in Wake County with land lines. This sampling fraction is disproportionate relative to the overall list because African Americans tend not to answer polls at a very high rate (Blumenthal 2012), thus the need to contact more households to get a suitable sample size. After the numbers were selected, the firm tried to reach a respondent at each number eight times across a five-day period so that households with different work and personal schedules would be fairly represented. From the two lists the firm was able to reach 21,177 numbers; numbers not reached included those that had been disconnected, numbers that were fax machines, and numbers that were not answered during the time the survey was in the field. Calls that did not reach someone 21 years of age or older resulted in a noninterview.

The survey was successful in reaching 1,706 respondents, for a response rate of 8.1 percent. This overall response rate is a good one considering the automated nature of the poll and the length of the survey (Pew Research Center for the People and the Press 2012). The sample overrepresented upper SES and female respondents, likely because these individuals were more engaged with the issue and more likely to respond to polls (Singer, van Hoewyk, and Maher 2000). Respondents were disproportionately married, more likely to have had postgraduate degrees, and more likely to have household incomes higher than $75,000 compared with

the 2010 census results from Wake County. They were also, by design, disproportionately African American.

We used the results of the 2010 census data for Wake County to postweight the data so that the analyses involving all 1,706 respondents would match the Wake County population distributions by gender, race/ethnicity, marital status, education, and household income. Comparing the data in Table 2 with the table footnote demonstrates that our raking was successful in matching our sample data to census totals for these major social characteristics.[1]

Table A1. Social Characteristics of Interviewees Quoted in the Article.

Race	Gender	Assignment Philosophy
African American	Male	Pro–neighborhood schools
White	Female	Pro–neighborhood schools
White	Male	Pro–neighborhood schools
White	Female	Prodiversity
African American	Male	Prodiversity
African American	Female	Pro–neighborhood schools
White	Female	Pro–neighborhood schools
White	Male	Prodiversity

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[1]Population estimates are not available for parents only. Therefore, we raked the sample to match the overall population and used the weight variable for the subsample of parents (*n* = 547). We thank David Johnson for helpful communication on this point.

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