



Written by [Thomas Sowell](#) on April 17, 2012

Mixing and Matching Classes and Races

Behind all this busy work for bureaucrats and ideologues is the idea that there is something wrong if a community does not have an even or random distribution of various kinds of people. This arbitrary assumption is that the absence of evenness or randomness — whether in employment, housing or innumerable other situations — shows a “problem” that has to be “corrected.”



No speck of evidence is considered necessary for this assumption to prevail at any level of government, including the Supreme Court of the United States. No one has to show the existence, much less the prevalence, of an even or random distribution of different segments of the population — in any country, anywhere in the world, or at any period of history.

Nothing is more common than for people to sort themselves out when it comes to residential housing, whether by class, race or other factors.

When there was a large Jewish population living on New York’s lower east side, a century ago, Jews did not live at random among themselves. Polish Jews had their neighborhoods, Rumanian Jews theirs, and so on. Meanwhile German Jews lived uptown. In Chicago, when Eastern European Jews began moving into German Jewish neighborhoods, German Jews began moving out.

It was much the same story in Harlem or in other urban ghettos, where blacks did not live at random among themselves. Landmark scholarly studies by E. Franklin Frazier in the 1930s showed in detail how different neighborhoods within the ghettos had people of different educational and income levels, with different male/female ratios and different ways of life living in different places.

There was nothing random about it. Within Chicago’s black community, the delinquency rate ranged from more than 40 percent in some black neighborhoods to less than 2 percent in other black neighborhoods. People sort themselves out.

None of this was peculiar to blacks or Jews, or to the United States. When emigrants from Scotland went to Australia, the Scottish highlanders settled separately from the Scottish lowlanders. So did emigrants from northern Italy and southern Italy.

Separate residential patterns that are visible to the naked eye, when the people are black and white, are also pervasive among people who physically all look alike. Charles Murray’s eye-opening new book, *Coming Apart*, shows in detail how different segments of the white American population not only live separately from each other but have very different ways of life — and are growing increasingly remote from one another in beliefs and behavior.



Written by [Thomas Sowell](#) on April 17, 2012

None of this matters to politicians and ideologues who are hell-bent to mix and match people according to their own preconceptions. Moreover, like many things that the government does, it does residential integration more crudely than when people sort themselves out.

Back in the days when E. Franklin Frazier was doing his scholarly studies of the composition and expansion of black ghettos, he found the most educated and cultured elements of the black communities living on the periphery of these communities.

It was these kinds of people who typically led the expansion of the black community into the surrounding white communities. By contrast, government programs often take dysfunctional families from high crime ghetto neighborhoods and put them down in the midst of middle-class neighborhoods by subsidizing their housing.

Whether these middle-class neighborhoods are already either predominantly black or predominantly white, the residents are often outraged at the increased crime and other behavior problems inflicted on them by politicians and bureaucrats.

But their complaints usually fall on deaf ears. People convinced of their own superior wisdom and virtue have no time to spare for what other people want, whether in housing or health care or a whole range of other things.

Thomas Sowell is a senior fellow at the Hoover Institution, Stanford University, Stanford, CA 94305. His website is www.tsowell.com. To find out more about Thomas Sowell and read features by other Creators Syndicate columnists and cartoonists, visit the Creators Syndicate Web page at www.creators.com.

COPYRIGHT 2012 CREATORS.COM



Subscribe to the New American

Get exclusive digital access to the most informative,
non-partisan truthful news source for patriotic Americans!

Discover a refreshing blend of time-honored values, principles and insightful perspectives within the pages of "The New American" magazine. Delve into a world where tradition is the foundation, and exploration knows no bounds.

From politics and finance to foreign affairs, environment, culture, and technology, we bring you an unparalleled array of topics that matter most.



Subscribe

What's Included?

- 24 Issues Per Year
- Optional Print Edition
- Digital Edition Access
- Exclusive Subscriber Content
- Audio provided for all articles
- Unlimited access to past issues
- Coming Soon! Ad FREE
- 60-Day money back guarantee!
- Cancel anytime.