

# (De)Segregation



The Impact of De Facto and De Jure segregation on African American English in the New South

# African American English

“AAE includes both AAVE (African American Vernacular English) and middle-class varieties that largely lack non-standard features but are still **recognizably African American**, mostly by subtle phonetic cues, some of which are likely prosodic.” (Thomas, Forthcoming)

- Distributed across the nation (ex: Habitual *be* found in Baltimore, Dallas, Detroit, NYC, LA, DC, etc... )(Farrington 2014)
- United by a shared history of settlement and migrations patterns
- Perceptually salient

Sociolinguists have documented these national patterns since the 1960's, illustrating the structured nature of AAE.

# The study of AAE

- In sociolinguistics, a lot of the early work was based in the study of AAE in different cities
  - New York City (Labov et al. 1968)
  - Detroit (Wolfram 1969)
  - Washington DC (Fasold 1972)
  
  - And less well known studies in Los Angeles (Legum et al. 1971), Baltimore (Anderson 1970), Chicago (Pederson 1965), Dallas (Jones 1972)

# Regionality

1001: But we might not talk the same as people from Louisiana. It's just a different dialect even though we're all speaking English.



# Regionality

1072:

Yes that's just how I went- **when I went to New York and everybody just thought it was so funny that I talk like how I talk but**



....

She said Durham!" or something and I was just like they think they think down here we got we talk with straws in our mouth and jump suits and hats I was just like "oh my God" (ch- no shoes)oh no shoes and everything like oh God."



# Regionality

1061:

Umm if anything people say I- I sound country I don't know where that comes from but people say I'm from the country and I sound country so apparently I do.



# Wolfram 2007: 5

**“The belief that regionality in vernacular AAE is invariably trumped by its supraregional linguistic core has now become a fundamental axiom in the study of AAE – and part of the canon of AAE description (e.g. Labov 1998; Wolfram and Schilling-Estes 1998; Rickford 1999).**

**In reality, regionality** has played a significant role in the earlier development of varieties of AAE and it **continues to play a significant sociolinguistic function in its development.**”

# Growing interest in regionality since 2010





# Segregation and Supra-Regional Patterns

“The degree to which a given AAE [speaker] accommodates to the local PVE [Predominant Vernacular English] norms is theoretically also influenced by the degree of actual face-to-face contact that occurs between members of each group in any given locale.

Presumably, the greater the degree of segregation that exists in a given locale, the smaller the opportunity for assimilation or accommodation in either direction.”

Yaeger-Dror & Thomas 2010

# Today's talk

How does this supra-regional variety interact with local sound changes?

1. What is the role of **segregation** in preserving AAE vowel patterns?
2. How do legislative changes that impact school segregation influence **participation in sound change**?
3. What can these patterns reveal about the ways in which **social structures** promote or curtail the spread of language change? A regional analysis...
4. Future directions in **corpora**

Schools are loci of contact that have been shown to influence language during a time when speech is particularly malleable (Kerswill & Williams 2000, 2005; Dodworth Today)



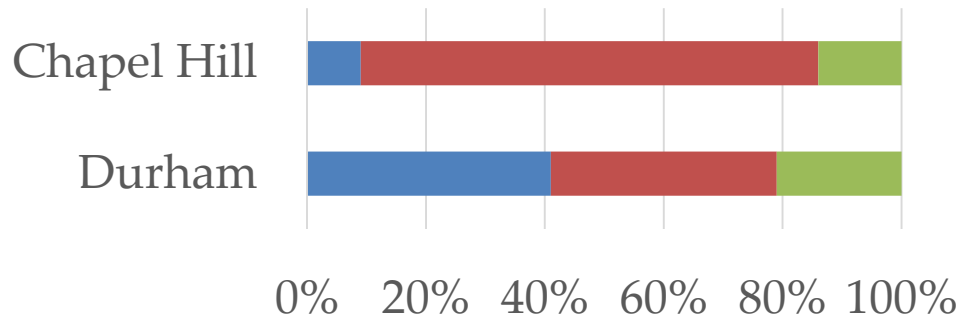


Segregation has been hypothesized to contribute to ethnolectal differences (Yaeger-Dror & Thomas 2010, Mufwene 2001; Wolfram 2007)

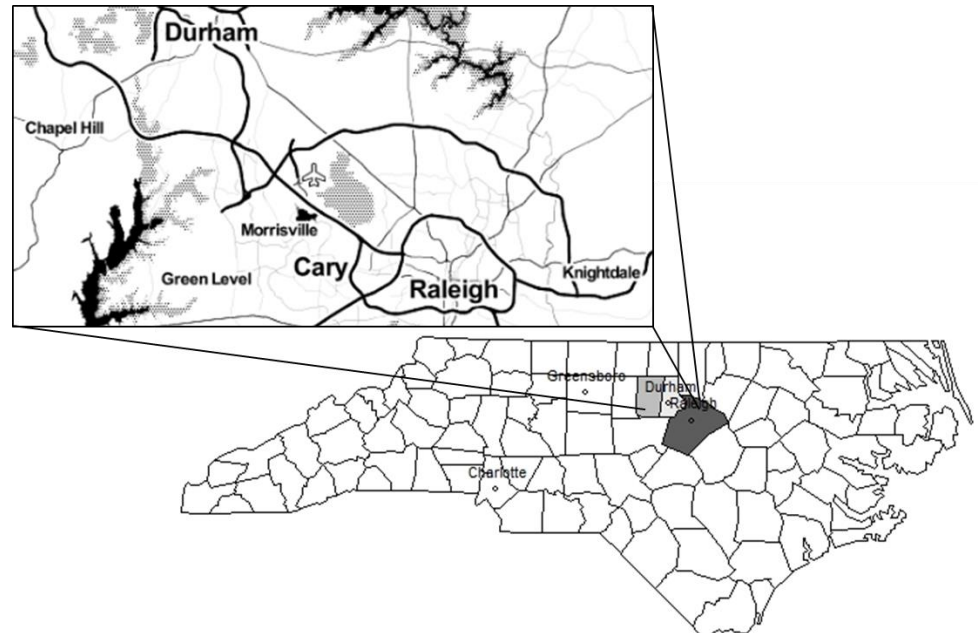
What is the relationship between segregation and historical/contemporary patterns of language variation in African American English within schools and within communities?

# Research Triangle of NC

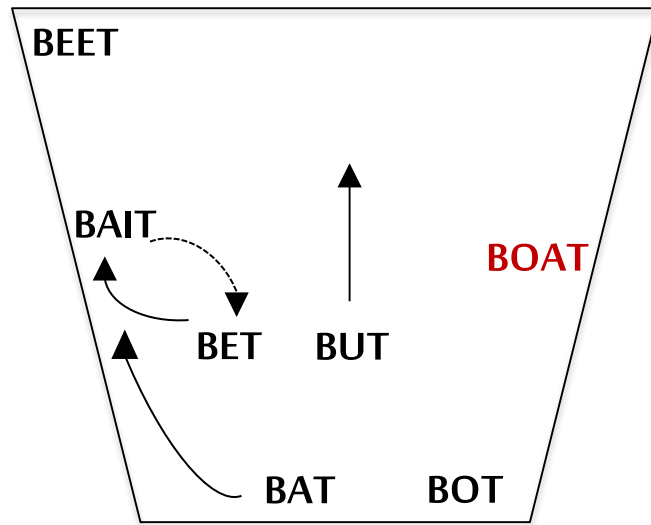
## Community Demographics



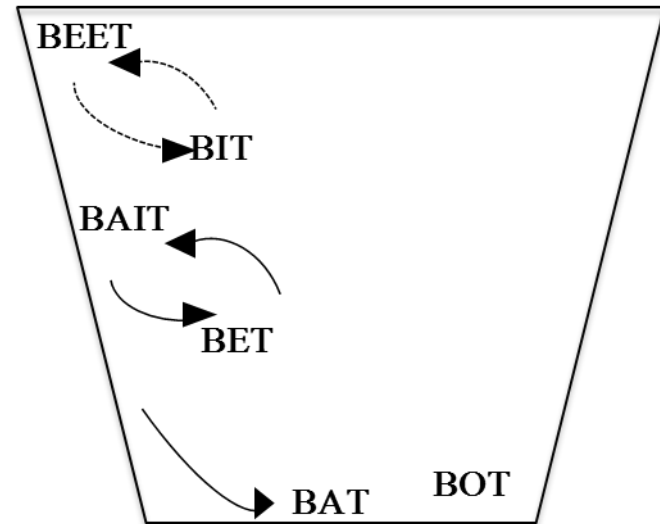
- African American
- European American
- Other



# Linguistic Contrast



AAVS

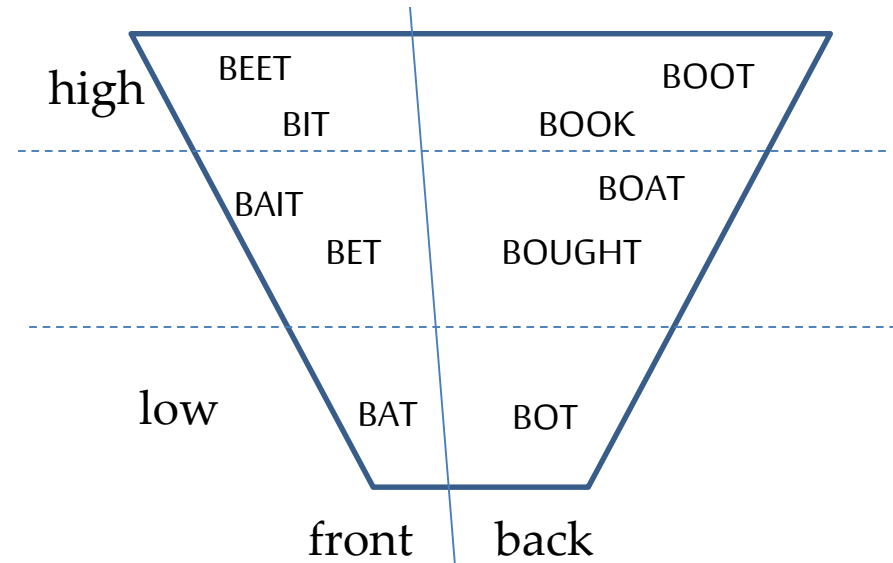
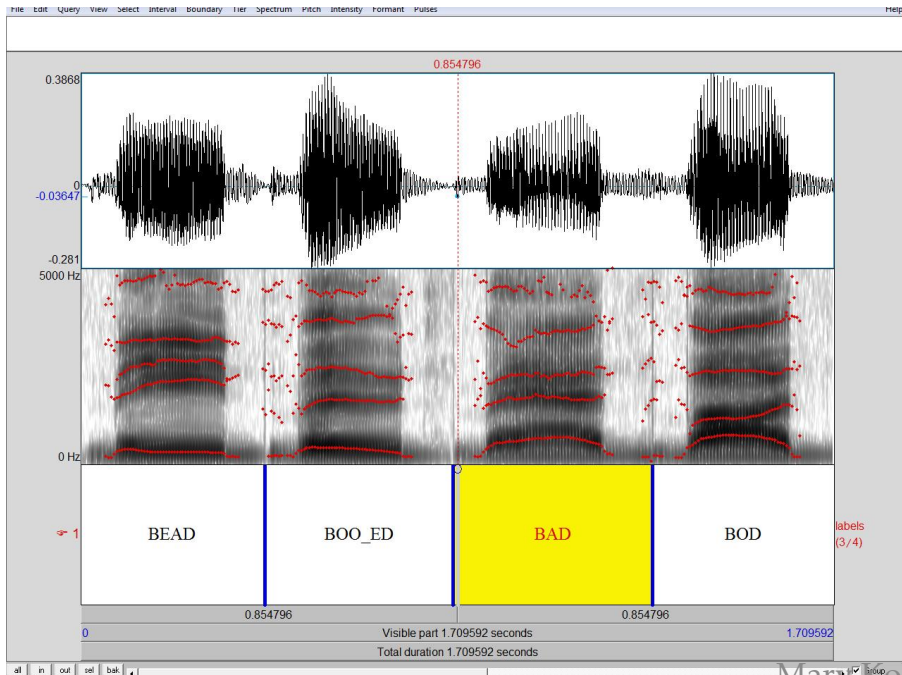


Reversal of SVS

The AAVS differs from contemporary Southern European American patterns in that the front lax vowels are raised for AAVS participants and lowered for younger Southern European Americans

# Methods

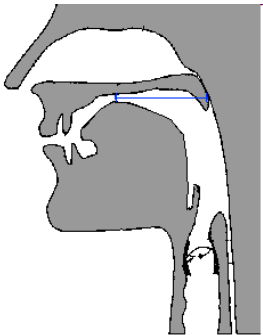
I measure sound waves  
as a correlate of  
pronunciation



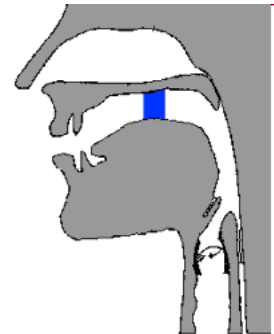
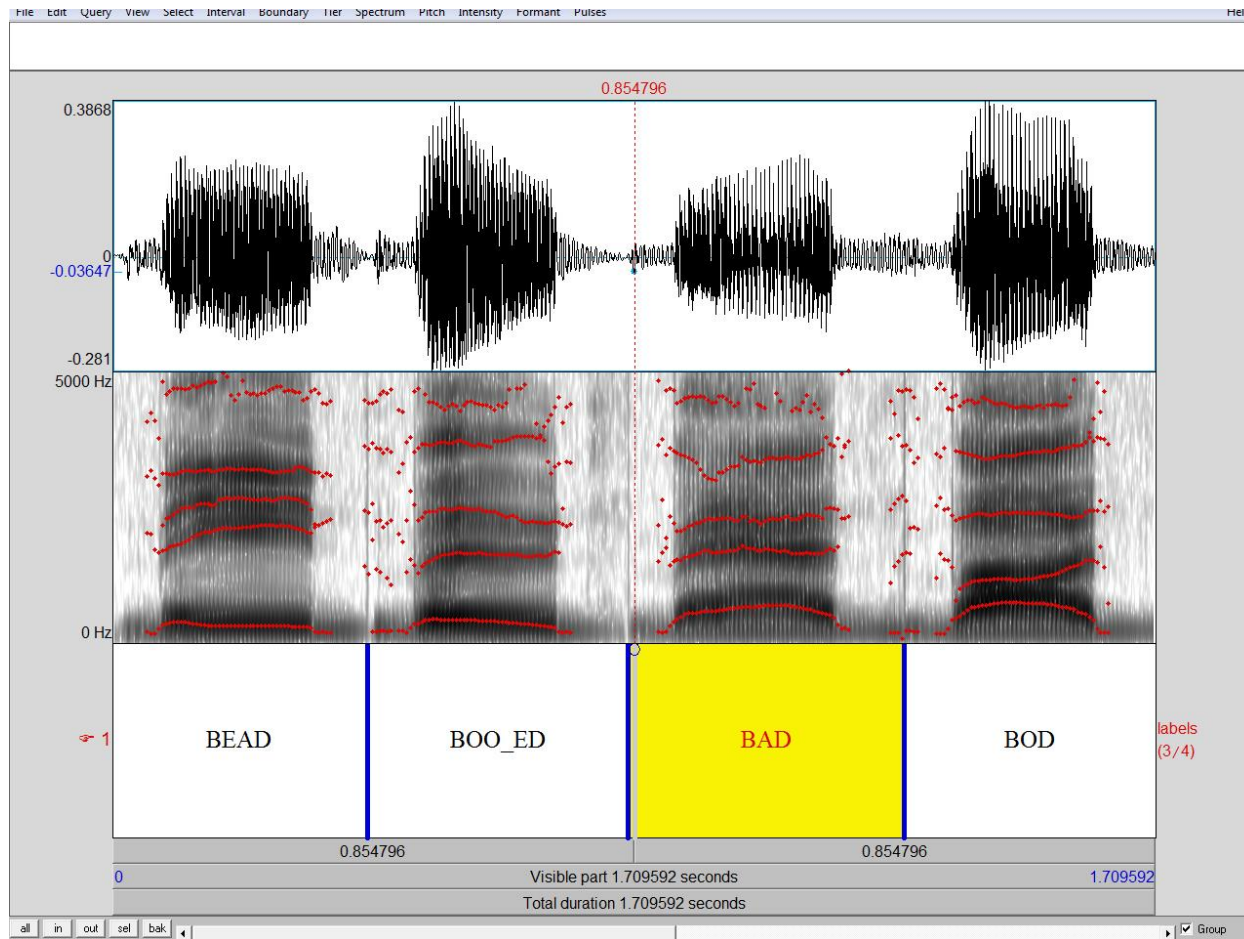
Normalized using Lobanov (1971)



# Resonance Frequencies Correspond to Tongue Position



The tongue is high and front for BEED



The tongue is low and back for BOD



# Tongue Position Changes Resonance

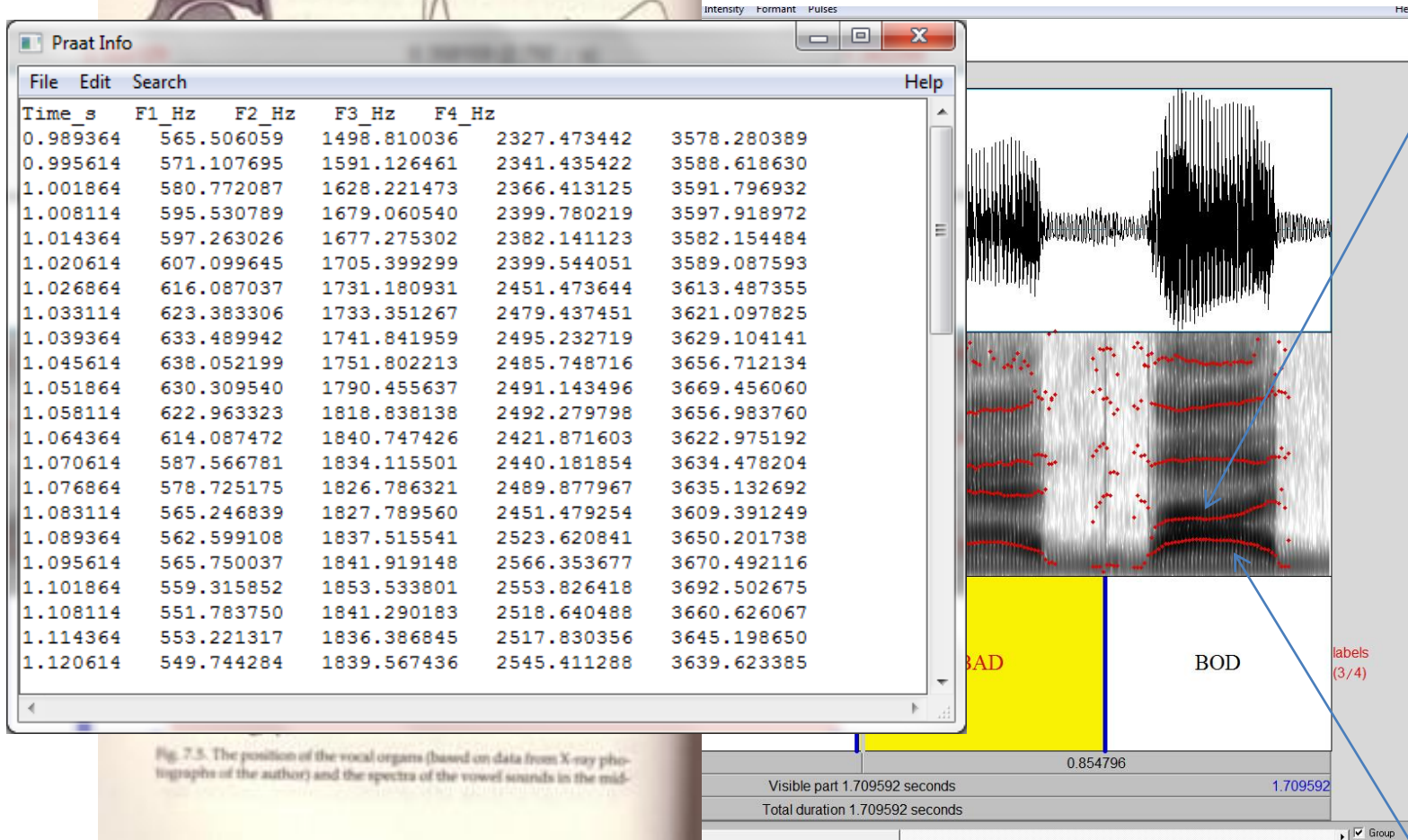
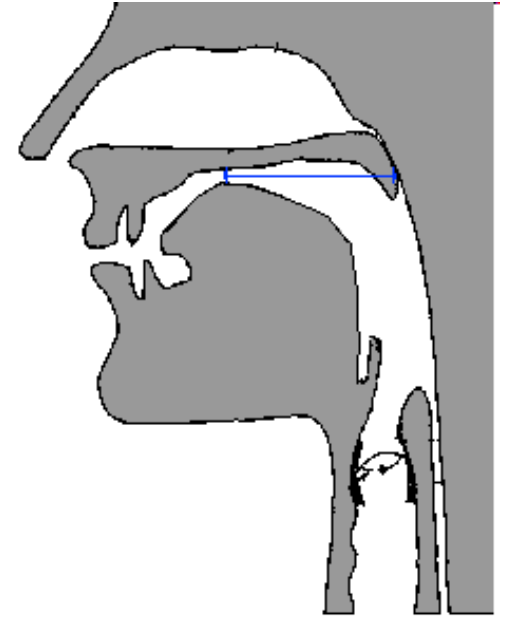
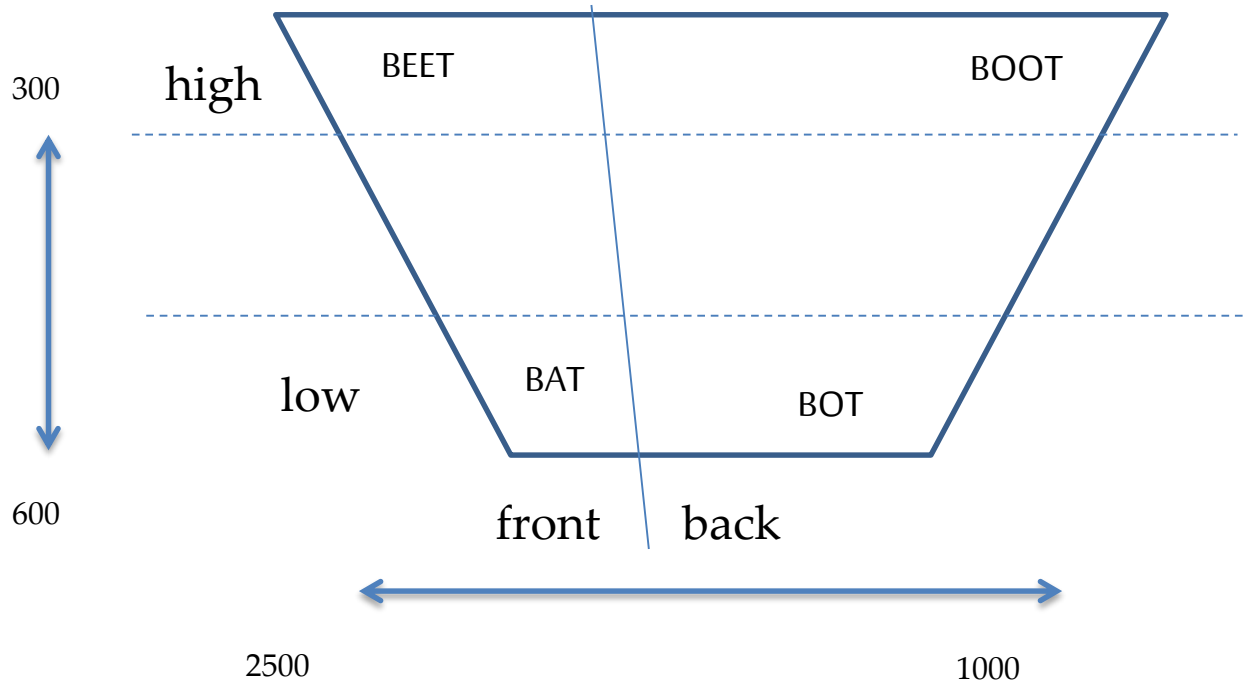


Fig. 7.5. The position of the vocal organs (based on data from X-ray photographs of the author) and the spectra of the vowel sounds in the mid-

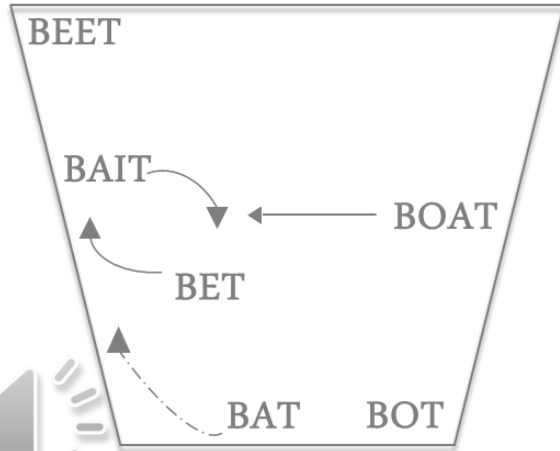
Tongue Height 34



Frequency Values Estimate Tongue Position

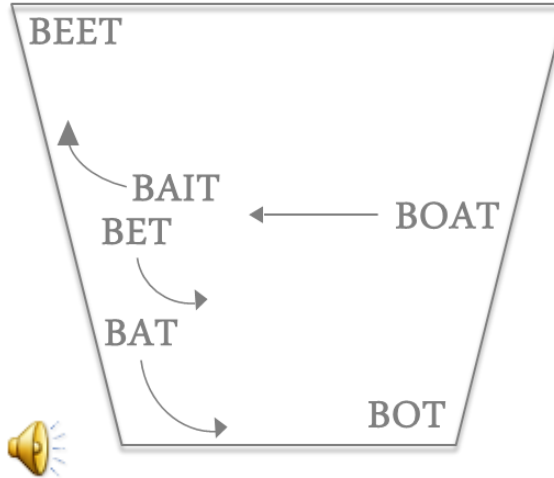
# Linguistic context

## Southern Vowel Shift (SVS)



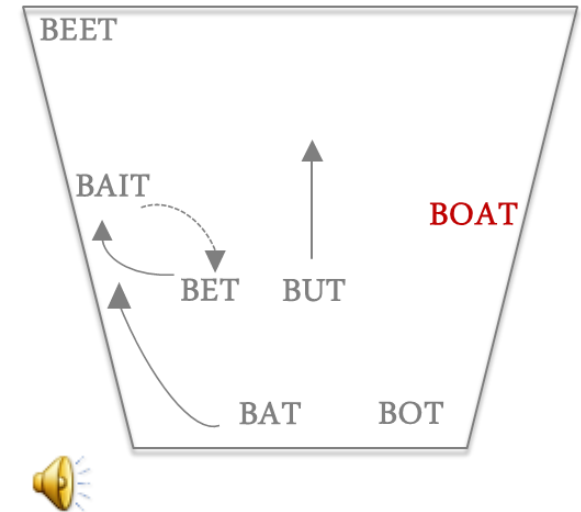
You have a birthday party you got you a little **cake** and **home-made ice cream** and **that** was the end of **that**

## European American sound change



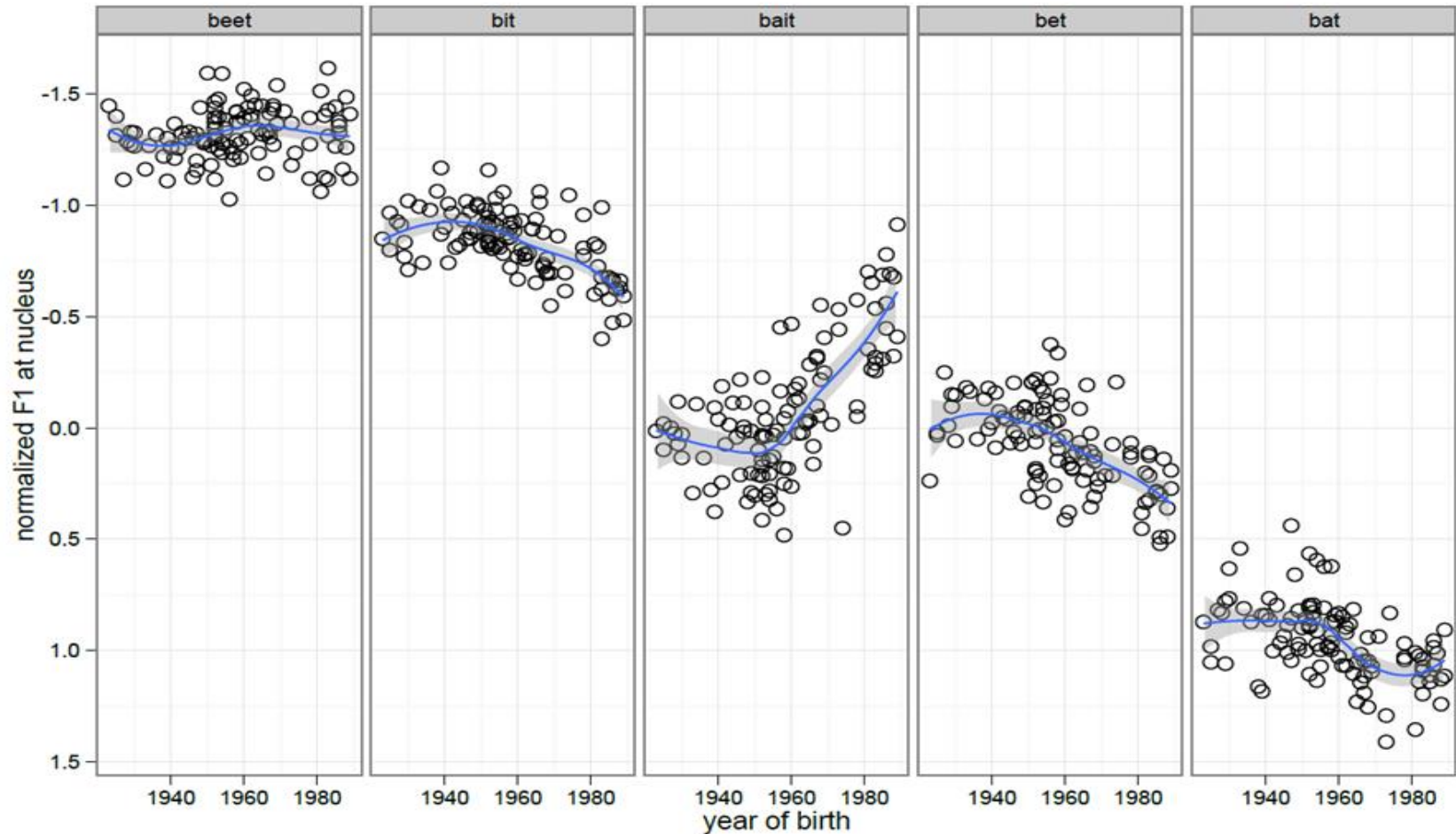
And, **you know**, you could put a **sack** of flour on its **back** and it would still win the **glass**.

## African American Vowel System (AAVS)



you gotta talk proper you got to put on your business **hat**.

# Southern Vowel Shift

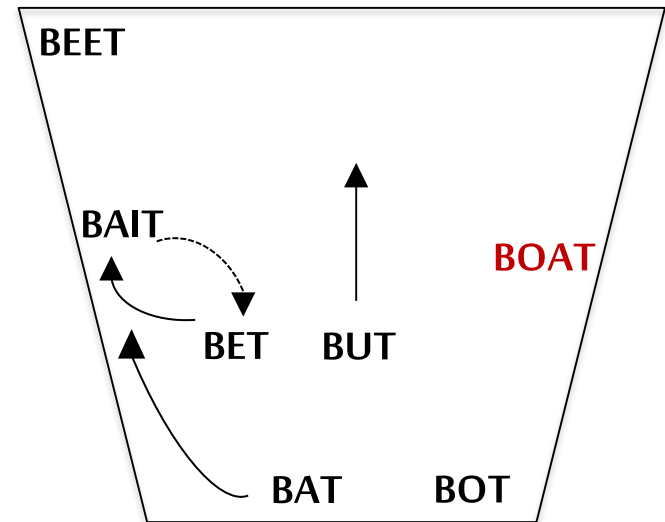


Dodsworth and Kohn 2012

# African American Vowel System

Aspects of this shift have been found in numerous communities across the US from New York (Thomas 2007) to Texas (Koops and Niedzielski 2009, 2011)

Regional accommodation appears more common in less segregated communities (Kohn 2015)

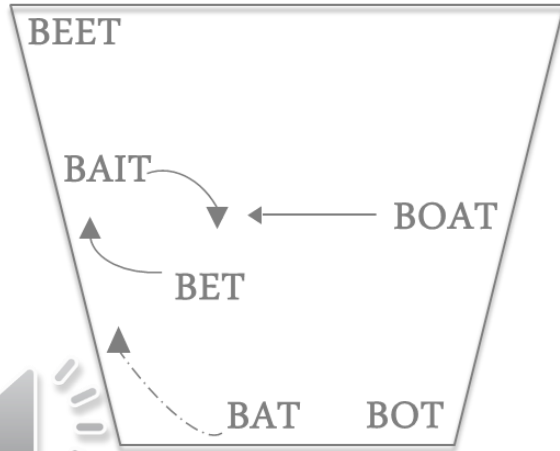


BET lowers, BAIT and BAT raise. Differs from SVS in that BOAT is back and BET/BAT are not diphthongal

System features derived from a review of acoustic AAE studies (Kohn 2015)

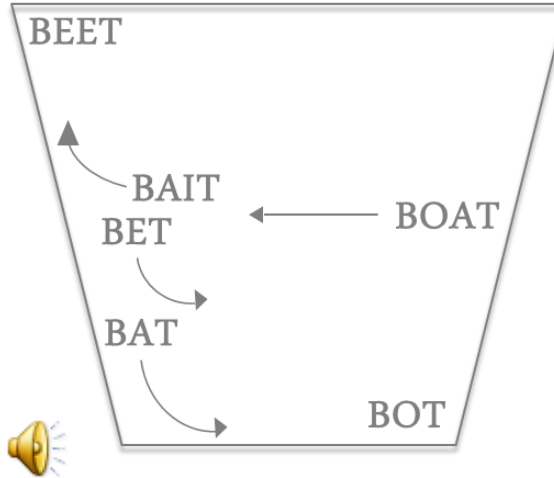
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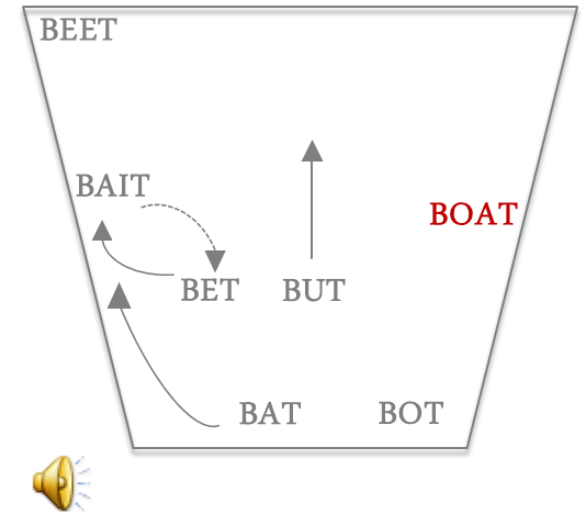
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## European American sound change



And, **you know**, you could put a **sack** of flour on its **back** and it would still win the **glass**.

## African American Vowel System (AAVS)

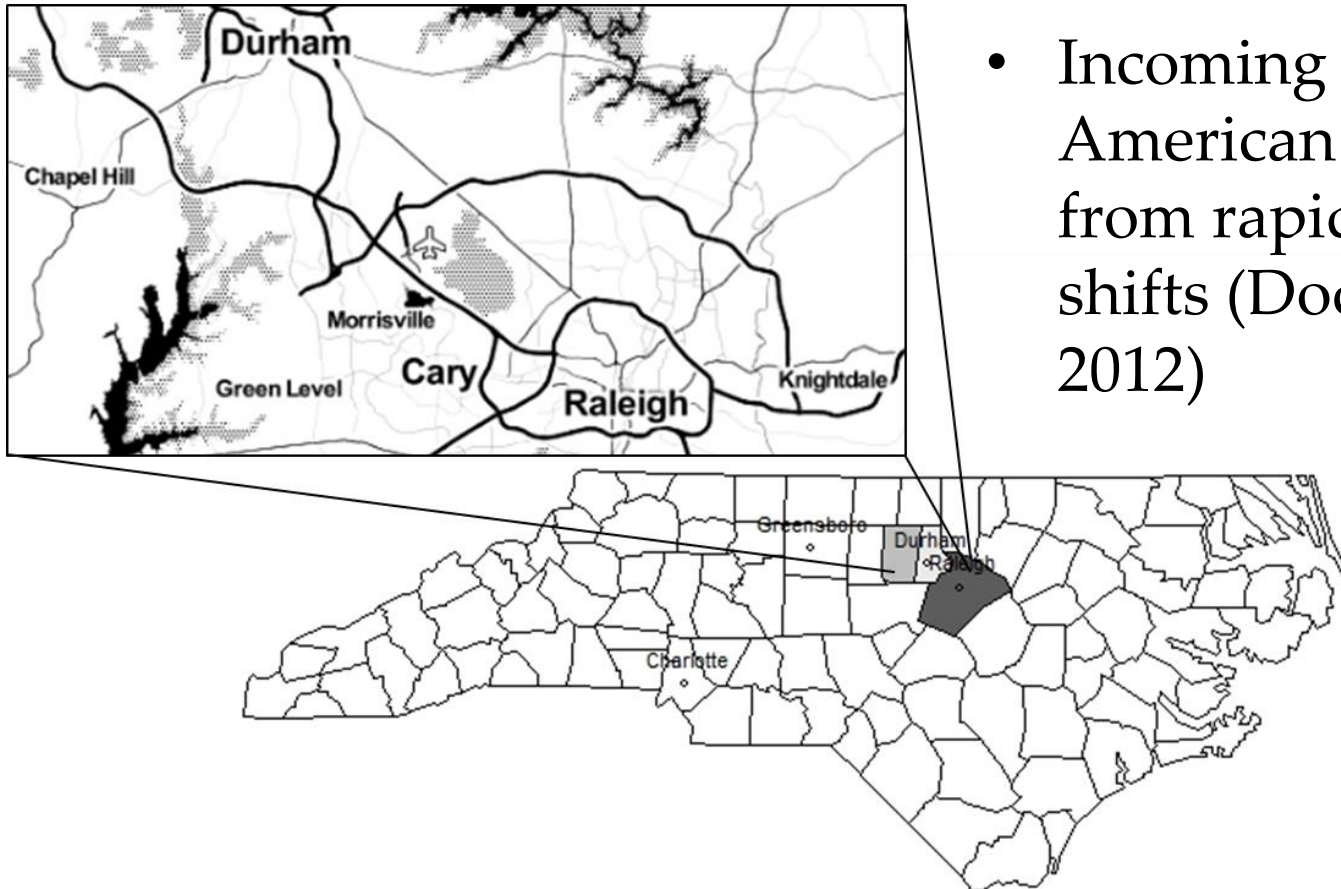


you gotta talk proper you got to put on your business **hat**.



# Research Triangle of NC

- Levels of segregation vary across cities (Census 2010)
- Incoming European American sound changes from rapid demographic shifts (Dodsworth & Kohn 2012)



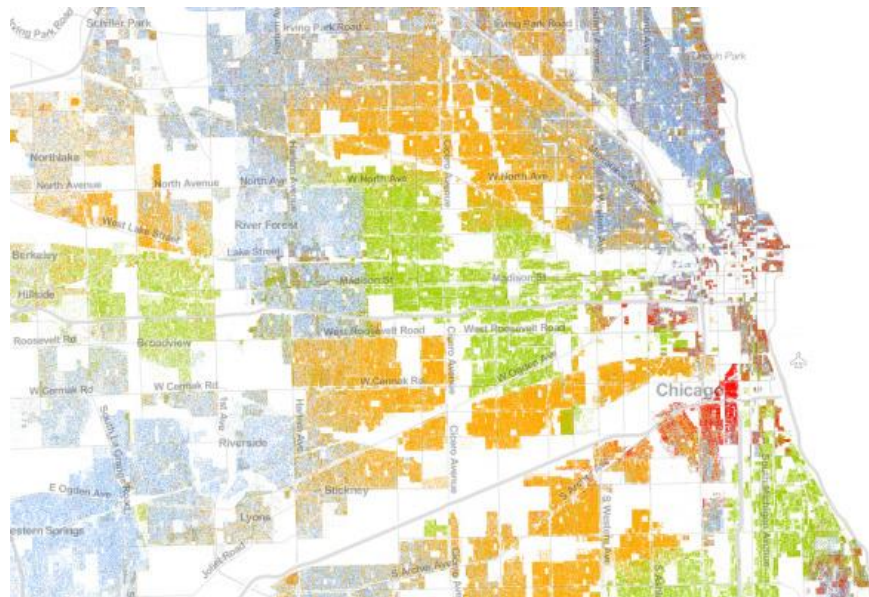


Contemporary Analysis

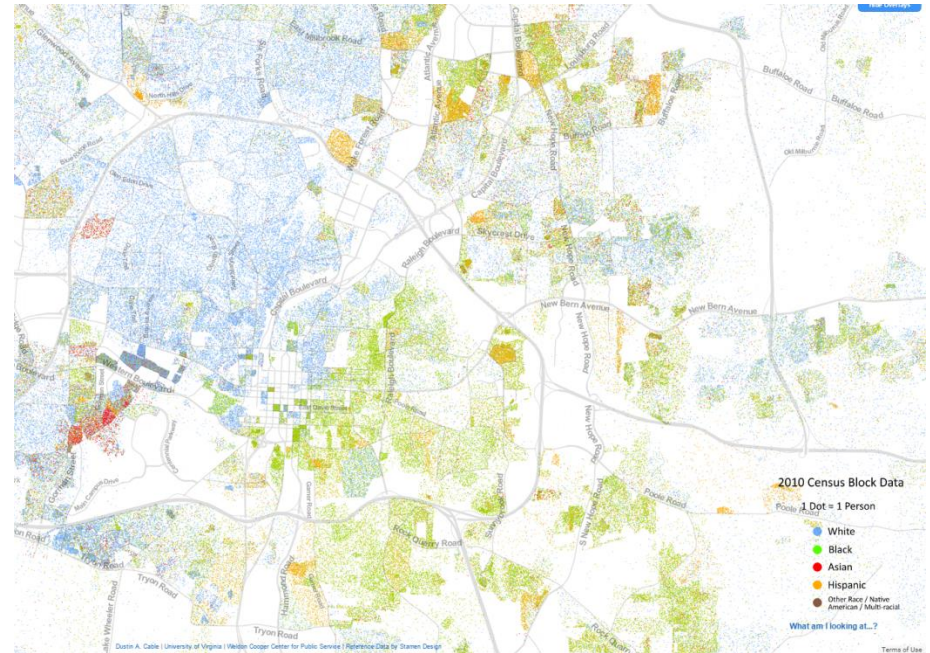
# **1. DOES SCHOOL SEGREGATION PREDICT PARTICIPATION IN THE AAVS?**

# Segregation in the Urban South

Historically the South has been more residentially integrated than other regions, while school segregation has fluctuated over time (Cutler, Glaeser and Vigdor 1999)



Chicago  
Dissimilarity index 83.6

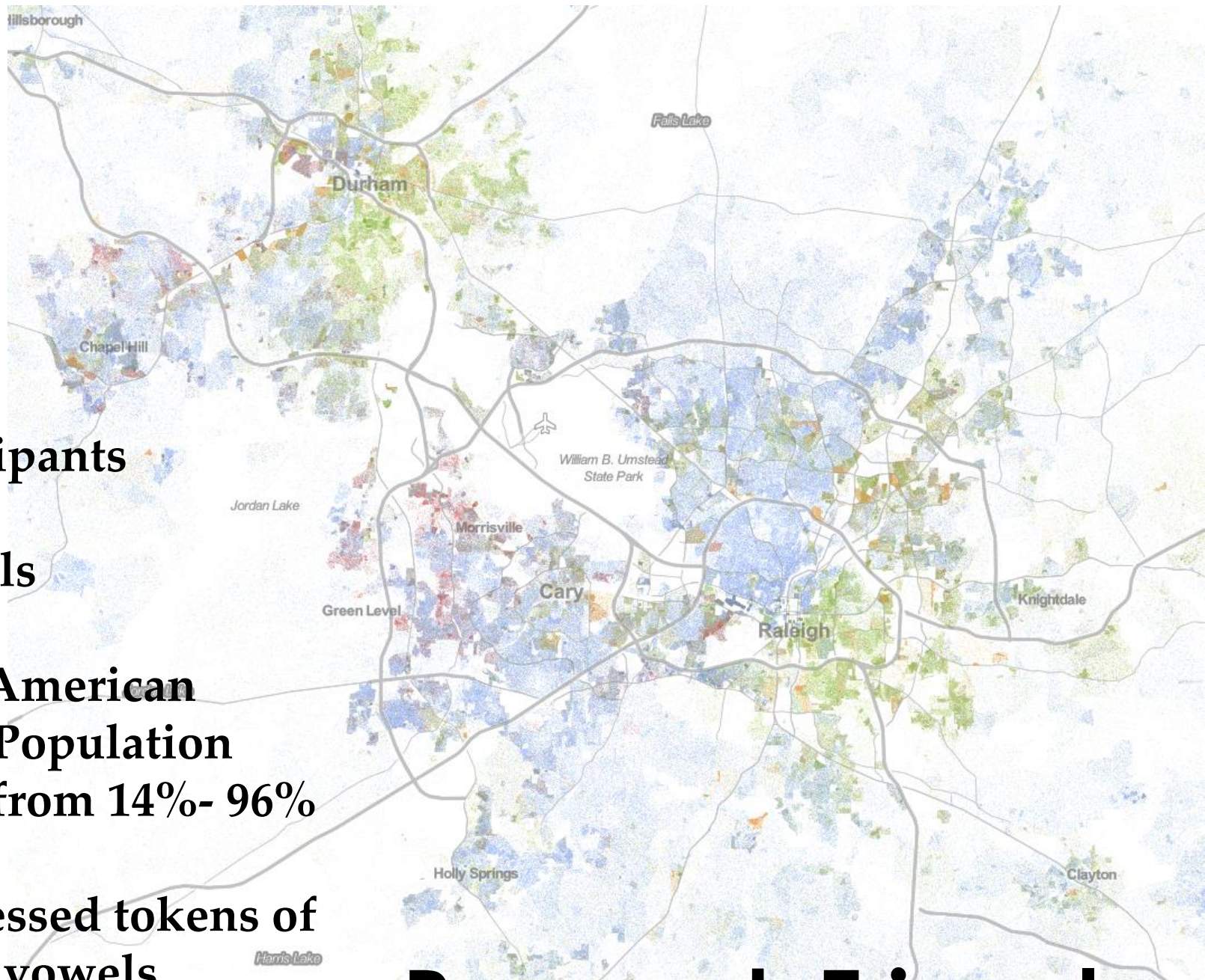


Raleigh/Durham/Chapel Hill  
Dissimilarity index 52.7

# School Segregation in the Modern South

- 1971 Bussing
  - While the pre-civil rights era South had some of the most segregated schools in the nation, legal action in 1968 reversed this trend so that Southern schools were more integrated than the rest of the nation by the 1980s.
- 1990-2007 Reversal of Court Support
  - Segregation levels are currently unevenly distributed across districts in ways previously not seen in the South
- Yet, schools continue to be more integrated than community neighborhoods (Clotfelter, Ladd, & Vigdor 2013).





**30 Participants**

**15 Schools**

**African American  
Student Population  
ranging from 14%- 96%**

**2,352 stressed tokens of  
front lax vowels**

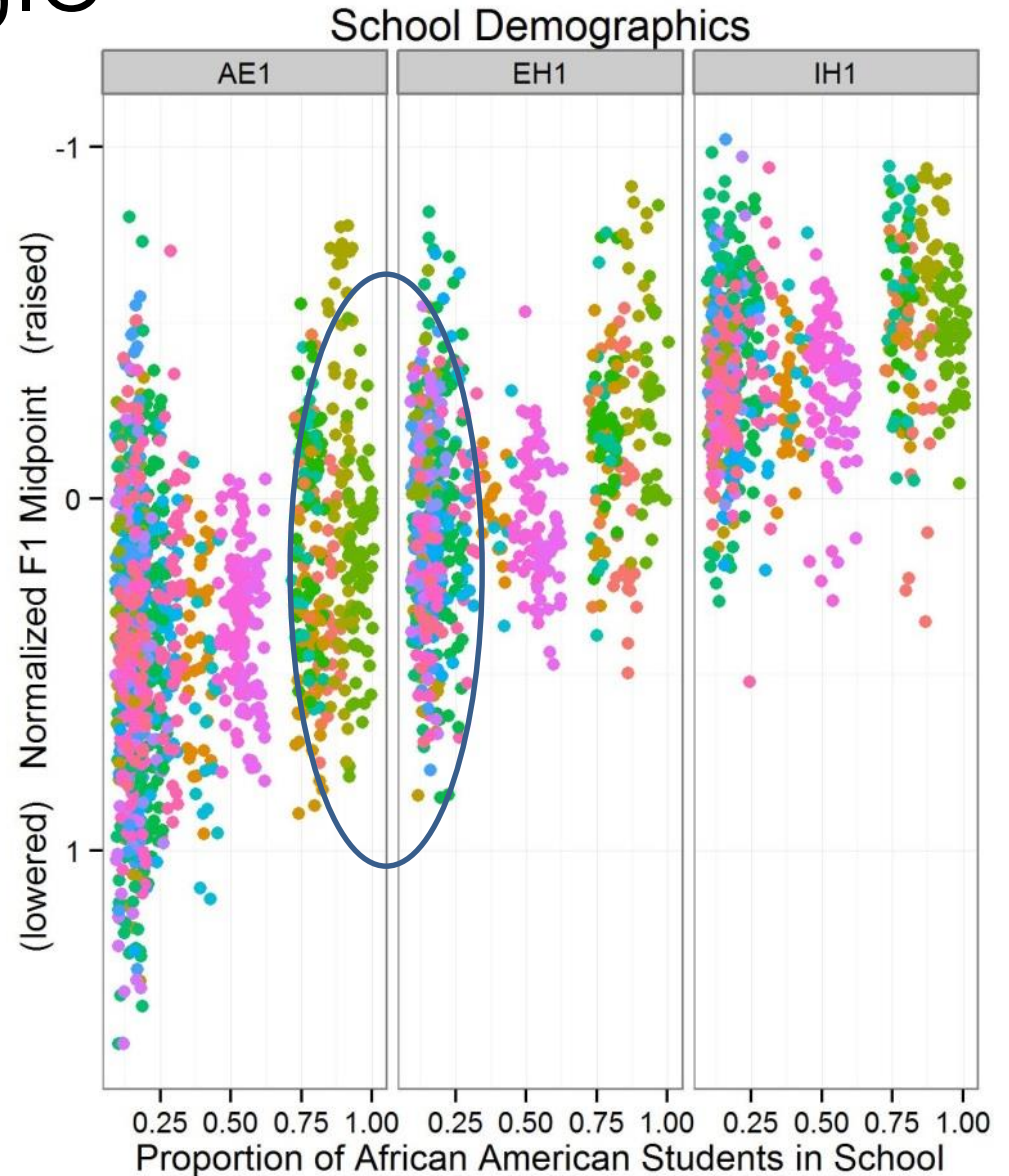
# Research Triangle

# Research Triangle

BAT  $t = -3.96^{***}$

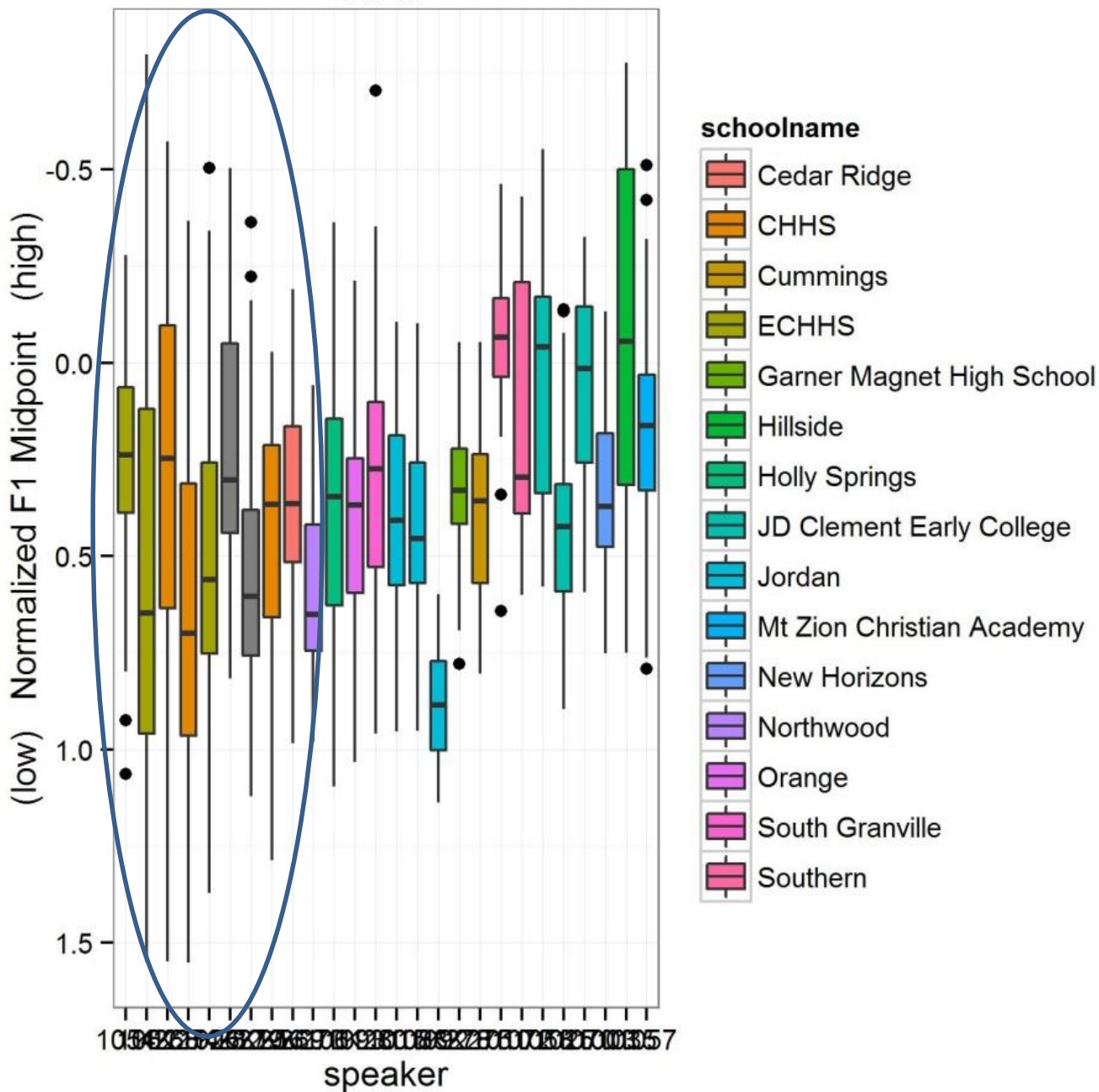
More significant than  
duration ( $-.38, P =$   
 $.0014$ )

BET  $t = -3.08^{***}$





# BAT

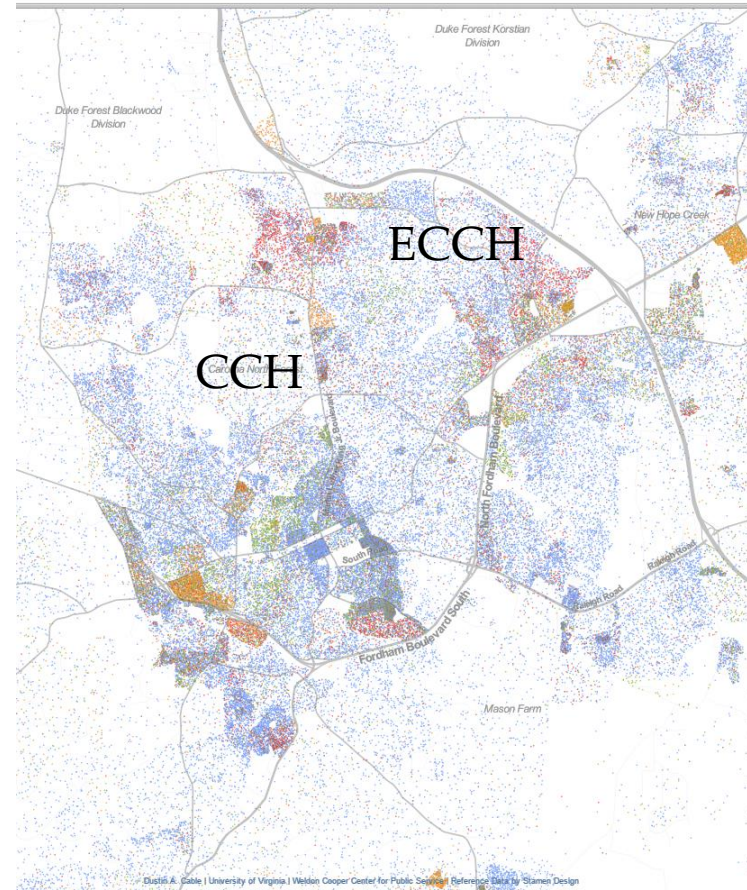


# The Chapel Hill Effect

Low community  
dissimilarity (19.9)

Minimal school  
imbalance (.04)

As defined by  
Clotfelter et al (2013)

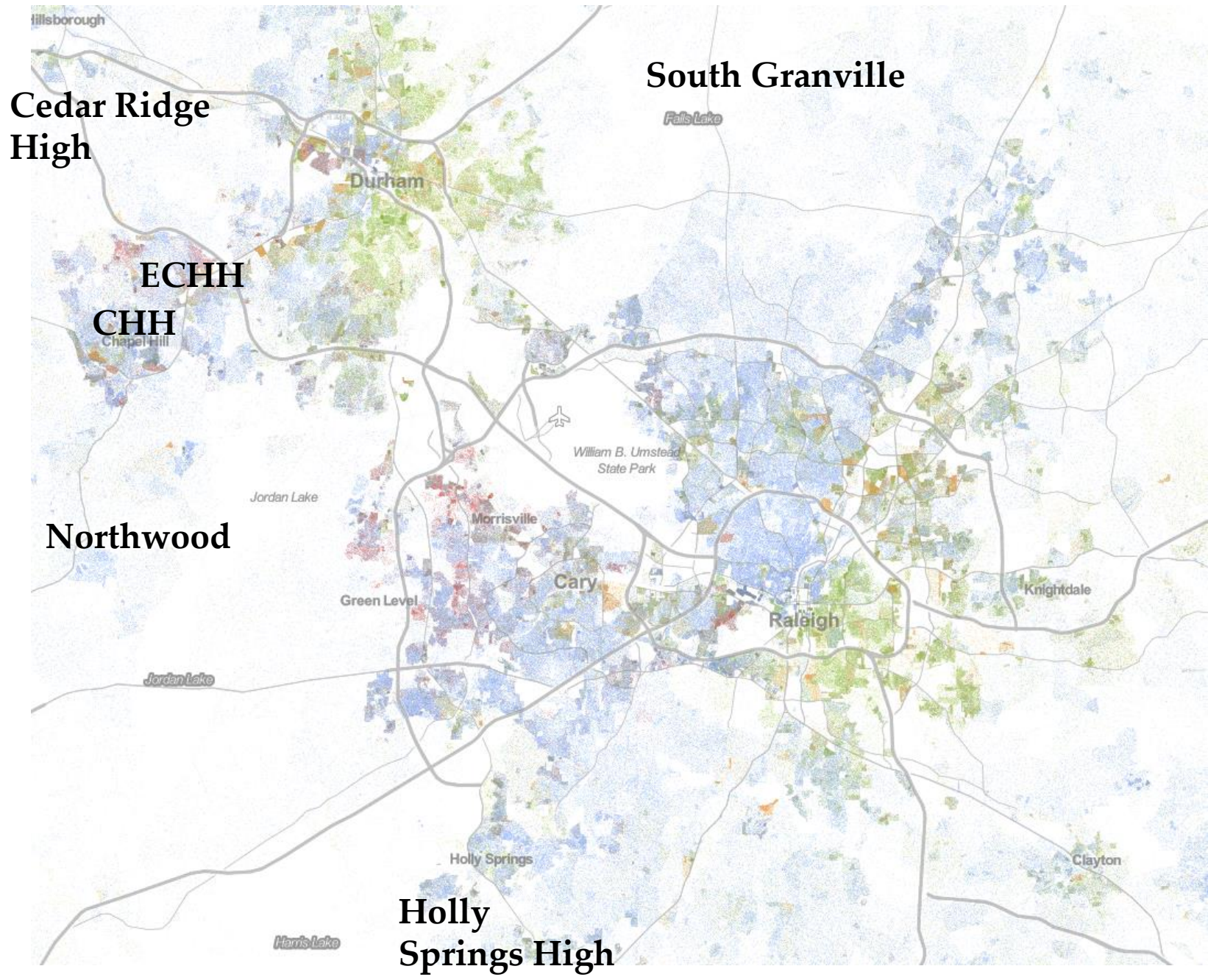


I: *East prepared you well for college?*

1062: Yes. Academically – Academically, Well, yes, and socially because um although it's like predominately Asian and White you still- you still has different races but East will make you become out of your- out of your comfort zone where you do have to socialize with other students or- **Since I took like APs and Honors classes sometimes I would be the only black student in class so I would- I would socialize with others"**







**Cedar Ridge  
High**

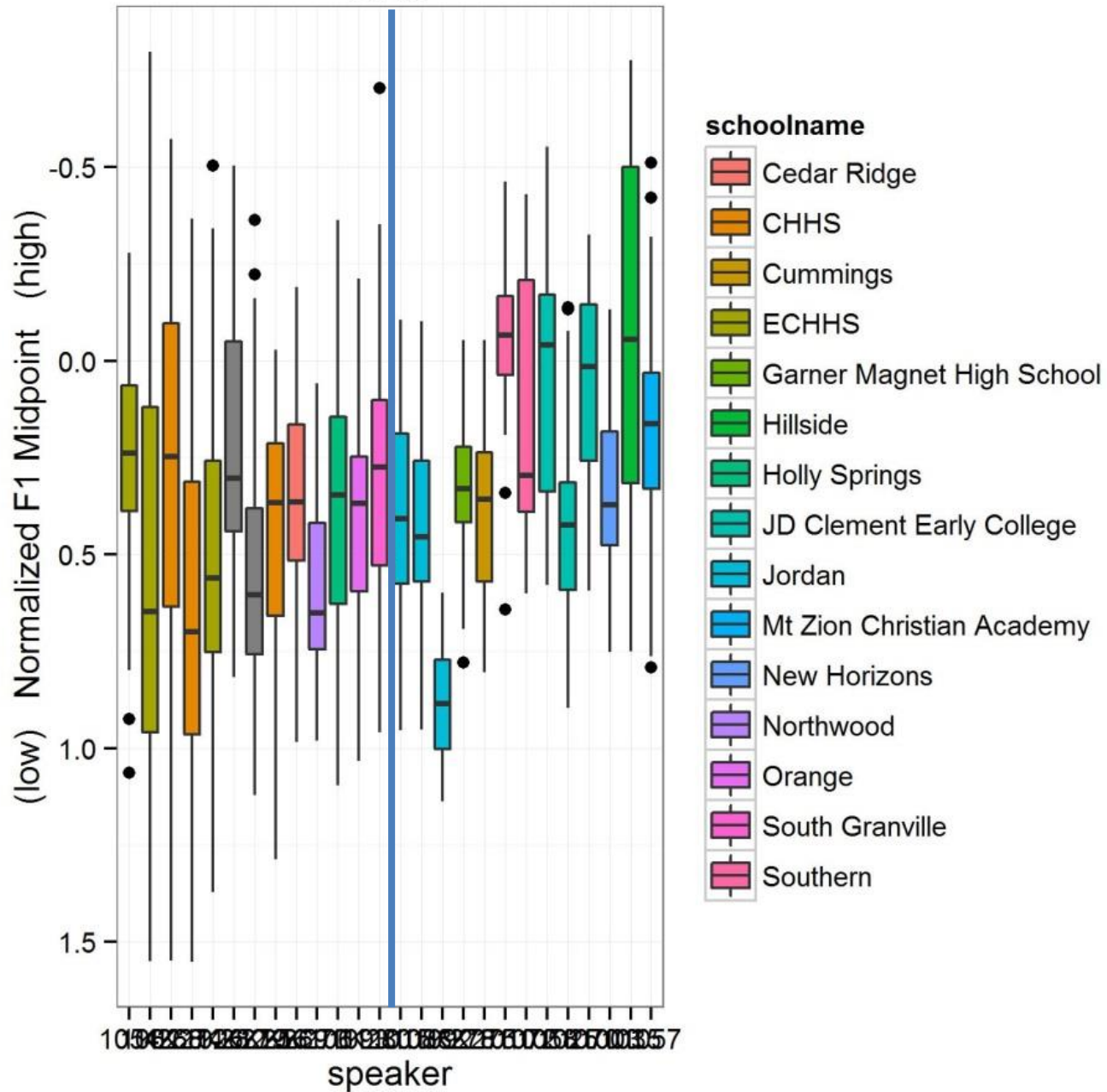
**South Granville**

**ECHH  
CHH**  
Chapel Hill

**Northwood**

**Holly  
Springs High**

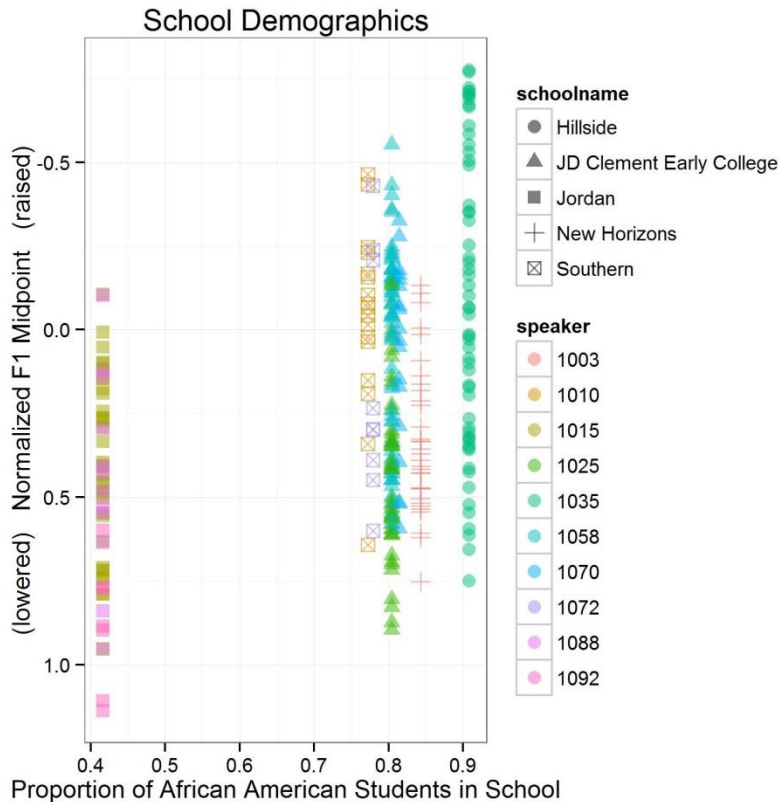
# BAT



# Durham

There is a contrast between:

- Jordan High School (41.6% African American)
- All other high schools above 75% African American, or 'Apartheid' or 'Near Apartheid' schools (Frankenberg, Lee, and Orfield 2003)



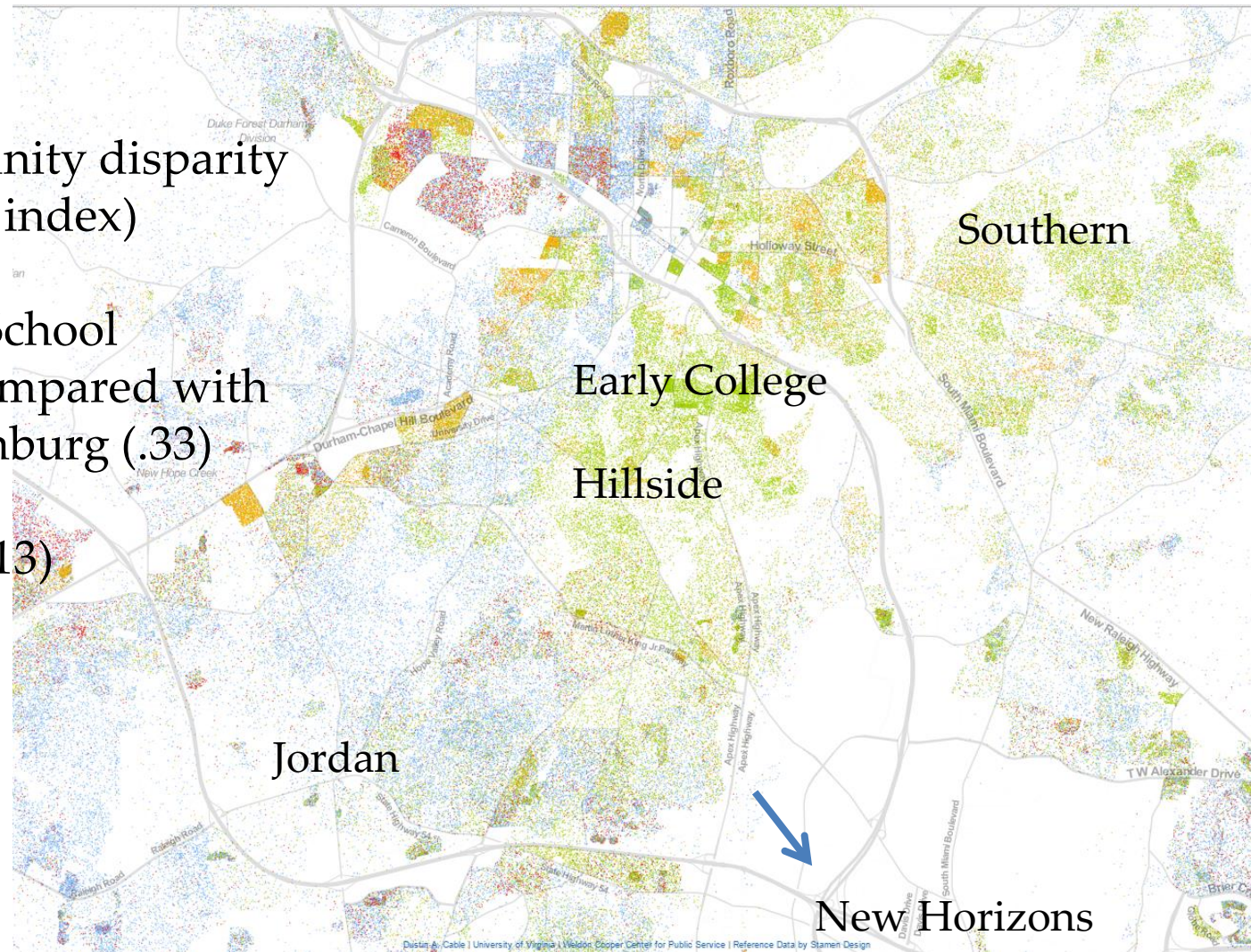


# Schools intensify community patterns

Moderate Community disparity  
(47.9 dissimilarity index)

Moderately Low School  
Imbalance (.18) compared with  
Charlotte-Mecklenburg (.33)

(Clotfelter et al 2013)



# Observations I

- There is a strong correlation between school segregation and participation in the AAVS
- BUT school segregation largely reflects or intensifies community patterns.

# “Clara”

“It was 70 or 71 when they merged and that’s when they integrated the schools. Now THAT was different. Umm. Uh Now that was an experience because they bussed us from inner city out. And we rode the CAT busses. Um. That was definitely an experience. Now we went from predominantly Black schools to predominantly White schools.”



When schools became a place of cross-ethnic contact

## **II. SCHOOL INTEGRATION**

# A timeline

- 1954 *Brown v. Board of Education*
- 1960 The first African American child attends a formerly white-only school in Raleigh, NC
- 1968 *Green v. County School Board of New Kent Count (Virginia)*
  - Southern school districts become the least segregated in the nation
- 1971 Ligon High School closes its doors



# The data

1917-1947	1963-1987
11	7, plus 2 FPG

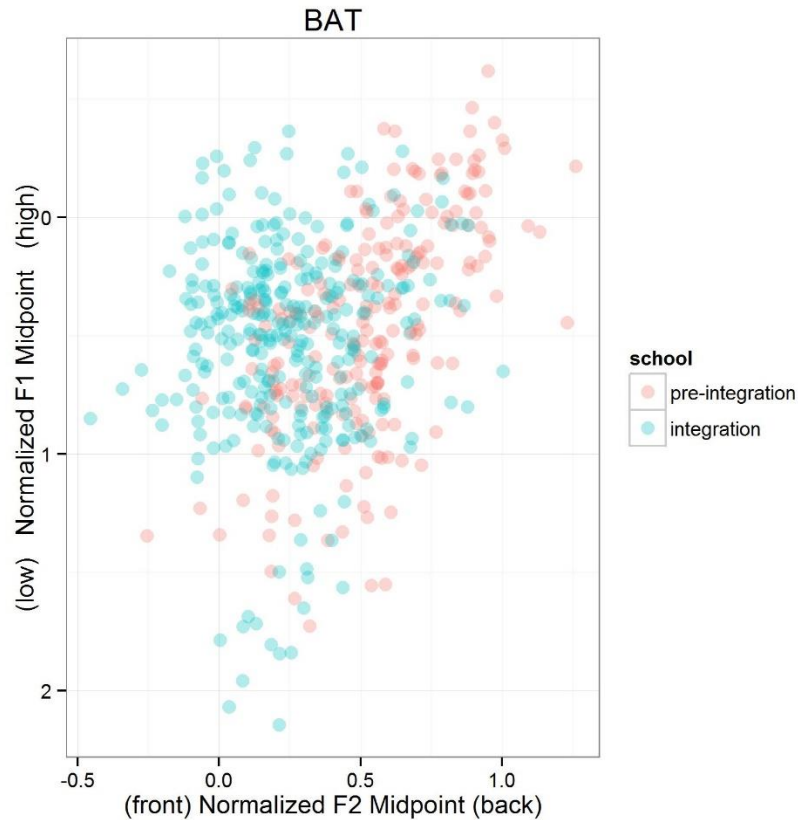


- Speakers born after 1963 would attend the newly integrated high school
- Speakers born before 1947 attended Ligon High, the historically African American high school
- 1,466 tokens of font lax vowels

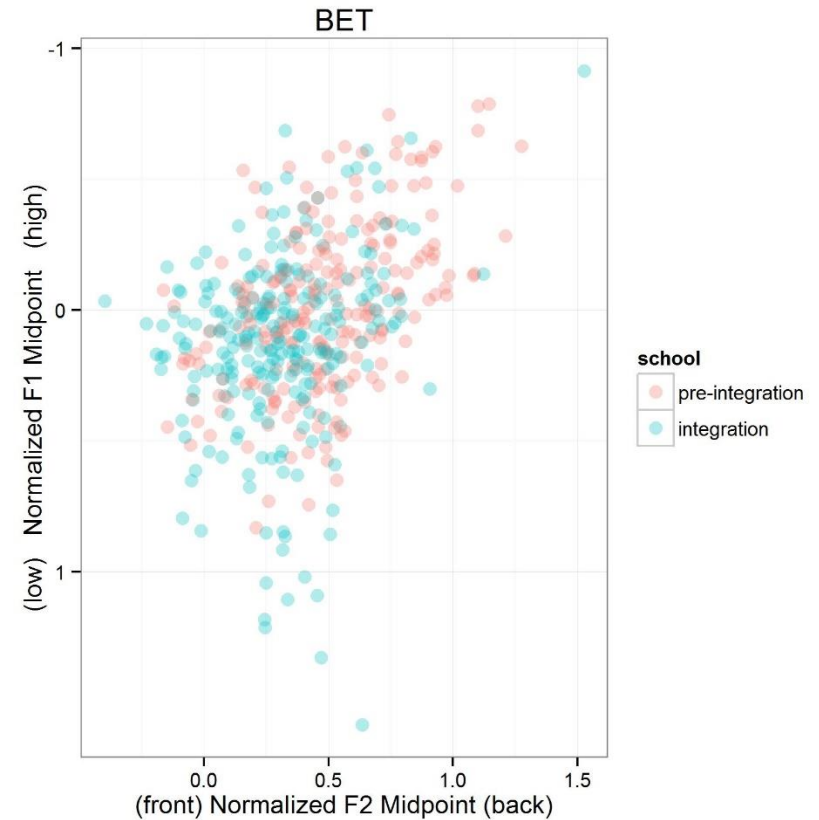
# Contemporaneous Patterns of Change

- Desegregation occurred at the same time that rapid immigration led to the rapid reversal of the Southern Shift in Raleigh, NC
- Do African Americans demonstrate changes associated with this monumental social shift?

# Apparent Time Evidence

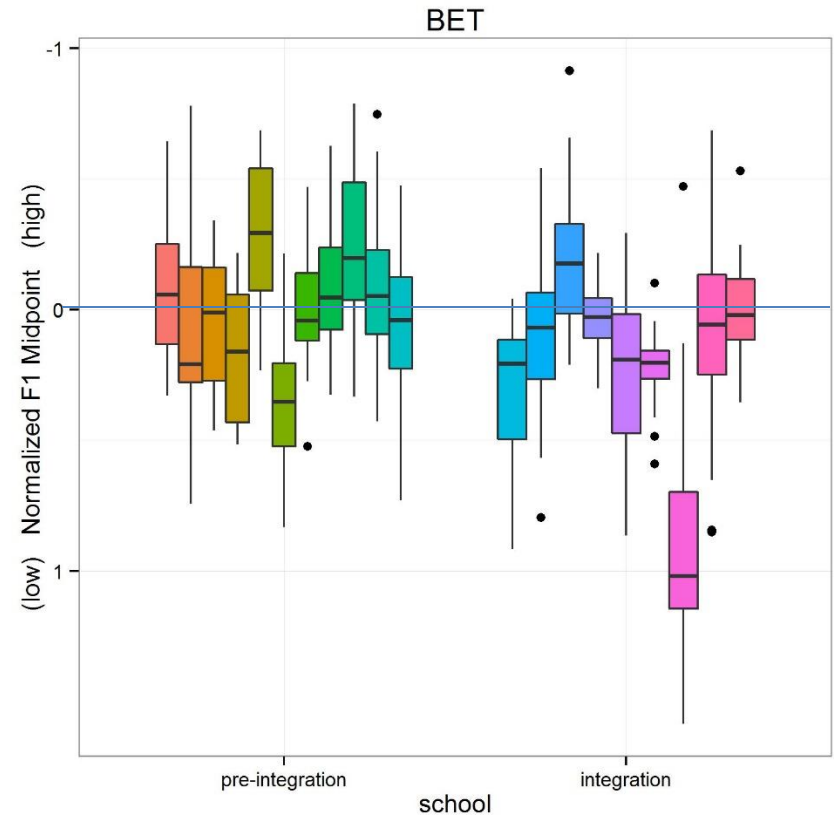
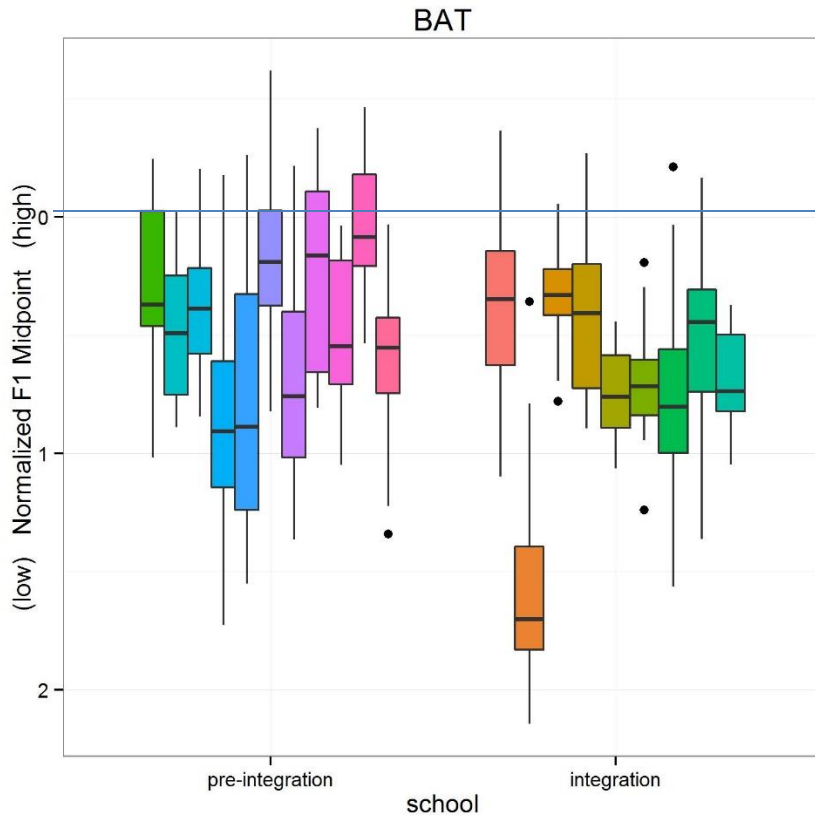


BAT F1: 1.49 (P = .15)  
BAT F2: -.173 (P=.10)



BET F1: 2.12 (P = .05)  
BET F2: -1.22 (P=.24)

# Apparent Time Evidence



Non-significant and small effects for the group

BAT F1: .24 (P = .15)

BET F1 .22 (P = .05)

# Observations II

- Apparent time evidence indicates little change around the time of integration and the onset of the reversal of the SVS
- One outlier in post-segregation schools stands out as unique

Bussing

**SCHOOL OR COMMUNITY?**

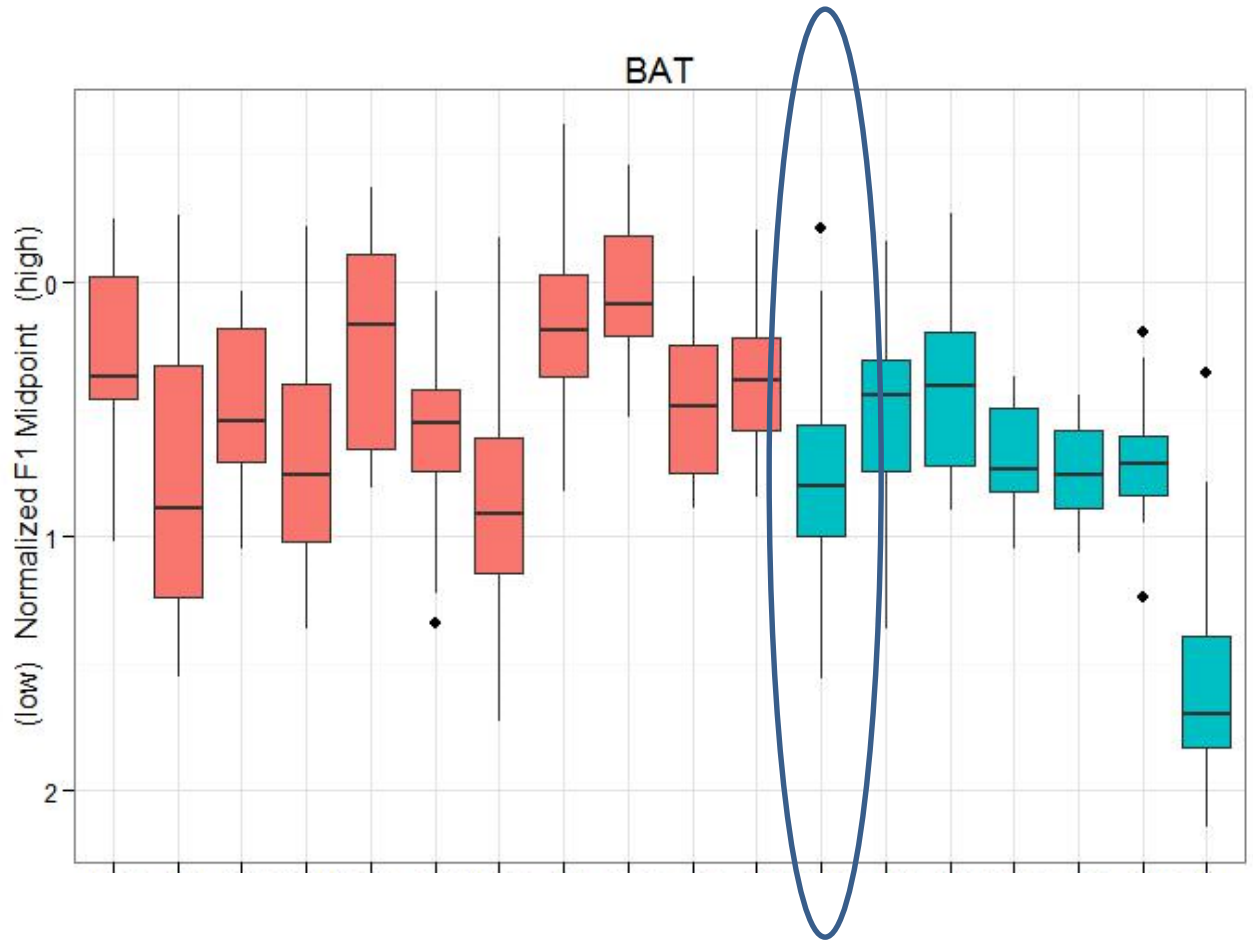
# “Clara”

b. 1963

Lives in South Park in the hub of the downtown African American community

In segregated schools until the third grade

Bussed to Cary High, the epicenter of IBM immigration

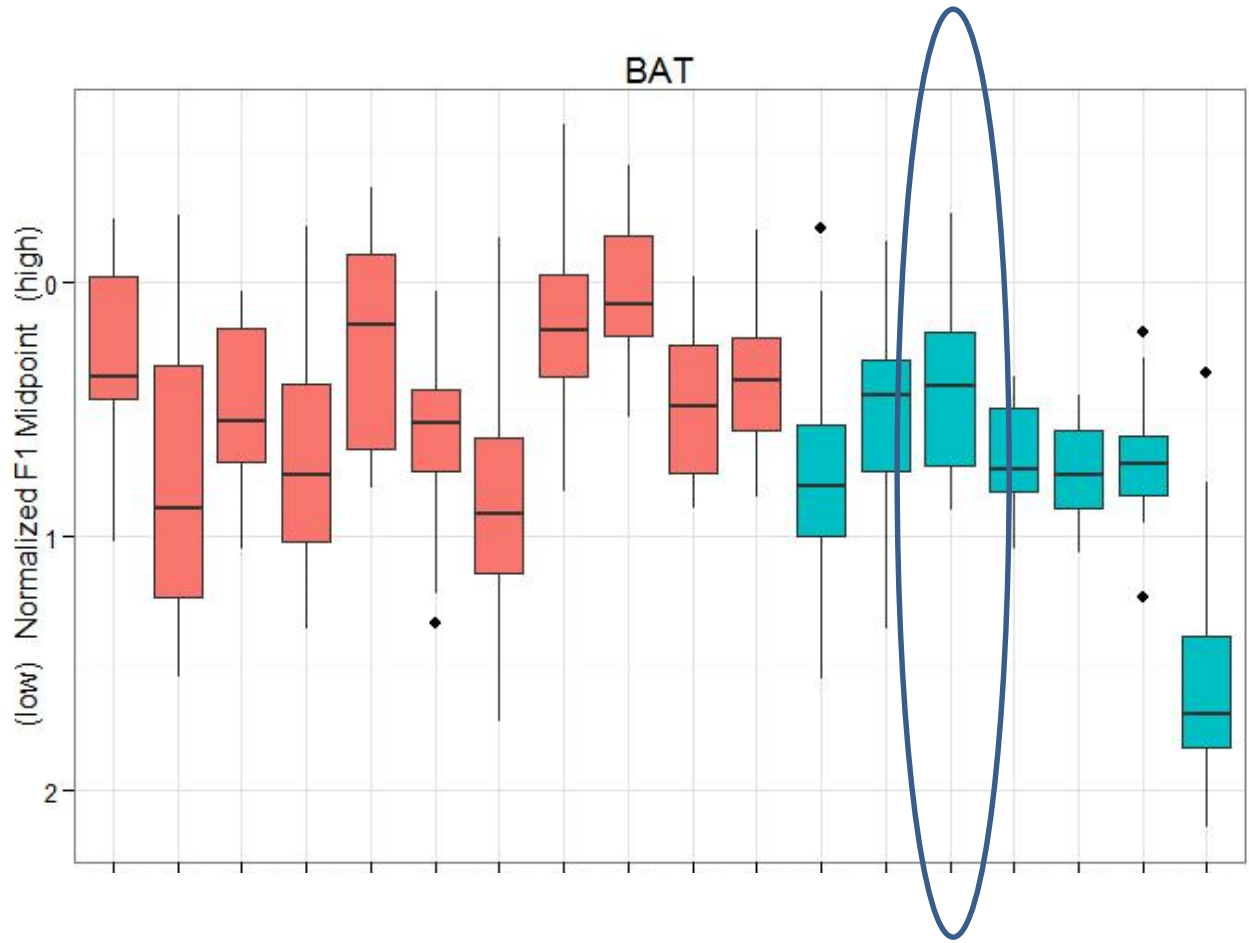


# “Daniel”

b. 1972

Lives in South Park in the hub of the downtown African American community

Attends majority-European American Broughton High



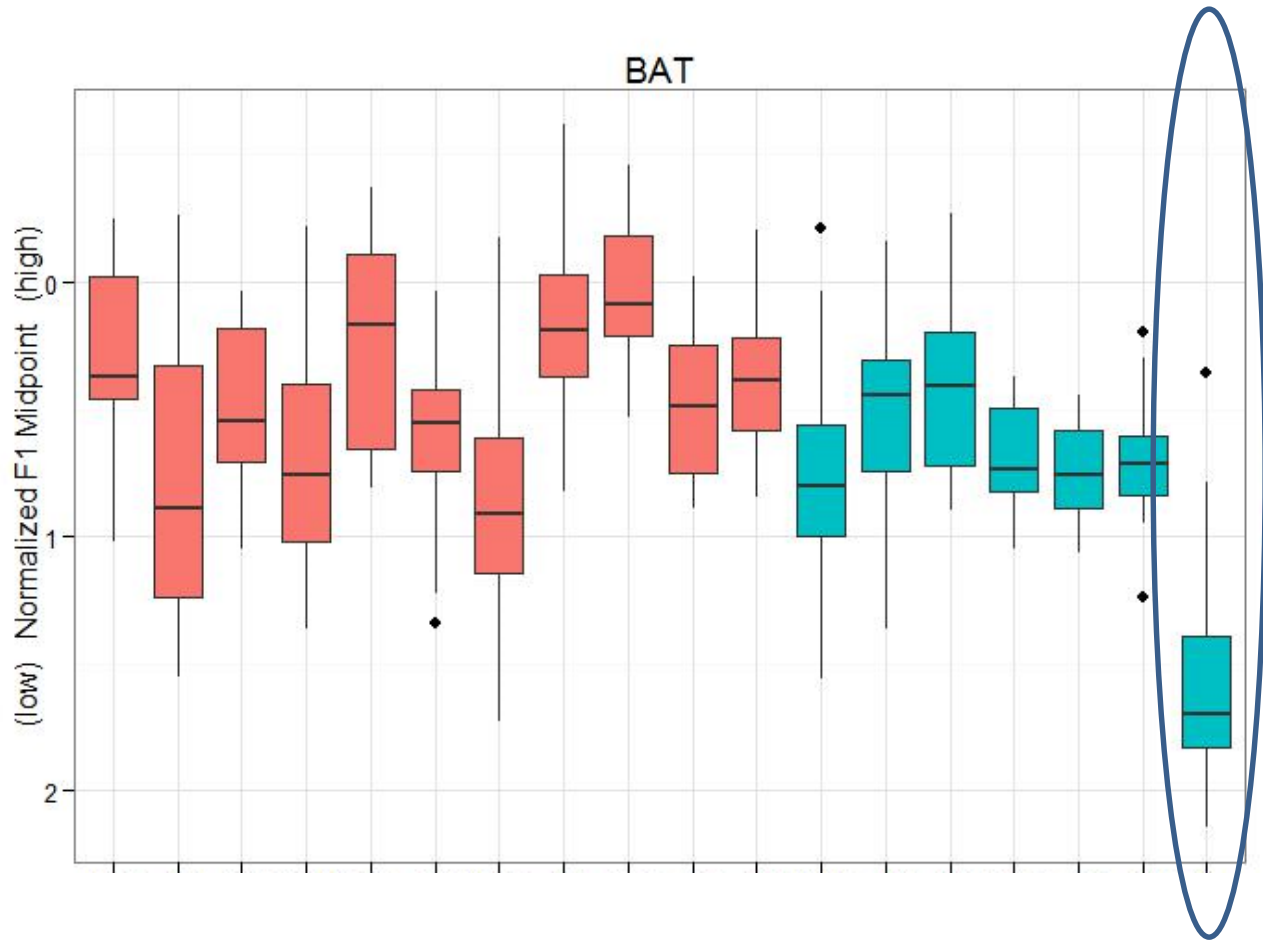


# “Dora”

b. 1987

Went to Southeast Raleigh High, a predominantly African American school, attended a magnet school program

Grew up on the border of Cary in Morrisville. Works in Cary.



**NEW SOUTH SCHOOLS,  
OLD SOUTH PATTERNS?**

# Observations II

- For our Southeast Raleigh case studies integration appears to have had a minimal effect on production
- Our few clear examples of students whose communities do not match the demographic makeup of their school indicate community norms trump school norms

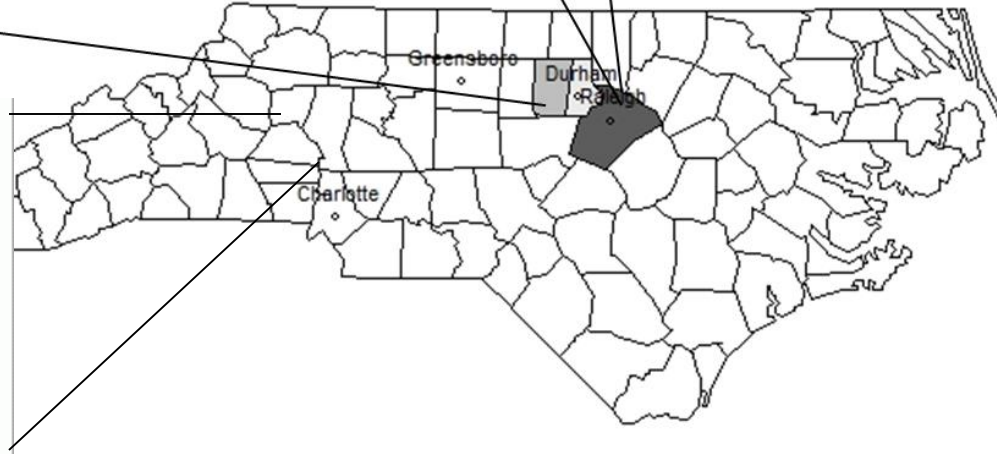
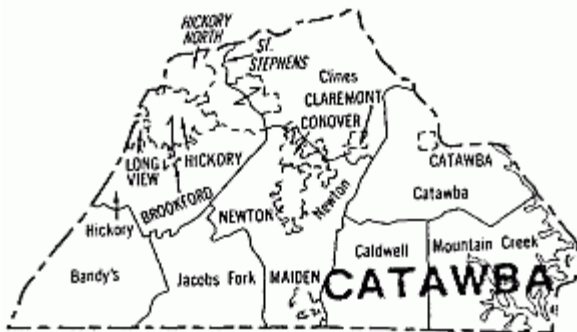
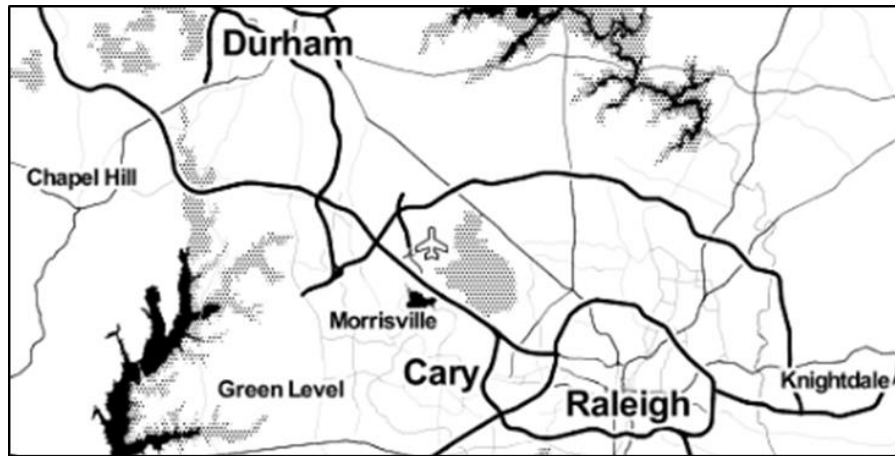
# Observations II

- However, those students in majority European American schools, with a few exceptions, have ranges that include more lowered incoming European American norms
- Students in “apartheid” and near-“apartheid” schools DO NOT show these ranges

Evidence from rural communities

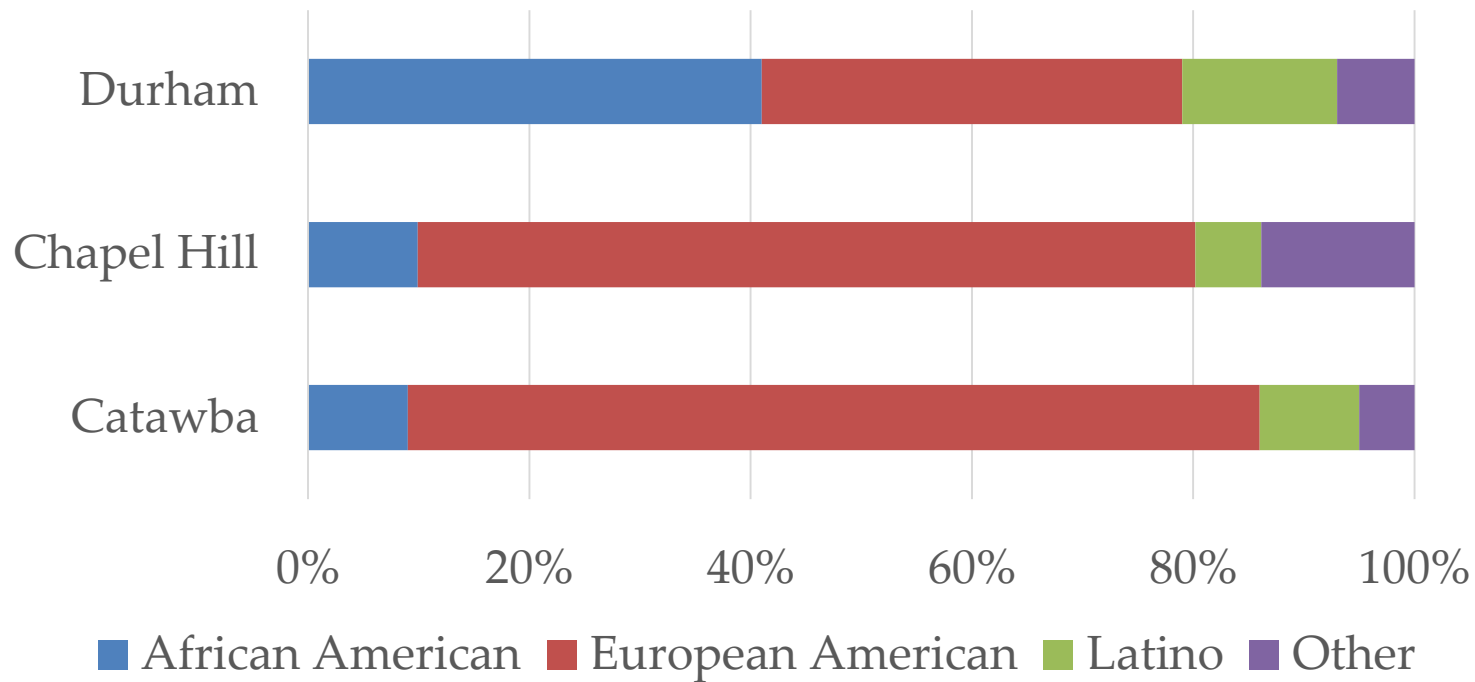
# **III. PARTICIPATION IN REGIONAL CHANGE**

# Three Field Sites



# Three environments

Community Demographics (Census 2010)



# Participants

- All born between 1985 and 1995, avoiding the confound of segregated schools and restricting the comparison to socio-geographic setting.

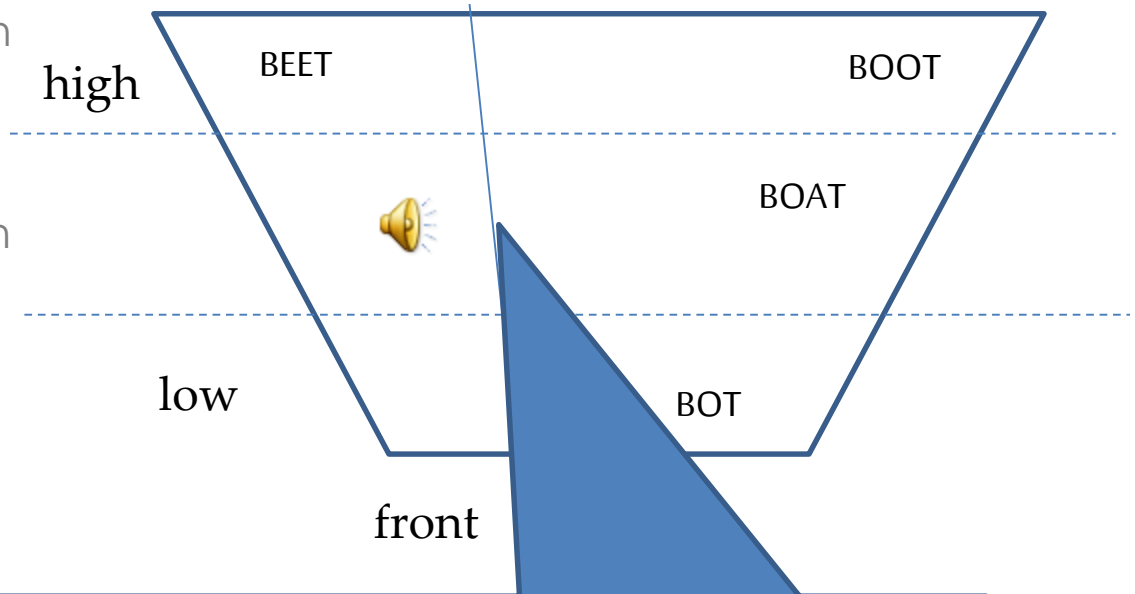
<b>27 speakers</b>	
Catawba County	<b>7</b>
Durham, NC	<b>9</b>
Chapel Hill, NC	<b>5</b>
Research Triangle	<b>6</b>



## Why BOAT?

Fronted among both OLDER and YOUNGER generations in most varieties of Southern English

But fronting is not as widespread among African Americans

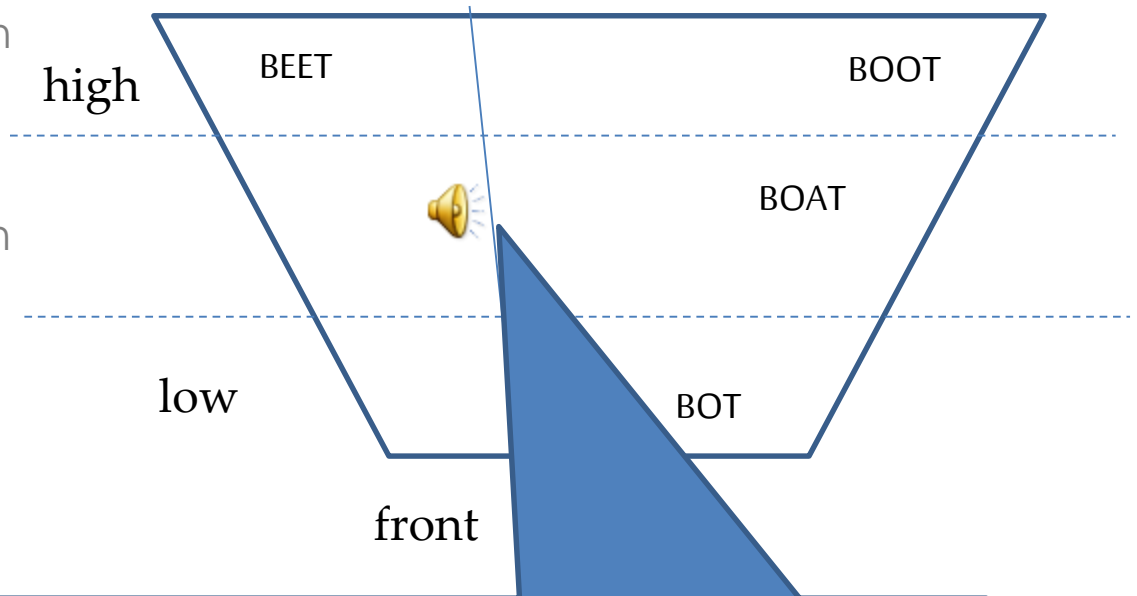


Older European American Raleigh, NC  
“And so we decided we go do our own paddle for the border”

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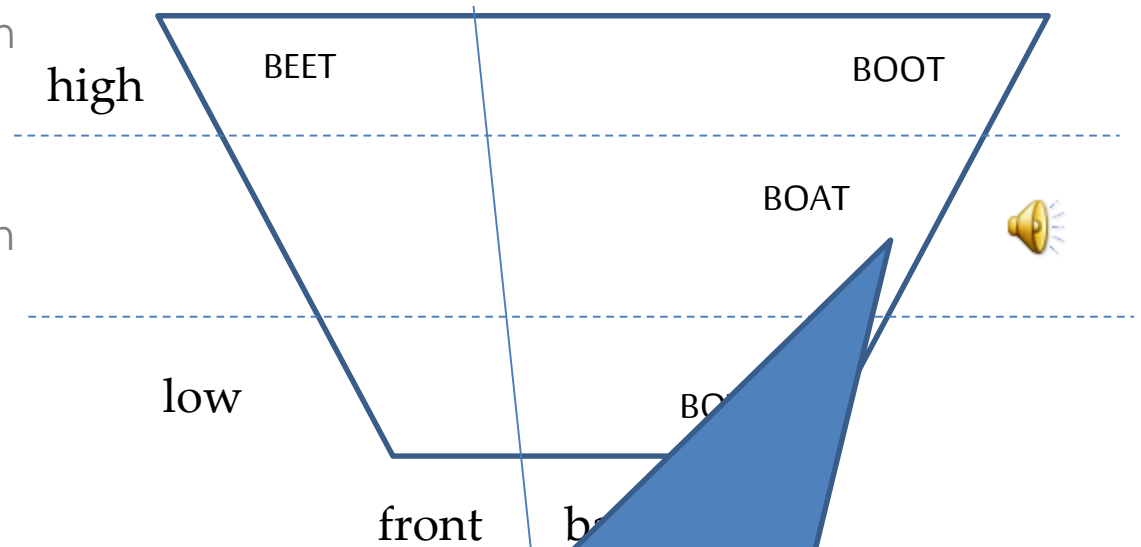


Younger European American Raleigh, NC  
“I finally registered to vote. It was a little later than I should’ve. I turned 18 two years ag- no- yeah- almost two years ago. I’ll be 20 in March”

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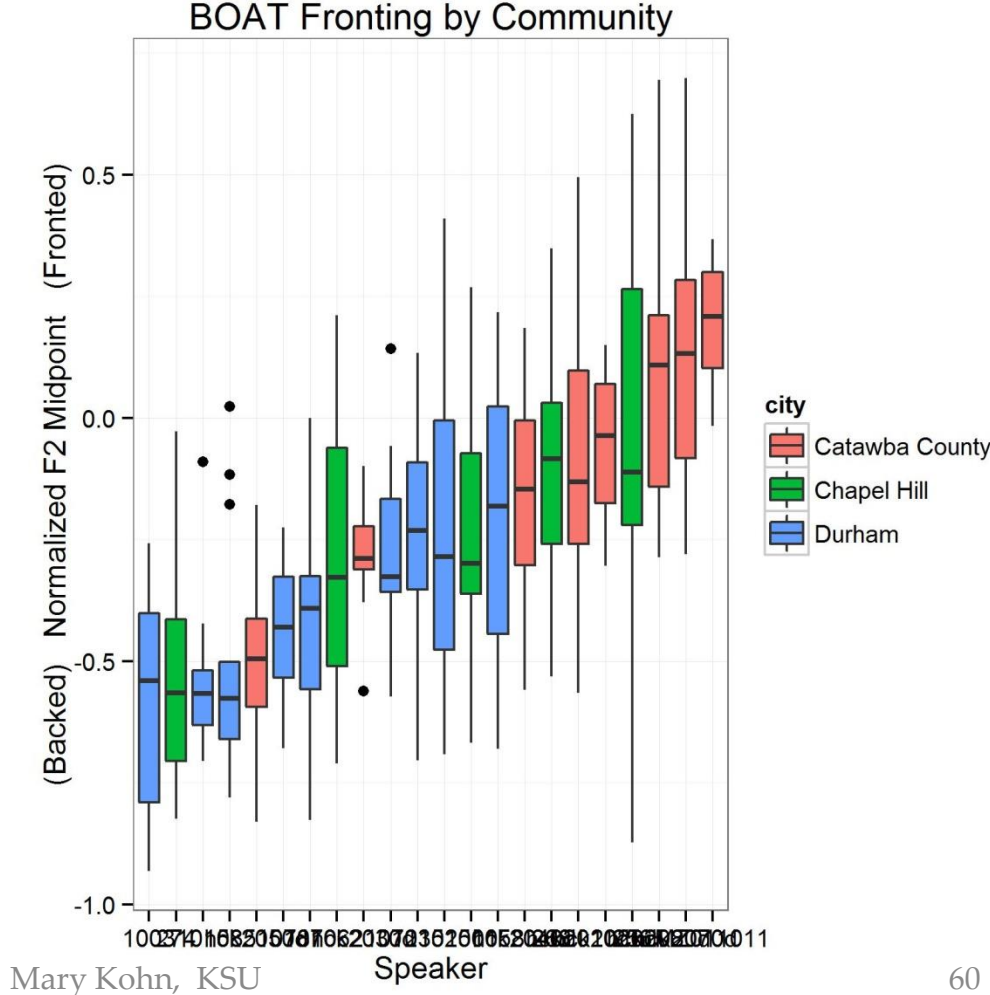


Younger African American Durham, NC  
"I do both but I'm focusing on R and B"

# Regional Alignment

Durham is predominantly African American and has backed BOAT  
 Catawba Co. is majority European American and has fronted BOAT



Durham significantly differs from Catawba Co.\*\* (-3.11, p =.005)



# Observations III

- Segregation significantly influences participation in regional sound changes
- Accommodation is localized to regional pronunciations
- This is evident in participant commentary as well
  
- Note: Appalachian English has monophthongal /ai/ in all environments, whereas Southern English only has this pattern in open syllables or before voiced consonants

# Hickory

- “Do you think people talk different around here?”
- “Yes. Catawba County has their own dictionary. We- There is so much Southern Twang and Hick-speaking language down here. When you go anywhere else they automatically know you’re from the South. **White.** That is not even a word. And half the people who say it can’t spell. It’s a little frustrating I mean because you go other places and they look at you like you’re stupid. I mean I’m just saying, for real. I mean we got all the little Ebonics stuff that we **be** using, like I’m using right now, obviously. 
- “But, I mean, like **rice.** I know I say **rice.**” 



A CAL corpus

# **IV. OLD DATA, NEW DIRECTIONS**

# The study of AAE

- In sociolinguistics, a lot of the early work was based in the study of AAE in different cities
  - New York City (Labov et al. 1968)
  - Detroit (Wolfram 1969)
  - Washington DC (Fasold 1972)
  
  - And less well known studies in Los Angeles (Legum et al. 1971), Baltimore (Anderson 1970), Chicago (Pederson 1965), Dallas (Jones 1972)

# Washington DC AAE

- Fasold's (1972) book, *Tense Marking in Black English: A linguistic and social analysis*, uses 90 sociolinguistic interviews collected in 1968, about half recorded at CAL
- The study of AAE in DC goes well beyond Fasold's important work...
- Putnam & O'Hern (1955) – a pre-Labov, sociolinguistic and sociophonetically interesting study of an “isolated urban dialect” (a block in DC)

- The yellow house studies (a small, one family house in DC rented by CAL in the mid 1960s. Inconspicuous microphones were located throughout the house)
  - Loman 1967a, 1967b
  - A lot of this work was the basis of William Stewart (CAL linguist in the 1960s) and Joey Dillard's observations about the origins of AAE
  - Additionally, the work around CAL at this time includes an important sociological work, *Soulside*, by Ulf Hannerz in 1969

- Around 1967, Roger Shuy became the head of the sociolinguistics program at CAL (and soon became professor of linguistics at Georgetown)
- He brought Walt Wolfram and Ralph Fasold to town, leading to a productive study of DC AAE, that followed the important work they did in Detroit

# Post-Fasold

- A lot of work out of Georgetown
  - Carroll 1971 (A phonology of Washington Negro Speech); Luelsdorff 1975 (A segmental phonology of Black English)
- And more recent work by Natalie Schilling and colleagues (Nielsen 2012; Nylund 2013; Schilling 2014; Grieser 2015; Lee f.c.)
  - Among many other papers and presentations...



# Corpus of Regional African American Language (CORAAAL)

- Tyler Kendall and colleagues at the University of Oregon, along with Natalie Schilling at Georgetown University, are in the process of creating the first public corpus of AAE
- A core component of the corpus includes sociolinguistic interview data from Fasold's (1972) study as well as new interviews recorded in 2015/2016
- More information can be found at: <http://blogs.uoregon.edu/lvclab/>
- Comments or questions can be directed to Tyler Kendall (tsk@uoregon.edu) or Charlie Farrington (crf@uoregon.edu)

## IV. 60 years of exploration

- It is crucial to move beyond “canonical” populations to identify the relationship between AAE and larger social structures.
- As segregation fluctuates with changing school policies and demographic shifts, these changes will necessarily impact the distribution of AAE. Linguists must carefully consider the relationship between school and community structures when considering these changes (or lack thereof).

## IV. 60 years of exploration

- Regional differences in morphosyntactic variation for AAE are largely unexplored
- As are intersections with class distinctions
- New, more inclusive, corpora compared with archival recordings give us the opportunity to explore these issues
- All of which continue to have crucial social and educational implications

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