

CRRES SPEAKER SERIES, Fall 2015

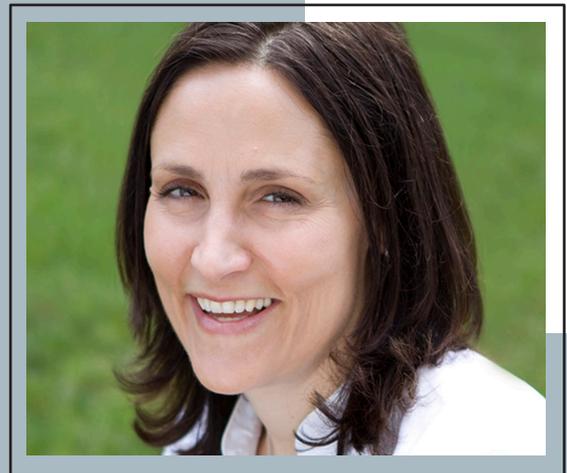
Despite the Best Intentions: How Racial Inequality Thrives in Good Schools

Drawing on five years' worth of interviews and data-gathering at Riverview, a diverse and highly resourced suburban school, we examine how the racial achievement gap persists in American schools more than fifty years after the formal dismantling of segregation. In this talk I address one dynamic often ignored in discussions of racial disparities in education outcomes. Historically, efforts to address the black/white achievement gap have often focused on some version of the question "What's going on with the black kids?" However, to understand why some aspects of educational outcomes at Riverview are so entrenched, we find that we instead need to ask, "What role do white parents play here?" We show that while white families reported choosing to live in Riverview because they wanted their children to be educated in a diverse community, these same parents' concerns about making sure their children have every educational advantage means they are often deeply ambivalent about if not explicitly hostile to changing the rules and practices that benefit their children (and disadvantage others). We show that at least one consequence of their cumulative behavior is to reproduce their racial advantage.

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Thursday, November 12, 2015
Bridgewaters Lounge, Neal-Marshall Center
4:00-5:30pm



Amanda E. Lewis is the Director of the Institute for Research on Race and Public Policy and an Associate Professor in the Departments of African American Studies and Sociology at the University of Illinois at Chicago. Her research focuses on how race shapes educational opportunities and on how our ideas about race get negotiated in everyday life. She lectures and consults regularly on issues of educational equity and contemporary forms of racism.