

EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Resident Satisfaction in Racially and Ethnically Diverse Neighborhoods

Sapna Swaroop, *University of Chicago*

Maria Krysan, *University of Illinois at Chicago*

A substantial body of research has shown that residence in racially/ethnically segregated environments leads to diminished life chances for minorities. It follows that residence in more diverse spaces – particularly stable integrated neighborhoods – may improve the quality of life for minorities. Neighborhood diversity might also enhance racial tolerance and community vitality, which would benefit all groups. Although census data have shown that the proportion of racially and ethnically diverse neighborhoods has increased across the United States over the last several decades (Fasenfest, Booza, and Metzger 2004; Rawlings, Harris, and Turner 2004), social scientists know relatively little about how individuals living in these racially and ethnically diverse places perceive and evaluate quality of life in their neighborhoods. Examining this question can provide important insights into the factors that compel individuals to move into, remain, or leave integrated neighborhoods, which could in turn promote or inhibit stable racial integration.

Our paper addresses this gap in existing research by investigating residents' evaluations of multiple aspects of everyday life in racially and ethnically diverse neighborhoods. Utilizing data from a recent survey of Chicago neighborhoods, we compare how whites, African Americans, and Latinos perceive quality of life in neighborhoods with different racial/ethnic compositions.

Background

Previous work on individuals' preferences related to neighborhood racial/ethnic composition has suggested that whites desire to live in predominantly white areas both because of racial prejudice and because of related beliefs about the negative characteristics of integrated neighborhoods, such as high crime, dropping property values, and poor upkeep of homes (Krysan 2002). For example, some research has shown that perceptions of crime and physical safety are influenced by racial/ethnic composition. As the proportion of African Americans in a neighborhood increases, whites perceive more crime, even after controlling for official crime rates (Quillian and Pager 1995). Similarly, both whites and Latinos report more physical and social disorder as the proportion of blacks in a neighborhood increases, and whites also report more disorder as the proportion of Latinos in a neighborhood increases (Sampson and Raudenbush 2004). There is less work on the residential preferences of non-whites. Harris (2001) asserts that African Americans are also averse to living in predominantly black neighborhoods because, like whites, they believe black neighbors bring higher crime and lower property values (Harris 2001), but Krysan and Farley (2002) argue that this finding applies to only a very small proportion of African Americans.

The relational and community aspects of living in racially and ethnically diverse neighborhoods are also important components of quality of life. On one hand, the contact hypothesis of race relations might suggest that under certain conditions, increased intergroup contact in diverse neighborhoods would lead to improved racial tolerance (Allport 1954) and would not negatively affect residents' sense of community. On the other hand, social disorganization theory posits that because of stereotypes, miscommunication, and

misunderstanding, heterogeneous neighborhoods are characterized by tension and conflict (Shaw and McKay 1942). Building positive social relations within neighborhood contexts is not only important for residents' sense of comfort and desire to remain in a neighborhood, but also because shared values and collective expectations about social control may improve children's outcomes and reduce neighborhood crime (Sampson, Morenoff and Earls 1999 Sampson, Raudenbush, and Earls 1997).

We examine how residents evaluate the quality of neighborhood institutions, services, and other characteristics (e.g. schools, presence of crime, and degree of property upkeep), the quality of community life (e.g. the sense of community), and the overall level of neighborhood satisfaction in racially and ethnically diverse versus homogeneous neighborhoods. Utilizing multilevel data from the 2004-2005 Chicago Area Study and the 2000 U.S. Census, we estimate models to assess how the relationship between neighborhood residence and quality of life varies by respondents' race/ethnicity and the racial/ethnic composition of the neighborhood.

Data and Measures

Data come from the 2004-2005 Chicago Area Study, which relied on an area probability sample of individuals aged 21 and over nested within block groups in Cook County, Illinois (Krysan et al. 2005). Face-to-face interviews were conducted with a response rate of 45 percent. Respondents were asked questions regarding their perceptions of neighborhoods, search for housing, experiences with discrimination, and racial attitudes. We restrict our analysis to those respondents who identified as non-Hispanic white, non-Hispanic black, and Hispanic for a sample size of 756 respondents nested within 80 block groups.

We examine five separate measures of quality of life related to neighborhood residence. Responses to each of these measures are given on Likert-type scales. Respondents' *overall neighborhood satisfaction* is measured with 1 corresponding to "not at all satisfied" through 6 corresponding to "extremely satisfied." *School satisfaction* measures how residents perceive the quality of public schools in the neighborhood, with 1 corresponding to "poor" and 5 to "excellent." *Problems with crime* assesses the extent to which respondents believe that there are problems with crime and vandalism in the neighborhood; *problems with property upkeep* measures problems with how well neighbors keep up their property. For each of these variables, 1 corresponds to "never a problem" and 5 corresponds to "always a problem." Finally, respondents are asked about the *sense of community* in the neighborhood, with 1 corresponding to "not much at all" and 4 to "a lot."

A categorical typology of racial/ethnic diversity is constructed based on the proportions of non-Hispanic whites, non-Hispanic African Americans, Hispanics, and non-Hispanic others present in neighborhoods (shown in Table 1). For the purposes of this analysis, we use census block groups to approximate "neighborhoods." The first three neighborhood types are comprised of predominantly one racial/ethnic group: *mostly White*, *mostly African American*, and *mostly Latino*. A neighborhood falls into one of these categories when it has greater than 90 percent of a single group or no other group is present in more than 10 percent. The next three neighborhood types are those in which two groups are present: *White-Latino*, *White-African American*, and *African American-Latino* neighborhoods. In these neighborhoods, each of the two groups has a proportion of greater than 10 percent and less than 90 percent. In addition, no group besides the two primary groups constitutes more than 10 percent of the population.

The final two categories are three- and four-group neighborhoods, where there are more than two groups present in proportions of more than 10 percent; these neighborhoods are termed *multiethnic* neighborhoods.

Table 1 presents frequencies of respondents by race/ethnicity in each of the different types of neighborhoods. Considerable numbers of whites in the sample live in predominantly white, white-Latino, white-other, and multiethnic neighborhoods, and relatively few live in white-black neighborhoods. Most African Americans live in predominantly black neighborhoods, with fewer living in white-black and multiethnic neighborhoods. Latinos tend to live in predominantly Latino neighborhoods, and about half as many live in white-Latino neighborhoods, with fewer living in multiethnic neighborhoods.

Control variables include respondents' race/ethnicity, gender, age, immigrant generation, marital status, status as a homeowner versus renter, years at the same address, level of education, household income. The presence of children in the home and language of interview are also included. At the neighborhood level, the median household income of the block group is measured.

Results

For the purpose of this abstract, we have estimated linear models with robust standard errors. Table 2 presents results from models of quality of life for whites, African Americans, and Latinos. The entire sample (n=756) was used in the estimation of each set of models, but the reference categories differed for each of the models. For whites, the reference category is whites living in predominantly white neighborhoods; for blacks, the reference category is African Americans living in predominantly African American neighborhoods; for Latinos, the reference category is Latinos living in predominantly Latino neighborhoods. In addition, in each analysis, individuals living in neighborhoods without a substantial representation of their group – for instance, the one white respondent living in a predominantly black neighborhood – are pooled into a residual category termed “extremely few whites/African Americans/Latinos.” We show only coefficients related to neighborhood racial/ethnic composition, but the full set of individual- and neighborhood-level control variables outlined above were also included in each model.

Whites. The first two sets of estimates demonstrate that whites living in diverse neighborhoods – either white-black, white-Latino, multiethnic, or neighborhoods with very few whites – report less overall neighborhood satisfaction and less satisfaction with public schools than do their counterparts living in predominantly white neighborhoods. However, except for those living in neighborhoods with extremely few whites, white do not report significantly different problems with crime in diverse versus predominantly white neighborhoods. Whites do report more problems with property upkeep in white-black and white-Latino neighborhoods, as well as neighborhoods with very few whites, compared to predominantly white neighborhoods. Additionally, whites in each type of diverse neighborhood report less of a sense of community than do whites living in homogeneous white environments.

African Americans. For none of the measured outcomes do African Americans report significantly different levels of quality of life – either better or worse -- than those they report in predominantly black neighborhoods.

Latinos. Latinos living in neighborhoods with very few other Latinos report more overall neighborhood satisfaction than do their counterparts in predominantly Latino neighborhoods. They also report higher levels of satisfaction with local public schools in neighborhoods with very few Latinos and in multiethnic neighborhoods. In the same vein, they report fewer

problems with crime in white-Latino and multiethnic neighborhoods, as well as neighborhoods with very few Latinos compared to problems with crime in predominantly Latino neighborhoods. Latinos' evaluations of problems with property upkeep and sense of community do not differ by neighborhood racial/ethnic composition.

Conclusion

Our initial results suggest that whites and Latinos evaluate quality of life in racially and ethnically diverse neighborhoods differently than they perceive quality of life in homogeneous neighborhoods, but that African Americans do not. Whites reported that neighborhood characteristics such as property upkeep and public school quality were worse in diverse neighborhoods, that there was less of a sense of community in diverse neighborhoods, and that in general, they were less satisfied with residence in diverse neighborhoods than in homogeneous neighborhoods. Surprisingly, they did not report higher levels of crime in diverse neighborhoods (other than those with few whites), which runs counter to previous research on this topic. Further, whites responded negatively not only to residence with African Americans, but also to residence with Latinos and to multiethnic settings. African Americans did not report any improvements in neighborhood characteristics when living in diverse neighborhoods, nor did they report declines in sense of community. The results for Latinos indicate that residence in diverse neighborhoods is related to improvements in quality of life with respect to satisfaction with local public schools and lower levels of crime.

We plan to extend our analysis in a number of ways before the PAA meeting. First, we plan to refine our modeling scheme by estimating multilevel models, which will allow us to examine cross-level interactions between individuals' characteristics, especially their socioeconomic status, and neighborhood racial/ethnic composition. We will include a more complete set of neighborhood characteristics in these models, including measures of racial/ethnic change over time, which Ellen (2000) has suggested may be even more important than a neighborhood's current racial/ethnic composition in influencing residents' perceptions of neighborhood life. We will also estimate models for a broader set of outcomes, including satisfaction with interracial interaction, perceptions of neighborhood racial/ethnic change, and beliefs about the future quality of the neighborhood.

References

Allport, Gordon. 1954. *The Nature of Prejudice*. Beacon Press.

Ellen, Ingrid G. 2000. *Sharing America's Neighborhoods: The Prospects for Stable Racial Integration*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.

Fasensfest, David, Jason Booza, and Kurt Metzger. 2004. "Living Together: A New Look at Racial and Ethnic Integration in Metropolitan Neighborhoods." Brookings Institution.

Harris, David R. 2001. "Why Are Whites and Blacks Averse to Black Neighbors?" *Social Science Research* 30:100-116.

Krysan, Maria. 2002. "Whites Who Say They'd Flee: Who Are They and Why Would They Leave?" *Demography* 39(4): 675-696.

Krysan, Maria, and Reynolds Farley. 2002. "The Residential Preferences of Blacks: Do They Explain Persistent Segregation?" *Social Forces* 80(3): 937-980.

Krysan, Maria, Tyrone Forman, Reynolds Farley, Mick Couper, Phillip Bowman, and Cedric Herring. 2005. Chicago Area Study 2004-2005. Data collected by Survey Research Center, Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan, Detroit Area Study and Institute for Social Research, and Survey Research Laboratory, Chicago, IL: University of Illinois at Chicago.

Rawlings, Lynette A., Laura E. Harris, and Margery Austin Turner. 2004. "Race and Residence: Prospects for Stable Neighborhood Integration." Urban Institute.

Sampson, Robert J., Jeffrey D. Morenoff, and Felton Earls. 1999. "Beyond Social Capital: Spatial Dynamics of Collective Efficacy for Children." *American Sociological Review* 64: 633-660.

Sampson, Robert J., Steven Raudenbush, and Felton Earls. 1997. "Neighborhoods and Violent Crime: A Multilevel Study of Collective Efficacy." *Science* 277:918-924.

Sampson, Robert J. and Stephen W. Raudenbush. 2004. "Seeing Disorder: Neighborhood Stigma and the Social Construction of 'Broken Windows'." *Social Psychology Quarterly* 67: 319-342.

Shaw, Clifford, and Henry McKay. 1942. *Juvenile Delinquency and Urban Areas*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

**Table 1. Frequency of Respondents by Race/Ethnicity and Neighborhood
Racial/Ethnic Composition:Chicago Area Study & 2000 U.S. Census**

Individuals				
Neighborhood Type	White	African American	Latino	<i>Total</i>
Greater than 90% White	84	4	10	98
Greater than 90% African American	1	150	0	151
Greater than 90% Latino	9	5	132	146
10-90% White & Latino	58	2	64	124
10-90% White & African American	25	32	3	60
10-90% African American & Latino	0	5	2	7
10-90% White & Other	54	0	1	55
Multiethnic	50	40	25	115
Sample Size	281	238	237	756

Table 2: Coefficients for Neighborhood Racial/Ethnic Composition by Respondents' Race/Ethnicity, from Linear Models of Selected Domains of Resident Satisfaction: Chicago Area Study & 2000 U.S. Census

	<u>Overall Nbhd.</u> <u>Satisfaction</u>		<u>School</u> <u>Satisfaction</u>		<u>Problems with</u> <u>Crime</u>		<u>Problems with</u> <u>Property Upkeep</u>		<u>Sense of</u> <u>Community</u>	
	Coeff.	Std.Err.	Coeff.	Std.Err.	Coeff.	Std.Err.	Coeff.	Std.Err.	Coeff.	Std.Err.
<u>WHITES</u>										
Predominantly White (omitted)										
White-African American	-.698	(.201) ***	-.496	(.244) **	.189	(.228)	.309	(.162) *	-.304	(.168) *
White-Latino	-.649	(.226) ***	-.422	(.219) *	-.166	(.209)	.352	(.129) ***	-.480	(.246) *
Multithnic	-.747	(.296) **	-.451	(.199) **	.131	(.199)	.216	(.154)	-.575	(.136) ***
Extremely Few Whites	-1.012	(.280) ***	-.732	(.264) ***	.479	(.276) *	.584	(.189) ***	-.400	(.157) **
Intercept	3.766		3.766		3.460		2.799		2.943	
<u>AFRICAN AMERICANS</u>										
Predominantly African American (omitted)										
White-Black	.048	(.281)	-.293	(.261)	-.318	(.217)	-.088	(.181)	-.112	(.275)
Multiethnic	.049	(.244)	.173	(.238)	-.040	(.218)	-.274	(.220)	-.157	(.171)
Extremely few African Americans	.340	(.314)	.104	(.244)	.047	(.217)	-.273	(.223)	.255	(.179)
Intercept	2.851		1.857		3.760		3.316		2.556	
<u>LATINOS</u>										
Predominantly Latino (omitted)										
White-Latino	.417	(.272)	-.114	(.209)	-.547	(.168) ***	-.210	(.148)	.021	(.123)
Multiethnic	.482	(.346)	.443	(.262) *	-.689	(.230) ***	-.352	(.170)	-.219	(.168)
Extremely Few Latinos	.853	(.273) ***	.529	(.251) **	-.741	(.236) ***	-.334	(.172)	.155	(.163)
Intercept	2.743		2.348		4.291		3.552		2.585	

***p<.01, **p<.05, *p<.10, n = 756 individuals in 80 block groups

Note: Coefficients reported from models that include a variety of individual-level control variables, as well as a measure of neighborhood socioeconomic status (see text for more details).