

Neighborhood Racial Integration and Perceived Discrimination¹

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As the prevalence of racially and ethnically diverse neighborhoods has increased in the U.S. over the past several decades (Fasensfest et. al. 2004; Ellen 2000), the question of how residence in these neighborhoods influences the life chances of minorities has become increasingly important. The experience of living in an integrated neighborhood may affect minorities' access to job opportunities, physical health, economic status, and sense of well-being. According to conventional social scientific wisdom, integration benefits minorities by providing environments that are safer and economically advantaged compared to more segregated places. On the other hand, integration may offer an alternative set of difficulties, such as isolation from social networks or frequent encounters with interpersonal prejudice. Little previous research has examined the extent to which racial residential integration produces these challenges.

Exposure to discrimination has long been a feature of social life for racial and ethnic minorities (Sigelman and Welch 1995). Recent research suggests that experience with perceived discrimination is correlated with negative health outcomes, for example higher rates of hypertension for African Americans (Krieger 1990) and increased depression for both African Americans and Mexican Americans (Schulz et. al. 2000; Finch et. al. 2000). This body of work highlights discrimination as a stressor that can lead to poor physical and mental health; however, it neglects to examine the ways in which individuals differentially experience exposure to discrimination. Feagin (1991) suggests that the probability of discrimination varies by context, where private sites are the safest and most protected, and public sites are the least protected and present the greatest potential for discrimination. One such public site is the neighborhood, where residents share common space and face common experiences. Interracial contact and interaction may take place more frequently in integrated neighborhoods than in segregated neighborhoods. Consequently, it is also possible that more discrimination occurs in integrated environments.

This paper investigates the relationship between racial residential integration and perceived discrimination, focusing on the experiences of racial/ethnic minorities. Utilizing data from a recent study of Chicago neighborhoods, I estimate multilevel models to answer three questions. First, I assess whether perceived discrimination differs across neighborhood racial compositions. Second, I test whether the relationship between integration and discrimination, if any, can be attributed to differences in the structural characteristics of integrated and non-integrated neighborhoods. Third, I test whether the relationship differs for two racial/ethnic groups, African Americans and Latinos.

Data and Methods

Analysis relies on data from the 2002 Chicago Community Adult Health Study (CCAHS), a sample of 3,105 respondents from 675 census tracts in Chicago. This study uses a clustered

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sample design that facilitates generalizability to neighborhoods rather than individuals. Additionally, I use data from the 1980-2000 U.S. Censuses to measure neighborhood characteristics, most notably neighborhood racial integration, as well as several other structural features.

I utilize two measures of perceived discrimination. The first is a scale of *everyday discrimination*, in which respondents are asked to rate the frequency with which they: 1) are treated with less courtesy or respect than other people, 2) receive poorer service than other people at restaurants or stores, 3) are treated as if they are not smart, 4) are treated as if others are afraid of them, and 5) are threatened or harassed. Responses are coded on a scale of one to five, where 1 corresponds to a frequency of less than once a year, 2 to a few times a year, 3 to a few times a month, 4 to at least once a week, and 5 to almost every day. Cronbach's alpha for this scale is .75. The second measure assesses *watchfulness* for discrimination by asking respondents the frequency with which they 1) try to prepare for possible insults from other people before leaving home, 2) feel that they always have to be very careful about their appearance to get good service or avoid being harassed, 3) carefully watch what they say and how they say it, and 4) try to avoid certain social situations and places. The response categories are the same as those listed above. Cronbach's alpha for this measure is .74.

The key independent variable of interest is racial integration. Since the city of Chicago is comprised primarily of Whites (29%), African Americans (42%), and Latinos (22%), I construct a six-category typology of racial composition based on the proportions of each of these groups present in a neighborhood in 2000.² I characterize neighborhoods as "mostly African American" if they are greater than 80 percent African American, "mostly Latino" if they are greater than 80 percent Latino, and "mostly White" if they are greater than 80 percent White. I categorize neighborhoods as "African American/Latino" if they are between 15 and 80 percent African American and between 15 and 80 percent Latino, and if African Americans and Latinos together comprise 80 percent or more of the population. I use a similar definition to classify "White/Latino" neighborhoods, where Whites are between 15 and 80 percent of the population and if Latinos are between 15 and 80 percent of the population, and where Whites and Latinos together comprise 80 percent or more of the population. All other neighborhoods are characterized as "multiethnic."³

Table 1 shows the number of census tracts and the number of respondents from each racial/ethnic group that fall into each category in the racial composition typology. The first column shows that mostly African American neighborhoods are the most prevalent neighborhood type, followed by White/Latino neighborhoods and then multiethnic neighborhoods. The least prevalent neighborhoods are African American/Latino neighborhoods.

The next three columns display the number of respondents of each race/ethnicity that fall into each category. Analysis is limited to respondents who reported that they were White, African American, or Latino, yielding an analytic sample size of 2,975 respondents. The boldface type

² For the purposes of this analysis, I follow previous research that considers the census tract to be the "neighborhood."

³ Only one neighborhood had a majority of residents (over 80 percent) that were not White, African American, or Latino. This census tract was dropped from the analysis.

shows the relevant comparison groups—due to sample size restrictions, for example, it is only meaningful to compare the numbers of African Americans in predominantly African American neighborhoods, African American/Latino neighborhoods, and multiethnic neighborhoods. By far, most African Americans in the CCAHS sample live in predominantly Black neighborhoods. In contrast, most Latinos and Whites live in White/Latino neighborhoods rather than predominantly Latino or predominantly White neighborhoods.

[Table 1 here].

Initial Results

Table 2 presents preliminary results from my analysis: descriptive statistics and t-tests for the two measures of discrimination by respondents' race and neighborhood racial composition. As these results are not final, I will only discuss them briefly. Again, I have highlighted the comparisons of interest in bold.

Column 1 shows that African American respondents in multiethnic neighborhoods report significantly higher levels of everyday discrimination than those in predominantly Black neighborhoods. However, respondents in African American/Latino and mostly Black neighborhoods report similar levels of everyday discrimination. The bottom panel of Column 1 shows that African Americans in all three neighborhood types (e.g. mostly Black, African American/Latino, and multiethnic) report similar levels of watchfulness.

Latinos in African American/Latino neighborhoods report significantly higher levels of both everyday discrimination and watchfulness than in predominantly Latino neighborhoods, as shown in Column 2. Latinos report no differences in either form of discrimination in multiethnic versus mostly Latino neighborhoods.

[Table 2 here].

Analytic Plans

The descriptive statistics and results from initial bivariate analyses suggest that there are differences in perceived discrimination across neighborhoods with differing racial compositions for African Americans, Latinos, and Whites. In the multivariate analysis, I will estimate multilevel models to assess both individual- and neighborhood-level effects on everyday discrimination and watchfulness. The focus of this analysis will be the neighborhood-level effects, particularly the effects of neighborhood socioeconomic status, residential stability, population change, and whether integration has been long-term or not. To examine selection effects, I will conduct propensity score matching and other sensitivity tests.

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Table 1. Frequencies of Neighborhoods and Respondents by Race and Racial Composition

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
	No. of Tracts	African American	Latino	White	Total
	<i>n</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>n</i>
Mostly African American	237	864	134	15	1036
African American/Latino	32	95	90	16	204
Mostly Latino	54	8	248	31	291
White/Latino	154	25	312	345	716
Mostly White	78	10	29	240	293
Multiethnic	120	105	127	281	565
Total	675	1107	940	928	2975

Source: CCAHS 2002, U.S. Census 2000

Table 2. Descriptive Statistics for Discrimination by Race and Racial Composition

	(1) African Americans		(2) Latinos		(3) Whites	
	Mean	Std. Dev.	Mean	Std. Dev.	Mean	Std. Dev.
<u>Everyday Discrimination</u>						
Mostly African American	1.89	.78	1.97	.86	1.72	.85
African American/Latino	1.89	.88	1.69	.83	** 2.26	1.27
Mostly Latino	1.63	.99	1.54	.69	1.74	.97
White/Latino	2.13	.89	1.59	.73	1.63	.71
Mostly White	1.70	.88	1.79	.83	1.60	.69
Multiethnic	2.06	.82	** 1.56	.69	1.73	.72
All	1.91	.80	1.64	.76	1.67	.74
<u>Watchfulness for Discrimination</u>						
Mostly African American	2.60	1.18	2.42	1.21	2.20	1.46
African American/Latino	2.63	1.22	2.41	1.28	** 2.22	1.14
Mostly Latino	2.00	1.34	2.10	1.14	1.76	.90
White/Latino	2.42	1.32	2.01	1.08	1.83	.90
Mostly White	2.73	.98	2.00	.83	1.81	.91
Multiethnic	2.49	1.25	1.96	.97	1.98	.87
All	2.56	1.19	2.12	1.13	1.88	.91

Source: CCAHS 2002, U.S. Census 2002

Notes: Boldface type indicates relevant comparisons.

Stars indicate $p < .05$ in a t-test comparing the integrated category to the group's homogeneous category.