Preferences Constrained: Racial and Ethnic Variations in Parents’ Neighborhood Choice Considerations
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Background
- Residential preferences are based on a variety of factors including life cycle and socioeconomic considerations, housing, and neighborhood racial composition (Ross and Monroe-James 2011; Farley, Felding and Krysan 1997; Krysan and Farley 2002, Clark 2009).
- Less attention has been given to how other neighborhood characteristics, like neighborhood advantage, affect preferences.
- Research suggests that whites and minorities have varying foci when choosing neighborhoods (Siedman and Hsiao 2001; Lewis et al. 2011; Zeum 1994).

Current Study
1) Do demographic characteristics predict which neighborhood characteristics parents say were most important in their choice of their present neighborhood?
2) Are there racial and ethnic differences in the salience of neighborhood characteristics by family socioeconomic status?
3) Does neighborhood racial/ethnic composition moderate the associations between an individual’s race/ethnicity and parents’ reasons for living in the neighborhood?

Data, Sample, & Methods
- National Longitudinal Study of Adolescent to Adult Health (Add Health)
- Add Health respondents with complete parent questionnaire
- Analytic sample: 13,818 respondents
- Analytic methods: multilevel multinomial logistic regressions

Dependent Variable
Which one statement describes the most important reason why you live in this neighborhood?
- Less crime: Less crime and less illegal activity by adolescents
- Better schools: Better schools or children of appropriate ages
- Other: Near old workplace, near current workplace, had outpatient previous housing, affordable good housing, close to friends or relatives, born here

Focal Independent Variables
- Neighborhood advantage: Mean scale of prop. aged 25+ with a bachelor’s degree or more, prop age 16+ employed in a managerial or professional occupation, and prop earning $50k or more
- Proportion white
- Parent’s Race/Ethnicity

Results

Table 1. Multinomial Multilevel Models of Parents’ Focal Consideration in Choice of Neighborhoods

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Model 1</th>
<th>Model 2</th>
<th>Model 3</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Schools Crime</td>
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<tr>
<td>Schools Health</td>
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<td>Schools Other</td>
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<tr>
<td>N’hood Prop. White</td>
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<tr>
<td>Level 1</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black</td>
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<td>-0.73***</td>
<td>-0.73***</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Prop. White</td>
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<tr>
<td>N’hood Advantage</td>
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Conclusions
- Black and Hispanic parents are more likely to choose neighborhoods on the basis of crime
- Black parents are much less likely (than whites) to choose neighborhoods based on schools
- Neighborhood advantage of chosen neighborhoods moderates associations between race/ethnicity and neighborhood considerations

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Figure 1. Crime as the Focal Consideration by Parent’s Race/Ethnicity
Figure 2. Schools as the Focal Consideration by Parent’s Race/Ethnicity
Figure 3. Centrality of Crime by Neighborhood Proportion White
Figure 4. Centrality of Schools by Neighborhood Advantage
Figure 5. Centrality of Crime by Neighborhood Advantage