

Changing Residential Preferences across Income, Education, and Age

Findings from the Multi-City Study of Urban Inequality

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Residential preferences and their role in creating and maintaining residential segregation are a subject of intense interest in ongoing debates about race and residential sorting in U.S. metropolitan areas and are central in work based on the Schelling tolerance models of residential selection. This study examines how residential preferences change across income, education, and age and provides new information on how race and socioeconomic status interact to create patterns of preference in particular locations. In general, African-Americans with increasing income show a distinct shift to greater willingness to live in integrated settings but also a distinct shift to own-race selections with second choices for neighborhood composition. Whites' unwillingness to move to African-American neighborhoods of more than 50% other race exacerbates the tendency to separate. Socioeconomic status plays a similar role for other ethnic groups. These findings parallel those from agent-based modeling about the low probability of achieving substantial mixing of racial and ethnic groups.

Keywords: *preferences; segregation; ethnicity; income*

Race and ethnic issues are still important in the conversations about the high levels of housing segregation in America's metropolitan areas. Even though there have been significant changes both in the legal context and in public attitudes to residential integration, neighborhoods remain relatively segregated. This outcome has led to a continuing and contentious debate about why segregation persists and the relative roles of economics, education, own race selectivity, and discrimination in creating these patterns of separation. Perhaps because of the recent high levels of immigration and the spread of these new immigrants across America's metropolitan areas,

there is substantial concern with how these patterns will change in the coming decades. Will the past patterns of Black/White separation be replicated with Asian Hispanic, Black, and White separation, or will there be greater mixing because of the now substantial numbers of very diverse populations?

Once, incomes and housing costs were largely dismissed as explanations for the patterns of segregation. More recently, research has shown that while housing costs and affordability do not provide a substantial explanation for the separation, they do provide a context within which choices are made and are far from irrelevant in the choice process. African-American households that move to the suburbs have higher incomes and more assets than African-American households that move within the city. One way in which affordability plays a role in housing and neighborhood selections is when households are able to meet some minimum threshold for selecting a particular neighborhood, as in any budget constraint on choice. It is certainly rational to envisage a minority household—African-American, Hispanic, or Asian—choosing neighborhoods subject to their income constraint. The fact that minority households and White households are not distributed equally across neighborhoods to which they could have access by their budget constraint suggests the role of other factors in the choice process. It is those other factors that led to debates about why there is continuing separation.

Residential preferences, either as revealed preferences from actual behavior in neighborhood selection or as preferred combinations of neighborhoods in survey experiments, are central in the debates about continuing separation. While we know a good deal about residential preferences and their variation by race and ethnic groups, we know much less about these preferences by age, income, and education. Even though a number of studies have used the data from the Multi-City Study of Urban Inequality to examine preferences, only a limited number of studies have attempted any decomposition of preferences by socioeconomic status, and in most instances, they have not provided details on the variation of preferences by status. Because preferences play an important role in residential selection and because they are almost certainly intertwined with socioeconomic status, it will enrich our understanding of how preferences work if we know more about how they vary with levels of income and education. Thus, the purpose of this study is to re-examine racial and ethnic preferences decomposed by education and income and to examine the variations in preferred neighborhoods as documented in first and second choices of neighborhood residential compositions. What are the expressions for integrated living and

how do education, income, and race affect those choices across different ethnic groups? We examine these outcomes for the four cities in the Multi-City Study of Urban Inequality and in greater specificity for the Los Angeles Metropolitan area, where there are substantial combinations of Whites, African-Americans, Hispanics, and Asians. This study extends our understanding of the nature of residential preferences and the potential for changes in the current patterns of residential segregation. The study is especially important at a time when an increasing number of African-Americans are moving to suburban locations. It is also important in the context of increasing multirace contexts and how preferences may influence their choices of residential locations.

Previous Work and Context

There is now a substantial body of research that has documented that by and large, African-Americans prefer integrated neighborhoods, and specifically, neighborhoods that are close to equal combinations of Whites and African-Americans. The research on preferences for living with other groups is less consistent, although there is some evidence for integrated living in general by African-Americans (Clark 1992). This research with respect to race, and later ethnicity, was initiated with a seminal article by Farley et al. (1978). That article was followed by several studies that confirmed and expanded the Farley study and showed that indeed, African-Americans preferred integrated residential settings, while Whites preferred majority White residential neighborhoods (Clark 1991, 1992; Farley, Fielding, and Krysan 1997). There is no question that there is a disjunction between the preferences of Black and White households, nor does there seem to be any question that in general, African-American households express a stronger desire to be in a mixed neighborhood than do Whites. Indeed, a study across several cities including analyses of all racial and ethnic groups revealed that very similar patterns of some level of intermixing are preferred (Farley, Fielding, and Krysan 1997). At the same time, groups other than Whites also expressed strong own-race, own-ethnicity preferences. Hispanics and Asians routinely express preferences for neighborhoods in which they are a majority presence. How should we interpret this outcome of stated preferences? On one hand, Charles (2000) and Farley, Fielding, and Krysan (1997) interpret this finding as revealing, not neutral ethnocentrism but rather fears of White hostility, or in some cases, outright racism (Denton 1996). On the other hand, Clark (2002) argues for own-race

myopia, and others (Thernstrom and Thernstrom 1997) suggest that the preferences are simply outcomes of differences in wealth and income. Some research, notably by South and Crowder (1998), has tried to find a middle ground, and indeed, South and Crowder show that wealth is not a central factor, but at the same time, it is increasingly clear that preferences do play a role in creating and maintaining the differences in residential patterns that we see in our metropolitan areas. But how do income and status affect the expression of preferences, what are the dimensions of the preference differences, and does it matter?

Recent research has tackled two important and related questions with respect to the role of preferences—first, what is the relative role of racial and nonracial factors in generating White neighborhood satisfaction, and by extension, the preferences and choices that arise from the preferences (Harris 1997a), and second, what is the role of Black preferences and self-segregation in creating residential separation? Harris (1997a) argues that while previously, satisfaction was largely race based, now White satisfaction is generated not just by preferences for particular combinations of own-race ethnicity; income and perceived social problems are relevant determinants of White choices as well. Thus, even though much of the research on neighborhood choice has invoked the White flight hypothesis to argue that Whites flee Black neighborhoods, Harris finds that in fact, the race effects, controlling for life cycle, dwelling, and nonracial contextual factors, are not statistically significant (1997b). These findings are not inconsistent with the difference between moving out and moving in. Considerable work shows that Whites are slow to move out of a neighborhood that is changing and that may be more Black than when they originally chose that neighborhood.

The discussion above raises the question of whether race is a proxy for other neighborhood issues, and it is far from settled. Harris (1999) concludes that his work offers mixed messages about race as a proxy. On one hand, his analysis suggests that homes in integrated settings are less valuable because of a preference for affluent, well-educated neighbors (presumably higher income and more educated households), and these characteristics are more prevalent among Whites than Blacks. At the same time, he concludes that even though property values decline when Blacks move in, it is not clear whether it is race or class that affects the property values, and a lot depends on the location and the character of the neighborhoods. On the other hand, Harris' research suggests that when neighbors have similar socioeconomic status, increasing integration will not affect desirability; again, it reiterates the relevance of preferences and socioeconomic status.

Harris is examining satisfaction and choice and notes that families with children are the most likely to leave when they are in integrated neighborhoods. It seems unlikely that their leaving is race driven alone—families without children do not have significant race effects, or at least, Harris finds inconsistent effects for race alone. Because we know that school composition is an important factor in neighborhood choice and there is a reasonable link between potential White attendance and school composition, it is likely that we are witnessing a response to questions of school composition, if only because of the perception that minority schools in general do not perform as well as majority White schools. It is just this type of finding that complicates the attempt to explain choices and outcomes in the residential fabric. However, it does seem that there are race effects and effects from neighborhood social problems. The work suggests that both socioeconomic status and race independently play a role in the residential outcomes we see in our cities. The analytic section of this article wrestles with the relative role of these forces.

The second question that has been at the center of debates about residence and residential outcomes relates to the preferences and desires of African-Americans to live primarily among other African-Americans. Both anecdotal and statistical evidence suggests that there is substance to the idea that own-race preferences play a role in continuing the racial separation. A study using data from the Multi-City Study of Urban Inequality finds that Black preferences in Atlanta, Detroit, and Los Angeles to live among Blacks does affect the racial composition of the neighborhoods occupied by Blacks. There is a stronger preference for Black neighbors and to reside in neighborhoods with a higher percentage of Black residents (Ihlanfeldt and Scafidi 2002, 387.) At the same time, Ihlanfeldt and Scafidi conclude that continuing housing segregation cannot rest solely on the existence of these preferences.¹ Perhaps what is most important about the Ihlanfeldt and Scafidi study is the finding that even under the assumption of universal preference for perfect integration, the average Black respondent would continue to live in a majority Black neighborhood. Thus, a high level of housing segregation would continue even if the desire for self-segregation were to disappear. This finding has been replicated in a slightly different context by the work on agent-based modeling, which shows that even without any discriminatory behavior in the housing market, a slight preference for like-color neighbors can generate a persistent high level of segregation (Zhang 2004; Fossett 2006; Clark and Fossett 2008).

Despite the argument that White hostility rather than preferences (Charles 2000) is the central force in creating residential separation, it has

been difficult to measure the role of hostility in creating patterns of separation, and the recent work suggests that the evidence for hostility as a major factor is weak (Ihlanfeldt and Scafidi 2002). The thesis is that White hostility discourages Blacks from moving into majority White residential areas. For example, Feagin and Sikes (1994) argue that Black preferences are strongly conditioned by fear of Whites on one hand and Black pride on the other. Clark (1993) could find only about a 15% effect for discrimination as an actual explanation for levels of separation. Clearly, there are still discriminatory acts in the housing market, and some White households, if not prejudiced, are still reluctant to entertain living in mixed-race settings, but the power of discrimination to create separation is lower than suggested by research in the past. The evidence for other ethnic groups tends to support a preference-based argument or a constrained-choice argument. For example, Boswell and Cruz-Baez (1997) argue that Hispanics make voluntary decisions to live with other Hispanics not because they want to avoid Blacks or Whites but because they feel they have few other reasonable choices.

As I argued earlier in the article, preferences are constrained by budget, and the new evidence on suburban and central-city compositions of African-Americans and Whites and their mobility behavior suggests that this is just what is happening. The research shows that there are substantial differences between the incomes of city and suburban Blacks. Those who move to the suburbs have higher incomes and more education and are more likely to be professionals (Clark 2007; Clark and Blue 2004). Clearly, income does play a role in opening up opportunities and allows higher-income individuals to express preferences for neighborhoods that are less minority and more White. But even these choices are complicated by the other important dimension in residential choice—balancing work and residence. Bajari and Kahn (2001) draw attention to the way in which these factors can modify the outcome of preferences. They examine city suburban differences in Black residential locations and their associated socioeconomic status but also the way in which job locations and commuting affect choices. They argue that the primary explanation for Blacks' living in cities and Whites in the suburbs is the fact that both Blacks and Whites will pay to avoid high commuting costs. To the extent that Blacks are more likely to work in occupations and industries that are concentrated in central cities (at least previously), they argue, is an explanation for the greater likelihood for Blacks to live in cities and Whites in the suburbs. Whites move to communities with fewer Blacks and more college graduates and featuring shorter commutes. Both wealthy Black and White migrants preferred short commutes and communities with college graduates, but still, richer

Black migrants preferred mostly Black communities, while White migrants preferred White communities.

Two studies have investigated the interaction of education and income on preference and choice outcomes. Krysan and Farley (2002) report from their study that social class does matter and that Black, middle-class households want more integrated neighborhoods, even though the income and education variables are not always significant. The study also finds some city effects, but the overall approach of the study is of Blacks' willingness to move into a range of compositions of White neighborhoods rather than a study of the intersection of preferences and status. Similarly, the study of Whites who say they will leave an increasingly Black neighborhood also finds that early leavers are likely to be less educated. Both of these studies hint at the intersections of preferences and status, but the central aim of the studies was not to decompose preferences by income and education (Krysan 2002), and that is the concern at the heart of the research reported here.

The research presented in the body of this article reports on the nature of preferences across categorizations of income and education and across the four cities in the Multi-City Study of Urban Inequality. The research provides new evidence of how preferences vary by income, education, and age and of the relative roles that preferences, income, and education play in creating the likelihood of separation.

Data and Methods

The Multi-City Study of Urban Inequality collected data on a sample of Hispanic, Asian, Black, and White households in Los Angeles and Boston and Black and White households in Atlanta and Detroit. The data were collected from 1992 to 1994, and although now a decade old, they are still some of the best comparative data that have been collected on the nature of preferences for different residential compositions. The sample sizes range from 4,025 in Los Angeles to 1,800 in Boston and 1,528 in Atlanta and Detroit. The data are available online from the Inter-University Consortium for Political and Social Research at www.icpsr.umich.edu/cocoon/ICPSR/STUDY/02535. There are detailed descriptions of the variables, sample sizes, and other materials, which make the data set readily accessible.

The study asked questions across a wide range of topics about race, perceptions of tolerance, and acceptance of different ethnic and racial groups. Some of those questions have been examined in more detail in Clark (2002) and Krysan (2002). For this analysis, a central part of the study was a set of "show cards" of various racial and ethnic combinations, which asked questions about which kind of neighborhood is most attractive.

The following question about the preferences for neighborhood composition was asked of Blacks, Hispanics, and Asians:

Now I would like you to imagine that you have been looking for a house and have found a nice house you can afford. This house could be located in several different types of neighborhoods as shown on these cards. (*The cards show combinations of 15 own and other races indicated by stylized houses.*) Would you look through the cards and rearrange them so that the neighborhood that is most attractive to you is on top, the next most attractive second, and so on down the line, with the least attractive neighborhood on the bottom?

Neighborhood 1 was all Black houses, neighborhood 2 was 10 Black and 5 White (or Hispanic or Asian, as the case required in the test), neighborhood 3 was 7 Black and 8 White or other (almost a 50/50 neighborhood), neighborhood 4 was 2 Black and 13 White or other houses, and neighborhood 5, the least preferred, was all White or other neighbors.

The question for White households was asked somewhat differently. They were asked,

Now, I'd like you to imagine yourself in a different situation. Suppose you have been looking for a house and have found a nice one you can afford. This house could be located in several different types of neighborhoods, as shown on these cards (similar to those described above). Would you consider moving into any of these neighborhoods?

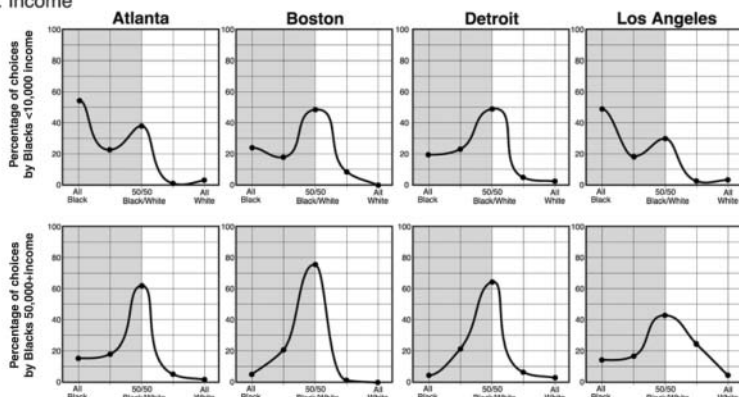
This study uses the responses to these questions to construct four analyses of preferences. First, I construct frequency distributions of Black residential preferences by income and education, and I compare these distributions using cumulative distribution curves for high and low incomes. I use the second question to construct preference distributions for Whites. Second, the study evaluates the first and second choices for African-Americans and the relative contribution of race, income, and education to understanding the potential for residential separation. Third, the analysis compares the differences in distributions for Blacks and other minority groups. Fourth, the study provides multinomial logit models of the contribution of age, education, income, and tenure to the choice outcomes.

Interpreting the Outcomes of Preference Decomposition

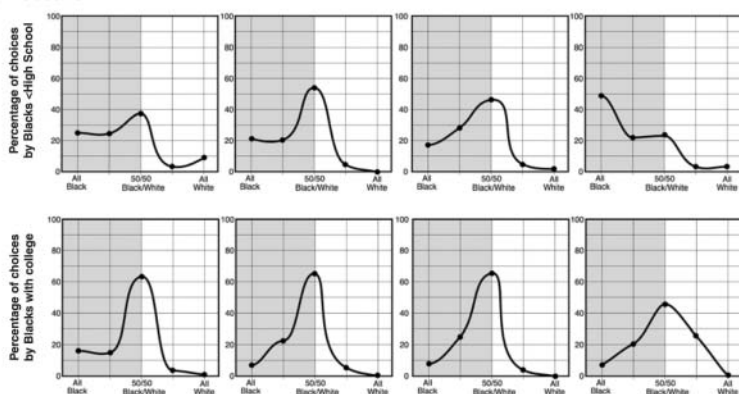
When preferences are disaggregated by income, education, and age, the distributions are subtly different. The decompositions are for income and

Figure 1
Expressed Preferences of Black Respondents
by Income and Education

a. Income



b. Education



education for Black preferences, and age is added for Whites, as we expected younger Whites to be different (more tolerant) in their preferences in contrast to older Whites. The distributions reveal a greater preference for own-race selections at incomes below \$10,000 and a tendency to reflect greater choices of 50/50 neighborhoods with higher incomes (Figure 1, Table 1). In the figure, low and high incomes only are portrayed, but the data by income categories in Table 1 show a trend to greater 50/50 choices

Table 1
First and Second Percentage Choices by Black Respondents
of Five Neighborhood Compositions by Income

Neighborhood Choice	Detroit		Atlanta		Los Angeles		Boston	
	1st	2nd	1st	2nd	1st	2nd	1st	2nd
Income <\$10k								
All Black	19.6	5.8	35.9	10.1	49.4	5.3	23.1	9.8
73/27	22.7	56.8	22.6	68.8	17.0	73.6	18.4	42.5
50/50	49.3	21.8	38.3	13.8	29.8	12.1	49.5	26.0
20/80	5.3	13.6	0.7	6.7	1.3	7.5	9.0	19.1
All White	3.2	2.0	2.6	1.6	2.5	1.6	0	2.6
Income \$10k–\$20k								
All Black	17.3	5.3	18.6	8.2	26.6	3.7	11.8	0.7
73/27	28.7	60.3	24.7	53.7	12.5	75.0	29.9	35.4
50/50	49.6	24.8	51.9	22.4	55.2	12.7	33.2	37.5
20/80	4.6	7.9	2.9	15.4	2.1	8.7	9.4	24.3
All White	0.4	1.6	1.9	0.2	3.5	0	15.7	2.2
Income \$20k–\$30k								
All Black	11.9	3.1	14.3	4.4	15.3	4.2	8.7	2.3
73/27	22.6	60.9	19.5	73.5	13.7	26.4	11.6	33.1
50/50	59.9	21.7	60.3	20.3	57.3	21.4	60.5	26.0
20/80	5.6	10.5	3.5	1.8	4.9	48.1	16.6	38.2
All White	0	3.8	2.3	0	8.8	0	2.6	0.4
Income \$30k–\$50k								
All Black	7.5	3.2	19.2	5.5	9.6	17.1	33.3	6.5
73/27	20.0	67.9	18.3	68.4	50.6	34.1	8.7	72.6
50/50	68.3	20.6	59.2	15.0	36.3	40.7	49.3	12.8
20/80	3.4	7.8	0.2	11.2	0.8	8.1	7.0	4.6
All White	0.9	0.8	3.0	0	2.7	0	1.7	3.6
Income >\$50k								
All Black	5.0	2.0	14.3	5.5	13.8	2.1	5.6	16.0
73/27	20.6	63.2	18.5	66.8	16.3	70.2	20.1	76.0
50/50	64.9	22.3	61.6	18.5	42.1	17.9	74.3	5.8
20/80	7.2	9.0	4.6	9.3	24.0	9.7	0.1	2.2
All White	2.3	3.6	1.1	0	4.0	0	0	0
Total								
All Black	13.2	3.6	21.8	6.1	21.5	6.6	15.1	7.9
73/27	21.2	61.8	20.0	66.1	19.7	55.1	19.6	48.3
50/50	59.2	21.4	53.4	18.0	46.6	20.4	52.9	21.5
20/80	5.2	10.9	2.3	9.5	8.2	17.5	7.8	20.8
All White	1.2	2.3	2.5	0.3	4.0	0.4	4.6	1.6

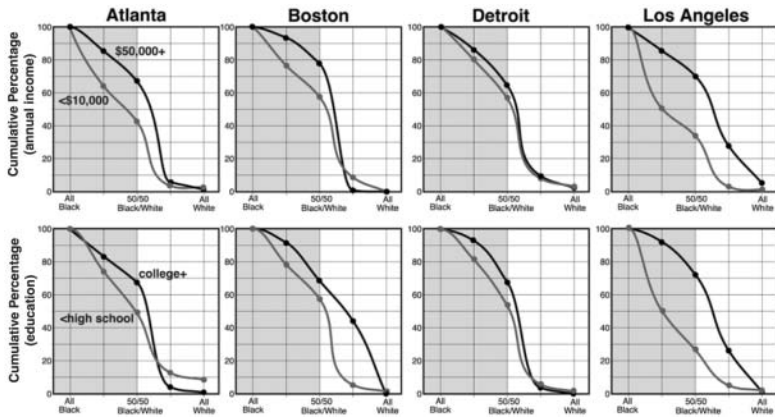
Table 2
First- and Second-Percentage Choices by Black Respondents
of Five Neighborhood Compositions by Education Level

Neighborhood Choice	Detroit		Atlanta		Los Angeles		Boston	
	1st	2nd	1st	2nd	1st	2nd	1st	2nd
<High school								
All Black	25.8	9.3	21.1	5.5	18.5	3.9	48.7	6.6
73/27	24.9	57.6	20.0	36.2	28.6	53.2	22.4	67.5
50/50	37.4	20.2	53.4	26.1	46.6	29.5	23.9	14.9
20/80	3.1	11.5	4.6	29.1	5.0	10.7	2.4	10.0
All White	8.9	1.3	0.9	0.9	1.4	2.6	2.6	1.0
High school								
All Black	28.5	5.8	13.9	7.6	12.6	3.4	11.9	2.9
73/27	20.8	62.4	15.3	53.4	17.3	66.7	21.1	43.6
50/50	46.9	19.0	52.6	17.6	62.4	17.0	56.3	27.0
20/80	1.7	12.5	11.2	21.1	6.1	9.9	4.7	26.0
All White	2.1	0.3	7.0	1.2	1.7	3.1	6.0	0.5
Some college								
All Black	10.9	7.7	14.5	3.4	12.1	6.1	44.9	13.0
73/27	20.7	67.4	40.5	40.4	19.1	64.1	10.4	62.2
50/50	66.4	15.2	40.9	37.1	66.1	17.2	36.4	11.8
20/80	0.3	9.7	0	19.1	2.7	12.7	5.8	13.0
All White	1.7	0	4.1	0	0	0	2.5	0
College								
All Black	16.4	4.2	7.8	19.8	6.4	2.7	7.1	12.0
73/27	15.5	75.7	22.4	62.6	24.7	56.3	20.7	72.0
50/50	63.7	16.0	65.5	16.1	65.1	26.7	46.2	12.9
20/80	3.7	4.1	4.3	0	3.8	13.9	25.1	3.0
All White	0.8	0	0	1.5	0	0.4	0.9	0

with increasing income. For the lowest incomes, the choice of 50/50 is lower than the choices for more Black in Atlanta and Los Angeles, dramatically so in Los Angeles. The choices of 50/50 compositions are nearly balanced by choices for all Black and 73% Black in Boston and Detroit.

Not surprisingly, given the association between education and income, the outcomes we see for income are repeated for education—again, the distributions concentrate over 50/50 choices as income increases. However, the detailed data in Table 2 report some anomalies in the outcomes by education. It is correct that the lowest education levels have the highest own-race choices and the proportion choosing 50/50 neighborhoods increases with income, but in both Boston and Atlanta, high school respondents report strong preferences for 50/50 neighborhoods, while some college

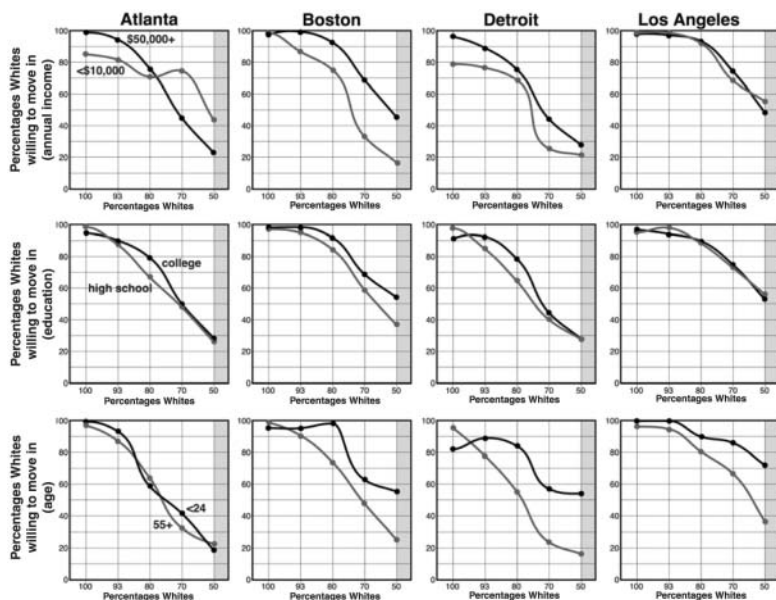
Figure 2
Cumulative Expressed Preferences by Income and Education



respondents report lower preferences for 50/50 neighborhoods. Further work may explain this anomaly, but for now, we might conclude that it is city specific and that it reiterates the complexity of geographic outcomes on these measures.

One way to both capture the role of income and education and provide a visual expression of the differences between the lowest and highest incomes is to report the data as cumulative curves of the preferences (Figure 2). The cumulative curves show the difference in the two distributions, and the separation of the curves at the 50/50 neighborhood choice is a measure of the reported differential response by income. For example, in Los Angeles, where the difference in the two curves is quite large, higher-income respondents are markedly more likely to express preferences for White neighborhoods. Across all cities except Detroit, higher-income and college-educated Black households uniformly select more White compositions than do lower-income households and households with less than a high school education. If we read the curves from right to left, from more White to less White combinations, for high-income and more-educated responses, all the cities show near 70% choices of White or 50/50 neighborhoods, while the less-than-high-school and under \$10,000 distributions have the opposite distributional outcome. That said, the tables show that the biggest difference is between the lowest-income respondents and the other groups.

Figure 3
White Expressed Preferences by Income, Education, and Age



How do White expressed preferences compare to Black preferences when they are decomposed by income, education, and age? Are there different outcomes by income, education, and age for White likelihoods of being willing to move into neighborhoods with Black residents? With some city-specific variations (Los Angeles and Atlanta), income and age play important defining roles in the willingness of Whites to move into mixed neighborhoods (Figure 3). In both Boston and Detroit, although at considerably higher ratios in Boston, higher-income households are willing to move into 70% White neighborhoods (that is, 30% Black neighborhoods). Atlanta has a crossover effect (it occurs at about 80% own race) in which high-income Whites are unwilling to move into 30% Black neighborhoods, and in Los Angeles, there is virtually no difference across the two income categories. For education in Los Angeles, the distributions are much closer and there is no crossover effect, nor is there one in Atlanta.

We can interpret the outcomes in Atlanta and Los Angeles (especially the latter) as exhibiting greater racial tolerance, which cuts across income

and may well reflect the long-time diversity of the city. The proportions that are willing to move into mixed-race neighborhoods are higher than for other cities and could also reflect the housing-market affordability and the willingness of Whites to explore mixed, and at one time cheaper, housing. The Atlanta crossover is also likely a reaction to housing affordability. Those households that can buy greater separation are expressing that choice in the Atlanta outcome, while lower-income households are expressing a willingness to choose mixed-race neighborhoods and possibly less expensive neighborhoods. Clearly, the results are a confirmation of the Harris (1999) finding that location and the characteristics of neighborhoods (and cities, we can add) are important in the nature of the outcomes.

The distributions by age are expected (Figure 3). Younger White households are willing to choose neighborhoods with 30% Black households in Los Angeles, Detroit, and Boston. The results for Atlanta reflect the complication of race in southern cities. There is no difference between young and old households, and relatively low percentages of White households (compared to other cities) are willing to select mixed-race neighborhoods.

Own-Race Black Choices

The study uses the second choices of African-Americans to evaluate own-race preference versus preference for an integrated neighborhood. The way in which Blacks make choices is central to the discussion of whether it is their choices that perpetuate segregation and is also important with respect to debates about the role of White hostility. In this section, I examine first and second choices of African-Americans, decomposed by income.

There is an important story embedded in the changing patterns of first and second choices. First, it is clear that African-Americans uniformly select more own-race neighborhoods than more White neighborhoods in their second choices, and this is true across income and education, again with the exception of Los Angeles (Tables 1 and 2). It has been suggested that the tendency to more own-race choice can be, in fact, a continuing Black preference for integration. The data come from a fixed-choice, show-card experiment in which respondents choose one of five neighborhoods, each with 14 houses—in addition to their own—that are colored Black or White. The first choice for most African-Americans, the 50/50 choice, was most preferred (actually, it is 53% own race). The second choice can be either a 73% Black neighborhood or a 20% Black neighborhood (with respect to Black/White composition). These contrasting outcomes can be

interpreted either as a Black respondent's expressing a desire to live with more of his or her own race or a preference for racial integration, in which case it has to be the 73/27% Black/White response, which is the closest response to a 50/50 choice. The second choice is in fact between a White or Black neighborhood. We can interpret the outcome as the resilience of the preference for integrated living or a preference for a more "comfortable" own-race neighborhood setting. However, whether it is an expression for integrated living or not, it is still a preference for more households of similar race.

Still, there is evidence for a preference for integrated living in some contexts, as can be demonstrated by examining the choices of middle-income (\$20,000 to \$30,000 in 1994 at the time of the survey) responses in two situations (Tables 1 and 2). Overall, the choices repeatedly privilege combinations with more African-Americans, but in Boston and Los Angeles, the "middle class" first selections, which were primarily 50/50, are evenly split between 73/27 and 20/80 Black/White. In fact, the choices in these two cities for this income group (although they are not replicated by education) suggest a real willingness to select "White areas." While this is strong evidence for potential integrative selections, it also reiterates the role of income. It is lower middle-income groups that are making these selections, suggesting that income matters in the choice outcomes. We cannot push this argument too far, as the high-income selections replicate lower-income choices of predominantly Black compositions. But even where the second choices are split between alternate expressions of integration, nearly two-thirds of choices are for 50/50 choices or more Black neighbors. It is this finding that helps us understand the complex interplay between White and Black choices. Whites will not choose combinations that are much less than 70% White, and Blacks are providing preference choices in the main of 50/50 or more African-American; thus, the findings reiterate that both Whites and Blacks are parties to the continuing separation. Even though it would be unrealistic to discount White prejudice, the outcomes of continuing separation are not being driven by Whites alone.

Comparing the Relative Role of Race, Income, and Education in Preferences

The data in Tables 1 and 2 can be used to provide an assessment of the relative role of income, education, and race in the way in which preferences may be played out in the choice process. The analysis cannot provide a

Table 3
Measuring the Effects of Income, Education,
and Race in Preference Outcomes

City	Income Effects	Education Effects	Own-Race Effects	Ratio Income/ Race Effects
Atlanta	25.7	18.8	30.4	1.18
Boston	15.8	10.9	21.4	1.35
Detroit	16.7	16.0	31.0	1.86
Los Angeles	36.3	43.9	20.5	0.56

Source: Data from the Multi-City Study of Urban Inequality, author's calculations.

definitive statement about income versus own-race selectivity, but it is possible to provide some broad parameters of their relative roles as forces in creating and sustaining residential separation. If we combine the proportion of the respondents who choose all Black and majority Black—preferences for all or mostly own race for high and low income and for less and more education—and take the difference, we can use it as a measure of the power of income and education.² Similarly, it is possible to compute the difference of the proportion of Blacks who choose all Black and predominately Black as a first choice without decomposition by income and education (the last panel in Table 1) as a measure of the tendency to favor own-race selectivity.³ Of course, income and education are intertwined and we cannot identify the contribution of each of these separately, but they do provide a relative measure compared to race. With these statistics, albeit not truly independent, it is possible to provide a broad interpretation of the relative roles of income, education, and race (Table 3).

The percentage difference for high and low income and high and low education range from 10.9 and 15.8 (Boston) to 36.3 and 43.9 (Los Angeles). There are bigger differences in Los Angeles and Atlanta than in Boston and Detroit. The first-level conclusion is that education and income matter more in Atlanta and Los Angeles than in the other cities. At the same time, the tendency to select own race is higher in Atlanta and Detroit, so there is no simple relationship across cities. However, it is the comparative effect of income and education versus own-race choices that is of most interest in this analysis. Assuming that education and income are relatively close surrogates for socioeconomic status, we can compare the shifts in the distribution for those measures versus the measure for race effects. Clearly, socioeconomic status is important, as demonstrated by the percentage measure of race perception effects. Moreover, the outcomes for Los Angeles tell

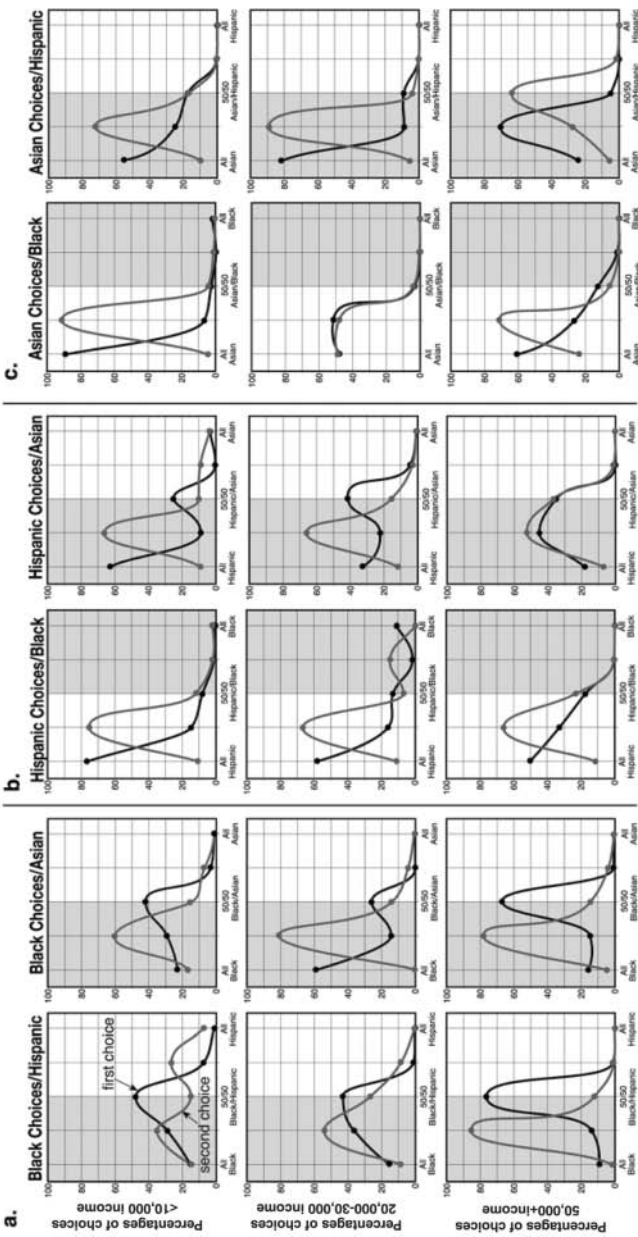
an appealing story about race and class effects across the cities. In Los Angeles, income/education has nearly twice the effect of race on the shape of the distribution. Income effects are more important than the perception of race in Boston, slightly less important in Atlanta, and have only about half the effects in Detroit. This is consistent with a view that the perception of race is significantly more important in Detroit, somewhat more so in Atlanta, but less important in Boston and a lot less important in Los Angeles. Los Angeles is the most ethnically diverse city and perhaps the most tolerant of the four cities, followed by Boston, Atlanta, and Detroit. The outcomes are consistent with our intuitive interpretations of race relations across these cities. Race perceptions and preferences vary across cities and substantially by income and education. The large difference in the distribution outcomes for Los Angeles can be arguably interpreted as a function of the shift to a preference for more integrated settings.

Choices in Multiethnic Settings

Attempts to provide explanations for underlying patterns of separation often invoke White hostility. What is the evidence of White hostility? I examine multiethnic responses of Hispanics, Blacks, and Asians to White plus other combinations to throw light on this issue.

How do Blacks select combinations when viewing combinations with other groups, and how do those groups make choices in response to combinations of their race or ethnicity and Blacks? Using data from Los Angeles from the Multi-City Study of Urban Inequality, I construct distributions of first and second choices of Blacks, Hispanics, and Asians for other racial and ethnic groups. Black first and second choices for combinations of Blacks and Hispanics are similar to those for Black/White combinations (Figure 4). The initial 50/50 choices are shifted to the left, to more Black in each case except for low-income outcomes, which are bifurcated and may reflect the impact of the rapidly changing actual neighborhoods in Los Angeles. The patterns for Black choices of Black/Asian combinations are again similar, although middle-income choices tend to majority back and shift toward 73% Black for second choices. Blacks are reacting to combinations of Black and other race or ethnicity in a manner similar to their reaction to Black/White combinations, which raises questions if not doubts about the notion of White hostility. A more likely interpretation, consistent with my arguments about own-race selectivity, is that African-Americans are reacting to all groups in preferring to be in the near majority or majority, and few selections identify nonmajority combinations.

Figure 4
Multiethnic Preferences by Income for Blacks, Hispanics, and Asians



Note: The titles refer to Black (or Hispanic or Asian) choices for a combination of own race and the other race or ethnicity identified in the title.

Further light on these outcomes is contained in the data on the choices by Hispanics and Asians. Hispanic choices for combinations of Hispanics and Blacks and choices of Hispanics and Asians reverse the first and second choices. Nearly universally (except that middle-income Hispanic choices of Asians show the recurring pattern of a shift to the left), Hispanics have a preference for majority Hispanic as first choices and 73/27 combinations of Hispanic and others for second choices (Figure 4). There are minor variations, but the powerful conclusion is that there is strong own-race preference without referring to White hostility in the choices made by these groups. When we turn to Asian choices of Black and Hispanic combinations, the patterns are more mixed. Still, Asian choices tend toward first choices of all Asian and second choices of 73/27 ratios of own and other races. These results suggest that we treat with caution any wholesale appeal to White hostility in the choices that we see in the Los Angeles context. It does seem, in multiethnic situations, that the choices reveal strong own-race myopia across racial and ethnic groups. Additionally, income matters in the likelihood of selecting own-race combinations. For Hispanics' and Asians' choices of varying combinations of either Asians or Hispanics, the graphs show a decline in own-race choice with increasing income—a decline that is more rapid for some combinations than others, but they do decline. That they do not decline for Black choices is further evidence of the powerful own-race selectivity in the choices by Blacks.

Models of Selection

The final analysis examines predictions of own-race combinations by income, education, and age, controlling for tenure. This analysis focuses on Los Angeles, where the sample sizes are sufficient to conduct multinomial logit models of choice across the race and ethnic combinations (Table 4). The choices are grouped into four categories: own race, mostly own race, 50/50 (the reference group), and majority other race. I examine choices of Blacks, Hispanics, and Asians. It is not possible to construct a parallel logit model for Whites, as the question was not asked in the same manner. The model includes the variables used in the preference decomposition—income, education, and age—and tenure is added as an additional measure of status.

Overall, the results provide support for the role of income (in one case, tenure, probably as a surrogate for income) and age. Education, as measured by college education, does not generate significant effects on the

Table 4
Multinomial Logit Outcomes of Choices by Blacks,
Hispanics, and Asians in Los Angeles

Effect	Black Choice of White		Black Choice of Hispanic		Hispanic Choice of White		Hispanic Choice of Asian		Asian Choice of White		Asian Choice of Black	
	Coeff.	Sig.	Coeff.	Sig.	Coeff.	Sig.	Coeff.	Sig.	Coeff.	Sig.	Coeff.	Sig.
Age	10.54	.015	4.82	.186	1.41	.703	1.86	.601	13.00	.005	9.22	.027
Family Income	1.35	.717	0.54	.910	14.92	.002	15.04	.002	8.50	.037	1.99	.574
College	1.39	.708	3.00	.391	1.91	.592	4.58	.205	3.49	.322	1.32	.724
Tenure (own)	2.52	.472	7.02	.071	2.17	.539	2.97	.397	4.95	.175	3.30	.347

Source: Data from the Multi-City Study of Urban Inequality, author's calculations.

Note: The choice is more own race, less own race, 50/50, other ethnicity race. The 50/50 choice is the referent group. No significant effects for Black choices of Asian and Hispanic choices of Black combinations.

choice patterns. There is general support for the arguments provided in the descriptive and distributional analysis in the previous sections. For Black choices of Whites, older respondents are less likely to choose integrated neighborhoods, and relative to Hispanics, the choices are more likely to favor 50/50 choices if they are owners—clearly an income effect. Hispanic choices for White neighbors are income related. With more income, they are likely to choose 50/50 combinations. With respect to Asian neighborhoods, Hispanics do not choose 50/50 combinations, even with more income. This can be seen as a preference for own-race combinations even in the light of income effects. Asian choices are clearly influenced by age. For choices of White combinations, they choose the reference category, 50/50, at younger ages and are less likely to choose predominantly Asian neighbors with more income. For combinations with Black neighbors, only choices by younger respondents show any tendency to integrated 50/50 combinations.

Conclusions and Observations

The findings in this article and the contribution of the article can be summed up quite simply. Preferences are fundamental in creating the patterns of separation in the residential fabric, but those preferences are modified substantially by education and income. That preferences are fundamental is without question, but we see how as income and education increase, the probability of choosing a more integrated residential setting also increases.

At the same time, the fact that Blacks rarely prefer settings in which they are less than 50% is a fundamental factor in continuing separation. This finding provides additional evidence to support other research that has also drawn attention to the fact that residential separation is not just an outcome of White choices.

The article has demonstrated that White, and in the case of Los Angeles, Asian and Hispanic preferences also play fundamental roles in the outcomes. To argue that it is only White preferences that create separation in metropolitan areas is to miss the fundamental dynamic across Black and White choices and across Black choices and the choices by other races and ethnicities. The analysis of choices by Hispanics and Asians in the Los Angeles context provides another cautionary note in continuing to apportion the explanation of separation to White hostility.⁴ The continuing separation of race and ethnicity is not simply attributable to White racism and White hostility. Rather, continuing separation is a complex outcome of preferences, tempered by income and education, for different combinations of own and other races and ethnicities.

Notes

1. It is worth reiterating something that often gets lost in the heat of debates about the reasons for residential separation. In no sense should we expect a single-factor explanation for residential separation; we would not expect preferences *alone* or housing affordability *alone* or discrimination *alone* to explain the patterns of separation (Clark 2002).

2. As an illustration, for Los Angeles, the value for income is $(17.0 + 49.4) - (13.8 + 16.3) = 36.3$. There are other ways of assessing the differences between the curves, but this is transparent and straightforward.

3. Here, the calculation, again for Los Angeles, is $(21.5 + 19.7) - (6.6 + 55.1) = 20.5$.

4. Invariably, the argument of White racism is dismissed as a straw man, but indeed, a variety of authors continue to invoke this, and White hostility, as explanations for residential separation (Denton 1996; Dawkins 2004).

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