

Extended Abstract¹

Whites' Residential Preferences in a Multi-Ethnic Context: Likes, Dislikes, and the Reasons Why

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Introduction. The role of residential preferences in shaping patterns of racial residential segregation has been the topic of considerable debate. Two trends characterize recent scholarship on this topic: increasing attention to the factors that shape preferences (e.g., race versus class; in-group attraction versus out-group avoidance) and the development of measures that can gauge preferences in a nation that is becoming increasingly diverse. This paper seeks to contribute to both of these efforts by reporting the results of an extension and expansion of Charles' (2006) 'draw your own neighborhood' measure of residential preferences, which was one of the first techniques developed to gauge residential preferences in a multi-ethnic context. In Charles' approach, respondents were presented with a card showing 15 houses and they were asked to draw their 'ideal neighborhood racial composition' by filling in the houses with either white, black, Latino or Asian neighbors. We build on her work by (1) asking respondents to draw both their most and least desirable neighborhood racial composition; (2) including Arab Americans among the possible neighbors; and (3) asking respondents, in an open-ended follow-up question, why they like or dislike the neighborhood they constructed. With these extensions, we believe we can add significantly to what we know about the patterns and contours of whites' residential preferences.

By asking about both most and least desirable neighborhoods, we seek to overcome some of the social desirability pressures in the original question—where pre-survey focus groups and in-depth interviews suggested that respondents felt some obligation to create diverse neighborhoods to not violate norms of tolerance and openness to racial/ethnic diversity. By including Arab Americans as possible neighbors, we are including a racial/ethnic group that, in the post-9/11 context, has taken on greater significance. And by asking respondents to explain, in their own words, why they drew the neighborhood that they did, we seek to both better-understand how respondents interpret the question they are answering, as well as the reasons behind their choices. The latter will speak to persistent theoretical debates about the factors—prejudice, ethnocentrism, social class perceptions, etc.—that shape whites' residential preferences.

Data and Methods. Our analysis is based on data from the 2004-2005 Chicago Area Study (Krysan et al. 2005), a face-to-face multi-stage area probability sample of adults 21 years and older living in households in Cook County, Illinois. Cook County (which includes the city of Chicago), was first stratified by racial/ethnic composition, based on counts from the 2000 Census, and over-samples were drawn of African Americans, Latinos, and those living in racially mixed neighborhoods. A total of 789 interviews were completed in Chicago, with a 45%

¹ Submitted to be considered for inclusion in the program of the 2010 Annual Meeting of the Population Association of America.

overall response rate.² However, for this paper we limit our analysis to the 257 non-Hispanic white respondents. Interviews were conducted from August 2004 through August 2005. All analyses use a weight that incorporates a selection weight and an adjustment for nonresponse (which was the inverse of the response rate in each primary sampling unit).

To measure racial residential preferences, we used a modification of Charles' (2006) technique. Respondents were given a card (see Figure 1), and told: "Now I would like you to imagine an ideal neighborhood that had the ethnic and racial mix you personally would feel most comfortable in. Here is a blank neighborhood card. Using the letters W for white, B for Black, H for Hispanic, AS for Asian American and AR for Arab American, please put a letter in each of these houses to represent your ideal neighborhood where you would most like to live. Please be sure to fill in all the houses." After filling in their card, the interviewer asked the respondents the following open-ended question: "Looking at the neighborhood you have created, please tell me what makes this an ideal racial and ethnic mix to you."

To measure the least desired neighborhood racial composition, respondents were then given a second card, and told: "Now I would like you to do the same sort of thing, except this time I would like you to construct a neighborhood that has the racial and ethnic mix that you would feel least comfortable in. Use the same letters to identify the race/ethnicity of each house." Again, they were probed for their reasons why, through the following open-ended question: "Looking at the neighborhood you just drew, can you tell me why you would feel least comfortable in this kind of neighborhood?" The responses to the open-ended question were collected in up to two ways. First, interviewers were instructed to type the responses, verbatim, into the laptop computer on which the interview was conducted. Second, for respondents who gave consent, a digital recorder was automatically activated for this entire set of questions, so that we obtained audio files of the exact responses provided by the respondent (with the exception of instances of poor recording quality). The audio files were transcribed and used in conjunction with the interviewer recorded responses to code the themes that were present in each of the responses.

In order to summarize—and typologize—the kinds of neighborhoods that were drawn by respondents, we conducted a two-step cluster analysis (Norušis 2010). The variables used to generate the clusters were the percent white, percent African American, percent Arab American, percent Asian American, and percent Hispanic in the respondent's most or least desired neighborhood. Using the resulting sets of clusters (one for the most desired racial composition and one for the least desired racial composition) as our dependent variables, we first describe the average racial composition of the most/least desired neighborhood within each cluster. This allows us to readily summarize the kinds of neighborhoods that individuals drew. We then use either binomial or multinomial logistic regression to identify the social and demographic factors associated with drawing particular neighborhood racial compositions. Lastly, we cross-tabulate the themes coded in the open-ended questions describing how people explained their choices (the coding process is described below) with the type of neighborhood drawn in order to identify patterns in the reasons behind a respondent's most/least desired neighborhood.

Coding of the open ended data was completed by two trained graduate research assistants. A complex, thematic and geometric coding scheme was developed inductively but was informed by theory. After several iterations involving several rounds of test coding, the coding scheme

² This response rate is calculated based on AAPOR standards and we report RR4, the calculation of which is described in Standard Definitions: Final Dispositions of Case Codes and Outcome Rates for Surveys, Revised 2008 (AAPOR).

was finalized. The two graduate assistants independently coded all responses, then made comparisons and ultimately reconciled any differences.

Preliminary Results.

Most Desirable Neighborhood.

The results of our two-step cluster analysis of the racial composition of respondent's most desirable neighborhood revealed a two-cluster solution (based on the size and change in the BIC between adjacent clusters). Despite the great variety of possible neighborhoods that respondents can draw, we find that just two main types emerge in our data: (1) all-white neighborhoods; and (2) racially diverse neighborhoods. As Table 1 shows, about one-third of white Chicago residents (see last column) drew an all-white neighborhood as their ideal racial composition; the other two-thirds drew a variety of differently diverse neighborhoods, but Table 1 shows that the modal group in the most desired neighborhood was whites (this cluster had an average of 37% white residents). Although Arabs were the smallest percentage (14%) of the average ideal 'mixed' neighborhood, they were not much smaller than the other three groups (African Americans, Hispanics, and Asians). Respondents clearly create neighborhoods with racial compositions that they are unlikely to reside in themselves—given the paucity of such integrated neighborhoods in metropolitan Chicago. We are struck by two patterns. First, we find initial evidence of a norm of diversity that this measurement tool may be capturing; we anticipate the analysis of the open-ended explanations, as well as the quantitative analysis of the predictors of who falls into which cluster, will shed further light on this observation. Nevertheless, it is also noteworthy that 1 out of 3 whites is comfortable drawing a virtually completely white neighborhood as their ideal.

Least Desirable Neighborhood

The results of the two-step cluster analysis for the least desirable neighborhood card show substantially more variety in the kinds of neighborhoods respondents drew. Based on the BIC statistics, we obtain a five cluster solution. Based on the average racial composition of those in each cluster, we have labeled the neighborhoods as "All"³ white, "All" Arab American, "All" Black, Mixed, and Mixed Black/Hispanic. A very small percentage of white respondents drew an "All" white neighborhood as their least desirable neighborhood (4%); somewhat more (10%) drew an "All" Arab American neighborhood. It is the remaining three neighborhood types—the "All" black, mixed, and Mixed black/Hispanic—where the majority of respondents fall. It is interesting to note that whereas the neighborhood we labeled "mixed" in the "desirable" analysis, above, had whites as the modal group in the neighborhood, the "mixed" neighborhood for the least desirable neighborhood looks quite different. This least populous group is whites, and the remaining residents are approximately evenly distributed across the other four racial/ethnic groups. We also find it of great interest that the mixed black/Hispanic neighborhood was the cluster into which most respondent's neighborhoods fell. We look forward to the analyses of the open-ended questions as providing valuable insight into how these different neighborhoods are viewed similarly or differently.

³ We use "all" in quotation marks to acknowledge that the neighborhoods are clearly not 100% of any of these racial groups; but in each case, the racial/ethnic group vastly predominates in the neighborhoods.

Progress and Plans for the Remainder of the Paper.

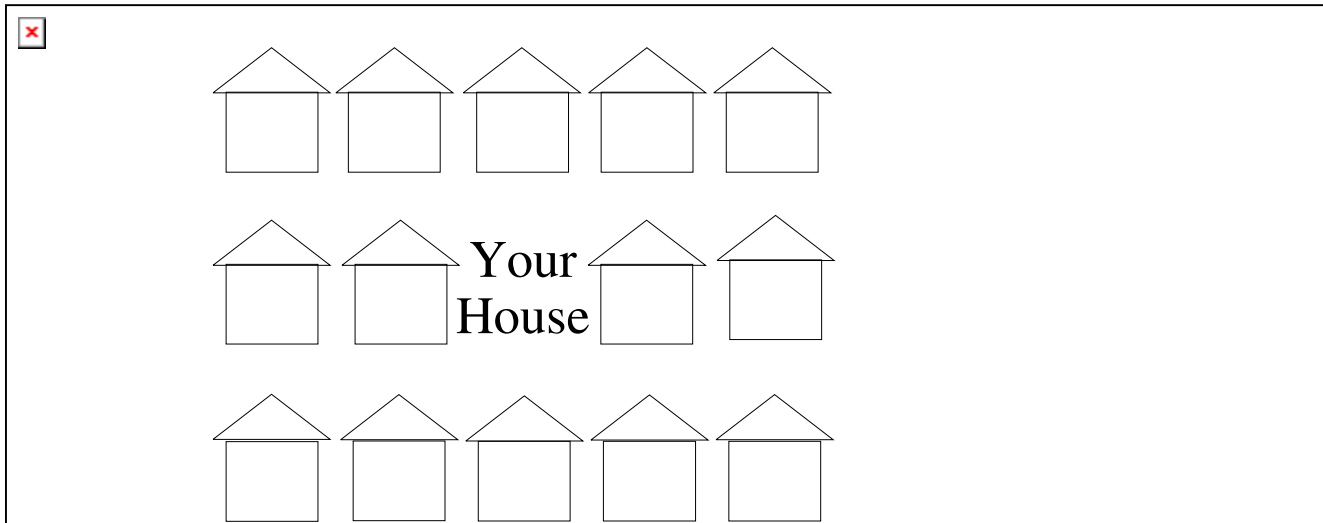
Our next steps are to conduct the binomial (for most desirable) and multinomial (for least desirable) logistic regression analyses, where the clusters for most and least desirable neighborhoods will constitute the dependent variables (in separate models). This will allow us to answer the general question of who draws what kind of most and least desirable neighborhood racial compositions. Key independent variables will include age, education, housing tenure, gender, presence of children in the household, racial composition of the respondent's neighborhood, and perhaps others.

We will then analyze the open-ended responses. At this point, all open-ended data have been transcribed and coded into the thematic and geometric coding scheme. The central themes identified in the coding scheme include: negative and positive feelings and cognitions toward racial groups (racial stereotypes); neighborhood characteristics; feelings about how in-groups and out-groups would treat the respondent; principles of diversity; and perceptions of cultural similarities/dissimilarities. As noted, we will present cross-tabulations between the themes mentioned by the respondent in explaining why they like/dislike the neighborhood and the neighborhood type that is drawn (which cluster their neighborhood fell into). We will compare and contrast the themes that emerge for different neighborhood clusters.

Table 1. Two-step cluster analysis results and mean racial composition in most and least desired neighborhoods by clusters, white respondents, 2004-2005 Chicago Area Study.

Cluster (Neighborhood Type)	% White in N'hood	% Black in N'hood	% Hisp. in N'hood	% Arab in N'hood	% Asian in N'hood	% of Respondents in Cluster
Panel A. Most Desirable Neighborhood						
"All" White	86%	3%	3%	1%	6%	33%
Mixed	37%	20%	18%	14%	18%	67
						100%
Panel B. Least Desirable Neighborhood						
"All" White	99%	0%	0%	1%	0%	4%
"All" Arab American	0%	1%	1%	97%	1%	10
"All" Black	2%	82%	4%	9%	1%	19
Mixed	16%	22%	17%	23%	22%	27
Mixed Black & Hispanic	7%	41%	38%	13%	1%	39
						100%

Figure 1. Example of the 'draw your neighborhood' card used in 2004-2005 CAS.



W=White B=Black H=Hispanic
AS=Asian American AR=Arab American