PAA 2015 Extended Abstract
September 25, 2014

Staying Close: Proximity to Kin and Patterns of Residential Mobility in Poor Neighborhoods

Elizabeth Ackert, *University of Washington*
Amy Spring, *Georgia State University*
Kyle Crowder, *University of Washington*
Scott J. South, *University at Albany, SUNY*

Introduction

Research on neighborhood mobility patterns has not fully accounted for how families' and individuals' propensity to move out of or into a neighborhood of a particular socioeconomic or demographic composition is influenced by proximity to kin. Previous research has demonstrated that families and individuals frequently move to be closer to family members (Dahl and Sorenson 2010; Geist and McManus 2008; Long 1988) and that having many local kinship ties can deter moving (e.g., Boyd 2008; Dawkins 2006; Kan 2007). However, previous work has not investigated the interplay between neighborhood composition, the location of kin, and patterns of residential mobility. Indeed, several scholars have recently called for more fully integrating the location of kin into theoretical and empirical models of internal migration (Cooke 2008; Mulder 2007; Mulder and Cooke 2009). In addition, the Population Association of America has explicitly called for research on how family considerations, especially proximity to kin, influence "location/migration behavior" (PAA 2010, p. 3).

In this project, we use the Panel Study of Income Dynamics from 1968 to 2011 and tract-level decennial census data to examine the association between proximity to kin and patterns of mobility among individuals residing in poor neighborhoods. We test the hypothesis that non-movers in poor neighborhoods are "rooted in place" by close proximity to kin. We evaluate the bivariate association between proximity to kin groups and mobility in poor and in non-poor neighborhoods. We then use multilevel statistical models to determine how background factors that shape overall residential mobility patterns, including race/ethnicity, socioeconomic status, and characteristics of the local metropolitan area, influence the relationship between proximity to kin and mobility in poor neighborhoods. Additionally, we explore whether factors such as race/ethnicity and age moderate the relationship between proximity to kin and mobility among those in poor neighborhoods.

Residential Mobility, Neighborhood Socioeconomic Composition, and Proximity to Kin

Prevailing models of residential mobility have helped to highlight the roles that individual, household, and contextual factors play in generating patterns of residential segregation within metropolitan areas. These frameworks, however, have not accounted

for how kin networks may influence differences in residential mobility by neighborhood composition.

The spatial assimilation model points to socioeconomic resources as key determinants of residential mobility. The spatial assimilation perspective posits that individuals will try to "match" their own socioeconomic status with that of their neighborhood, using to the extent possible their human capital and other endowments to purchase residence in the most desirable neighborhood. Residential mobility from impoverished to non-impoverished neighborhoods is considered to be a natural consequence of more general processes of social and economic mobility, especially for minorities and immigrants (Massey and Denton 1985).

Place stratification models focus more centrally on how race influences patterns of residential mobility. Place stratification models of neighborhood attainment draw attention to the barriers to residential mobility faced by black residents, especially in the form of housing discrimination (Fischer and Massey 2004; Galster 1991; Galster and Keeney 1988; Massey and Denton 1993; Yinger 1995). The discriminatory practices of real estate agents (Pearce 1979; Yinger 1995), local governments (Shlay and Rossi 1981), and mortgage lenders (Shlay 1988; Squires and Kim 1995) create a racially segmented housing market that obstructs the mobility aspirations of African Americans, especially for those wishing to move to racially integrated and/or middle-class neighborhoods. White stereotyping of, and hostility towards, black residents, as well as whites' unwillingness to share neighborhoods with minority residents, may also impede blacks' migration into racially-mixed or predominantly white neighborhoods (Crowder 2000; Farley et al. 1994; Krysan 2002; Krysan and Farley 2002; Harris 1999; 2001; Quillian 2002; Quillian and Pager 2001; Wilson and Taub 2006).

While the spatial assimilation and place stratification models of locational attainment identify important influences on individuals' ability to move between neighborhoods of varying socioeconomic and racial/ethnic composition, they tend to treat migration decision-makers as isolated, independent agents, largely disconnected from extended kin and other social networks. As a consequence, research in these traditions has paid little attention to how the geographic location of kin affects the likelihood of moving between different types of neighborhoods.

The residential satisfaction perspective (Speare 1974; Speare et al. 1975) and the modifications and extensions of that framework (Bach and Smith 1977; Landale and Guest 1985; Newman and Duncan 1979; Rossi 1980) speaks more directly to how personal and life-course variables can influence mobility, either directly or indirectly, by affecting the level of satisfaction with the housing unit and the local neighborhood. Age, marital status, the presence of children, and home ownership are among the most prominent predictors of residential mobility implicated by this approach. The geographic location of kin figures indirectly in this perspective, insofar as the presence of kin may provide social and financial support and resources that bind individuals to their current neighborhood (Dawkins 2006). Having kin living nearby may also increase neighborhood satisfaction (Logan and Spitze 1994) and thus deter out-migration (Lee et al. 1994). Beyond this, however, the residential satisfaction perspective fails to speak to how the location of kin influences the propensity to migrate between neighborhoods of varying socioeconomic and racial composition.

We focus on proximity to kin as a factor that could influence mobility patterns among residents in poor neighborhoods. Previous research shows that the desire to be geographically close to kin can serve as a "pull" factor for families and individuals that move (Dahl and Sorenson 2010; Geist and McManus 2008; Long 1988), and that local kinship ties can serve as a deterrent for moving out of a neighborhood (e.g., Boyd 2008; Dawkins 2006; Kan 2007). Data from the Annual Housing Survey (AHS) also shows that proximity to kin plays a prominent role in migration decision-making (U.S. Bureau of the Census 2011). Omitting respondents who reported "other reasons" or "all reasons equal" (as well as those who didn't report a reason), 22% of all respondents in the AHS reported that convenience to relatives or friends was the main reason for choosing their current neighborhood, which is second in importance only to convenience to job (31%).

Research Questions and Hypotheses

In this paper, we focus on proximity to kin and the propensity to move among residents living in poor neighborhoods. We test the following hypotheses:

Hypothesis 1: Within poor neighborhoods, closer geographic proximity to kin decreases the propensity of an individual to move from his/her current residence.

Hypothesis 2: The influence of proximity to kin on mobility in poor neighborhoods is moderated by background factors that are associated with patterns of residential mobility, including race/ethnicity, socioeconomic status, and age.

Data, Sample, Measures, and Methods

We use data from the Panel Study of Income Dynamics (PSID) for the years 1968 to 201l and tract-level decennial census data. The PSID is a well-known longitudinal survey of U.S. residents and their families. Begun in 1968, members of the initial panel of approximately 5,000 families (about 18,000 individuals) were interviewed annually until 1997 and biennially thereafter. New families have been added to the panel as children and other members of original panel families form their own households.

We use the PSID's supplemental Geospatial Match Files to link the addresses of individual PSID respondents at each annual (or biennial) interview to corresponding census codes for census tracts and other levels of geographic aggregation. This information allows us to construct neighborhood-level measures for both PSID respondents and their kin. The individual-level PSID data contain a variable indicating the extended family to which each respondent is linked. We used this variable, in combination with an identifier for each respondent's parents from the 2011 update of the "Parent Identification" file, to define kinship groups. Therefore, all kinship groups are inferred based off of the initial parent/child relationship defined in the Parent ID file. In this way, we are able link individual-level neighborhood information with neighborhood information on each member of a kinship group.

We restrict the analysis to PSID householders from 1968 to 2011. The final sample includes approximately 254,900 householder-year observations. Poor neighborhoods are defined as census tracts that have approximately 20% or more

residents living at or below the poverty level. In future analyses, we will check the sensitivity of our results to this classification. Mobility out of the neighborhood is measured from time *t* to *t + 1*. For this research, only moves out of the census tract are coded as mobility out of the neighborhood.

Our dataset includes information on the geographic location of multiple kin groups, including parents, children, and other relatives. In this analysis, we focus on four main kin groups: All kin, parent/s, child/ren, and "other" relatives (non-parent, non-children). We record the total number of kin in each group, and the proximity to each member of the group. For each kin group, we construct a measure of average proximity to kin that divides the total distance to kin (in miles) by the total number of kin within that group. For instance, for an individual with three children, we sum the total distance to each child and divide by three. Individuals who do not have any kin within a given category, or whose kin locations are missing, receive a value of missing on the kin distance variable of interest. As might be expected, the distributions for proximity to kin are heavily right-skewed. For this reason, we present both the mean and median average distance to kin in descriptive statistics. In future analyses, we plan to create "bins" for proximity to kin, and count the number of kin that fall within a certain geographic distance from the householder.

[Table 1 about here]

Table 1 presents weighted descriptive statistics for the overall PSID householder-year sample and the PSID householder-year sample in poor neighborhoods (20% or more of residents in the tract living at or below the poverty level). We begin the analysis by comparing mean and median distances to kin between movers and non-movers across all neighborhoods, poor neighborhoods, and non-poor neighborhoods (Table 2). We plan to use varying-intercept multilevel logistic regression models, with householder-year observations nested within householders, to evaluate the relationships between distance to kin and the likelihood of mobility, net of other individual- and household-level factors that have been shown to influence mobility, including race/ethnicity, socioeconomic status, age, and home ownership.

In future work, we will also incorporate MSA-level characteristics into multilevel models that regress mobility on distance to kin variables. In addition, we will include interactions between kin proximity variables and individual-level background factors such as race/ethnicity and socioeconomic status. Finally, we will use data on the socioeconomic composition of the destination neighborhood to determine whether proximity to kin affects mobility from a poor to a non-poor neighborhood. We will also attend to missing values using logical imputation and/or multiple imputation techniques.

Preliminary Results

Table 1 shows that individuals living in poor neighborhoods have shorter mean and median distances to all kin groups than the overall sample in the PSID. The median distance to any kin among those in poor neighborhoods is approximately one-third the median distance to any kin among the overall PSID sample of householders. Table 2 displays average and mean distance to kin groups by mobility status and neighborhood socioeconomic composition. Table 2 demonstrates that, among all householder-years in the PSID, movers live further away from kin directly preceding a move compared to non-

movers. The proximity to kin gap between movers and non-movers is smallest for median distance to children. Individuals who moved versus those that did not had similar starting distances to children.

[Table 2 about here]

Table 2 shows that close geographic proximity to kin is a key feature of residence in poor neighborhoods. Individuals in poor neighborhoods across both mobility categories live closer to kin than even non-movers in non-poor neighborhoods. Across both poor and non-poor neighborhoods, mobility is associated with longer distances to kin. However, the difference in proximity to kin groups among movers and non-movers is smaller overall in poor neighborhoods relative to non-poor neighborhoods. In sum, across all neighborhoods, individuals who engage in mobility appear to be less rooted in terms of distance to kin than those who do not move. While individuals in poor neighborhoods live closer to kin overall than those in non-poor neighborhoods, movers in poor neighborhoods live further away from kin networks than non-movers.

In future work, we will evaluate the relationship between distance to kin and mobility in poor neighborhoods using multilevel statistical models. These models will incorporate individual- and household-level variables associated with mobility, and MSA-level variables that shape patterns of mobility within metropolitan areas.

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Table 1. Characteristics of the total sample and sample in impoverished neighborhoods (20% poverty or higher), PSID Householder-Years, 1968-2011, (weighted).

	Full Sample (non-missing)		Full Sample		Poor Neighborhood (non-missing)		Poor Neighborhood	
	Mean	S.E.	Missing n	% Missing	Mean	S.E.	Missing n	% Missing
Tract Poverty and Mobility								
Lives in impoverished tract	0.176	0.001	25,381	10.0	1.000		n.a.	
Moved out of tract (t +1)	0.087	0.001	9,225	3.6	0.112	0.002	3,047	4.3
Distance to Kin (miles)								
Average distance to any kin	252.8	1.6	63,759	25.0	162.6	2.9	18,361	25.9
Average distance to any kin (median)	48.6		63,759	25.0	16.1		18,361	25.9
Average distance to parent/s	211.7	2.2	177,722	69.7	137.9	4.2	48,289	68.2
Average distance to parent/s (median)	11.0		177,722	69.7	4.4		48,289	68.2
Average distance to child/ren	212.3	2.3	195,367	76.6	133.8	4.5	53,974	76.2
Average distance to child/ren (median	19.9		195,367	76.6	7.4		53,974	76.2
Average distance to "other" kin	260.5	1.6	68,451	26.9	166.4	3.0	19,416	27.4
Average distance to "other" kin (median)	50.6		68,451	26.9	17.9		19,416	27.4
No kin information available	0.258	0.001	0	0.0	0.244	0.003	0	0.0
Demographic Characteristics								
Male	0.694	0.001	244	0.1	0.561	0.003	69	0.1
Age	47.5	0.1	15	0.0	46.3	0.1	6	0.0
Non-Latino White	0.810	0.001	0	0.0	0.449	0.003	0	0.0
Non-Latino Black	0.131	0.001	0	0.0	0.428	0.003	0	0.0
Latino- Any Race	0.044	0.001	0	0.0	0.106	0.002	0	0.0
Non-Latino Asian	0.007	0.000	0	0.0	0.007	0.001	0	0.0
Non-Latino Other Race	0.007	0.000	0	0.0	0.01	0.001	0	0.0
Married or cohabiting couple	0.541	0.001	0	0.0	0.373	0.003	0	0.0
Children under 18 present in household	0.37	0.001	1	0.0	0.395	0.003	1	0.0
Socioeconomic Characteristics								
Years of education	12.6	0.0	5,071	2.0	11.4	0.0	1,635	2.3
Working (vs. not working or other status)	0.691	0.001	84	0.0	0.585	0.003	25	0.0
Family income ($1000s, adjusted to yr. 2000)	52.1	0.2	3,931	1.5	31.0	0.2	1,923	2.7
Receipt of transfer income	0.465	0.001	1	0.0	0.544	0.003	1	0.0
Home owner	0.618	0.001	6	0.0	0.409	0.003	4	0.0
Lives in public housing	0.038	0.001	95,911	37.6	0.104	0.002	24,253	34.3
n	254,897				70,798			

Table 2. Distance to kin (in miles) by mobility status and neighborhood socioeconomic composition, PSID Householder-Years, 1968-2011, (weighted).

	All						
	Movers[a]			Non-movers			*Diff.*
Kin Proximity Measure	Est.	Std. Dev.	n	Est.	Std. Dev.	n	Est.
Average distance to any kin	**326.9**	5.5	20,199	**242.8**	1.7	162,825	***84.1***
Average distance to any kin (median)	**90.0**		20,199	**43.8**		162,825	***46.2***
Average distance to parent/s	**268.1**	6.1	12,910	**200.8**	2.5	60,200	***67.3***
Average distance to parent/s (median)	**19.3**		12,910	**10.2**		60,200	***9.2***
Average distance to child/ren	**286.8**	14.2	2,939	**208.8**	2.3	55,077	***78.0***
Average distance to child/ren (median)	**21.9**		2,939	**20.0**		55,077	***2.0***
Average distance to "other" kin	**334.1**	5.6	19,838	**250.2**	1.7	158,617	***83.9***
Average distance to "other" kin (median)	**91.8**		19,838	**45.0**		158,617	***46.8***
No kin information available	**9.2%**	0.3%	22,425	**27.8%**	0.1%	223,247	***-18.6%***
n[b]			22,425			223,247	

[a]Movers refers to individuals who moved out of the tract from t to t+1.
[b]n refers to the total number of movers and non-movers. Cell sizes vary based on the number of missing values for each kin measure.

(Table 2 Cont'd.)

	Poor neighborhoods (>=20% poverty)							Non-poor neighborhoods (<20% poverty)						
	Movers			Non-movers			*Diff.*	Movers			Non-movers			*Diff.*
Kin Proximity Measure	Est.	Std. Dev.	n	Est.	Std. Dev.	n	Est.	Est.	Std. Dev.	n	Est.	Std. Dev.	n	Est.
Average distance to any kin	**240.7**	10.2	6,117	**146.7**	3.0	43,631	***94.0***	**361.1**	6.8	12,735	**270.2**	2.0	104,976	***90.9***
Average distance to any kin (median)	**42.3**		6,117	**12.7**		43,631	***29.6***	**112.1**		12,735	**56.9**		104,976	***55.2***
Average distance to parent/s	**196.1**	11.7	3,969	**119.9**	4.6	17,176	***76.2***	**294.6**	7.6	8,160	**225.1**	3.0	38,392	***69.4***
Average distance to parent/s (median)	**9.3**		3,969	**3.7**		17,176	***5.6***	**24.7**		8,160	**12.3**		38,392	***12.4***
Average distance to child/ren	**177.7**	18.2	1,022	**129.3**	4.7	15,255	***48.4***	**328.0**	18.6	1,768	**227.5**	2.8	34,711	***100.6***
Average distance to child/ren (median)	**9.0**		1,022	**7.0**		15,255	***2.0***	**28.7**		1,768	**23.9**		34,711	***4.9***
Average distance to "other" kin	**248.7**	10.7	6,047	**149.7**	3.1	42,679	***99.0***	**368.0**	7.0	12,487	**278.4**	2.1	102,150	***89.6***
Average distance to "other" kin (median)	**41.9**		6,047	**13.9**		42,679	***27.9***	**114.2**		12,487	**59.3**		102,150	***55.0***
No kin information available	**8.0%**	0.6%	6,674	**27.3%**	0.3%	61,077	***-19.3%***	**9.1%**	0.3%	14,024	**25.4%**	0.2%	138,874	***-16.3%***
n[b]			6,674			61,077				61,077			138,874	