Title:
Differences in social resources among African- and European-American elementary children across differing classroom contexts

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Abstract:
The racial composition of school classrooms, and the possible benefits of diverse classrooms, receives much attention in debates about school choice. I examine the social resources available to African- and European-American children across three elementary classroom contexts: 11 classrooms that are majority White (65% W, 35% B), 11 that are majority Black (65% B, 35% W), and 11 that are multicultural, with equal proportions of Whites and Blacks and 30% Hispanics and Asians. Participants were 680 3rd and 4th graders. Three questions emerged: (a) Do an individual’s social resources depend on the relative number of same- and cross-race peers one has in a classroom? (b) Do children who exhibit stronger tendencies toward racial integration enjoy denser egonetworks? (c) Do diverse classrooms, moreso than classrooms with a distinct racial majority, have denser social networks? Regarding the availability of social resources, individual-level social centrality and density measures were calculated by using egonetwork functions within the UCINET social networks program. Classroom-level density measures were constructed within the framework of two-mode, bidirectional networks. Cross-race social integration was assessed by aggregating compositionally invariant ratios of same-race to cross-race nominations of whom children: (a) affiliated with and (b) were friends with. I expected interactions where the salience of classroom context to social resources would vary for European- and African-American children. In terms of racial integration, I have used multilevel modeling and have consistently found interactions between individual race and classroom racial majority. Preliminary analyses of egonetwork density suggest interactions between individual race and classroom racial majority. I hypothesize that the final analyses will substantiate these initial findings.