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Effect of Urban Poverty on Parents' Expectation of their Children's Achievement

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Abstract

In this study we examine if parents' expectation of their children's success in life varies by type of urban neighborhood. Do parents' expectations of their children's educational achievement and age at which their offspring may start their first job, marry and have children vary by type of urban neighborhood in which they reside? Analysis of data taken from inner city Chicago indicates that residents in urban neighborhoods varied in their demography, ethnic status, marital status, labor force participation, earnings ability, welfare dependency and asset holdings. Parental expectation of their offspring's educational achievement and age at which offspring may begin working or marry, however, did not vary by type of neighborhood. Expected age at which their children may have kids, however, did vary by type of neighborhood. Actual first child's success indicators were also similar across types of neighborhood. This study shows that parents' expectations for their children's achievement are largely independent of the poverty level of the urban neighborhood in which they reside. The findings also challenge the validity of the culture of poverty theory.

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