

Social contexts and urban adolescent outcomes: The interrelated effects of neighborhoods, families, and peers on African-American youth.

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Social Contexts and Urban Adolescent Outcomes: The Interrelated Effects of Neighborhoods, Families, and Peers on African-American Youth

[Bruce H. Rankin](#) ✉, [James M. Quane](#)

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Abstract

Multilevel data are used to assess how three interrelated contexts—family, peer group, and neighborhood—influence the social functioning of urban African-American adolescent youth, a group believed to be especially "at-risk" due to high rates of exposure to contextual disadvantage and its associated ills. The analysis is designed to test the various pathways that neighborhoods influence, both directly and indirectly (via their impact on families and peers), two adolescent outcomes—prosocial competency and problem behavior. Neighborhood effects are relatively modest, operate indirectly via their effect on parenting and peer groups, and are transmitted through neighborhood social organization (i.e., collective efficacy), rather than neighborhood structure. Parental monitoring and peer quality are higher in neighborhoods with greater collective efficacy, which also moderates the effect of parental monitoring on both youth outcomes.

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