

**Place, ethnicity, and health: how  
neighbourhood effects on health reflect the  
racialisation of ethnic minority people, and the  
areas where they live**

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# Ethnic density effect

- Ethnic density hypothesis: As the proportion of ethnic minorities in a neighbourhood increases, the health of ethnic minority residents in that area will improve (after adjusting for area deprivation).
- Theorised as ‘one size fits all’ construct, but empirical research suggests otherwise
  - Findings vary across ethnic minority groups and mental/physical health outcomes
  - Differences across type of ethnic density (own, overall)

# Ethnic density effect

- Most often detrimental for the UK-based black Caribbean ethnic group<sup>1,2</sup>
  - Across health outcomes, social cohesion, and experiences of racial discrimination
- Most often protective for US-based Latinos<sup>1,2</sup>
  - The Latino group is large, heterogeneous (17% of US population). Largest ethnic groups are Mexican, Cuban, Puerto Rican
  - Most ethnic density research done with Mexican American group

# Place, ethnicity, and health

**Black Caribbeans who migrated to either England or US**

**Latinos from Cuban, Mexican, or Puerto Rican origin living in US**

Are ethnic groups, and the areas where they live, racialised differently depending on the **socio-political context of the country of reception?**

Are ethnic groups, and the areas where they live, racialised differently depending on their **country of origin?**

Caribbean and Black ethnic density

Own, Latino, and Latin American immigrant ethnic density

# Cross-national comparison of ethnic density effects

- Black Caribbeans in US have better health and higher socioeconomic resources than Black Caribbeans in England<sup>3</sup>
  - Different contexts of reception in US and in UK
  - Different racialisation of Caribbean migrants in the two countries
- Differences of racialisation of people observed in racialisation of place?

# Study Aims

Compare ethnic density effects among US Black Caribbeans and British Black Caribbeans to examine differences in:

- 1) Association between ethnic density and health
- 2) Association between ethnic density and experienced racism and discrimination

# Data

## National Survey of American Life (NSAL), 2001-2003

## Ethnic Minority Psychiatric Illness Rates in the Community (EMPIRIC), 2000

N=1621 Black Caribbean respondents

N=661 Black Caribbean respondents

- Suicidal ideation 'Have you ever seriously thought about committing suicide?

- Suicidal ideation 'Have you ever thought of taking your life, even if you would not really do it?'

- Doctor-diagnosed hypertension
- Self-rated health (excellent, very good, good, vs. fair, poor)

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- Self-rated health (excellent, very good, vs. fair, bad, very bad)

- Verbal insult at least once a year,
- Unfairly denied promotion
- Refusal of employment,  
...due to ancestry, race or skin colour

- Insulted due to ethnicity in the last 12 months.
- Unfairly denied a promotion,
- Refused a job,  
... due to race, colour or religious or ethnic background

# Ethnic density measures

## National Survey of American Life (NSAL), 2001-2003

## Ethnic Minority Psychiatric Illness Rates in the Community (EMPIRIC), 2000

Linked to 2000 US Census at tract level

Linked to 2001 UK census at Middle Super Output Area

Caribbean ethnic density (% born in Caribbean in census tract )

Caribbean ethnic density (% self-identified as Black Caribbean in MSOA)

M(SD), range: 13(43), 0-53

M(SD), range: 8(6), 0-24

Black ethnic density (% Black in census tract)

Black ethnic density (% Black Caribbean, Black African, Black other, mixed White and Black African, mixed White and Black Caribbean in MSOA)

M(SD), range: 52(88), 0-99

M(SD), range: 15(12), 0-58

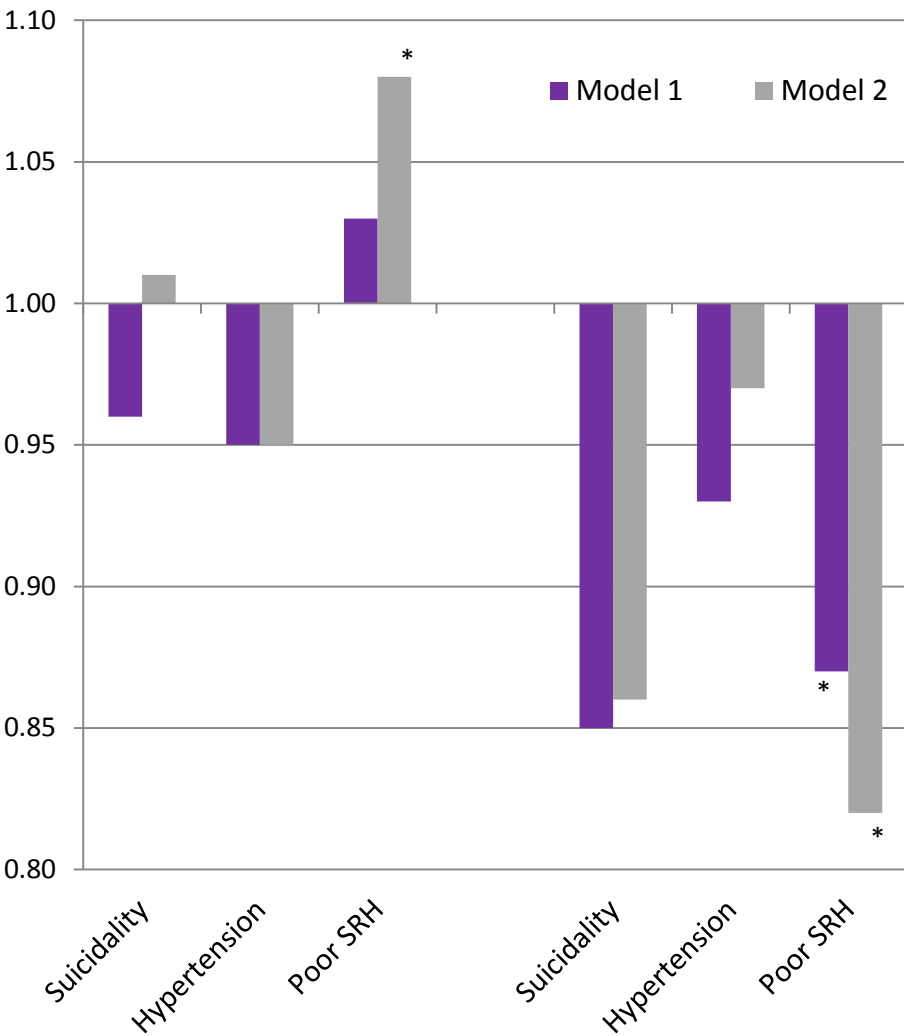


# Analyses

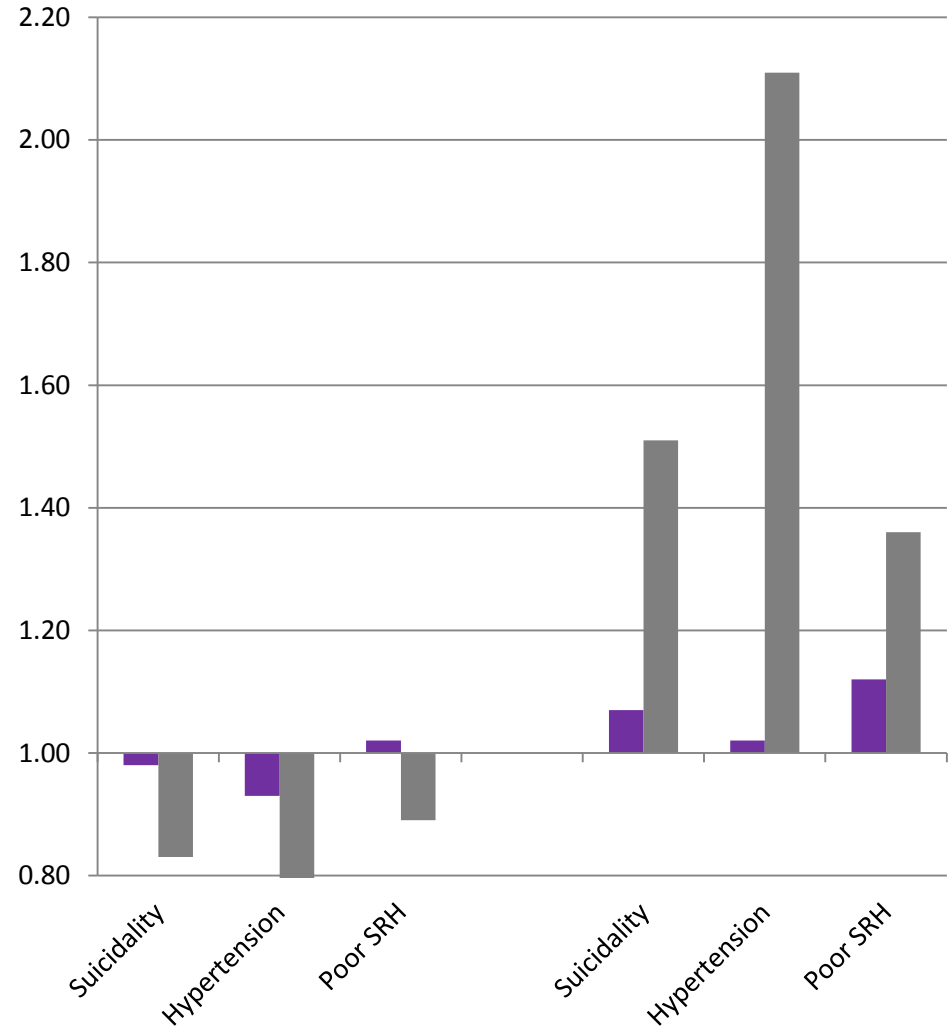
- Age restriction 18 – 74
- Multilevel logistic regression models adjusted for age, sex, nativity, marital status, education, employment, equivalised household income, area deprivation
- Model 1: One measure of ethnic density
- Model 2: Mutually adjusted

# Ethnic density and health

**Caribbean American**



**Caribbean English**



**Black Ethnic density**

**Caribbean Ethnic density**

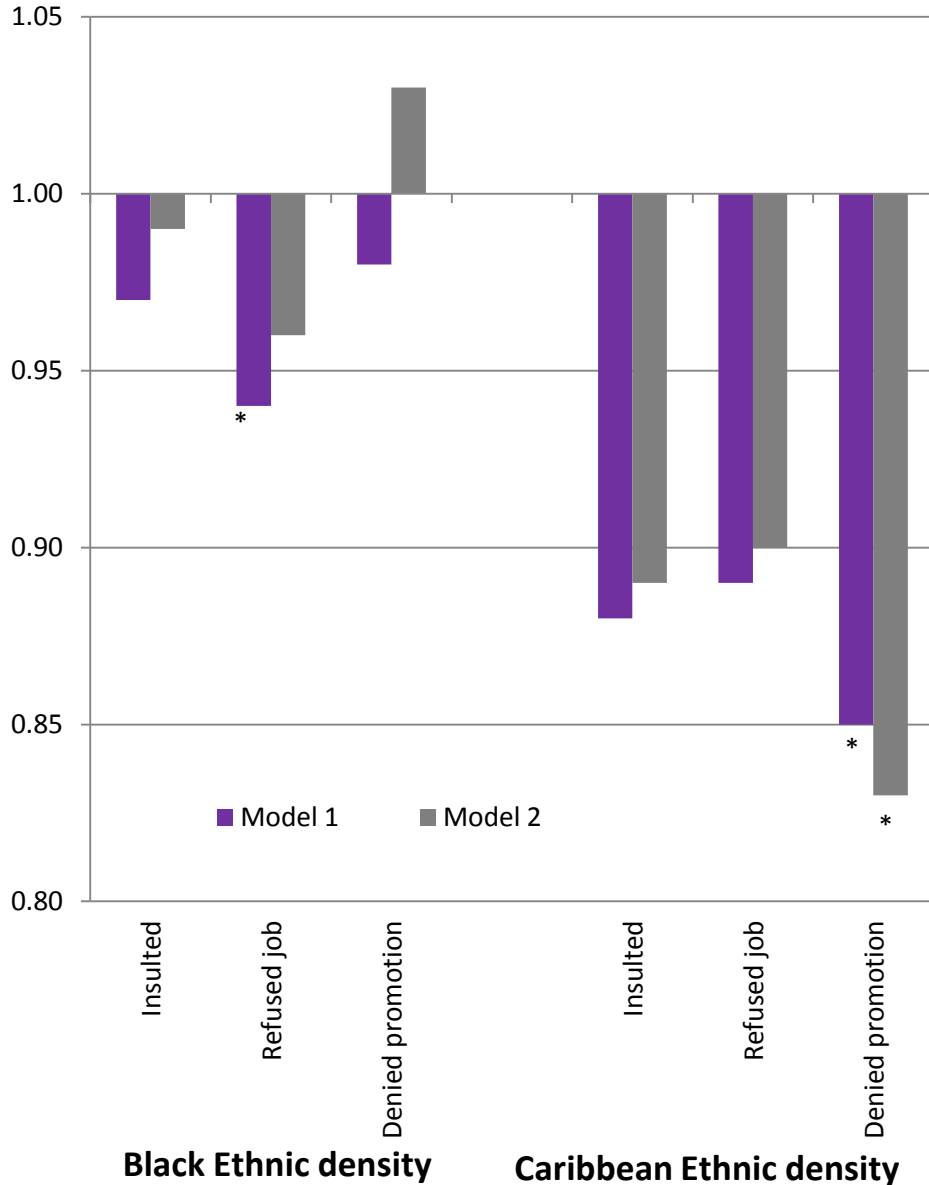
**Black Ethnic density**

**Caribbean Ethnic density**

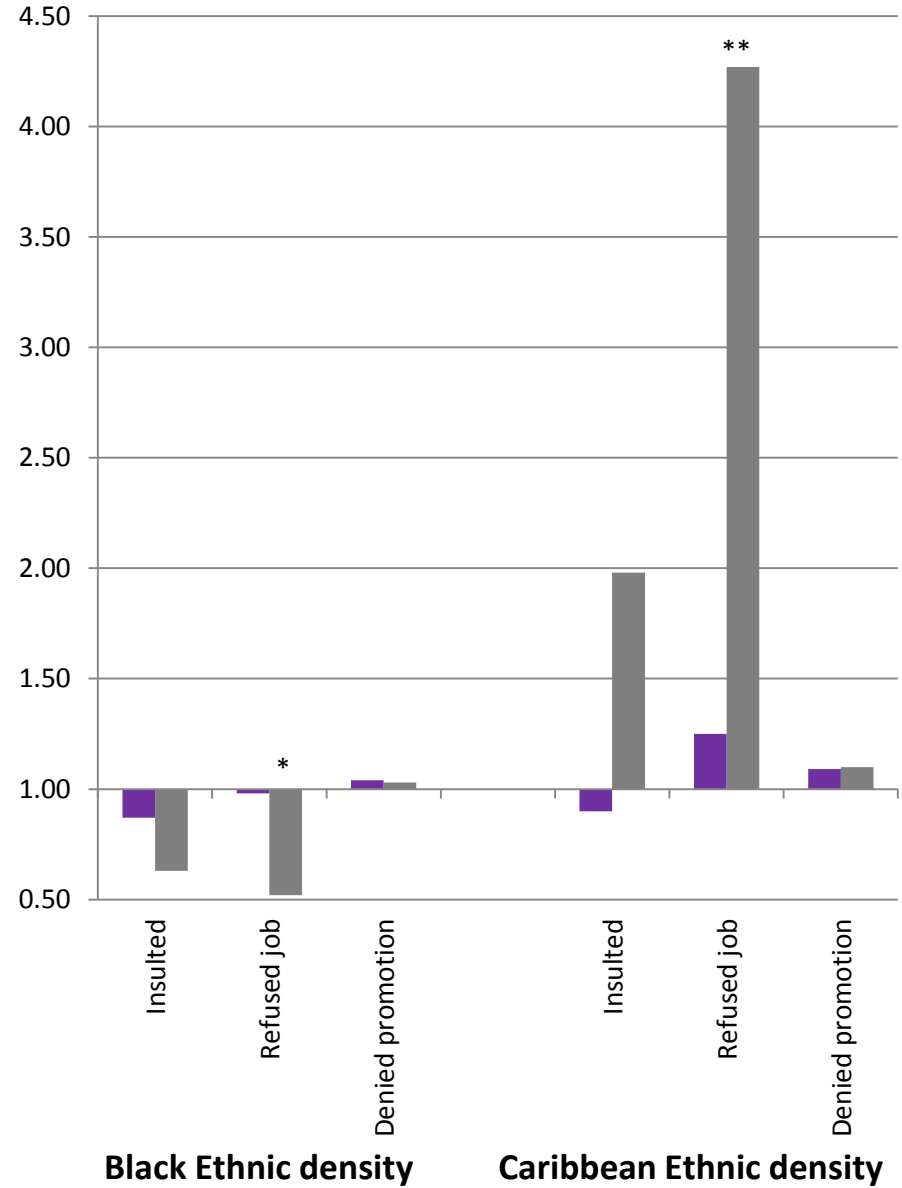
\*p<0.05, \*\*p<0.01

# Ethnic density and experienced racism

**Caribbean American**



**Caribbean English**



# Summary

- In US, an increase in Caribbean ethnic density associated with improved health and decreased experienced racism. Opposite in England.
- Distinct and contextually specific constructions of Caribbean identities in US and in England, observed in racialisation of place.

# Comparison of ethnic density effects among Latinos in US

- Studies of ethnic density are most often protective among Latinos, but most studies conducted among Mexican Americans
- Puerto Ricans experience fewest legal barriers, but experience more discrimination and stereotyping than other Latino subgroups<sup>4</sup>. Puerto Ricans have poorer health than Cuban and Mexican Americans<sup>5</sup>
- Mexican migrants have the greatest barriers to enter the US, and the fewest rights<sup>6</sup>
- Despite large differences depending on period of migration, attitude of the US government towards Cuban migrants has allowed them to enter as political exiles rather than economic immigrants<sup>7</sup>

# Comparison of ethnic density effects among Latinos in US

- Differences across immigration categories within Latinos: health deteriorates with length of residence in US following exposure to discrimination, prejudice and other consequences of minority status<sup>8</sup>
- Unclear what type of ethnic density is protective (own-group, Latino, Latin American immigrant) and for whom

# Study Aims

- 1) **Examine association between ethnic density and mental health across Latino sub-groups (Cuban American, Mexican American, Puerto Rican) and immigrant status (1<sup>st</sup>, 1.5, 2<sup>nd</sup> generation)**
- 2) Explore mechanisms behind ethnic density
  - Increased neighbourhood cohesion and decreased racism and discrimination
- 3) Establish differences in ethnic density effects and mechanisms depending on measure of ethnic density
- 4) Determine whether observed relationships are the same across Latino sub-groups

# Data

- Latino sample from National Latino and Asian-American Study (NLAAS)
  - Cuban (n=577), Puerto Rican (n=495), Mexican American (n=868) sub-groups
- Outcome: Psychological distress measured with Kessler-6<sup>9</sup>
- Immigration status: 1<sup>st</sup> generation (US/mainland born); 1.5 generation (born abroad, migrated to US before age 13); 2<sup>nd</sup> generation (born abroad, migrated to US after age 13).



# Ethnic density measures

- NLAAS linked to 2000 US Census at county level
- Own sub-group ethnic density (Census question on ethnicity: % same sub-group as respondent)
- Overall Latino ethnic density (Census question on ethnicity: % any Spanish/Hispanic/Latino)
- Latin American Immigrant ethnic density (Census question on country of birth: % born in Latin America, including Caribbean, Central America, and South America)

# Analyses

- Multilevel linear regression models to examine association between ethnic density and health across Latino sub-groups and immigration categories
- Adjusted for age, sex, marital status, language of interview, work status, income, education, area deprivation, percent Black residents in county

# Results

	Own ethnic density	Latino ethnic density	Latin American Immigrant ethnic density
	Coeff (S.E.)	Coeff (S.E.)	Coeff (S.E.)
<b>Cuban Americans</b>	-0.391 (0.34)	-0.227 (0.30)	-0.222 (0.29)
US born	-0.865 (0.49)	-0.787 (0.44)	-0.931 (0.46)*
1.5 generation	-0.253 (0.97)	0.038 (0.50)	0.441 (0.40)
1st gen	-0.296 (0.24)	0.118 (0.33)	-0.112 (0.24)
<b>Puerto Ricans</b>	-0.063 (0.73)	-0.800 (0.14)***	-0.999 (0.24)***
US born	-0.976 (1.06)	-1.053 (0.37)***	-1.134 (0.50)*
1.5 generation	-1.213 (1.12)	-0.821 (0.40)*	-0.806 (0.41)*
1st gen	1.574 (0.97)	-0.342 (0.44)	-0.979 (0.37)**
<b>Mexican Americans</b>	0.430 (0.23)	0.244 (0.18)	0.246 (0.28)
US born	0.302 (0.31)	0.059 (0.22)	-0.004 (0.36)
1.5 generation	-0.207 (0.58)	-0.242 (0.55)	0.071 (1.16)
1st gen	0.780 (0.24)***	0.665 (0.22)***	0.946 (0.39)*

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# Summary

- Ethnic density most beneficial for Puerto Ricans (not for own ethnic density), for whom increased Latino and Latin American immigrant ethnic density was associated with decreased psychological distress
  - Association stronger for mainland-born
- Null overall association for Cuban and Mexican Americans, but
  - Detrimental association for 1<sup>st</sup> generation Mexican Americans
  - Protective association for US born Cuban Americans (for immigrant ethnic density)

# Limitations

- Limitations:
  - No period of migration
  - Cross-sectional data
  - No info on how areas and groups are racialised
- Ethnic density effects on health reflect area racialisation of different racial/ethnic groups resulting from different structural processes

# References

- Bécares, L. Nazroo, J., Jackson, J., & Heuvelman, H. (2012). Ethnic density effects among Caribbean people in the US and England: a cross-national comparison. *Social Science & Medicine*, 75(12), 2107-2115
- Bécares, L. (2014). Ethnic density effects on psychotic symptomatology among Latino ethnic groups: an examination of hypothesized pathways. *Health & Place*, 30, 177-186.

# Thank you

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