

DECOUPLING SCHOOLS AND NEIGHBORHOODS: LOCAL SCHOOL ATTENDANCE AND NEIGHBORHOOD PERCEPTION

Julia Burdick-Will
Johns Hopkins University

Urban Affairs Association
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Assumed Neighborhood-School Link

- “For most children in the U.S., where you live determines where you go to school” (Schwartz 2013: 24)
- Such an implicit assumption that it is rarely stated this clearly
- School choice provides options
- Especially in urban, low-income neighborhoods

Research Questions

- Who attends a school near their home?
- Do parents who travel for their children's school feel differently about their neighborhood?
- Do residents feel differently about a neighborhood when larger proportions of students attend non-local schools?
 - Is this relationship different for parents and non-parents?

Making Connections: Wave 1

- Verbatim school name for randomly selected child in the household
- All school locations regardless of type using NCES and Google
 - Fuzzy matching in Python to correct misspellings
 - 84.4 percentage of school names matched
 - Legible non-matches were confirmed outside of the area
- 680 households per city on average
- 280 households per city with school-age kids on average

Making Connections: Wave 1

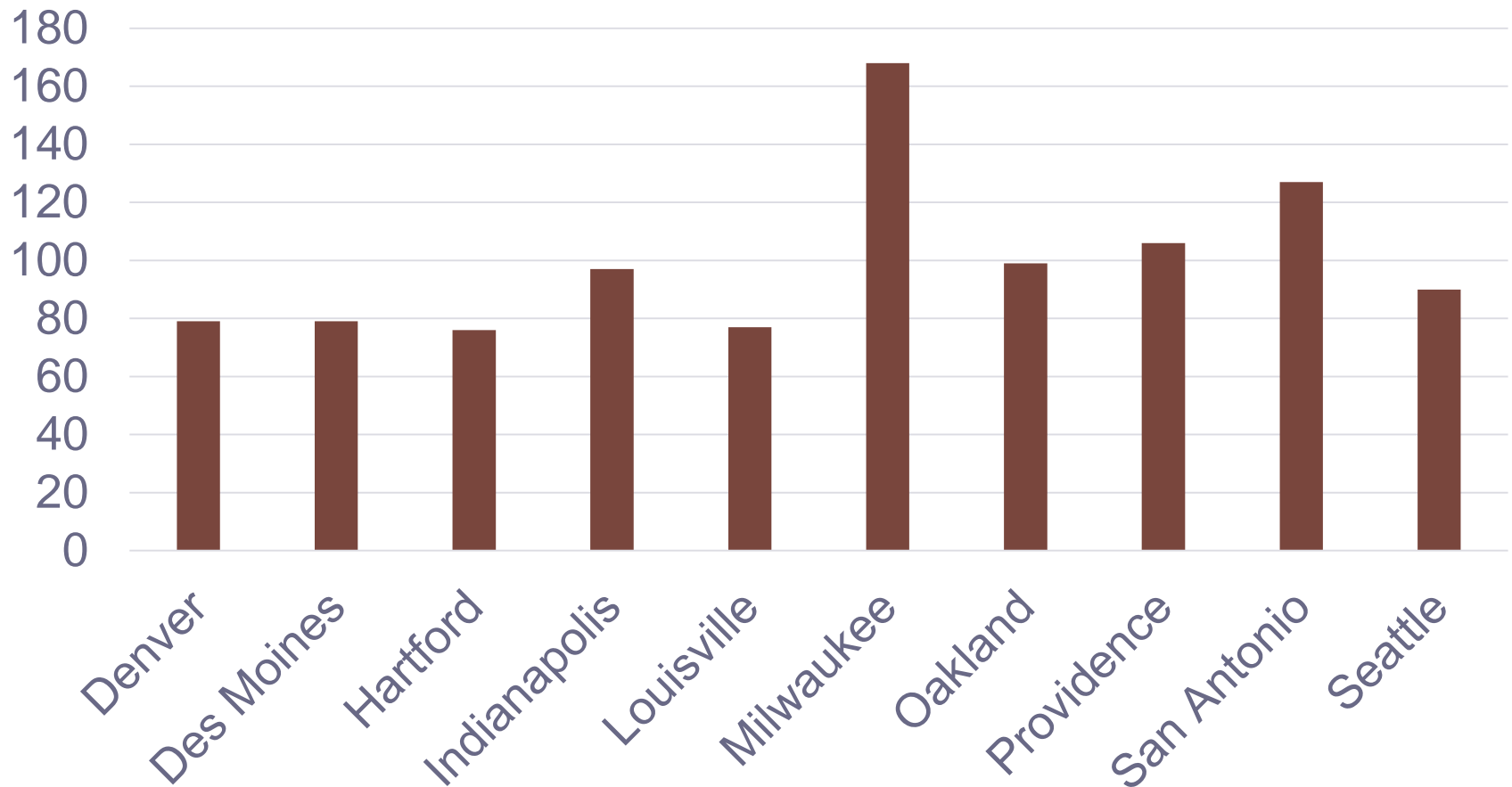
- Defining “Local”:
 - By geography
 - Within the official neighborhood boundaries
 - By attendance patterns
 - The school with the largest proportion of children
 - Best guess at an attendance boundary school

Making Connections: Wave 1

- Neighborhood perception measures:
 - Collective efficacy
 - Social cohesion
 - Informal Social control
 - Safe neighborhood
 - Good neighborhood

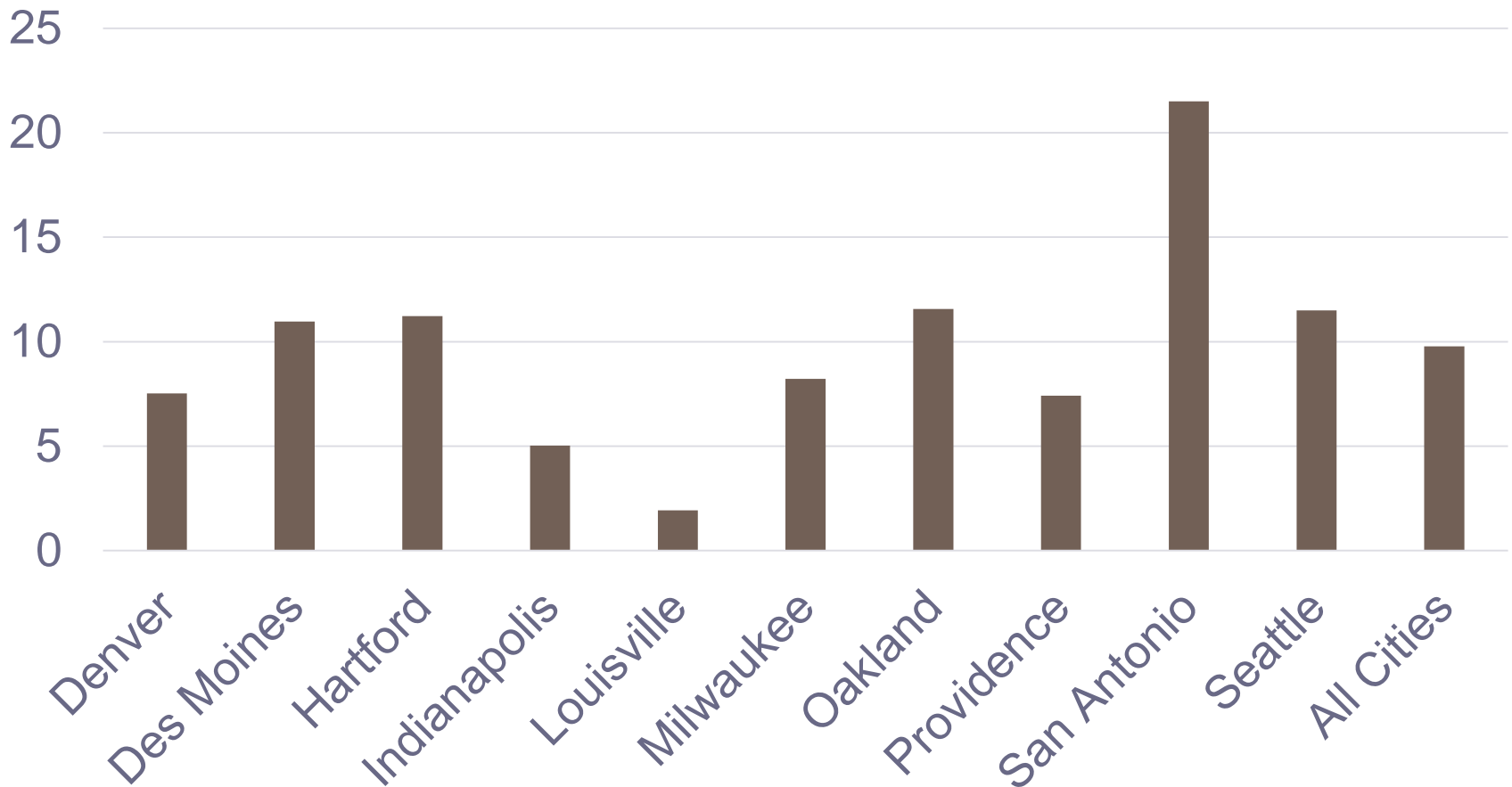
School Attendance Patterns

Number of Schools



School Attendance Patterns

Percent in Local School

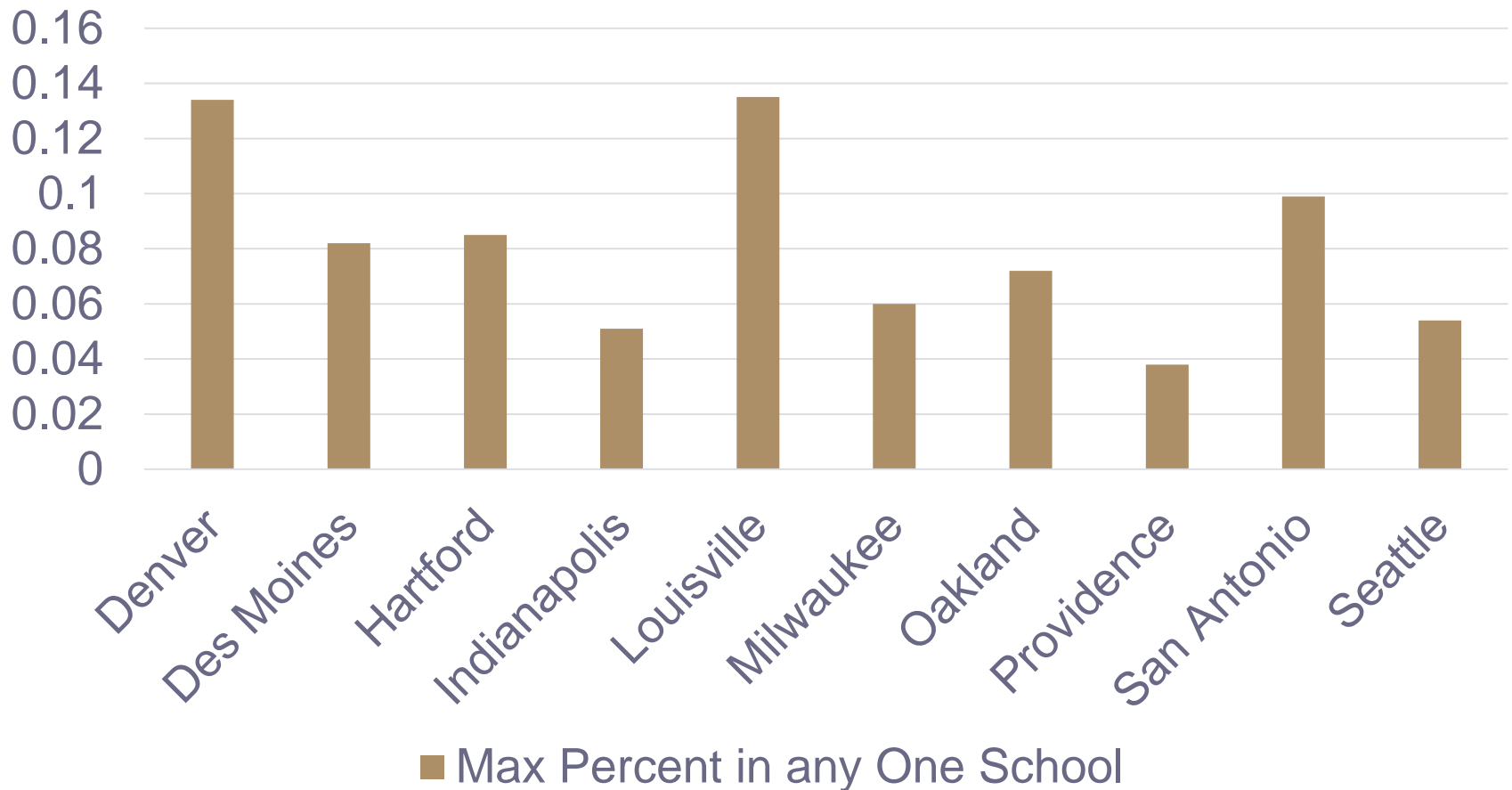


Predicting Who Attends a Local School

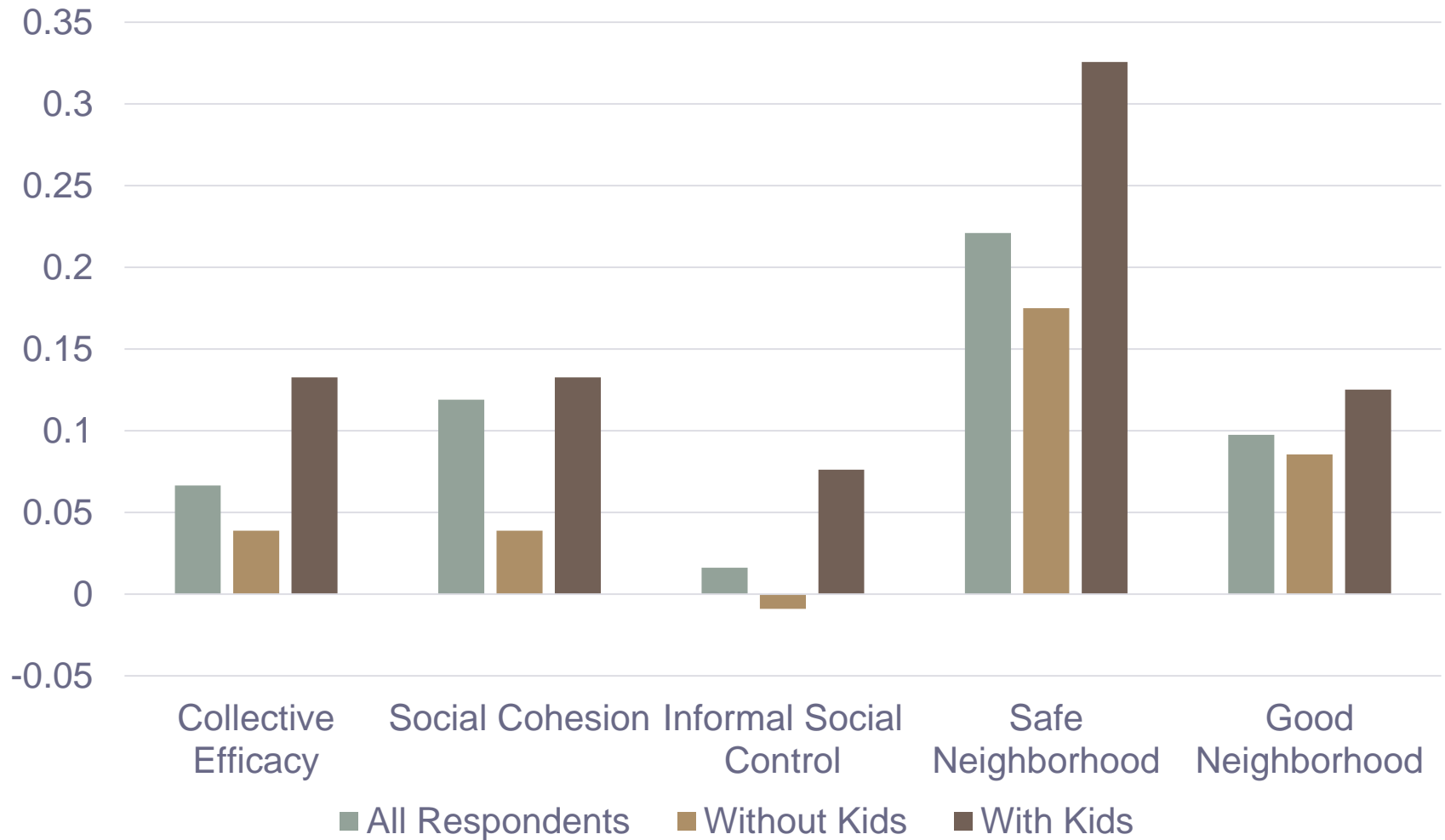
- Insignificant Predictors:
 - Black, Asian, Income, Education, Respondent Age, Employment status, Welfare receipt, Public Housing, Home Ownership
- Significant Predictors:
 - Hispanic, Other race, Any foreign born adult, Number of years in the neighborhood
 - All substantively small
- **Nothing** significant after controlling for city
- Among parents, **no significant difference** in neighborhood perception

Exploring City-level differences

Max Percent in any One School



Effect of 10 percent more kids in one school



Conclusion and Implications

- Assumed school-neighborhood link is clearly false
 - Need to focus on within neighborhood educational heterogeneity
 - Consequences for educational inequality?
- Preliminary city-level comparisons
 - Just one neighborhood in each city
 - Many other differences in these areas
- Initial findings suggest that in areas where students scatter, residents report lower levels of social capital
- Paradox of choice

THANK YOU

jburdickwill@jhu.edu