

## **Social networks and school demographics in longitudinal adolescent data**

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The centrality of schools to language variation and change has been well established as these institutions facilitate the formation and propagation of adolescent social network structures (Eckert 2000), as well as language contact and leveling processes (Kerwill & Williams 2000). Student transience in the US is among the highest in developed countries (US GAO 1994) and disproportionately affects ethnic minorities and urban populations (Rumberger 2003; Xu et al. 2009). As a core component of school culture for many US adolescents, high rates of student mobility potentially disrupt social networks and influence linguistic behavior. Real-time panel studies can reveal trajectories of change associated with school transience, but these studies remain rare in sociolinguistics, leaving the linguistic influences of student transience underexplored (Carter 2007; Rickford & Ludwig 2013; Sankoff 2004; Van Hofwegen & Wolfram 2010).

This paper examines 60 African Americans from central North Carolina (USA), a region with a highly transient student body (Xu et al. 2009). The data come from a real-time study of African American English, where a range of data types was collected from the subjects yearly from the age of 5 to 17. The present study combines three different sets of extra-linguistic factors for the investigation of development of the local regional ethnic variety for these speakers - traditional sociolinguistic measures, such as socioeconomic indices of parents, quantitative social network measures, such as degree and betweenness centrality scores (Newman 2010), and macro-demographic factors, such as year-by-year information about the proportion of ethnic groups in each specific school. These diverse factors have variable influences on individuals' language, and thus, this presentation addresses the relative benefit of such measures for analysis with the ultimate goal of understanding the outcome of student transience on the development of linguistic identity.