

Changing Neighborhoods to Increase Educational Opportunity

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Forward

With the assistance of Gautreaux and a maternal desire to protect her children from urban crime, Noelle decided to move her family from inner city Chicago to a nearby suburb. At the time, her daughter, Laura, was eight years old. Noelle recounts, "I wanted [Laura] to see that there is more to life than what the ghetto offers." Laura had not had a positive experience in the city schools. Her grades were good, but both she and her mother questioned how much she was actually learning. Laura came home from the city schools with headaches each day. She reported, "they didn't really try and teach you anything. The teachers were mean and did not listen." Laura commented on the broken glass that covered the playground, and how frequent street fights made her afraid of walking to school.

When Laura first started in the suburban school, she was frequently tested to prove she was not "slow." Noelle and Laura both contested that she simply had not had the material. Laura recalled the testing as a frustrating and difficult experience. Despite the testing and academic challenge of the suburban school, Laura benefited from the extra attention and concern that teachers expressed. Noelle comments, "They [the teachers] will call you everyday to let you know how your child is doing in school. And send work home and tell you to help your child." Laura's track coach made a special effort to keep her from quitting the team and a teacher arranged for her to make up a missed exam. Laura graduated from high school with a B average, and was in honors English and Math classes. Laura plans to pursue a career in computers, and in 1989 was enrolled in the local community college for a two-year degree. She hopes to enter a four-year program after community college.

In addition to her positive and improved school experience, Laura was able to achieve some measure of social integration. Laura described herself as having five friends: one black and four white. She was unable to spend as much time with them as she would have liked because they lived across town and transportation was often a problem.

Noelle noted the benefit of white role models, but with proximity comes prejudice. Some teachers were helpful, while others were hateful. Some schoolmates told Laura to go back to the ghettos and/or Africa. For both Laura and Noelle, however, the prejudice in the suburbs was much less threatening than the physical dangers of the city. Noelle rationalized that no matter where you live there will always be somebody that does not like you regardless of your race, creed, or economic status. Essentially, the harassment was "worth" the safety and educational opportunity of the suburbs.¹

Alex Kotlowitz, Chicago journalist and author of There are no Children Here, expands on the family ambivalence and complexities of moving to suburban communities. He writes, "While mothers praise the quality of the suburban schools, they

¹ Fishman, N., Brett, A., Meaden, P., & Rosenbaum, J.E. (June 1993). Can the Kerner Commission's housing strategy improve employment, education, and social integration for low-income blacks? *North Carolina Law Review*, 15-17. Retrieved from the Internet on February 14, 2002: <http://web.lexis-nexis.com>

wonder if too many of their children are being placed in special education classes. While they take comfort in low crime rates, they talk of racial prejudice, some of it quite frightening. While they mention the friendliness of some neighbors, they also talk of feeling isolated and alone. It is these paradoxes which make Gautreaux an unusual window onto America's fault lines."² Noelle, Laura, and Kotlowitz note many of the same benefits and trials of Gautreaux, bringing into question the successes of residential relocation programs. Mobilization programs, such as Gautreaux and Moving to Opportunity, assist disadvantaged families in leaving urban environments often deprived of educational, social capital, and human capital opportunities. This paper explores the advantages and disadvantages of residential relocation programs, most specifically their impact on child development and educational achievement.

Introduction: Neighborhoods, Schools and Community Make a Difference

In 1968, the Kerner Commission reported a divergence of two American societies – one black and one white. The Commission implied that racial and class segregation ghettoized black communities, isolating blacks from acceptable housing and life opportunities. The Commission identified racial barriers in housing as the “cornerstone” of segregation, and advised that new project construction occur in non-ghetto areas. “The Commission’s assertion that a failure to build new housing accessible to low-income blacks outside of the central cities would be ‘counter-productive’ stems also from the Commission’s belief that ‘racial and social class integration is the most effective way of improving the education of ghetto children’.”³ Studies on the educational achievement of integrated blacks support the Commission’s assertions. Desegregation has positive impacts on black educational achievement. Some past integration policies, specifically busing, increase the visibility of a student’s class and race, and should therefore be avoided. Researchers suggest that residential mobility programs employ more appropriate measures of integration and educational improvement.

² Rubinowitz, L.S., & Rosenbaum, J.E. (2000). [with a forward by Alex Kotlowitz] *Crossing the class and color lines: From public housing to white suburbia*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, xi.

³ Fishman, Brett, Meaden, and Rosenbaum, 3.

Residential mobility programs integrate schools by integrating communities. Mobilization efforts recognize the developmental significance of schools, neighborhoods and communities on children. Relocation programs are founded on the theoretical relationship of geography and opportunity. Similar to the spatial mismatch hypothesis that identifies residency and distance as low-income blacks' most significant barriers to employment, geography of opportunity suggests that where an individual lives affects his/her education and life opportunities. An individual's neighborhood, church, school, employment and social interaction influence the direction and quality of one's life. These social networks nurture positive child development and assist in the child's development of human capital.

In recent years, social scientists have shifted their focus on child development from an interest in the interfamilial relations to the role of neighborhoods and environment. Jeane Brooks-Gunn and Greg Duncan examine the influence of neighborhoods and communities on child development. In an assessment of whether, and in what ways, neighborhood conditions influence children's achievement and behavior, Brooks-Gunn and Duncan conclude that the concentration of affluence in a child's neighborhood and school system is a significant predictor of cognitive development. They suggest that affluent neighborhoods provide greater resources and opportunities for enrichment. Although families are the key agents in promoting positive child development, the neighborhood and community in which a child is raised greatly influences life achievement.⁴

⁴ Brooks-Gunn, J., Duncan, G. & Aber, J.L. (eds.) (1997). *Neighborhood poverty*. New York: Russell Sage Foundation, 279-281.

More specific to mobilization programs, George Galster and Sean Killen have done extensive research on the geography of metropolitan opportunity and child outcomes. They propose that an individual's life can be profoundly changed if moved to environments that offer new and better opportunities. They suggest that geography influences social networks, normative contexts and child development.⁵ Their research reviews geography's influence on education, crime and employment.

Galster and Killen's studies have brought to the forefront of child development and social capital debates the notion that geography of opportunity varies greatly between extremely poor and suburban youth. Impoverished youth of highly segregated inner city communities are exposed to truly deteriorated environments, more violence and fewer role models than suburban children.⁶ Inner city schools tend to replicate the problems of the surrounding community, limiting social interaction in the school, neighborhood and home.

Positive child development is essentially limited to the educational opportunities and social influences available in the geographic location. Funding and resource disparities of urban and suburban schools illustrate the influence of geography on educational achievement.⁷ In addition to resource inequalities, urban environments lack the positive peer and adult influences of suburban areas. Elijah Anderson's latest study, Streetwise, addresses the decline of positive adult influences or "old heads" in urban areas. According to Anderson, in the ghetto environment of earlier decades, "old heads

⁵ Rosenbaum, J.E. (1995). Changing the geography of opportunity by expanding residential choice: Lessons from the Gautreaux program. *Housing Policy Debate*, 6(1), 231.

⁶ Harris, L.E. & Rosenbaum, E. (February 2000). Short-term impacts of moving for children: Evidence from the Chicago MTO program, 1. Retrieved from the World Wide Web on March 1, 2002: <http://www.wws.princeton.edu/~kling/mto/chicago.htm#Chi2>

⁷ In 1991-92, the cost and need adjusted general revenues of public school districts by metropolitan areas indicate substantial disparities in cost per student. (Urban: \$3,563; Suburban: \$3,972; Rural: \$3,719). Data retrieved from the world wide web on April 11, 2002: <http://nces.ed.gov/pubs98/inequalities/>

acted as a kind of guidance counselor and moral cheerleader who preached anticrime and antitrouble messages in their charges.”⁸ Old heads embodied the traditional mores that assign value to education and hard work. Essentially, they served as a form of social capital for inner city youth. In place of the values that old heads embodied, a culture of poverty has arisen in the urban ghettos.⁹ As a result of suburban flight, the applied and motivated role models that once surrounded urban youth are a rarity in poor communities. Assuming a strong relationship between geography and opportunity, residential relocation programs propose that changing neighborhoods increases the educational opportunity and positive social interactions of disadvantaged youth.

Gautreaux and Moving to Opportunity test geography of opportunity theory. James Rosenbaum, Professor of Sociology, Education and Social Policy at Northwestern University, serves as the primary researcher of Gautreaux.¹⁰ In support of geographical relocation, Rosenbaum argues, “Because exposure to disadvantaged environments compounds the already increased risk of compromised outcomes associated with being poor and nonwhite, it is imperative to identify ways of providing such at-risk children with healthier environments.”¹¹

History: Gautreaux and Moving to Opportunity

Both Gautreaux and Moving to Opportunity (MTO) attempt to improve the educational and life opportunity of low-income black youth through geographic relocation. These programs accomplish residential relocation through the issuance of housing vouchers. Although some families choose to stay in the metropolitan area,

⁸ Massey, D.S. & Denton, N. A. (1993). *American Apartheid: Segregation and the making of the underclass*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 173.

⁹ Massey and Denton, 174.

¹⁰ Unfortunately, Gautreaux studies are limited to Rosenbaum’s analysis.

¹¹ Harris and Rosenbaum, 2.

Gautreaux participants have the option to move to middle-income, predominantly white neighborhoods. All of the housing opportunities made available to Gautreaux participants are in racially monolithic areas. The suburban areas are predominantly white, whereas urban housing options are in “black” neighborhoods. Contrastingly, the experimental group of MTO participants is required to move to environments that differ in the type of housing, community and income level. Unlike Gautreaux, MTO is not concerned with the area’s racial concentration. MTO relocation options focus on the area’s poverty level. Typically, low-poverty areas are predominantly white.

Gautreaux

The product of a housing desegregation lawsuit, the Gautreaux Project began issuing housing vouchers to more than 1,300 families in 1976. Dorothy Gautreaux and five others filed a class-action lawsuit against the Chicago Housing Authority in 1967. The tenants claimed victimization of imposed residential segregation by race.¹² Judge Richard Austin found the CHA guilty of illegal discriminatory practices and in violation of the Fourteenth Amendment. Austin specifically ruled against the CHA’s efforts to keep blacks out of housing projects in outlying, predominantly white neighborhoods. He concluded that CHA residents were, “isolated in areas of poverty and crime, thus hindering their ability to achieve the American Dream.”¹³ Court orders prohibited the construction of any new public housing in neighborhoods where more than 30 percent of the occupants were people of color.¹⁴ In addition, the Federal Government issued

¹² The Gautreaux Case: What went wrong? (December 1998). *Chicago Sun Times*. Retrieved from the World Wide Web on February 27, 2002: <http://www.columbia.edu/~sk652/gaux.htm>

¹³ The Gautreaux Case: What went wrong?

¹⁴ Latest decision on *Gautreaux v. Chicago Housing Authority*. National Housing Law Project: *Housing Law Bulletin*. Retrieved from the World Wide Web on February 27, 2002: <http://www.nhlp.org/html/hlb/1097/1097gautreaux.htm>

implementation of the Gautreaux Project, a residential mobility program intended to assist low-income families in moving to the suburbs.

From 1976 to the late 1990's, over 5,600 families participated in the program, administered by the Leadership Council for Metropolitan Open Communities.¹⁵ One-third of program participants relocated within the city, while the remaining two-thirds established residency in more than 50 suburban communities. The Leadership Council for Metropolitan Open Communities recruited families, consulted landlords and assisted suburban-movers with finding homes and meeting financial strains.

The Gautreaux program provides striking evidence for neighborhood impacts. The successes of the project are numerous, establishing it as a national model. Gautreaux is credited for its useful insights regarding the effects of urban inequalities on educational achievement. Furthermore, Gautreaux is sometimes marketed as proof that “the early experiences of low-income blacks do not prevent them from benefiting from suburban moves.”¹⁶ Gautreaux appears to discredit culture of poverty theories that claim disadvantaged children have formed irreversible life habits. Rosenbaum comments, “Gautreaux results clearly contradict deficiency theories about the poor. Our findings clearly indicate that the pessimistic predictions of culture of poverty models are not supported.”¹⁷ At the same time, Gautreaux appears to endorse culture of poverty theories that suggest sub-cultures and social networks deeply influence the performance and development of impoverished youth.

¹⁵ The Gautreaux Project. (1997). *York Daily Record*. Retrieved from the World Wide Web on February 12, 2002: <http://www.ydr.com/projects/rusk/1ruskw.shtml>

¹⁶ The Gautreaux Project. (1997). *York Daily Record*.

¹⁷ Rosenbaum, J.E. (1993). Closing the gap: Does residential integration improve the employment and education of low-income blacks? *Affordable Housing and Public Policy: Strategies for metropolitan Chicago*. Chicago: Chicago Assembly, 249.

In 1982, Rosenbaum and his colleagues, Rubinowitz and Kulieke, studied how the Gautreaux program affected children of both city and suburban-moving families. The two groups of children were similar in age, proportional by gender and predominantly parented by single-mothers.¹⁸ The suburban group consisted of 114 families who moved to predominately white neighborhoods. On average, the suburban neighborhoods to which participants moved were 96 percent white. Comparatively, 48 families moved to racially segregated, urban communities.¹⁹ These urban movers serve as the study's control, a methodological unsound approach.²⁰

Rosenbaum conducted two studies, one in 1982, six years after the initial move, and again in 1989. The same children participated in both studies. In the first study, the children's average age was 11 years. The second study was conducted at the average of 18 years. The 1982 study focuses on the social and school integration of elementary youth, whereas the second study examines the students' cumulative achievement and post high school plans.²¹ Two types of analyses are used in this study: control/suburban comparisons and retrospective pre/post comparisons. Retrospective pre/post comparisons ask participants to reflect on their urban experiences before moving and their opinions of the city after living in the suburbs for at least six years.

The selection process of Gautreaux participants produces a slightly creamed sample. Some argue, "that those who break the residential barriers of race and class are

¹⁸ 86% of suburban-moving families and 88% of city-moving families were headed by single mothers.

¹⁹ The racial composition of neighborhoods to which urban movers moved was 99 percent black.

²⁰ To ensure methodological soundness, the experimental control should not experience any change in circumstances or character. Rosenbaum's utilization of urban movers as a control is unsound because they were permitted and encouraged to relocate to Section 8 facilities in the city. As in MTO, Rosenbaum should have three groups: (1) suburban movers, (2) urban movers, and (3) a control.

²¹ Rosenbaum, J.E., Kulieke, M.J., & Rubinowitz, L.S. (Winter 1987). Low-income black children in white suburban schools: A study of school and student responses. *Journal of Negro Education*, 56(1), 36.

themselves exceptional people, so their subsequent achievements may reflect more about themselves than about the effects of the neighborhoods.”²² The fact that Gautreaux participants were selected from a pool of applicants suggests the “exceptionality” of these families. Application takes initiative and motivation on the part of the parent, implying that Gautreaux participants were a “cut above the rest.” Furthermore, in an effort to avoid overcrowding, late rent payments and building damage, the program did not admit families with more than four children, large debts, or unacceptable housekeeping standards. Together, these requirements reduced the Gautreaux applicant pool by approximately 30 percent.²³

Nonetheless, Gautreaux researchers insist that participants represent the Chicago “project population.” Rosenbaum maintains that Gautreaux participants are not a creamed sample, citing: (1) 95 percent of low-income families have four or fewer children, (2) Gautreaux applicants were informed in advance of the scheduled housekeeping inspection, and (3) applicants had previously passed credit checks in receipt for Section 8 housing.²⁴ To address the creaming issue further, Rosenbaum and Kaufman compared Gautreaux participants with a random sample of AFDC recipients in Chicago. Gautreaux participants are similar to the AFDC sample in their length of time on public assistance and their marital status.²⁵ On the other hand, Gautreaux adult participants are less likely to be high school dropouts, are older and have fewer children.²⁶ These comparisons

²² Kaufman, J.E. & Rosenbaum, J.E. (1991). The education and employment of low-income black youth in white suburbs: Working papers. Northwestern University, Center for Urban Affairs and Policy Research, 7.

²³ Kaufman and Rosenbaum, 8.

²⁴ Kaufman and Rosenbaum, 7.

²⁵ On average, both Gautreaux and AFDC recipients receive public assistance benefits for 7 years. 45% of both populations never marry. Kaufman and Rosenbaum, 8.

²⁶ Kaufman and Rosenbaum, 8.

suggest that Gautreaux participants are slightly above average, but “not a highly creamed group.”²⁷

In theory, Gautreaux participants had a choice about where they moved. However, limited housing availability practically compelled them to settle for the first available assignment. Although applicants voiced a location preference, housing counselors did not deal directly with clients. Apartment offerings, therefore, were unrelated to client interest. Housing agents offered clients units as they became available regardless of their location. Few clients refused available housing, fearing they would not receive another offer. The housing counselors’ “assignment” of urban and suburban locations challenges Gautreaux’s claim of residential choice. At the same time, residential assignment minimizes the creaming of the suburban population. The most motivated participants may have settled for urban relocation. A methodologically sound experiment would have randomly assigned participants to suburban and urban sites. Despite Gautreaux’s non-experimental and methodologically unsound design, its results are still significant.

Moving to Opportunity

Due to the acclaimed success of Gautreaux, the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development realized the potential of re-location programs. Section 152 of the 1992 Housing and Community Development Act authorized the Moving to Opportunity demonstration. The Act provides funding for housing vouchers, rental assistance and supportive counseling services. The Act appropriates approximately \$70 million for 1,300 Section 8 vouchers and for counseling services. Funding increased proportionately to the growth of the program and the addition of cities.

²⁷ Kaufman and Rosenbaum, 8.

Moving to Opportunity was implemented in five large cities: Baltimore, Chicago, Boston, Los Angeles and New York. All five cities have populations of at least 400,000 and are located in metropolitan areas of at least 1.5 million people. Moving to Opportunity utilizes the services of a local housing authority to administer units and one or more non-profit agencies to provide counseling services. Low-income families that lived in public or Section 8 housing were encouraged by outreach programs to apply. MTO applicants were randomly assigned to one of three groups: (1) an experimental group that received vouchers usable only in low-poverty areas and supportive counseling services, (2) a Section 8 comparison group that received geographically unrestricted vouchers without supportive services, and (3) a control group that consisted of permanently wait-listed applicants.²⁸ Although both the experimental and Section 8 families move, there are significant differences in the communities to which they relocate. For example, in Chicago, the poverty rate of Section 8 children's destination neighborhoods is more than three times higher than that in experimental children's new communities, and the difference in terms of the percent households receiving public assistance is about tenfold.²⁹

This paper specifically examines MTO outcomes on the experimental, Section 8, and control groups in Baltimore, Chicago, and Los Angeles.

²⁸ A low-poverty area refers to neighborhoods with less than 10 % of residents below the poverty line.

²⁹ Harris and Rosenbaum, 11.

TABLE ONE: Descriptions of MTO Site Operations

	Baltimore	Chicago	Los Angeles
Local Housing Administration	The Housing Authority of Baltimore City (HABC)	The Chicago Housing Authority (CHA); the Leadership Council for Metropolitan Open Communities	The Housing Authority of the City of Los Angeles (HACLA)
Non-Profit Agency & Counseling Services	Community Assistance Network (CAN)	Quadel Consulting Corporation	The Fair Housing Congress of Southern California (FHC); Beyond Shelter; on your feet
Participant Demographics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Average household income of residents is only \$6,880 • 46% receive public assistance • 99.6% of residents are African American • 84% of the families are female headed 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Average household income of residents is \$7,114 • 75% receive public assistance • 99.4% of households are African American • 70% of the families are female headed 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Average yearly income of targeted project residents is \$9,607 • 61% receive public assistance • 58.4% of households are Hispanic and 38.5% African Americans
Areas from which Participants Moved	The tracts selected for MTO recruitment average a poverty rate over 67%	The tracts selected for MTO recruitment average a poverty rate over 67%	The tracts selected for MTO recruitment average a poverty rate over 54%

Families that participated in Moving to Opportunity were similar to their public and assisted housing neighbors. Most applications were single, African American or Hispanic mothers with two to three children. The Moving to Opportunity executive summary states, “almost one in five of these women work, and two thirds receive Aid to Families with Dependent Children.”³⁰ Almost half (47.8 percent) of applicants reported fear of crime as their motivation to participate in MTO. Improved housing conditions and better schools are other significant reasons for family participation.³¹ As in

³⁰ Stegman, M.A. (April 1996). Expanding housing choices for HUD-assisted families: First biennial report to congress on the Moving to Opportunity for Fair Housing Demonstration. Retrieved from the World Wide Web on February 14, 2002: <http://www.huduser.org/publications/affhsg/expand/expand.html>

³¹ 39.3% of participants said they wanted better schools for their children.

Gautreaux, it appears that MTO applicants might represent a slightly more motivated group than their urban counterparts.

Moving to Opportunity hopes to assess the role and effectiveness of residential relocation programs, and determine the impact of neighborhood conditions on the employment, income, education and social well-being of participating families. Especially important, are the ways in which neighborhood, school and family resources intersect to provide social networks and positive opportunities for children. MTO offers a unique opportunity to isolate the true effect of neighborhood characteristics on child development; outcomes will be studied over a ten-year period.

Discoveries of Gautreaux

Although the Gautreaux project is not a methodologically sound social experiment, reported discoveries remain significantly important to the analysis of relocation programs. Before examining the results of Gautreaux studies, a comparison of Chicago's city and suburban schools is useful. The graduation rate of suburban schools in 1990 was 85.7 percent. Only 33.5 percent of students attending city schools graduated. Suburban movers of the Gautreaux program attended schools that scored above the Illinois state average on an 11th-grade reading test and the ACT examination. More than 88 percent of suburban movers attended schools with ACT averages of 20 (the national average) or better.

TABLE TWO: School Achievement

Test	City School Avg.	Suburban School Avg.	State Avg.
11 th -grade Reading Test	198	259	250
ACT	16.1	21.5	20.9

Rosenbaum concludes from these test score comparisons that suburban schools maintain higher standards of educational achievement.³² These scores provide a sufficient contrast of suburban and urban high school performance; however, Rosenbaum and his colleagues began their analysis of educational achievement in 1982 when Gautreaux children were 11 years old and attending elementary school. This time-series approach enables researchers to document the life impact of improved school opportunity and resources. The educational outcomes considered follow a developmental progression in the school arena by looking at different outcomes at different ages. Outcome progression serves as an indicator of future performance and total educational success.³³

Evaluating Human Capital

In his studies of Gautreaux students, Rosenbaum applied the “permanent disadvantage” hypothesis. The permanent disadvantage hypothesis considers whether transplanting ill-prepared poor children into suburban schools will put them at a comparative disadvantage.³⁴ The hypothesis considers the impact of income, family, and the city subculture on the preparedness and potential of disadvantaged children. The hypothesis proposes that the children’s low-income background may make them less prepared or less motivated, addressing the notion of income deprivation as well as economic security. The disadvantage is labeled “permanent” because it accounts for the students’ deprived early childhood development in addition to the child’s income. The students’ low socio-economic status may result in “undesirable” attitudes. Furthermore, racial discrimination may prevent movers from obtaining full access to suburban

³² Rosenbaum, *Housing Policy Debate*, 242.

³³ Kaufman and Rosenbaum, 9.

³⁴ Kaufman and Rosenbaum, 3.

resources.³⁵ However, Rosenbaum's studies disprove the hypothesis. Rather than suffering from permanent disadvantage, the students benefited from the improved educational opportunity, resources and role models of suburban schools. Other advantages of suburban schools were smaller classes, better course selection and teacher availability.

Rosenbaum examines five areas of neighborhood transition and school achievement, utilizing both subjective and objective data. Rosenbaum examines: (1) Students' Grades and Satisfaction, (2) Teachers' Response to Students, (3) Post High School Outcomes and Activities, (4) Negative Outcomes, and (5) Neighborhood Impacts.

Students' Grades and Satisfaction

Suburban movers encountered initial difficulty in adapting to the higher expectations of suburban schools. Suburban students tended to experience slight grade declines in their first few years, but after one to six years, their grades were comparable to city movers. Rosenbaum and his colleagues report "virtually no difference in grades" between suburban and urban movers.³⁶ Gautreaux students in both the city and suburban schools earned mostly "B's" and "C's."³⁷

Comparable grades, however, understate the improved achievement of suburban movers. Rosenbaum maintains that grades are sometimes insufficient indicators of academic performance. Gautreaux studies suggest that, "passing grades in the city did not indicate achievement at grade level, and even students on the honor roll were sometimes two years behind."³⁸ Therefore, suburban movers that earned the same grades

³⁵ Kaufman and Rosenbaum, 4.

³⁶ Kaufman and Rosenbaum 10.

³⁷ On a scale in which 5 represents "C's" and 6 equates to mostly "B's" and "C's," suburban movers earned a 5.61. City students scored a 5.60.

³⁸ Rosenbaum, *Housing Policy Debate*, 240.

as their city peers were actually performing at a higher level. Furthermore, the initial grade declines experienced by suburban students may be attributed to grade inflation of the city schools and not a decline in student performance.

Interviews are of particular value when comparing the quality of education suburban and urban movers received. Suburban movers were generally more satisfied with the academic standards and educational resources of their schools. In retrospect, suburban movers suggest that their new schools have much higher academic standards and greater possibilities for achievement than the city. Suburban movers complained that their city teachers, “did not expect [them] to make up work when absent, to do homework, to know multiplication in the third grade, or write in cursive in the fourth.”³⁹ In addition to the difference in academic standards, suburban participants acknowledged the disparity of resources between city and suburban schools. Rosenbaum summarizes, “Suburban movers had smaller classes, higher satisfaction with teachers and courses, and better attitudes about school than city movers.”⁴⁰

Teachers’ Response

In general, suburban movers attributed the improved academic standards of suburban schools to the teachers’ availability and commitment. However, students and their parents reported high rates of teacher prejudice and discrimination. Although suburban movers benefited from teacher responsiveness, they questioned teacher sincerity.

Students and their mothers felt that suburban teachers were more responsive to educational needs, available for extra assistance, better motivators and more committed than city teachers. Rosenbaum notes that teachers’ responses to students were “not part

³⁹ Rosenbaum, *Housing Policy Debate*, 240.

⁴⁰ Rosenbaum, *Housing Policy Debate*, 240.

of a systematic response to the housing integration program.”⁴¹ The program kept a low profile in order to avoid identification and stigmatization of the new students as low-income children. The teachers did not receive any notice, training, or information regarding the children’s residential and socio-economic histories. Furthermore, the Gautreaux project made special attempts to limit the number of program participants in each school to minimize speculation. Rosenbaum remarks, “Indeed, [teachers] were not told that these children were part of a special program.”⁴² As a result, all efforts made by teachers were the product of their own initiative.

Suburban mothers felt that the teachers were committed to the students’ performance. Again, interview responses are particularly valuable despite their subjectivity. When asked whether teachers had gone out of their way to help their children, 59 percent of suburban mothers reported such extra help.⁴³ Contrastingly, only 30 percent of city mothers answered in the affirmative. The following are retrospective comments made by suburban mothers addressing the satisfaction of teacher response:

In Chicago, after the teachers eight hours are over, they’re over! That’s the way it was. He has teachers in the suburbs who would work overtime to get things right if it looks like his work is messed up.

My daughter is really good in music. She’s in concert band...I could not take her to a concert so she called school. The band instructor left his home, picked her up from the house, and drove her to school. It’s that type of cohesiveness.

The reason I feel he his doing better is because the teachers are different. If you need help with subjects they’re right there to help you. They will xerox the copies of the directions of assignments and send them home so the parents can help. They did an IQ test on him and he scored high enough to be a genius. This caused some frowns as to why he sits in a

⁴¹ Rosenbaum, J.E., Kulieke, M.J., & Rubinowitz, L.S. (1998). White suburban schools’ responses to low-income black children: Sources of Successes and Problems. *The Urban Review*, 20(1), 37.

⁴² Rosenbaum, Kulieke and Rubinowitz, *TheUrban Review*, 37.

⁴³ Rosenbaum, Kulieke and Rubinowitz, *TheUrban Review*, 36.

classroom and won't do anything. So they figured maybe he would work better under a male teacher. So they gave him all male teachers and his grades went up.

Although suburban movers benefited from teacher enthusiasm and extra assistance, students also reported racial teacher bias. Many mothers that expressed approval of suburban teachers also described instances of racial discrimination. Mothers noted that some teachers had allowed and even encouraged white students to harass black children. These teachers rarely called on black students in class and gave white students more time to make-up missed assignments. One suburban mother reported, "A lunchroom monitor segregated the black children into one part of the cafeteria, and a school bus driver made black children go to the back of the bus."⁴⁴ Mothers reported conflicting perceptions and relationships with suburban teachers. They recognized that some teachers were helpful while others were prejudiced. Black children undoubtedly suffered from teachers' racist attitudes. An important question to consider is how teacher prejudice impacted the student's level of social acceptance and integration among his/her peers.

Suburban schools placed Gautreaux children in special education programs at a significantly higher rate than city schools; 19 percent of suburban movers were identified as disabled.⁴⁵ Mothers had a variety of reactions to their children being placed in special education classes. Some mothers accused teachers of mislabeling their children as learning disabled, others were grateful for the suburban schools' ability to identify and address the special needs of their children. Undoubtedly, some students tested were not learning disabled, but were simply "behind" acceptable performance levels. These

⁴⁴ Rosenbaum, Kulieke and Rubinowitz, *TheUrban Review*, 37.

⁴⁵ Rosenbaum, Kulieke and Rubinowitz, *TheUrban Review*, 35.

students were reportedly frustrated by the misdiagnosis, but their placement in special education classrooms proved beneficial. These classrooms had fewer students and a higher student to teacher ratio. Many mothers were initially suspicious of the potential stigma of special education placements, but concluded that their children were making better progress in such classes.⁴⁶ Rosenbaum concludes, “While it seems possible that both discrimination and higher standards are contributing to the greater incidence of special education placements, we cannot say how much each of these is affecting these children.”⁴⁷

In addition to discrimination and higher academic standards, Rosenbaum attributes the abundance of testing and special education placements to a wealth of suburban resources. Rosenbaum reports, “It is quite possible that suburban schools have more resources to devote to special education classes, allowing more flexibility to respond to students’ special needs.”⁴⁸ Interestingly, suburban schools were more likely to place Gautreaux students in special education classes than holding children back a grade. Rosenbaum suggests that special education placements are preferable to holding students back with younger children. However, special education tends to separate children from the suburban mainstream – an important obstacle to the integration goals of Gautreaux.

Post High School Outcomes and Activities

Rosenbaum concludes that improved prospects for graduation, college attendance and employment for suburban movers were the results of neighborhood safety, peer role models and educational resources. Rosenbaum considers college tracking of particular importance to suburban students. An educational resource, “tracking” of high school

⁴⁶ Rosenbaum, Kulieke and Rubinowitz, *TheUrban Review*, 33.

⁴⁷ Rosenbaum, Kulieke and Rubinowitz, *TheUrban Review*, 35.

⁴⁸ Rosenbaum, Kulieke and Rubinowitz, *TheUrban Review*, 35.

students significantly influences college attendance and employment rates. Schools have different curricula or tracks for college and non-college bound youth. College tracks more readily prepare students for college and careers. Study results disprove the permanent disadvantage hypothesis because suburban movers are 16.8 percent more likely to be enrolled in a college track curriculum than city movers. Furthermore, college enrollment rates of suburban movers were higher than those of city youths.⁴⁹

Counseling support is an important element of a good education. Trade school, community college, and four-year institution enrollment rates allude to the disparities of suburban and city counseling programs. Suburban movers were more motivated to attain their bachelor's degree than their city counterparts. An impressive 50 percent of suburban movers were enrolled in four-year colleges at the time of the study. Of the remaining 50 percent, two-thirds of suburban movers were working toward a two-year associate degree at local community colleges. Comparatively, only 20 percent or one-fifth of city movers planned on earning a bachelor's degree.

Although tertiary education goals are ideal, economic circumstances may impact the graduate's decision to seek employment. Rosenbaum suggests that suburban schools improved student awareness and knowledge of job opportunities. Motivating graduates to find good jobs and assisting students in the search for employment is an important component of education. Although suburban movers had to compete with middle-income white youths for employment, schools prepared black graduates for suburban job markets. Some employers discriminated against black suburban youths, but most

⁴⁹ Whereas 54% of suburban movers were enrolled college students at the time of the study, only 21% of urban movers had tertiary education plans.

suburban movers had more job opportunities with better pay, higher prestige and greater benefits than their city peers.⁵⁰

TABLE THREE: Suburban and City Employment Comparisons

Location	% Employed	Job Pay	Skill Requirements	Job Benefits
Suburbs	75%	9.5% earn less than \$3.40 per hour 21% earn at least \$6.50 per hour	55% have skilled or semi-skilled jobs	55.2% received at least one job benefit such as vacation, sick leave, educational opportunities, or health coverage
City	41.4%	43% earn less than \$3.50 per hour 5% earn at least \$6.50 per hour	36.4% have skilled or semi-skilled jobs	23.1% received at least one job benefit

Rosenbaum notes the dramatic difference in job opportunities available to suburban and city youths. In a study comparing the employment of suburban and city graduates not enrolled in college, suburban movers were more likely to be employed and working better jobs. “Better” employment suggests jobs that pay higher wages, require skilled or semi-skilled workers, and provide benefits.

Negative Outcomes

To fully evaluate the achievement outcomes of suburban and urban movers, one must also consider youths who are neither in school nor working. Suburban movers reported a low percentage of negative outcomes, appearing more motivated than their city peers. For example, suburban movers were 15 percent less likely to drop out of high school than city youth. Furthermore, only 10 percent of suburban youths were outside education and employment systems. Contrastingly, Rosenbaum labeled 26 percent of city movers “high risk” because they were neither enrolled in college nor employed. The

⁵⁰ Kaufman and Rosenbaum, 10.

study identified them as at risk because they were no longer improving their human capital.

Neighborhood Impacts

Gautreaux is a unique program that combines residential and school integration. Suburban students escape the backlash and stigma of past school integration attempts, such as busing, because children arrive and attend school as community residents. Residential integration provides the possibility for social integration of old and new residents. In this sense, residential integration is a process of mutual adaptation.⁵¹ Social integration determines the student's access to the community's social capital. If the students remain socially isolated, they cannot take advantage of the community's opportunities and social capital.

Through surveys and interviews, Rosenbaum measured the perceived social acceptance levels of suburban and urban youth. Researchers worried that Gautreaux youth would remain socially isolated. "Having spent more than six years in all-black urban housing projects, these children have learned habits and tastes different from those of their classmates."⁵² Furthermore, due to inadequate socio-economic resources, Gautreaux youth may be limited in their participation in after school activities. However, researchers discovered that both suburban and urban movers perceived themselves as socially accepted by their school peers.

⁵¹ Rosenbaum, Kulieke and Rubinowitz, *The Journal of Negro Education*, 36.

⁵² Rosenbaum, *Housing Policy Debate*, 246.

TABLE FOUR: Perceived Social Acceptance Levels of Gautreaux Youth

Question	Suburb	City
<i>Are you considered part of the in-group?</i>	<i>(n = 49)</i>	<i>(n = 31)</i>
Very Much	32.7%	32.3%
Somewhat	44.9%	51.6%
Not at all	22.4%	16.1%
<i>Do others see you as popular?</i>	<i>(n = 50)</i>	<i>(n = 31)</i>
Very Much	36.0%	29.0%
Somewhat	60.0%	61.3%
Not at all	4.0%	9.7%
<i>Do others see you as socially active?</i>	<i>(n = 50)</i>	<i>(n = 31)</i>
Very Much	46.0%	48.4%
Somewhat	44.0%	41.9%
Not at all	10.0%	9.7%
<i>Do others think you do not fit in?</i>	<i>(n = 50)</i>	<i>(n = 30)</i>
Very Much	2.0%	3.3%
Somewhat	16.0%	26.7%
Not at all	82.0%	70.0%

Contrary to researchers expectations, the suburban movers were nearly as accepted by their peers as the city movers. Suburban movers had almost as many black friends as and significantly more white friends than city movers.⁵³ Rosenbaum suggests that suburban movers interacted with a more racially integrated peer network, despite the small numbers of blacks in urban schools.⁵⁴

Harassment serves as an additional measure of social integration. Gautreaux respondents of both residential locales reported incidences of name-calling, threats, and hurtful actions. Name-calling was the most frequently reported form of harassment for both groups. Not surprisingly, 51.9 percent of suburban movers reported at least one name-calling incident by whites, but only 13.3 percent of city movers reported such. However, it is important to note that 41.9 percent of city movers experienced name-calling by blacks. In terms of actual threats, 15.4 percent of suburban movers were

⁵³ Suburban movers had a mean number of 8.81 black friends, while the city mover mean was 11.06. The mean number of white friends was 7.37 for suburban movers and 2.37 for their city peers. Rosenbaum, *Housing Policy Debate*, 248.

⁵⁴ Rosenbaum, *Housing Policy Debate*, 248.

threatened by whites, and 19.4 percent of city movers were threatened by blacks on more than one occasion.⁵⁵ Neither group reported instances in which these threats developed into actual violence. Students reacted to harassment in the same way that their mothers coped with teacher discrimination, students did not allow the harassment of a few hinder the advantages of the move.

Possible Reasons for Positive Outcomes

Suburban movers were able to offer valuable insight as to the reasons for improved human capital outcomes of Gautreaux. Suburban movers provide a distinctive vantage point, having lived in the suburbs and the inner city. Rosenbaum and Kaufman suggest that suburban movers contributed “new insights on the difference between these environments.”⁵⁶ Suburban movers reported safety as the most important factor to the study’s outcomes. When asked how youths’ lives would have been different if they had not moved, the typical comments included, “He would be on drugs, dead or in a gang.”⁵⁷ Secondly, suburban movers noted the new environment’s positive impact on youths’ motivation. Suburban youths explained that the positive influence of role models and peers motivated them to do well in school. Suburban youths report that their suburban friends had “more values.”⁵⁸ Furthermore, suburban schools’ wealth of resources accounts for the recruitment and employment of qualified teachers and guidance counselors. Committed adults and motivated students increased the schools’ academic and the suburban youths’ achievement standards. In contrast to suburban praise of improved motivation, a city mover commented about the demoralization of public housing, stating, “The housing project environment brings you down...makes you not

⁵⁵ Rosenbaum, *Housing Policy Debate*, 246.

⁵⁶ Rosenbaum, Kulieke and Rubinowitz, *The Urban Review*, 15.

⁵⁷ Rosenbaum, Kulieke and Rubinowitz, *The Urban Review*, 15.

⁵⁸ Rosenbaum, Kulieke and Rubinowitz, *The Urban Review*, 18.

care about the future...living in the type of environment where nobody wants nothing, nobody does nothing, nobody gets up and tries to have anything.”⁵⁹

The improved academic performance and achievement of suburban movers implies that neighborhoods impact child development. Suburban communities provided Gautreaux youths with ample social capital, including a wealth of academic resources, motivational role models and physical security. In contrast, city movers reported improved financial security and housing, but did not experience educational or motivational changes. City movers benefited from voucher assistance, but remained in communities with few resources to devote to social capital. City movers were integrated into their communities, but lacked the social organization and networks of their suburban counterparts.

Discoveries of Moving to Opportunity

Human Capital Outcomes

This section of the paper addresses Moving To Opportunity’s impact on human capital development. Conclusions are presented according to the 5-part analysis developed in the examination of Gautreaux, and are based on studies of three MTO cities: (1) Chicago, (2) Baltimore, and (3) Los Angeles. Although the studies pursue different methodological strategies and specific topic interests, all researchers involved comment on MTO’s infancy. As a result of the program’s infancy, post high school outcomes and activities are not available.

Student’s Grades and Satisfaction

Children’s school-related experiences in the Chicago MTO program are very similar to the short-term results of Gautreaux. Gautreaux evaluations suggest that in the short term, the suburban movers encountered both positive and negative school-related

⁵⁹ Rosenbaum, Kulieke and Rubinowitz, *TheUrban Review*, 16.

experiences. In the long run, however, Gautreaux suburban movers out-performed their city counterparts.

Based on the short-term experiences of Gautreaux children, Laura Harris and Emily Rosenbaum, Chicago MTO analysts, suggest that children in the MTO experimental group are more likely placed in classes designed to address behavior and learning problems.⁶⁰ At the same time, Harris and Rosenbaum expect that experimental mothers will be more likely to rate their children's schools in a positive fashion. Harris and Rosenbaum's study examines the school-related experiences of MTO sixth graders. Students are referred to according to their MTO assignment: (1) experimental, (2) Section 8, and (3) control.⁶¹ Harris and Rosenbaum note that although Section 8 families moved, some children did not change schools. They label experimental children and Section 8 children that changed schools the "treatment group."

First, Harris and Rosenbaum consider Chicago MTO children's class placements. Among experimental and Section 8 children that changed schools, 8.6 percent were placed in advanced classes, 24 percent in classes for learning disabilities, and 3.4 percent in classes for behavior problems.⁶² Harris and Rosenbaum report, "The profile of special placements does not appear to translate into a pronounced deterioration of children's grades. Rather, the mothers' reports suggest that the children are, on the whole, doing well academically."⁶³ More than 45 percent of experimental and Section 8 mothers report that their children's grades have improved.⁶⁴

⁶⁰ Harris and Rosenbaum, 17.

⁶¹ MTO experimental and Section 8 families parallel Gautreaux's suburban and urban movers. Gautreaux lacked a control. The MTO control group is composed of wait-listed applicants. My use of the terms "experimental children" or "Section 8 mothers" is for methodological and consistency purposes.

⁶² Harris and Rosenbaum, 19.

⁶³ Harris and Rosenbaum, 19.

⁶⁴ Harris and Rosenbaum, 19.

Harris and Rosenbaum asked experimental and Section 8 mothers to “grade” their children’s new schools. Mothers were asked to give a letter grade, from A to D, and F, on four dimensions of school quality: (1) the extent to which the teachers care about the students, (2) the safety of the school, (3) the effectiveness of the principal, and (4) the ability of the school to maintain order and discipline.⁶⁵ Experimental and Section 8 mothers gave their children’s new schools a “B” for order and discipline, and a “B+” for safety. Although order and safety dimensions do not directly reflect on student academic performance, they are essential to the overall academic environment. The majority (three-fourths) of experimental and Section 8 mothers felt that the academic standards of the new school’s were more demanding, and about two-thirds indicated their children’s interest in school was growing.⁶⁶

Unfortunately, class placements and mothers’ short-term perceptions are the only measures of educational achievement presently available. Combining experimental and Section 8 mothers together as one treatment group further complicates Harris and Rosenbaum’s ability to make accurate conclusions. The combination makes it difficult to infer about the real successes of suburban and urban schools and communities.

Jens Ludwig, Helen Ladd, and Greg Duncan conducted educational outcome research on Baltimore MTO participants. Instead of relying on survey and interview data, Ludwig, Ladd, and Duncan obtained student records for the 1993-94 through 1998-99 academic years. School district offices merged the information on MTO participants with school administrative records, and were able to identify a majority of the children’s records.

⁶⁵ Harris and Rosenbaum, 20.

⁶⁶ Harris and Rosenbaum, 21.

Baltimore educational outcome measures come from student performance on two sets of standardized achievement tests: (1) the Comprehensive Test of Basic Skills (CTBS), a standardized achievement test that measures math and reading skills of elementary and middle school students and (2) the Maryland Functional Tests (MFT), a graduation requirement that tests student math and reading capabilities. Although MFT results are typically reported as a numerical score, some counties involved in the study only recorded whether the student passed or failed. Consequently, Ludwig measures MFT performance as a series of dichotomous pass/fail indicators. Furthermore, due to missing math score data, Ludwig focuses on the MFT reading test. Despite missing data, Ludwig suggests that there are advantages to using administrative records and test scores over surveys and interviews. Specifically, administrative records make multiple years of educational achievement data available for each child and are less susceptible to self-reporting problems.⁶⁷

Additional outcome measures included the number of school absences, dropout rates, grade retention, and receipt of special education services. Because Maryland education records do not directly indicate whether students dropped out of school, Ludwig constructed a proxy variable to measure dropout rates. By referring to absentee documentation, Ludwig declared students under the age of 16 that had not attended school in 120 days or longer dropouts. The variable is a limited indicator, but Ludwig believes it is the best approximation of dropouts available.

⁶⁷ Ludwig, J., Ladd, H. F. & Duncan, G. (January 2001). The effects of urban poverty on educational outcomes: Evidence from a randomized experiment, 26. Retrieved from the World Wide Web on March 1, 2002: http://www.wws.princeton.edu/~kling/mto/mto_balt_edupaper3.pdf

Ludwig, Ladd, and Duncan focus separately on two age groups; children who, at the time of the study, were at least five but less than 12 years of age (“young children”) and children who were 12 and older (“adolescents or teens”). Ludwig anticipated that MTO intervention would have a greater effect on the educational achievement of the younger cohort because “the annual rate of change in children’s test scores appears to decrease with age...[and because] young children from high-poverty areas will not be as far behind as adolescents.”⁶⁸

To provide context for the measurement of MTO’s effects on children’s educational outcomes, Ludwig describes the developmental trajectory of children in the MTO control group. In general, disadvantaged children’s educational outcomes “deteriorate absolutely or relative to the national average.”⁶⁹ Although children in the MTO control group scored near the 40th percentile in the national distribution on the CTBS reading and math tests at age 6, by 13 the score had declined to the 20th percentile.

Ludwig, Ladd, and Duncan provide the following conclusions about relocation and its impact on educational outcomes. Compared with adolescents in the control group, experimental children are twice as likely to pass the MFT reading test. Experimental children also score about 7 percentile points higher on the CTBS reading and math scores than students in the control group.⁷⁰ Section 8 students do appear to perform better on both the MFT and CTBS, but differences are not statistically significant. Ludwig, Ladd, and Duncan also examined whether test results were impacted by parent educational attainment and motivation for program participation. While it appears that younger children in households headed by a parent with a high

⁶⁸ Ludwig, Ladd and Duncan, 26.

⁶⁹ Ludwig, Ladd and Duncan, 27.

⁷⁰ Ludwig, Ladd and Duncan, 29.

school degree (or equivalent) and/or a parent that applied for MTO to gain access to better schools experienced above-average gains in CTBS math and reading scores, differences were not significant. Ludwig, Ladd, and Duncan regret that they are unable to draw firmer conclusions about the program's effects on student achievement, and attribute the inconclusive results to the short post-program observation period.

Teacher Response

Harris and Rosenbaum briefly discuss mothers' satisfaction with their children's new teachers. The majority of experimental and Section 8 mothers felt that the new teachers were willing to discuss child performance, problems, and progress. Many experimental mothers commented on teacher dedication. At the same time, treatment mothers frequently reported that their children were not getting along with some teachers. An experimental mother commented that her son did not "get along" with his computer teacher, while another parent reported that her daughter's teacher was "picking on her."⁷¹ Again, Harris and Rosenbaum's results resemble conclusions made about Gautreaux. It can therefore be assumed, that isolated incidents of teacher bias will be resolved. Furthermore, it is likely that the positives of the children's new schools will outweigh negative teacher response.

Negative Outcomes

Education is part of the whole person. Therefore, it is important to consider negative outcomes as well as the positive effects of an improved school and neighborhood environment. Similar to Gautreaux conclusions, MTO experimental children report low levels of negative outcomes. For example, the violent crime incidence of boys aged 11 to 16 in the Baltimore experimental group is significantly less than that of boys in the control group. For every 100 boys in the control group, 61

⁷¹ Harris and Rosenbaum, 21.

commit violent crimes. Contrastingly, for every 100 boys in the experimental group, 16 participate in violent, criminal activity. A decline in delinquency and violent crime incidences among the experimental group implies the positive impact of improved neighborhood environments.

Ludwig, Ladd, and Duncan report that there are no statistically significant differences in special education placements, absences, grade retention, and disciplinary problems between experimental, Section 8 and control children. At this time, Ludwig, Ladd, and Duncan do not have longitudinal data, but they hypothesize that dropout rates for experimental children will decline. Ludwig, Ladd and Duncan report, “MTO experimental and Section 8 comparison treatments seem to slow the rate of relative decline in children’s test scores as they age...but MTO also appears to increase the rate of grade retention among adolescents.”⁷² Grade retention may be categorized as negative educational outcome. However, retention may be the best treatment for students achieving below an acceptable performance level. In the long-term, grade retention tends to improve the student’s academic performance.

Neighborhood Impacts

Becky Pettit, from the Center for Research on Child Well-being, has performed extensive research on MTO children’s loss and gain of social capital as a result of moving. Pettit cites past studies that imply that children lose social capital in the short-term after moving. These studies support the “social disruption” hypothesis, maintaining that residential mobility disrupts social capital. The social disruption hypothesis suggests that the loss of social capital following a move may be “particularly detrimental for children’s educational attainment because social capital, like economic or human capital,

⁷² Ludwig, Ladd and Duncan, 28.

may be used to foster skills and capabilities of children.”⁷³ However, Pettit contends that few studies have directly examined the relationship between residential mobility and indicators of social capital.⁷⁴ Pettit’s study of Los Angeles MTO participants provides strong evidence that the “effect of moving depends upon the quality of the neighborhood into which a family moves, on whether parents have enough money to take advantage of the resources that a neighborhood makes available, and on the age of the children in the family.”⁷⁵ Pettit’s statement above highlights the importance of social integration to gains in social capital. Whereas Gautreaux studies focused on racial integration, Pettit examines the effects of economic integration on participants’ access to social resources.⁷⁶ Furthermore, Pettit’s studies suggest that both urban and suburban students access their communities’ social capital, but suburban resources are more beneficial, are of higher quality, and are more expensive.

Washington and Lee University

Becky Pettit, Maria Hanratty, and Sarah McLanahan are responsible for research conducted on the impact of the Los Angeles Moving Opportunity program on child well-being. They focus on participants’ first years in their new neighborhoods, and the impact of improved social capital.

Childcare is an important community resource that significantly impacts child development. Childcare affects the child’s health and school readiness. In addition, childcare enables parents, particularly single mothers, to work. Research suggests that both the experimental and Section 8 groups were significantly less likely to use non-

⁷³ Pettit, B. (March 2000). Moving and children’s social connections: The critical importance of context. Princeton: Bendheim-Thoman Center for Research on Child Wellbeing, Working Paper 98-04, 5. Retrieved from the World Wide Web on March 1, 2002: <http://www.wws.princeton.edu/~kling/mto/la.htm#LA3>

⁷⁴ Pettit, 2.

⁷⁵ Pettit, 6.

⁷⁶ Pettit fails to sufficiently distinguish between social integration and social capital. Although the two are related, they are distinguishable in important ways.

relative childcare than the control.⁷⁷ Relative childcare is generally perceived as providing lower quality care in terms of health and school preparedness. Comparatively, center-based care is generally perceived as a superior form of care. Experimental families were most likely to use childcare centers and Head Start programs. A related issue, experimental and Section 8 participants are more likely to seek medical care at doctors' offices, whereas control group respondents access emergency hospital care.

Researchers note that the program's infancy may misrepresent the potential for improved social capital. Few families surveyed had lived in their new communities for longer than a year at the time of the study. For example, researchers hope that relocation to low-poverty areas will result in increased parental involvement, but they hypothesized that experimental and Section 8 families, having recently moved, would not have had time to establish themselves. Therefore, Pettit, Hanratty, and McLanahan were surprised that experimental and Section 8 parents were as likely to be involved in their child's school as control families. Although experimental and Section 8 parents are not more involved than control families, these findings suggest that with time, the improved community conditions will increase participation and interest.

Petit, Hanratty, and McLanahan focused on two age groups of children – 6 to 11 and 12 to 17. They specifically surveyed the children's participation in after school activities, after school supervision, and number of friends. Studies indicate that experimental children in the younger cohort were the least likely to participate in after

⁷⁷ 6% of the experimental group, 15% of the Section 8 group, and 50% of the control have relatives care for their children. Pettit, B., Hanratty, M. & McLanahan. (April 1998). The impact of Los Angeles Moving to Opportunity on residential mobility, neighborhood characteristics, and early child and parent outcomes. Princeton: Bendheim-Thoman Center for Research on Child Wellbeing Working Paper Number 98-18, 18. Retrieved from the World Wide Web on March 1, 2002: <http://ryder.princeton.edu/crcw/publist/workingpapers/wp98-18-Hanratty.pdf>

school activities, including tutoring, religious groups, camp, sports and art. However, Pettit, Hanratty, and McLanahan conclude that the difference in participation is not significant. Children in the two treatment groups (experimental and Section 8) tended to have fewer friends than their control counterparts. At the same time, parents in the two treatment groups were more likely to talk frequently with other parents than parents in the control group.⁷⁸ These results suggest that the new neighborhoods' elementary schools facilitated parent involvement.

Regarding children 12 to 17 years of age, study results speak specifically to neighborhood impact. Of particular interest is the experimental group's tendency to be more involved in school tutoring and religious programs. Contrastingly, control children were more likely to participate in sports, military programs and camp. Both experimental and control children participate in after school activities and are equally integrated into their communities. Significant to Pettit's study, however, are the different types of programs in which children participate. Arguably, tutoring and religious programs instill "better" values in children, motivating them toward spiritual and educational success. One might therefore conclude that while both groups of children utilize their communities' social capital, the opportunities and resources in the suburbs are of greater quality and benefit.

Pettit identifies several reasons why neighborhood context matters for the development of social connections important for children. First, Pettit notes that affluent communities typically have lower violence and crime rates than high-poverty neighborhoods. Attempting to protect their children from neighborhood risks, low-

⁷⁸ 39% of experimental parents, 48% of Section 8 parents, and 31% of control parents frequently talk with community parents. Pettit, Hanratty, and McLanahan, 23.

income parents tend to isolate their children from community members. Pettit reports that children in the two treatment groups were given more freedom in their new neighborhoods. Due to the improved safety of their new communities, teenagers were not supervised after school. Furthermore, Pettit suggests that the social world of teenagers moving to low-poverty neighborhoods seem much wider than those of Section 8 and control adolescents. Pettit provides the following example:

Janette and her family moved from public housing to a low-poverty neighborhood on Los Angeles' north side. Janette's eldest son worked with school counselors to find a summer job in the community and was active on the high school football team.⁷⁹

Although Janette's son sought employment, Pettit also notes that experimental parents were less likely to depend on teens to earn family income or baby-sit younger siblings.

Secondly, Pettit identifies the stock of social, educational and economic resources available in low-poverty neighborhoods. Pettit suggests that residential relocation to low-poverty areas increases children's access to community resources, which enhances their human capital. Despite improved availability of social capital, experimental families reported short-term financial demands immediately following the move that limited their access to the community's social resources. Pettit concludes that the social costs associated with moving to middle-class neighborhoods were borne primarily by young children whose parents could not find affordable after school activities.⁸⁰

The experimental group's improved accessibility to center-based childcare and preventative medical services suggests that low-poverty neighborhoods positively impact child development and increase social capital. Although experimental children 6 to 11

⁷⁹ Pettit, 19.

⁸⁰ Pettit, 20.

years of age participated in fewer after school activities and had fewer friends, these findings are most likely temporary.

Although by design, Laura Harris and Emily Rosenbaum can only address the short-term impacts of moving on Chicago MTO families, they broadly evaluate the quality and impact of these families' new neighborhoods. Harris and Rosenbaum note that the destination neighborhoods for children in both the experimental and Section 8 groups have the potential for higher levels of social organization than the areas from which they moved. The levels of concentrated disadvantage in their new neighborhoods are much lower for both treatment groups. Furthermore, the structural characteristics of experimental children's new communities are far more advantageous than those of Section 8 children.

Harris and Rosenbaum examine MTO mothers' perceptions regarding the improved social characteristics of their new neighborhoods. Harris and Rosenbaum discovered that experimental mothers reported a higher degree of perceived safety in their new neighborhoods than any other group. Experimental mothers were significantly less likely than Section 8 mothers to report problems with trash, drinking in public, drugs and abandoned buildings.⁸¹ In addition, experimental mothers were more likely to trust their neighbors' judgment in watching their children. Significantly more experimental mothers felt attached to their new neighborhood, reporting that the communities were good places for them to live, it was important for them to live there, expected to live there a long time, and if there was a problem in their community, their neighbors could get it solved.⁸² Harris and Rosenbaum note that experimental mothers' belief that their

⁸¹ Harris and Rosenbaum, 13.

⁸² Harris and Rosenbaum, 14.

neighbors could solve community problems “is perhaps the most significant with respect to the overall discussion of social capital.”⁸³

Conclusion

Three solutions are thought to resolve the concentrated poverty of inner cities: (1) linking families living in highly impoverished neighborhoods to jobs in areas with greater economic opportunity, (2) promoting the revitalization of distressed inner city neighborhoods, and (3) enabling families to move to neighborhoods with low rates of poverty.⁸⁴ The Gautreaux Project and Moving to Opportunity programs pursue the third policy option with great success.

Rosenbaum concludes that the Gautreaux program indicates large-scale success is possible, but will require extensive additional housing services. He suggests, “If national policy made a long-term commitment to expanding the Section 8 program and increasing suburban moves, then builders and developers could make long-term investments in building low-income housing in more affluent areas.”⁸⁵ Although large-scale relocation programs would be quite costly, the alternative is to spend more money on current housing projects that racially segregate disadvantaged peoples. If for no other reason, relocation programs should be championed for their efforts to desegregate suburban and urban communities. Gautreaux studies show that socio-economic and racial desegregation is possible, and that low-income blacks benefit from living among middle-class whites.

⁸³ Harris and Rosenbaum, 14.

⁸⁴ Shroder, M. Moving to opportunity: An experiment in social and geographic mobility. Retrieved from the World Wide Web on February 10, 2002: <http://www.huduser.org/periodicals/cityscape/vol5num2/shroder.pdf>

⁸⁵ Rosenbaum, *Closing the Gap*, 249.

To date, Gautreaux and MTO studies do not specifically measure the relationship between relocation and social capital. However, Gautreaux is often cited as confirmation that neighborhood quality has an important influence on child well-being. While correlative inferences can be made, more research on the relationship between community environment and educational achievement should be conducted. The future of relocation programs as large-scale policy options greatly depends on the establishment of such a relationship.

The positive conclusions of Gautreaux and Moving to Opportunity are limited and qualified. Relocation programs improve the environment and opportunities of low-income families, but fail to revitalize inner city, poor neighborhoods (policy option 2). In essence, mobilization efforts cause ancillary risks. In all likelihood, mobilization programs cream the most motivated individuals from the community. It appears that revitalization and relocation programs compete for the inner city's most inspirational leaders and "old heads." Can or should both policy options be pursued simultaneously? This is an important question for advocates of residential relocation programs and policymakers to consider. Just as there are many causes of poverty, there is no one solution to its alleviation. The national "war against poverty" should neither discount nor solely depend on residential relocation programs.

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