The Durability of the Gautreaux Two Residential Mobility Program: A Qualitative
Analysis of Who Stays and Who Moves from Low-Poverty Neighborhoods

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Abstract

This paper explores the durability of the Gautreaux Two housing mobility program, implemented in 2002, which gave low-income residents of Chicago public housing a special opportunity to move to more advantaged neighborhoods—neighborhoods in which at least 76.5 percent of households were non-poor and 70 percent were non-black. In addition to observing all aspects of program implementation, we conducted four waves of in-depth qualitative interviews with 91 program participants and their children. Among those who moved, we compare those who made secondary moves within the three-year study window to those who stayed at their Gautreaux placement addresses. Furthermore, we break down secondary movers into those who made subsequent moves to other relatively advantaged neighborhoods and those who moved back to more disadvantaged neighborhoods.

Key factors motivating secondary moves included substandard unit quality, hassles with landlords, feelings of social isolation due to poor integration into the new neighborhood and distance from kin, transportation difficulties, a negative reaction on the part of the children to the new neighborhood, and financial difficulties. Conversely, good unit quality, pleasant and supportive relationships with landlords, positive social integration into the new neighborhood, the presence of kin nearby, and a positive reaction on the part of the children to the new environment were crucial reasons why some families remained in their Gautreaux neighborhoods. Among secondary movers, those who returned to high poverty, highly segregated neighborhoods were more likely to have hailed from such neighborhoods initially, while those who moved on to neighborhoods with characteristics similar to their Gautreaux placement neighborhood had often had prior experiences in lower poverty and integrated neighborhoods. Other characteristics distinguishing movers from stayers included jobs, as stayers were more likely to be employed, and city versus suburban placements, as the city placements were more stable.

Introduction

In 1976, a U.S. Supreme Court decision championed the cause of a Chicago public housing tenant, Dorothy Gautreaux, and over 40,000 other African American tenants of the Chicago Housing Authority (CHA), who had brought a suit against the CHA and the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development for discriminating on the basis of race by engaging in "systematic and illegal segregation"—that is, the policy of placing public housing in predominately black neighborhoods (Keels et al. 2005). [1]

The courts' remedy, the Gautreaux Housing Mobility Program, has proven to be one of the nation's largest housing desegregation efforts, with over 7,100 families moving to more affluent neighborhoods in mixed-race or white suburban and city neighborhoods between 1976 and 1998 (Mendenhall 2005a). A variety of current federal housing policies are now based on the notion that families in need of housing assistance should not be segregated, though these policies center on economic segregation rather than segregation by race (Popkin et al. 2000).

The Gautreaux program had a long-term impact on the residential locations of participants, as most families maintained their neighborhood affluence and, to a somewhat lesser extent, racial composition of their placement neighborhood over time. This was somewhat surprising, since after one year families were no longer restricted to predominantly non-poor, non-black neighborhoods. When suburban Gautreaux movers were compared to other housing project residents who instead moved to more disadvantaged city neighborhoods, the employment, education, and health of suburban movers and their children was superior to that of those who stayed in the city (Rosenbaum and DeLuca 2000; Rubinowitz and Rosenbaum 2001; Keels et al. 2005;

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[1] Some of these individuals were on a waiting list for a unit in a Chicago public housing project.

Keels 2005a; Keels 2005b; Mendenhall, DeLuca, and Duncan 2005; Rosenbaum, DeLuca and Tuck forthcoming). However, in-depth interviews with program participants revealed that the transition from public housing to more prosperous city or suburban neighborhoods was neither smooth nor straightforward for many (Rubinowitz and Rosenbaum 2001; Mendenhall 2005b).

As indicated above, a number of researchers have studied residential mobility programs such as the first Gautreaux program and the Department of Housing and Urban Development's Moving to Opportunity (MTO) program. However, no study we know has observed families during the crucial early months and years of adjustment to their new and very different neighborhoods. Additionally, no study has observed the process by which some may make decisions about subsequent residential moves. This question is particularly important, since results from the MTO program (Orr et al. 2003) and our own findings from a subsequent CHA housing mobility program, Gautreaux Two, show that unlike the first Gautreaux program, families who move on to subsequent addresses usually move to neighborhoods that are highly segregated by both income and race.

In 2002 the CHA initiated a second Gautreaux program, called Gautreaux Two. We conducted repeated, in-depth qualitative interviews with 91 of the program's participants over a three-year period to glean detailed narratives about their experiences in the program as they moved through the process of orientation, housing counseling, housing search, unit acquisition, moving, and settling in. A primary goal of this study was to understand why some participants stayed in the placement neighborhood while others moved on once their vouchers became portable.

Literature Review

Racial Residential Segregation

The felt need for housing mobility programs largely arose due to rapid increases in the racial segregation in large northern cities, a process that was worsened by the policies of local housing authorities (Hirsch 1983). Racial segregation is the primary residential pattern in cities in the United States, and it is particularly evident in the segregation of blacks from whites (Bobo and Zubrinsky 1996).

Residential segregation is not simply the result of historical processes; it continues due to ongoing individual and institutional discrimination (Bobo and Zubrinsky 1996; Massey and Denton 1993). Race continues to be salient in shaping residential location even over class, and although the majority of blacks favor desegregation, the fact that segregation persists is evidence of the largely involuntary nature of the segregation of blacks (Massey and Denton 1993). Even though many whites may be in favor of fair housing, the willingness of whites to live within close proximity to blacks diminishes with increasing concentration of blacks (Massey and Denton 1993). Whites often consider racial integration to be a threat to traditional status relations and avoid purchasing homes in neighborhoods with a high percentage of African Americans (Bobo and Zubrinsky 1996; Emerson, Yancey, and Chai 2001).

Blacks are less likely than whites to be able to move out of poor areas and are more likely to move into poor areas than whites, even when controlling for socioeconomic status (South and Crowder 1997). The largest disparity in access to suburban housing is between whites and blacks, and black householders are less able to translate their desires to move into actual residential relocation than white householders,

even when socioeconomic status is taken into account (Crowder 2001; Logan, Alba and Leung 1996). Thus, for blacks, enduring barriers to residential mobility exist. Blacks' decisions about residential location are largely determined by external forces rather than by personal desires (Crowder 2001; Massey, Condran, and Denton 1987).

Neighborhood Effects

Researchers point to the negative effect that living in areas of concentrated poverty and high crime rates may have on individual outcomes, including health, education, employment opportunities, safety, and mortality (Allard and Danzinger 2003; Brooks-Gunn et al. 1997; Peterson and Krivo 1993; Crane 1991; Mayer and Jencks 1989). Galster and Killen (1995) conceive of neighborhoods as "opportunity structures" which consist of systems, networks, and institutions that result in social advancement outcomes. Positive effects are presumed to follow movement to more affluent neighborhoods with greater racial diversity.

While previous research does not consistently find evidence of such "neighborhood effects," there is some recent evidence that neighborhoods can confer both advantages and disadvantages to residents, particularly children (Newman and Schnare 1997). Children's neighborhoods are related to their cognitive development, and children living in affluent areas are surrounded by greater resources and more enrichment opportunities (Brooks-Gunn et al. 1997). Outcomes for parents and children may be related to both the quality and availability of services and of jobs, as living closer to job opportunities is associated with a higher probability of working (Allard and Danzinger 2003; Ellen and Turner 1997).

Social Networks

Housing mobility programs and related policies make the presumption that individuals and families who live in segregated urban areas are more disadvantaged than those living in more resource-rich areas and assume that moving to safer and wealthier neighborhoods will result in a better quality of life and increased life chances. There are various mechanisms that transmit neighborhood-level characteristics to individual outcomes, and social networks are a primary source of transmission (Ellen and Turner 1997; Briggs 1997; Mendenhall 2005b).

Clampet-Lundquist (2004) shows that while policy makers assume that children and adults who move through mobility programs will create the kind of social ties in their new neighborhoods that will allow them to become more economically independent, this does not always happen. Briggs (1997) reminds researchers and policy-makers that moving low-income families into affluent neighborhoods does not automatically result in positive effects for these families, as there are challenges to creating connections in the new neighborhoods and to accessing the resources of those neighborhoods. Forming social ties in the new neighborhoods is not an easy process, as social ties take time to develop (Clampet-Lundquist 2004).

People in low-income areas tend to use very local social ties, and make ties with others who are very similar to themselves (Clampet-Lundquist 2004; Briggs 1997; Gilbert 1998). One of the goals of mobility programs is to relocate such families to areas where they can form more diverse social ties with people who are different from them in terms of resources and networks. These ties, in turn, should lead to more diverse information sources and provide access to opportunities that families would otherwise not

have known about (Granovetter 1973). However, as Clampet-Lundquist's (2004) research suggests, such families may not have the resources to utilize the newly available ties in a way that improves their situation (see also Kleit 2001).

Data and Methods

Our recruitment of a sample of program participants employed a two-pronged approach. First, we enlisted a randomly selected 20 percent of all Gautreaux Two clients at orientation sessions held between May and October of 2002, which yielded an initial group of 82 families. Orientation sessions began in April, 2002. To compensate for the initially low take-up of the program (fewer used their voucher to move than was anticipated), we drew a second sample of 25 program enrollees who appeared likely to move as part of the program.[2]

Of the total respondent pool, 77 percent of the families were drawn from a random sample of program participants. We wanted to be able to compare those who moved through the program to those who did not (see Pashup et al. forthcoming). As program take-up proceeded at a slower rate than anticipated, and it appeared that take-up would be less than 50 percent, we recruited an additional 25 respondents from a list of "likely movers," that is, participants who already had selected a unit and secured a verbal agreement with the landlord. These likely movers constitute 23 percent of our sample. Thus, though take-up is only at 36 percent in the program overall, over half of the Gautreaux Two study participants have now moved through the program. Fifty-eight percent of these movers relocated to opportunity areas in the city, while the rest moved to the suburbs.

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[2] Likely movers were drawn from the Leadership Council's Transmittal List, which consists of families who have already located units and begun the inspection/moving process.

We completed baseline interviews with 91 of the 107 sampled families, giving us an 85 percent response rate. This is a relatively high rate of response for such an unusually disadvantaged population. We completed second-round in-depth interviews with 86 of the 91 families (95 percent retention), over 60 percent of whom had moved by that time. In the third wave, our retention rate was above 90 percent. In our fourth and final interview nearly all wave three families again participated.

Each of our semi-structured qualitative interviews – which resemble "conversations" rather than the question and answer format common to closed ended surveys – ran between two and four hours in duration and elicited rich narrative detail on a number of topics related to the move.   For purposes of comparison, we conducted in-depth interviews and observations with both the movers and non-movers, but the conversations with those families who did not move through Gautreaux were directed along lines that make sense given the differences in the situations of the groups.

Our approach to collecting qualitative data is highly systematic, with core content gathered from each respondent (although interviewers are at liberty to change the order and wording of questions, and directed to probe for specific examples). This allows us to elicit consistent information across cases on constructs relevant to theory, while still allowing room for unanticipated constructs to "bubble up" from the data collection and coding process. Additional data come from field notes and interviewer observations we documented for every case after each interview.

After each interview wave was complete, we developed coding schemes that reflected both the core constructs that shaped the study at the outset, as well as the constructs that emerge in the data collection and coding process. The latter (coding for

emergent constructs) is a hallmark of qualitative analysis and ensures that constructs of relevance that might not have been evident at the outset can be fully recognized and taken into account in the analysis. The former (coding for preexisting constructs relevant to theories) better enables this analysis to speak to the concerns of the larger research and policy communities it seeks to inform.

Coding is largely based on verbatim transcriptions of interviews and interviewer observations (field notes). Coders begin by sorting text drawn from transcripts and field notes into predetermined or emergent topics, known as "fields." Topical field codes are based on the interview guide, but some also arise from the themes in transcripts that were not anticipated by the researchers. In the initial stage of coding, coder-analysts derive topical fields both inductively and deductively. New fields can be added at any point during the analysis process, although analysts will attempt to identify the majority of these "emergent fields" early, since each addition requires back-coding for all previously coded interviews.

Consistency was maintained across coders by careful monitoring and frequent discussions in twice-weekly coding meetings. These meetings facilitated the team's ability to consistently apply decision rules to all cases (both those that have been previously coded and those that have yet to be coded). Coders were instructed to draw material from any portion of the transcript that is relevant to the field's topic, even if given in answer to a question not directly related to that field. Data that are appropriate to more than one field are entered into as many as are applicable. A percentage of coded transcripts were randomly quality-checked to ensure consistency and accuracy.

For this paper, we analyzed the transcripts of the interviews with all of the respondents in the sample who moved through the Gautreaux program. To gain a broad understanding of the reasons why respondents stayed in or moved from their placement neighborhoods, we read several waves of interviews for each of the respondents and coded the interviews for patterns that addressed the research question. We then constructed a profile of the experiences of each respondent in their new neighborhoods and their reasons for either staying or leaving. After creating these profiles, we counted the cases for each category that emerged from the coding and created a narrative analysis of reasons for moving and staying. We also focused on the type of neighborhoods that the secondary movers moved to and classified them as either opportunity areas or non-opportunity areas based on the original requirements of the Gautreaux program of what constitutes an opportunity area. Finally, we utilized the extensive field notes that the interviewers took after each interview to get a better picture of each respondent, their unit, and their neighborhood.

Results

Virtually all respondents were female heads of household, with only one male respondent in the sample. Almost all of the respondents were African American, and the remaining few were Caribbean or Puerto Rican. The average age of adult respondents at baseline was 32 years old, and at baseline respondents lived in their current housing development for an average of eight-and-a-half years. The average household size was four members, the majority of whom were children, apart from the leaseholder.

Though nearly two thirds (64 percent) of the participants in our subsample took up the Gautreaux Two offer and moved with the program, only about half (47 percent) remained in their placement neighborhoods for the duration of the study. The rest took advantage of their voucher's flexibility at the one year mark and moved on. Subsequent moves have been quite common across all types of housing mobility programs, such as the original Gautreaux housing mobility program (Keels 2005a) and MTO (Orr et al. 2003). However, in the first Gautreaux program, secondary movers usually moved on to neighborhoods that maintained the economic advantages of their placement neighborhood, though they were somewhat higher in the percent black in the neighborhood (Keels et al. 2005). The story for the Gautreaux Two movers is far more bleak than its predecessor. As we show below, those who moved on usually chose to return to highly segregated neighborhoods with very high poverty rates.

We ask two sets of questions in this analysis. First, we rely on participants' own narratives about residential choices. For secondary movers, we describe the factors that respondents name as most relevant in their decision making process, and what aspects of their experience in their "opportunity area" neighborhoods contributed to their decisions to move. For stayers, we focus on what factors were most salient in their decisions to remain. We also compare movers' and stayers' narratives to see how their experiences in their "opportunity area" neighborhood during the first year differed. Second, it is possible that other factors than those that respondents named might have influenced the probability that a family would move. These include the demographic characteristics of respondents, the economic and racial characteristics of the neighborhoods they lived in at baseline, the economic and racial characteristics of their Gautreaux Two placement

neighborhoods, whether they made city or suburban moves, and whether they had had any recent residential experiences outside of public housing. We look systematically to see whether there are differences between movers and stayers in these domains, and if there are differences between secondary movers who remained in somewhat racially and economically integrated neighborhoods and those who moved on to high poverty, highly segregated neighborhoods.

Why did the Movers Move?

We asked participants a number of open-ended questions about their experiences in the placement neighborhoods and to describe in their own words the experiences and events that led to secondary moves. In soliciting these move narratives, however, we probed consistently for factors such as proximity to social networks, transportation issues, unit and landlord quality, their level of integration into the social life of the neighborhood, and experiences of their children in the neighborhood and school.

Proximity to Social Networks.

Nearly two thirds (65 percent, or 20/31) of those who moved on to a new unit after a year in their placement neighborhoods said they were motivated by a desire to be near family or friends, and the distance imposed by the placement move had made it difficult to engage in the frequent round of visitation and exchange they were used to. Almost none had any family or friends in or near their placement neighborhood, which, in addition to posing practical difficulties, led to acute feelings of social isolation, as almost none established new networks in the placement neighborhood. The failure to form new social ties in the placement neighborhood was cited by 42 percent of secondary movers as a reason for moving. Five of these families moved on in order to be closer to

family members they relied on for childcare, while two moved on because they needed to

care for sick relatives. When asked what she missed about her baseline neighborhood,

Tina said:

> Well, the people. Because I [knew] a lot of people. Like all over the
> neighborhood, I [knew] a lot people. [There], it's not like here. Ok, if I get
> stuck I can't hit no one [up for help]. You know what I'm saying? Over
> there everybody knows me. [If] I need [something] or I don't have any
> money and I need a ride to the emergency; there's always somebody
> because they all know me.

Nikki reflected on the implications of moving through the Gautreaux program:

> I mean, I understand what they were trying to do. I do understand what
> they were trying to do and they were hoping to give people better
> opportunities, but to force people away, to force people away from their
> family, their support system. You know, just common things that people
> need to have. It's not beneficial. It's not beneficial and it causes more
> harm than good.

Transportation

Nearly six in 10 families (58 percent, or 18 of 31 families) said

transportation problems prompted their secondary move. In four cases, families

moved on because they wanted to be closer to work. Three moved on to be closer

to a health care provider, three made a subsequent move so they could be closer to

their children's schools (these families had not moved their children out of the

baseline schools), while three did so to be nearer to the non-family daycare

provider they used. For Joan, public transportation was a primary reason for

leaving her suburban Gautreaux address to move back to Chicago. She explains:

"What made me want to come back to the city? Well, well the transportation.

Transportation-wise, I don't have a car. It was like, if I'm in the city, [there are]

buses here, buses there. I like that."

Landlord Issues

One of the primary reasons respondents named as a reason for moving was the quality of their landlords. Sixty-eight percent (21 of 31 families) name this as a reason for moving. Eleven of these families complained that their landlords did not maintain their units or buildings adequately, and most were able to describe multiple incidences where requests for maintenance were ignored. Five reported that their landlords were overly intrusive, and five said they would have stayed but their landlords refused to renew their lease or sold the building to another landlord who was unwilling to continue renting to them.

> Bernice's landlord was unresponsive to her requests for maintenance:
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> About almost like, I don't know, I want to say like about two months, we started to have like problems with the toilet, and it was like running over like every day, I mean, we had just…I got so stressed out every day, ever other day, plunging that toilet, water was leaking, I don't know if it was coming from the…it had to be coming from the toilet, we was mopping up water like every day to every other day, I was constantly calling that landlord, and I don't know, It's just like he didn't care. I was so glad when my lease was up, really.

Unit Quality

Delinquent or difficult landlords often led to substandard unit quality, and fully 65 percent (20/31) of secondary movers named poor unit quality as a reason they moved on. Several complained that their units were not much better than the projects they had moved from, a startling assertion, as by our observation the condition of the public housing units we first interviewed them in were often quite poor. Our interviewers had multiple opportunities to observe these families' Gautreaux units directly, and generally concurred with respondents' reports. Talia moved to the north side of Chicago, and had

problems with the ceiling in her bathroom. When the ceiling fell in one day, it almost hit her daughter. Talia also named other problems as well:

> Because you know like [the Gautreaux Two program staff] said you get an opportunity to live in an opportunity area and everything. You think if you move from the projects it's going to be much better. But it's not better, so I'd rather stay in the projects than this. This apartment is just the same. […] It's the same…. Raggely apartment, mices, it's the same thing like the projects."

Children's Experiences

Many observers might assume that living in a significantly better neighborhood might confer enough benefits – especially in the case of the children, many of whom also moved to new schools – that a mother who was otherwise unhappy with the distance from kin, transportation ease, current landlord or unit would nonetheless choose to remain in an opportunity area. Nearly four in ten (35 percent, or 11/31) of the secondary movers did recognize that their kids were benefiting from the higher quality of the new schools, and several noted that their daughters seemed to be doing particularly well. However, other factors, especially their children's own difficulties adjusting to the placement neighborhood, outweighed these perceived benefits.

Olivia, whose grandson lives with her, says one of the main reasons she moved to the suburbs was to provide her grandson with a better education. She recognized that he was doing much better in the school in her Gautreaux neighborhood, but she ended up moving on to a more disadvantaged neighborhood anyway because of her health problems—problems that made it especially difficult to live in a neighborhood with poor public transportation. "That's the only part that makes me really hate to move. 'Cause he doing really, really good in school. He doing better in school out here than he ever did in his whole entire life."

Five of the families who moved on reported that their children experienced racism in the placement neighborhood or school. Four of the five said that it was a son who had gotten into trouble at the new school. As we show below, stayer families experience these difficulties at about the same rate as mover families. However, children's own adjustment to the new schools and neighborhoods appears to have been markedly poorer in the group who made secondary moves. Three mothers claimed their child just didn't like the new placement neighborhood school, a sentiment not expressed among the stayers' children. More significantly, though, eight said their children felt the neighborhood was boring, and that they missed friends in the baseline neighborhood. As we will show, only one stayer mother offered a similar report.[3] Nikki, for example, told us,

> [My kids] play with some of the kids on the block, but not too much, not too much. So it's, I mean, it's really boring out here. [He tells me] "It's really boring. It's nothing [to do]." Hey, you know, when I'm here and I'm out, I'll turn jump rope [and I'll say] "Come out and play." But, it's like, they don't know what to do. I stick them outside, and they don't know what to do.

Financial Concerns

Finally, and somewhat unexpectedly, as we did not specifically probe in this domain, financial concerns were a strong motivation for 39 percent (12/31) of our secondary movers. Theoretically, voucher holders pay the same proportion of their income for rent as public housing residents do. We learned that in practice this is often not the case. Many of these families had lived in the same public housing unit for many

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[3] This is not to say that these families were impervious to the risks associated with moving back to poorer and more racially segregated neighborhoods. Five noted they were careful to choose units the second time around that were not in gang infested neighborhoods, and two talked specifically about the necessity of keeping their daughters close to home to avoid the added risk their secondary move posed.

years, and though rent is supposed to be adjusted as income changes, the Chicago

Housing Authority had apparently failed to adjust most of our participants' rents upward

when they secured jobs or better pay. Thus, at baseline, most were paying a far lower

percent of their income than they ought to have been. When they entered the Gautreaux

Two program, their income was reassessed, and many ended up paying sharply higher

rents as a result. Furthermore, in units that did not include utility costs in the rent, as

public housing projects did, that cost fell to the tenant. Many families were struggling to

meet these new responsibilities in the year following the move to the placement

neighborhood. Those that moved on often asserted that they had moved to lower their

costs of living, claiming that living costs in their opportunity area neighborhoods were

higher than they were in the more impoverished and segregated neighborhoods they

moved on to. This could not literally have been true, as their share of the rent in their

subsequent unit was calculated in the same way as it had been in their Gautreaux unit.

However, transportation costs were often less, and in-kind assistance was easier to

garner.

> Lisa explains the difficulty she had in paying all her bills in her Gautreaux unit:
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> Yeah, because I had to pay all the utilities, water, gas, lights, cable, phone, everything. So it's like one month I could try to pay this part of something and not pay this part, and it was just getting to be too much. My family, they wouldn't come out there, you know? See because that was a long drive to get to me. So if I needed some help or something, I was on my own. So I was like no. It just wasn't working for me.

Secondary Moves to Opportunity Areas

Fifty-three percent of the sample who moved through the Gautreaux Two

program made a secondary move by 2005. Only 6 out of the 31 secondary movers (19%)

moved to opportunity areas; the remaining 25 (81%) moved to non-opportunity areas. Three of the secondary movers who moved to opportunity areas moved to areas where they had family living, which demonstrates the importance of family networks in respondents' decisions about where to move. This is a theme we will see repeated in the stories of our stayers.

Lisa found the financial burden of her Gautreaux unit to be too overwhelming, so she made a secondary move to live closer to some of her family, which happened to be another opportunity area. Janet also made her secondary move to live closer to her family. Luckily, Janet's mother moved to an opportunity area through the Gautreaux program as well, and Janet was able to move to a unit near her mother. Yolanda originally moved through Gautreaux to the suburbs in order to be near her sister, who also lived in the suburbs. She only made a secondary move because her daughter was having problems with other kids in the immediate neighborhood, so she moved to a different area in the same suburb. These three secondary movers who moved to opportunity areas all made decisions primarily based on proximity to family networks, just as other secondary movers did. The difference was that their family networks included others living in opportunity areas, whereas few of the movers who returned to non-opportunity areas had any such network ties.

The other three respondents who made secondary moves to opportunity areas all moved on only because they had problems with their Gautreaux units and landlords. Jennifer was evicted from her original Gautreaux unit after altercations with her landlord over maintenance issues, but remained in an opportunity area because she had come to like the city's more affluent north side. Angela moved for similar reasons, but had

acquired a taste for the north side of the city as well, so she chose another similar neighborhood there. Monique moved a second time to a neighboring suburb so she could secure a larger unit. As we shall see, these secondary movers exhibited many of the same favorable attitudes about opportunity areas as stayers, but made secondary moves because of problems with their specific units and landlords.

Why Did The Stayers Stay?

We asked similar open-ended questions about the residential decisions of those who stayed in their placement neighborhoods, also probing in the domains outlined above. Stayers were not free of the problems that movers noted. Yet, when we asked stayers why they stayed, it became clear that their views and experiences of their placement neighborhoods were sharply at variance with those of the secondary movers.

Proximity to Social Networks/New Neighborhood Integration

Distance from social networks was not as often cited as a problem for stayers. In contrast to the movers, nearly half of the stayers (48 percent, or 13 of 27 families) said they had family or friends in or near the placement neighborhood. Thus, these participants were often using their Gautreaux Two voucher to follow in the footsteps of other network "pioneers" who had moved to low poverty, less segregated neighborhoods before them (at least one through the earlier Gautreaux program and several through the Gautreaux Two program itself). Even those who did not have family and friends in the vicinity did not report as many difficulties visiting back and forth or obtaining and providing kin support. However, most interesting of all, well over half (59 percent, or 16 of 27 families) said they had quickly plugged in to a non-kin network in the placement neighborhood, while almost none of the mover respondents had done so. Often, a

friendly neighbor or a helpful landlord served as a point of entry into the social life of the community.

Melissa moved to the suburbs from LeClaire Courts, on Chicago's southwest side, and some of her friends moved there through Gautreaux Two as well. These friends really helped Melissa with her transition to the suburbs.

> Yeah, [I have] friends that came from my old neighborhood. [They live] about five minutes [away], and I go visit them, go to the store and stuff like that. It helps me adjust more you know, because I know somebody from my old neighborhood here.

Some participants were physically separated from kin, like Vanessa, but liked the new neighborhood enough that it compensated for the distance:

> I mean, I do more things than I used to. The only thing I used to do, was either go to the show or go to my mom's house or something like that. But here, I take more walks. I'm an inside person, but I find myself now going outside more. I'll walk down the bike path. Or I may decide to walk further up Sheridan into Evanston. I find myself outside doing a lot more walking than [before]. Everywhere I went there, I would take the bus. It's just, I learn the neighborhood by walking around and learning the different little things, the activities and stuff they have in the neighborhood. So I find myself getting outside more here, around here, than I did [before].

Transportation

In sharp contrast to the movers, 55 percent (17/31) of the stayers had no transportation problems, and, in fact, described their locations as more convenient to shopping and employment than their old locations had been. This was, in part, because they were more likely to have cars or to be located in opportunity areas with shopping areas and good public transportation. Others had friends and relatives nearby who were willing to transport them to work or for errands. Several mothers in this group had even managed to secure units within walking distance of shopping or jobs. Some of these jobs

had actually been secured prior to the move, so the mothers' initial moves had been made with their job's location in mind.

Evelyn loves the convenience of her Gautreaux neighborhood on the far southwest side of Chicago,

> I love it, 'cause everything's right here. The store's on the corner, restaurant's right up the street. Either way you go, restaurants around, little places. Bus stop right outside. Don't have a car, drop you off, so, nope…love everything. Love everything.

Landlord Issues

In sharp contrast to the movers, no stayer had substantial landlord problems. In fact, more than half (56 percent, or 15 of 27 families) specifically noted that they liked their landlords, expressing their appreciation with the prompt attention to maintenance issues their landlords showed. Several had developed friendships with their landlords, and told stories of landlords delivering gift baskets and treats for the children during the holidays. One mother described how her landlord had been willing to hold off on collecting the rent while she caught up on other bills. In addition, as noted above, sometimes landlords helped their tenants plug into the neighborhood.

Melissa rates her landlord a ten out of ten:

> I would say he's a ten, because he's…I don't…He's not the type of landlord that hinders you. You know, he do his thing. If there's a problem, he comes fix it and he's gone, you know? He don't try to see how, you know, be nosy or is she clean or is she nasty. You know? He don't do that, he's fine, he's real nice. He likes kids. He used to bring them like taffy […] Round this time, he's going to come with Taffy Apples or something. He's real nice.

Unit Quality

The most frequent reason offered for staying was that participants liked their unit and judged it considerably better in quality than their baseline public housing unit. Fully 78 percent (21/27) of stayers cited this as a reason for staying. These mothers spoke at length about improvements in unit size and upkeep, and although some had minor problems, most were satisfied. In fact, some waxed eloquently about how they loved their new units. Beatrice explains that she loves her Gautreaux unit and feels comfortable there: "Because sometimes you can get a place and you don't feel at home. I felt comfortable as soon as I set my foot in here. The first day I seen it, I said, oh Lord, let me get it. And I felt like I've been here for years."

Children's Experiences

Stayers' narratives place far greater emphasis on the advantages of the placement neighborhood and school for their children than secondary movers' narratives do. Six stayers specifically said that they chose to stay because they wanted to raise their children in a racially diverse neighborhood rather than the highly segregated housing projects they had moved from, a rationale largely absent in the narratives of the leavers. Eleven of 27 reported that their children had gotten involved in neighborhood activities and made neighborhood friends, a rare occurrence among mover children. Interestingly, stayer mothers were no more likely to say their children were doing better in school than secondary mover mothers were (12 of the stayers versus 11 of the movers). Additionally, as was true for the movers, four of the stayer mothers reported that their sons had gotten in trouble in the new school. However, no mother in the stayer group reported that their children had experienced incidences of racism. The mothers were also far more likely to

report that their children liked their neighborhoods (7 mothers specifically noted this),

and, as noted above, only one said her children complained of boredom or missed old

friends in the origin neighborhood.

Veronica discusses wanting to stay in her Gautreaux area in the suburbs for the

sake of her niece who lives with her and is doing well in her new school:

> Yeah, because I want to keep Tiffany in [her new school]. You know,
> that's my whole thing. You know, she's doing so well. Like I said, she's in
> honors at school, and I don't' want to pull her away from that. Wherever I
> move, she might get discouraged and go down, you know? I want to keep
> her head up.

Financial Concerns

Though several families in the stayer group also experienced sharp increases in

their housing costs after the move, these problems did not usually motivate the stayers to

contemplate moving. The mover families were less likely to experience a financial shock

during the initial placement year, such as a theft of a car or the funeral expenses

associated with a death of a relative, than the stayer families. Also, stayer families had

more readily available network support to help them cope with financial difficulties.

Safety and Diversity

Though not probed for directly in this portion of our interview with program

participants, 85 percent (23/27) of stayers told us one motivation for staying was the

increased safety of the new neighborhood. Another 37 percent (10/27) said they stayed,

in part, because they enjoyed the diversity in their new neighborhood. When asked what

the most positive thing about living in an opportunity area is, Mia replied,

> Not seeing all the violence, you know, because we don't see it over here. I
> mean sometimes you see little kids fighting, but that's everywhere you
> know. But as far as the shooting and the drugs? I'm sure it's probably

over here, but you don't see it. It's not as open as it is out where we were.
It's not.

Sonia told us how much she appreciates the diversity of her Gautreaux neighborhood:

I was, say, it's a nice quiet neighborhood. You got all races up here too.
Got all races. That's what the landlord say, that's what she like about it.
You got Africans, you got the uh Italian, white people, Mexican people,
Puerto Rican, got 'em all. Real nice. […] I like it. Always did like it
mixed.

Other Factors that Distinguish Stayers from Leavers.

This analysis also explored what features of participant's residential histories and

neighborhood characteristics distinguished those families who stayed in their placement

neighborhoods from those who moved on to other neighborhoods. We consider the

demographic characteristics of the movers and stayers, the racial and economic

conditions of their neighborhoods of origin, and the racial and economic conditions of the

neighborhoods they moved to. We also consider whether the placement neighborhoods

were in the city or the suburbs and whether there were differences in families' recent

residential histories, noting those with recent experience living outside of housing

projects.

Demographic Characteristics of Movers and Stayers

Stayers and movers were not distinguished from one another by age, number of

children (total children and number of children in the household), whether or not the

household contained preschool children or school aged children, or whether the family

needed a unit that had at least four bedrooms (such units are in short supply and might

make moving on more difficult). Stayers, however, were more likely to have a job at

some point during the study than movers were (63 versus 39 percent). A substantial

minority of these jobs were, in fact, in the placement neighborhood or close by.

Racial and Economic Differences in Neighborhood of Origin

Seventy-eight percent (21/27) of stayers had originally hailed from neighborhoods

that were segregated by race—the exceptions were from projects on the North Side

(either Lathrop Homes and Cabrini Green, both large racially segregated public housing

developments in a rapidly gentrifying neighborhoods on Chicago's North Side) or in

scattered site housing. For movers, about the same percentage, 73 percent (22/30 – with

baseline data missing for one case), originated from neighborhoods that were racially

segregated.

The economic characteristics of the two groups' origin neighborhoods did not

differ either. For the stayers, 70 percent (19/27) had originally lived in neighborhoods

that were at least 40 percent poor, the exceptions hailing from either Lathrop Homes or

scattered site housing. The origin neighborhoods of the movers were similar, as 73

percent (22/30) had originated from neighborhoods with a poverty rate of 40 % or more.

Half of the exceptions lived in Lathrop Homes.

Racial and Economic Differences in Placement Neighborhood

Thirteen percent (4/31) of the mover families' placement moves were to

predominantly Hispanic neighborhoods. Sixteen percent (5/31) moved to neighborhoods

that were at least 80 percent non-Hispanic white, while 74 percent (23/31) moved to

neighborhoods that were at least 50 percent white. Figures for stayers were similar.

Nineteen percent (5/26 – one case was lost during follow up) moved to neighborhoods

that were at least 80 percent white, while 62% (16/26) moved to neighborhoods where at

least 50% of the residents were non-Hispanic white. Ten percent moved to mixed-race neighborhoods where the largest group was Hispanic, and another 3 percent (1 family) moved to a mixed race neighborhood with roughly equal proportions of blacks, whites, and Hispanics (this family's neighborhood exceeded the racial restriction, but was allowed an exception). Another 16 percent lived in heavily Hispanic neighborhoods. Thus, like the movers, 26 percent moved to predominately Hispanic neighborhoods through Gautreaux Two. Also like the movers, the rest moved to predominantly white neighborhoods (52 percent) or to mixed race neighborhoods where the dominant group was white (12 percent).

Eleven of the 31 movers (35 percent) moved to neighborhoods that were less than 10 percent poor. Conversely, only 13 percent (4/31) moved to neighborhoods that were at or above 20 percent in their poverty rate. For the stayers, 38 percent (10/26) moved to neighborhoods that were less than 10 percent poor, and only 15 percent (4/26, including the family who got an exemption from the race and income requirements) moved to neighborhoods at or above 20 percent poverty.

Suburban/City Differences in Placement Neighborhood

The groups do differ somewhat in the proportion who found housing in the city versus the suburbs. For the movers, about half (52 percent, or 16/31) of the group moved within the city and the rest moved to the suburbs. Stayers were somewhat more likely to have moved within the city (62 percent, or 16 of 26 families).

Residential History

There were fairly large differences in the percent of each group who reported a recent residential history (the past 5 years) that included some time living outside of a

public housing project. Thirty-six percent of the stayers for whom we have residential history data (5 did not offer this information, could not remember, or gave answers that were too unclear to code them) had lived outside of public housing in the last five years, whereas only 13 percent of the movers (only 1 in this group offered no residential history) had lived outside of public housing in the last five years.

Differences Among Secondary Movers

Two of the 31 secondary movers were lost during follow up, leaving us with 29 secondary movers for whom we have information about the racial and income level composition of their secondary neighborhoods. As noted earlier, only 19 percent of the subsequent moves were to neighborhoods that qualified as opportunity areas. In fact, nearly half (48 percent) moved back to neighborhoods that were over 90 percent black or 90 percent minority. It is worth noting that all but one of these 14 families had originally hailed from neighborhoods that were at least 90 percent black, whereas 7 of the 15 families who moved on to less segregated neighborhoods had lived in less segregated neighborhoods at baseline.[4] The economic story for subsequent moves is somewhat better, as only 17 percent moved on to neighborhoods that were 40 percent or more poor, as opposed to 73 percent who lived in such neighborhoods at baseline. However, only 32 percent of the families moved on to low poverty areas (defined as less than 20 percent poor). There were no clear factors distinguishing this group from the other secondary movers.

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[4] There were no notable differences between secondary movers who moved to highly segregated neighborhoods and those who moved on to less segregated neighborhoods in terms of the economic character of their baseline neighborhoods or the economic or racial characteristics of their Gautreaux Two placement neighborhoods. Nor were there differences in the proportion who had been placed in the suburbs versus the city or the proportion who had had recent residential experience outside of public housing.

Conclusion

This analysis explores the durability of the Gautreaux Two program during the three-year period after the program's implementation in 2002. In the qualitative sample of program participants who moved through the Gautreaux program, 53% had made a secondary move by the end of the three year study period, and 81% percent of these secondary moves were to "non-opportunity areas" as defined by the program requirements. This high percentage of non-opportunity secondary moves raises important questions about what factors influence respondents' moving decisions as well as the locations of those moves.

The results of this analysis show that several key factors motivate secondary moves, including hassles with landlords, substandard unit quality, distance from kin and support networks, and difficulty in creating new social ties in placement neighborhoods resulting in social isolation and transportation and financial difficulties. Primary reasons why some respondents stayed in their Gautreaux neighborhoods were supportive relationships with landlords, good quality units, the ability to maintain ties with kin, the development of relationships with new neighbors, and involvement in their placement neighborhoods. Some of these factors were facilitated by employment in or near the Gautreaux neighborhood, possession of a car, and relatives and friends who lived nearby. Respondents who stayed in their placement neighborhoods were more likely to be employed than those who made secondary moves, and those who moved to neighborhoods in the city were more likely to remain in those neighborhoods than respondents who moved to the suburbs.

Among the secondary movers, 81% moved back to non-opportunity areas to be closer to kin, public transportation, and familiar support networks, with only 19% moving to other opportunity areas. Respondents who made secondary moves to opportunity areas either had family living in the opportunity area or relocated because they were having problems with their Gautreaux unit or landlord, but specifically wanted to stay in an opportunity area. Respondents who returned to high poverty, highly segregated neighborhoods were more likely to have previously lived in these types of neighborhoods than those who moved to other opportunity areas.

While the high percentage of secondary moves to non-opportunity areas does not necessarily meet the stated goals of the Gautreaux Two program, the reasons for moving provide important information about what other support services are needed to assist movers in their transitions to new neighborhoods. Assisting families to relocate to areas where they have family and friends in or near opportunity areas is one possible response. Another possibility is to encourage people to move in family groups rather than treating them as independent economic and social units. Requiring the family to remain in an opportunity area for two years rather than just one year would give more time for new social ties to develop before respondents made decisions about moving elsewhere. The analysis also points to the need for continued housing counseling for participants beyond the initial placement, as not all will be able to connect with neighborhood networks and services on their own. Receptive local institutions such as churches and community groups can help integrate socially different families into new neighborhoods (Briggs 1998), and subsidized recreation programs and other in-kind assistance often only

available to participants from kin can alleviate some of the financial burdens that

mobility programs may inadvertently impose.

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