

Brown Kids in White Suburbs: Housing Mobility and the Many Faces of Social Capital

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Abstract

Social capital has many faces in the geography of urban opportunity, and as such, particular housing policies might have positive effects on some forms of social capital and negative effects on others. The author defines *social support* and *social leverage* as two key dimensions of social capital that can be accessed by individuals. A sample of 132 low-income African-American and Latino adolescents is used to examine the early impacts of a Yonkers, NY, housing mobility program on social capital.¹

Overall, program participants (“movers”) appear to be no more cut off from social support than a control group of “stayer” youth. On the other hand, movers are also no more likely to report access to good sources of job information or school advice—to *leverage* that might enhance opportunity. Adding just one steadily employed adult to an adolescent’s circle of significant ties has dramatic effects on perceived access to such leverage.

Keywords: Mobility; Neighborhood; Programs

Introduction

The recent popularity of the “social capital” concept has focused on its collective dimension—social capital as possessed by neighborhoods, cities, or even nations, and as indicated by patterns of “civic engagement.” In his widely read “Bowling Alone,” for example, Putnam (1995) argues that a decline in particular forms of organizational participation around the United States reflects a loss of “norms and networks of civic engagement” that are, he asserts, essential to good governance and even to a strong economy. Putnam’s evidence, and the compelling debate it has sparked, are themselves engaging and important. In the housing policy arena, Keyes et al. (1996) have applied the collective dimension of social capital to local community development “systems,” arguing that the winning

¹ Throughout this article, the term *African Americans* refers to non-Hispanic blacks. *Latinos(as)* refers to Hispanics of all races. *Whites* are non-Hispanic whites.

horses in an era of devolution will be cities and regions rich in trust and cooperation among local problem solvers.²

One problem is that enthusiasm for this collective dimension has given social capital a circus-tent quality: all things positive and social are piled beneath. Another, more serious problem is that recent discussions of social capital have obscured, to a great degree, the individual dimension of the concept and the multiple forms seen in that more *microlevel* dimension.

Social capital is easiest to “see” in its individual guise, wherein it refers to a resource for individual action that is stored in human relationships. Social capital is what we draw on when we get others, whether acquaintances, friends, or kin, to help us solve problems, seize opportunities, and accomplish other aims that matter to us. As an individual good, there are two forms that should interest researchers and policy makers:

1. *Social leverage*—social capital that helps one “get ahead” or change one’s opportunity set through access to job information, say, or a recommendation for a scholarship or loan. This form is about access to clout and influence (Boissevain 1974).³
2. *Social support*—social capital that helps one “get by” or cope. This might include being able to get a ride, confide in someone, or obtain a small cash loan in an emergency. Although people at all income levels need social supports, coping capital is especially vital to the chronically poor, as it routinely substitutes for things that money would otherwise buy (Stack 1974). Some of the most important supports we all rely on, though, are emotional and not material.

² An important question for this vein of research is whether scholars focused on social capital per se will draw adequately on interorganizational network and “community exchange” analysis (Galaskiewicz 1979; Mizruchi and Galaskiewicz 1994), as well as research focused on interests and conflict in the domain of urban politics. Some of the latter (see, e.g., Weir 1996) grapple with similar conceptual and empirical problems in the city-as-system vein but sometimes with quite different assumptions. In general, the risk in collective-good analyses of urban social capital is in reductionism. Establishing patterns of trust and reciprocal obligation is crucial not because it eliminates important conflicts of political interest but because the former make it easier to reconcile the latter in creative and sustainable ways. Social capital is a vital resource for cities, neighborhoods, and individuals *because* of power and politics and not in place of them (Briggs 1997b).

³ Many Spanish-speaking ethnic groups have long referred to this as *palanca* (literally, “lever”), Portuguese-speaking groups as *pistolão*, and other groups by many other names.

Although these two forms of social capital overlap in key ways—a supportive relative may provide me with child care so that I can get an education to get ahead, as one early reader of this article suggested—the distinction between the two forms is important. It holds key implications for how we think about racial/ethnic segregation, welfare reform, and related challenges as the nation nears a new millennium. When we turn to other people to help us cope with challenges that life presents, from flat tires to divorces, social capital is at work. When poor moms share caregiving tasks or rides to church, or when they reinforce norms that support job search along networks of relatives, friends, and acquaintances, they each draw on social capital in its *support* guise. But when a recent college graduate calls on a friend or acquaintance, specifically because they are “connected,” to ask that they put in a “good word” as part of a hiring process, or when an inner-city kid, through a personal relationship, gets a shot at a life-changing scholarship, that is social capital of a markedly different kind. It is about influence that enables socioeconomic mobility or “getting ahead.” It is quite different in effect and often differs radically in source from aid of the support variety.

In the earlier example of child care and education, even though my relative’s off-the-books caregiving may free me to attend school, it will not get me *into* a school that does not typically enroll people like me (whether because people like me typically do not learn about it, qualify, get treated fairly, or all of the above). Furthermore, if I am a poor person in America, the latter kind of “leverage” may not be available in my network of kin or close friends, who are likely to be similarly situated in the opportunity structure. In this example, I am more likely to have the leverage I need to get ahead if I have at least a few social ties to people who are quite *unlike* me. In fact, if I am among the chronically poor in America, those who help me get by can sometimes do relatively little to help me get ahead. These important insights are widely understood by students of social structure and, in particular, of social networks (see, e.g., Burt 1992; Granovetter 1973, 1974; White 1970), but they are rarely incorporated into policy debates to any significant degree.

Housing policy, social capital, and urban opportunity

By influencing where and how people live, as well as the services, institutions, and significant social ties that people access, housing policy, more than ever in an era of welfare reform, should help those on the bottom of the opportunity structure to gain more social leverage without losing vital stores of support. A key caveat is that, as a resource—a means to an end and not an end in itself—social capital embodies no right or wrong until some judgment is made about the ends to which we put it. For example, Mafia organizations and

youth gangs might be characterized as rich in social capital (of various kinds), but in the latter case, it is a social capital that does little to promote school completion by the youthful “gangbanger.” Policy discussions of social capital must therefore specify the ends desired and consider whether particular kinds of relationships are likely to promote them and, if so, how.

The question for housing and related urban policies is not whether social capital of the kind stored in job networks, say, matters for job seekers, including the urban poor. There is little disagreement that it matters enormously and in ways that vary by ethnic group, neighborhood makeup, career stage, gender, local industry base and structure, and even occupational category (Falcon and Melendez 1996; Granovetter 1974; Hannerz 1969; Holzer 1991; Kasinitz and Rosenberg 1996; Liebow 1967; Lin, Ensel, and Vaughn 1981; Newman and Lennon 1995; Pastor and Adams 1995; Sullivan 1989). In fact, even the mainstream press has taken notice that “contacts are key to getting jobs” and therefore to dealing with welfare reform (Goldman 1997). The question now is how to refine our thinking about, how to measure and track, and how to positively *shape* the links among social capital, economic opportunity, and urban policy.

Focusing on networks and job getting, observers have highlighted ways in which policy can influence social capital as part of the “geography of urban opportunity” (Galster and Killen 1995). The first is by creating workforce development collaboratives or other institutions that compensate for the disrupted job networks of the urban poor (Dickens 1996; Harrison and Weiss 1998), or by specifically promoting access to distant job sources (Hughes 1995), or both of those *without* directly influencing where the poor reside. The second role is in creating wider housing choices for the poor, through housing mobility or dispersal strategies, that might enable poor people to live closer to jobs, access stronger job networks, and send their children to better schools. Dispersal strategies have received attention from researchers and policy makers since enactment of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and the riots of the later 1960s. It was 30 years ago that the Kerner Commission report (National Commission 1968) emphasized that dispersing concentrations of ghetto poverty should be a national priority, and researchers have long echoed that message (see, e.g., Downs 1973; Kain 1968).⁴ Skeptics argue that dispersal will never be carried out at scale because residents of receiving neighborhoods will continue to say “not in my backyard” (Briggs, Darden, and Aidala 1998; Danielson 1976).

⁴ As Moynihan (1971, 132–33) put it, “The poverty and social isolation of minority groups in central cities is the single most serious problem of the American city today. It must be attacked with urgency, with a greater commitment of resources . . . and with programs designed especially for this purpose.”

But housing mobility has attained new visibility and scale in the past decade thanks to encouraging evidence on the impacts of the voucher-based Gautreaux program on former residents of high-poverty neighborhoods of inner-city Chicago (Rosenbaum 1995; Rosenbaum and Popkin 1991). Inspired by Gautreaux and authorized by the Housing and Community Development Act of 1992, the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) is conducting Moving to Opportunity (MTO), a voucher-based demonstration program in five cities (Gallagher 1994; Gordon 1997; HUD 1996). In addition to MTO, about 50 new, HUD-funded Regional Opportunity Counseling, Vacancy Consolidation, and litigation-based voucher programs are up and running in 33 metropolitan areas (Turner and Williams 1998), and an unknown number of similar programs are run by local housing authorities without special funding or oversight from the federal government. Finally, many scattered-site public housing (SSPH) programs, some now 30 years old, are driven, at least in part, by the same policy aims (Hogan 1996). Except for Gautreaux, however, there is little empirical evidence on the effects of these programs, and only after a new study of that Chicago experience will researchers have substantial data on the social and other mechanisms that underlie the observed impacts. There is much we do not know about how housing mobility affects families and neighborhoods.

Preview

Using a unique research opportunity created by the high-profile desegregation of public housing in Yonkers, NY, this article begins to address the considerable gaps in our understanding of housing mobility and, more broadly, of how housing policy may enhance social capital and economic opportunity. The study draws on a sample of 132 African-American and Latino adolescents, half of them participants in the Yonkers scattered-site housing mobility program (“movers”) and half comprising a control group of “stayers.” The thesis, derived from arguments pro housing mobility, is that the movers will—already—show substantially different access to richer social capital.

The next section reviews research on (1) housing mobility and neighborhood effects and (2) the nature and importance of social capital for urban dwellers, including the links between social networks and employment. Following that is a description of the Yonkers research context and method, analyses of social networks that point to the multiple forms of social capital discussed above, and a discussion of implications for policy and further research.

Prior research

Housing mobility and neighborhood effects

To date, only two contexts offer published empirical results on the impacts of housing mobility programs. Most mobility programs are not being evaluated, and in the case of the MTO experiment, limited results on early adjustment to neighborhood have circulated among the researchers and officials directly involved. These results emphasize the housing search and counseling challenges, the higher satisfaction with neighborhood, the much lower fear of neighborhood crime and (in Boston) lower exposure to violence, and higher school quality reported by movers to low-poverty areas (the “treatment” group), when compared with other Section 8 movers.⁵

The first context with available impact evidence is the widely known Gautreaux program, which uses a lottery to allocate housing vouchers to residents of high-rise public housing located in high-poverty, inner-city neighborhoods of Chicago. Voucher recipients move to “receiving” neighborhoods of Chicago and to any one of six surrounding suburbs up to 30 miles away from their prior (sender) neighborhoods. No special counseling or other services are provided with the Section 8 housing voucher. Research on Gautreaux participants indicates that African-American adults who move to suburban neighborhoods are more likely than counterparts who stay in Chicago to be employed and that their children are more likely to finish school and enter college (Rosenbaum and Popkin 1991). The receiving neighborhoods in Chicago’s suburbs are overwhelmingly white, as are the schools there. Gautreaux children living and attending school in the suburbs are more likely to report having white friends than their urban counterparts (Rosenbaum 1995). The researchers suggest that the apparent effect of suburban neighborhoods in Gautreaux owes to lower crime, better schools, and greater proximity to suburban job growth.

There are two acknowledged limitations to this survey-based study: (1) the 30 percent nonresponse may bias results in important ways

⁵ See Hanratty, McLanahan, and Pettit (1997); Katz, Kling, and Liebman (1997); Ladd and Ludwig (1997); Matulef (1997); Newman, Harkness, and Yeung (1997); Norris and Bembry (1997); Rosenbaum, Denton, and Harris (1997). Without reporting on early site findings, Leventhal and Brooks-Gunn (1997) and Turner and Ellen (1997) examine what we can learn from MTO. Excluded in this review of research are studies that rely on self-reports of housing administrators on their perceptions of impacts (e.g., Hogan 1996) or studies that, by design, cannot provide evidence on social outcome impacts (Burby and Rohe 1989; Fischer 1991; Stacey, Brown, and Coder 1988). The latter do, however, effectively illustrate the positive attitudes of participants and housing officials toward the program and, in the case of Chandler (1991), the limited awareness of neighbors that subsidized housing exists in their neighborhoods.

if even some of those who dropped out of the program or were hard to reach differ in systematic ways from those who responded; and (2) the study was carried out after residents had been in their new neighborhoods for years and was cross-sectional and focused on social outcomes, so it conveys little about participants' adjustment to new neighborhoods, let alone the array of social processes that underlie the apparent impacts—on job holding, for example. There is only speculation, for example, about the role of social resources or social capital in producing the positive effects observed for adults and their children. Also, where the young participants are concerned, it is difficult to distinguish effects owing to the suburban schools from those owing to attributes of the movers' new neighborhoods. The question arises: In mobility programs that do not offer such a dramatic gain in the quality of vital public services, including education, would there be measurable effects for poor people who leave behind high-poverty neighborhoods?

The second context offering empirical evidence on the impacts of housing mobility is the subject of this article: the Yonkers, NY, SSPH. Unlike the Gautreaux effort, the Yonkers project has examined impacts on program participants (adults, adolescents, and children), receiving neighborhoods, and even citywide politics and race relations (Yonkers Family and Community Project 1997). Also unlike Gautreaux, which compares two groups of movers, the Yonkers project compares movers to a control group of stayers who live in the high-poverty neighborhoods that movers exited thanks to the program. Furthermore, Yonkers movers remain in the city, and so their children attend the same schools as the comparison (stayer) group. Much like Gautreaux, findings on participants are limited thus far to structured surveys administered after participants in the program (movers) had moved (though just 1 to 36 months after, as compared with 5 to 10 years in the Gautreaux case). Details on context and method are given in the next section. Excluding for the moment the results that are the focus of this article, findings on the early impacts of Yonkers' program are very positive. Movers of all ages are much more likely than stayers to feel safe in their neighborhoods, and mover children (ages 8 to 12) already show lower expectancies for substance abuse and delinquent peer involvement, which could have a huge influence on long-run social outcomes, including job holding. Baseline results, then, confirm significant differences in how movers and stayers think about and act in their respective neighborhoods. The processes that drive many of the outcomes we care about will take time to mature.

Other important studies of neighborhood effects are not based on housing mobility programs, let alone on the sophisticated controlled experimental design that underlies MTO. Most studies of how neighborhoods affect children and adults are based on either quali-

tative fieldwork in neighborhoods (without comparison groups of any kind to serve as benchmarks) or statistical studies of census, Panel Study of Income Dynamics, or other data that include residential location along with income, education, and family and personal traits. The latter look for statistically reliable associations between neighborhood traits (poverty level, proportion professional workers, etc.) and personal outcomes (income, educational attainment, etc.), once personal—and in some cases family—traits have been accounted for. As I summarized both terrains of this large and methodologically uneven literature last year in this journal (Briggs 1997a), I will offer only the highlights here:

1. Beyond the varying levels of model error they contend with, the statistical studies have four typical flaws: (1) selection bias (since families do not choose their way into neighborhoods randomly, apparent effects of neighborhoods may, in fact, owe to unobserved background differences in the “type” of family); (2) in newer studies, where family traits are accounted for, it is generally impossible to distinguish direct effects of neighborhoods from effects that work through the family to reach the individual;⁶ (3) large data sets provide administratively designated “neighborhoods” (typically census tracts) that may be unreliable proxies for true “social neighborhoods,” especially where mean measures obscure huge differences between microareas that house distinct income groups (Tienda 1991); and (4) lacking data on actual social interaction in neighborhoods, these studies merely guess at such interaction (professional workers, e.g., are assumed to have contact with young people residing in the same census tract).
2. Statistical results for criminal involvement, income, and education generally suggest positive effects on poor people of having more affluent neighbors, but the evidence is of such uneven quality and so lacking in explanation that little strong evidence exists of *particular* effects of neighborhood traits on particular social outcomes of individuals (Jencks and Mayer 1991). The strongest evidence is for positive effects of professional workers on high school graduation, child cognitive indicators, and teen childbearing (Brooks-Gunn et al. 1993; Crane 1991) and for

⁶ Two key exceptions are Sampson, Raudenbush, and Earls (1997), who report that social cohesion, trust, and informal social control among neighbors (“collective efficacy”) are associated with lower levels of neighborhood violence in Chicago, and Garner and Raudenbush (1991), who find that “neighborhood deprivation” (a multidimensional index) is associated with lower educational attainment by Scottish youth. Both studies employ structural equation models to sort out direct and indirect effects of neighborhoods (endogeneity bias). Such multilevel statistical models are unworkable in the context of many housing programs because of the small number of observations at the level of neighborhood.

positive effects of social cohesion and trust among neighbors on levels of violent crime in neighborhoods (Sampson, Raudenbush, and Earls 1997). Life stage, race/ethnicity, parenting practices, and socioeconomic status are thought to be especially important mediators of the effects of neighborhoods on individuals.

3. Appropriately, qualitative studies of neighborhood effects on human development and social attainment emphasize process and pathways of social process rather than representative effects of particular magnitude. The best studies of low-income neighborhoods emphasize the importance of particular parenting strategies in either exposing children to or insulating them from risks, such as violent behavior or normative messages that the parents in question may dislike (Anderson 1991; Furstenberg 1993; Jeffers 1967). Ethnographic studies of neighborhoods also emphasize the importance of effective neighborhood-based job networks, or lack of the same, for poor adults (Hannerz 1969; Liebow 1967) and for poor youth just entering the job market (Sullivan 1989).
4. Little or no qualitative research has directly compared similar families living in neighborhoods that differ dramatically in terms of racial/ethnic, income, and other compositional traits—as in housing mobility programs. In general, ethnographic studies of neighborhoods, which are highly labor intensive at each site, are rarely comparative (see Sullivan 1989).

In sum, it is widely acknowledged that existing quantitative studies of neighborhood effects and housing mobility programs provide compelling evidence on the “what” of neighborhood effects (outcomes) but tell little of the “how” of the processes involved (Aber 1993; Briggs 1997a; Garner and Raudenbush 1991). Qualitative studies rich in evidence on social process lack direct comparability with housing mobility programs, let alone direct evidence from such program contexts. By way of preview, this article adds quantitative evidence on a key dimension of social structure and process—networks—whereas qualitative evidence on the same program context is in the planning stages for Yonkers as well as MTO.

Social capital and urban dwellers

Wilson (1987) made “social isolation” from job networks and mainstream role models the centerpiece of his influential work on the chronically poor in high-poverty, inner-city neighborhoods. Beyond generating debate over the existence and labeling of an “under-

class,” Wilson helped to spur the little research that has explicitly addressed the extent, spatial organization, and labor market impacts of social capital (possessed by individuals) in our cities—that is, of research that has used the concept explicitly. In this vein, Wacquant and Wilson (1993) found comparatively fewer spouses, lower rates of organizational involvement, fewer employed social contacts, and, as a result, “devalued social capital” among residents of extreme-poverty census tracts of Chicago (areas with a poverty rate of 40 percent or higher in 1980). The researchers underline the notion that having social capital is not simply about how many people you know, how close you feel to them, or what exchanges you enter into together, but about *where your contacts are in a social structure*. Wacquant and Wilson found the contacts of residents of extreme-poverty areas to be generally less well placed, at least using the proxy measures of educational attainment and employment, than the contacts (social resources) of residents in lower-poverty tracts. Portes and Sensenbrenner (1993), in research on urban markets for immigrant labor, suggest four sources of social capital: (1) value introjection (the moral element in social interaction), or how people generate norms that are themselves social resources; (2) bounded solidarity (group-oriented behavior, taking care of one’s own); (3) enforceable trust (rewards and sanctions linked to membership); and (4) reciprocity exchanges (norms of reciprocity in face-to-face interaction). The researchers note that a range of factors can influence the forms and extent of social capital developed by groups, from the extent of discrimination outside the group (which encourages group solidarity) to the effectiveness of communication (which underpins the enforcement of trust).

Portes and Sensenbrenner also note that social capital has important downsides where conformity or heavy group obligations have negative effects on individual mobility. Stack (1974) illustrated this in her classic study of poor African-American mothers surviving in a small midwestern city. These mothers shared new earnings (and much more) along extended networks of kin, accumulating few assets for themselves in the process. An established and socially enforced group survival strategy thus conflicted at times with the demands of individual mobility or asset development. Other researchers have argued that groups that suffer extended discrimination, whether race- or class-based, may create and compel members to conform to “counter-school culture” (Willis 1977) or “oppositional identities” (Ogbu 1978). By rejecting the value of formal education as a priority of the perceived oppressor group, it is argued, such cultures and identities inhibit economic opportunity. Ethnic group solidarity, and culturally organized identities as part of it, is an important source of social capital. But like any resource or means, social resources associated with group solidarity may be put to destructive, and even self-destructive, ends.

Beyond the few studies that explicitly address social capital among urban dwellers, there is a vast social network literature, rarely used by housing researchers, which provides important clues about the processes and social structures through which a move to more affluent neighborhoods might affect poor people and their stock of social capital. First and most broadly, although bigger is not always better, larger social networks are generally more supportive (Burt 1987; Wellman and Gulia 1993). Barrera (1981) found this especially true for adolescent parents. In other studies, the social ties of very poor people were found to be more localized, limited, and strained than those of middle-income people (Fischer 1982; Kadushin and Jones 1992; Oliver 1988). Fernandez and Harris (1992) found especially acute patterns of social isolation among the non-working poor when compared with working people living in the same high-poverty neighborhoods of Chicago. The researchers specified a definition of social isolation—in effect, of isolation from social resources or social capital—that contrasts sharply with the two-dimensional definition of social capital posited in this article. Fernandez and Harris stressed isolation from *individuals* and nonparticipation in *organizations* as the two elements of social isolation. But this confuses the media, or channels, through which social resources are obtained with the distinct forms of aid that constitute the *capital* itself.

Next, network and neighboring studies emphasize that proximity alone does not a neighbor make—not in the social sense, that is. In a survey study of 81 “micro-neighborhoods” in Nashville, Lee, Campbell, and Miller (1991) found that even in racially integrated neighborhoods that were fairly homogeneous in terms of class, 90 percent of neighbors with whom blacks kept active ties were also black, whereas fewer than 2 percent of whites’ neighborly ties were. Based on ethnographic research in a racially desegregated public housing project, Merry (1981) found that neighbors shared a physical community but inhabited quite separate social worlds, leading to decreased residential satisfaction and even increased racial prejudice and hostility in some cases.⁷ So the effects of housing mobility programs on social networks, and by extension social capital, should depend not only on physical proximity but also on race, class, and other factors that are known to affect neighboring and friendship building. In Gans’ (1962) early formulation of this problem, neighbors are found, but friends are chosen, and class, race, and life

⁷ Briggs and Mueller (1997) report similar findings for families living in low-rent housing managed by nonprofit community development corporations in three cities. Some of those most wary about close, regular interaction with their neighbors—and understandably so, given neighborhood crime, chronic neediness among neighbors, and so on—were those with the most to gain from supportive social ties. Like most Americans, these families reported “shopping out” (of their immediate neighborhood) for such ties.

stage, not proximity, appear to be the key factors in this process (see also Fava 1958).

A third powerful insight of network research is that the type and contents of each social tie, and not just the absolute number of ties, are important predictors of the social resources, or social capital, that networks provide. Close or intimate (strong) ties tend to be the best sources of emotional aid and other social support. As discussed earlier, such ties to kin and friends are known to be especially important to the survival or coping strategies of poor people (Hannerz 1969; Liebow 1967; Stack 1974). On the other hand, “weak” ties or acquaintances are often key sources of everyday favors, an important type of instrumental support, and for some people, such ties are the most important sources of job referrals and other forms of leverage resources (Campbell, Marsden, and Hurlbert 1986; Granovetter 1973, 1974; Lin, Ensel, and Vaughn 1981). Where dense networks, in which everyone or almost everyone knows everyone else, are good for mobilizing social support, widely dispersed ties to many kinds of people, even if these ties are casual acquaintanceships, tend to be more crucial for job search and other processes that depend on advantage and influence *beyond* support.

Because labor markets are socially organized, there are strong links among the social type of a job contact (friend, relative, other), race/ethnicity of job seeker, racial/ethnic makeup of workplace, and job quality (wages, benefits, conditions). In general, the poor appear more likely than the nonpoor to rely on friends or relatives (strong ties) to get jobs (Green, Tigges, and Browne 1995). In addition, segregated networks may be a quick route to bad jobs. Falcon and Melendez (1996), in a study of Boston residents in the Multi-City Study of Urban Inequality (MCSUI), found that African-American and Latino men whose job contacts were mostly coethnics ended up in jobs with lower wages and benefits than comparable job seekers whose primary job contacts were white, once education and other measures of human capital were held constant (see also Braddock and McPartland 1987). Based on an analysis of the Atlanta MCSUI data, Johnson (1995) emphasized the importance to nonwhite job seekers of having three kinds of social “bridges”—ties outside the neighborhood, ties to whites, and ties to employed people (of any ethnic background).

Similarly, long-run studies of school desegregation indicate that African Americans educated in desegregated schools have more white friends and work in workplaces with more white workers and higher wages than counterparts educated in racially segregated schools (Crain and Wells 1994).

The role of social networks in employment are not uniformly positive, whether from the standpoint of the individual or that of a soci-

ety concerned with equal opportunity. For one thing, because they are by definition socially selective, networks can be powerful instruments of exclusion. In a study of the hotel and restaurant industries in Los Angeles, Waldinger (1996) found that ethnic groups that come to dominate particular occupational niches, recruiting their own along networks, not only exclude members of other ethnic groups but also raise wages in these “protected” markets. This is a traditional strategy of immigrant labor groups. On the other hand, according to Waldinger, members of ethnic groups that get stuck in low-status niches, also recruiting along networks of their own, earn depressed wages. And Kasinitz and Rosenberg (1996), in a study of the market for maritime jobs on the Brooklyn, NY, waterfront, found that white ethnics who lived outside the neighborhood recruited their own to the exclusion of African Americans living near the high-wage local jobs. It is clear, then, that job networks do not always lead one to *good* jobs but also that where networks are missing or weak, poor people may not have any leverage on the job market.

Finally, it is especially disturbing that poverty concentration appears to make young men’s ties denser, more strictly local, and more often “redundant” from the standpoint of social leverage or personal mobility (Burt 1992). Smith (1995), in a study of 50 young black men in high- and low-poverty neighborhoods, found that men in the high-poverty areas were more likely to know people who were good friends of each other, who socialized regularly, and who lived in the same neighborhood—that is, people from a single social world who are likely to have the same limited information about education and job opportunities.

The evidence is that although the poor need supportive ties that may lie in the immediate neighborhood and come from socially similar others, bridges to leverage—ties outside the neighborhood and, in general, to people of higher socioeconomic status and different racial/ethnic groups—are also important. The wider and deeper the social net, the greater and more varied the information and other social resources available. Broadly, then, it is by considering the size, localism, diversity, and aid contents of social networks, and by relating these factors to job, school, health, and other outcomes, that research on housing mobility may show whether and how a radical change of neighborhood generates helpful forms of social capital for the urban poor.⁸

⁸ Most social network research is about networks and not networking (i.e., the social structures themselves and not *action* within them). This, unfortunately, is also true of our baseline research on housing mobility in Yonkers. A meaningful look at networking, and other forms of social process, calls for qualitative fieldwork research—observations of, and unstructured interviewing about, social processes—as described in the earlier review of neighborhood effects.

Study context and methods

This article is a small part of a projected 10–15 year, multidisciplinary study of the impact of a Yonkers, NY, SSPH program on families, neighborhoods, and citywide politics and race relations.

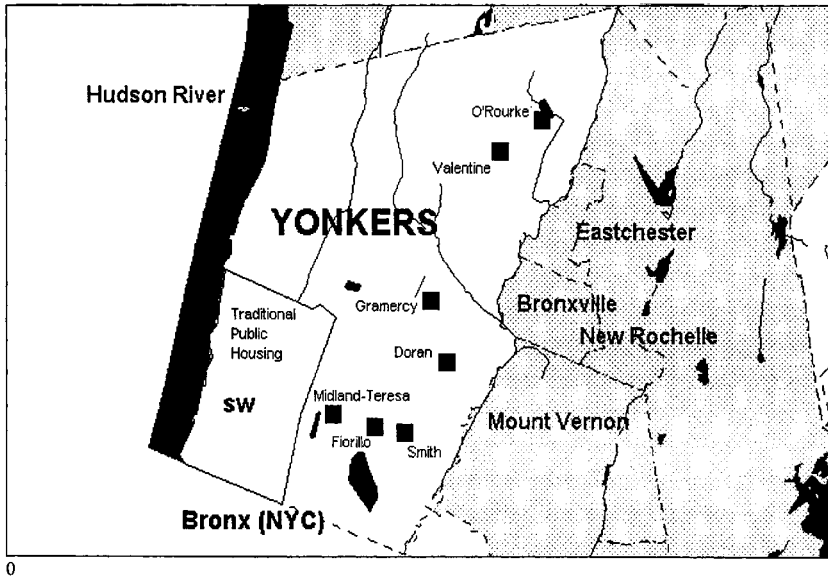
The context

Yonkers, NY, located just north of the New York City borough of the Bronx, is the largest city in mostly suburban Westchester County (population 189,000 in 1990). Yonkers is also racially diverse and highly segregated. During the 1970s and 1980s, Yonkers' economy lost most of its high-wage industrial jobs, much like the greater New York region of which Yonkers is a part (Harris 1991). The context map of Yonkers (see figure 1) shows its neighboring cities, the southwest quadrant of the city, and the seven complexes (indicated by black squares) built and occupied from 1992 to 1994 under the court-ordered SSPH program.

Yonkers balkanized. The city is divided by highways and other major thoroughfares into three demographically and physically distinct areas. East Yonkers is predominantly white and middle-to-upper income. Several neighborhoods here resemble those of more affluent Scarsdale and White Plains to the north, with single-family homes on large lots. Northwest Yonkers is home to both low-income and middle-income non-Hispanic whites and to a small neighborhood of African-American middle-income households. In southwest Yonkers, which surrounds the older central business district, most of the population is African American or Latino and, in 1990, 22 percent of households lived below the poverty line. The city's oldest, most dilapidated housing is located here, including most of its 13,000 units of public housing stock. All of the high-rise buildings are visible from a single street corner. Public housing forms the core of Yonkers' concentrated poverty neighborhoods—home to our control group of stayers and former home to the movers. The most segregated neighborhoods in this segregated quadrant are nearly 50 percent poor and 90 percent nonwhite.

In some respects, racial/ethnic segregation has worsened in Yonkers over the last two decades. African Americans and Latinos made up only 14 and 17 percent of the city's total population, respectively, in 1990 but constituted over 62 percent of the population of the southwest quadrant. That year, the index of dissimilarity (a widely used segregation measure) between African Americans and whites in Yonkers was 66, equal to the average for the largest 45 metropolitan areas in the United States (Li, Bagakas, and Darden 1995). The index for whites and Latinos was 53, higher than the national aver-

Figure 1. Context Map of Yonkers, New York



Shows neighboring cities, the Southwest quadrant of Yonkers, and the seven complexes (black squares) built and occupied under the court-ordered scattered-site public housing (SSPH) program during 1992–1994.

age of 42. This index did not change for African Americans between 1980 and 1990 but increased for Latinos over the same period (Dentzer 1992).

Though the city has not recovered from deindustrialization of the past several decades, recent job growth has been concentrated in service businesses along a commercial strip in east Yonkers and in light manufacturing and processing in a slowly revitalizing port and economic development zone in the southwest.

In Yonkers, decades of segregative policy decisions, the most important occurring between 1948 and 1982, concentrated nonwhites and the poor in a few census tracts (Galster and Keeney 1993). Because public schools in Yonkers were organized around neighborhood catchment zones, residential and school segregation went hand in hand.

Enter the court. In 1980, the U.S. Department of Justice, joined by a local chapter of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), filed suit against the City of Yonkers, charging deliberate segregation of public housing and schools. On November 11, 1985, Federal District Judge Leonard B. Sand ruled that city leaders had for many years deliberately appeased white

homeowners by concentrating all new public housing in poor and minority-concentrated neighborhoods (see *United States v. City of Yonkers* 1985). Judge Sand noted that in 1982, 97 percent of the city's 6,800 subsidized housing units were located in or immediately adjacent to the mostly nonwhite southwest section. Judge Sand also ruled that the discriminatory siting of public housing had created a dual system of neighborhood schools resulting in the denial of equal educational opportunity for children of color. Sand's decision was the first in American legal history to explicitly link school and housing segregation, and his remedy placed Yonkers alongside Mount Laurel, NJ, and other communities where housing policy would become the tool of "judicial activism" (Briggs and Lenhardt 1998; Haar 1996, 1997).

The court order and community response. In May 1986, one year after his landmark ruling, Judge Sand ordered a dual remedy for the city of Yonkers: (1) immediate desegregation of its public schools and (2) provision of subsidized housing opportunities for eligible households outside the southwest section of the city. The housing order called for the construction of mixed-income housing by private developers and of 200 units of low-rise public housing in the mostly white, formerly "protected" neighborhoods of east Yonkers.

The court's school order was immediately implemented through busing and the creation of theme-oriented magnet schools. But the Yonkers City Council fiercely resisted Judge Sand's housing order. Most of the opposition came from white-led homeowner groups and their elected allies, and according to informed insiders, the city's strong-council form of government exacerbated the standoff (Yonkers Family and Community Project 1997). White opponents claimed that the new public housing would lead to a decline in property values, white flight, an increase in crime, and a weakening of the social fabric. It was quickly apparent that the region's depressed real estate market made the mixed-income element nonviable,⁹ but it was the public housing order that brought severe political backlash. One city councilman wondered aloud whether the court order would erase the line between Yonkers and its infamous southern neighbor, the Bronx. Oscar Newman, the architect and planner hired by the court to design the housing and get it built, recalls:

During the heyday of its defiance, the city went so far as to elect a mayor because he had promised to hire the most expensive lawyers available and to lie down in front of the bulldozers him-

⁹ Private developers would have had to build and sell upward of 3,000 market-rate units to make 800 subsidized units financially feasible. The local market simply could not support this.

self to stop the housing from being constructed. The city spent more on attorney's fees to stop the housing than I spent on building it—more than \$20 million. (Newman 1996, 86–87)

Yonkers was excoriated in the national press. It became, among fair housing advocates, a symbol for racial bigotry—“Mississippi on the Hudson.” Public officials relented only in September 1988 when Judge Sand threatened to bankrupt the city with large and exponentially increasing fines (McFadden 1988). Yonkers began, and continues, a long-term plan to build small, privately run affordable housing developments in various parts of the city. This study focuses on the newly built scattered-site public housing only.

Scattered-site public housing: Design, development, and occupancy. Built between 1990 and 1993 and occupied by the fall of 1994, the 200 public housing units in east Yonkers consist of two- and three-bedroom factory-built town house units that used “as much brick as possible,” according to architect Oscar Newman. They feature the occasional bay windows and other amenities intended to make them look like the privately owned, single-family homes nearby and thus blend into the surrounding neighborhoods (Stern 1991; Newman 1996). The units are scattered across seven sites (see figure 1), which range from 14 units to 48 units each.¹⁰ Newman, the architect, had asked for 10 or more sites so as to keep each complex small. This was in keeping with the “defensible space” principles he had developed through the successful redesign of housing and neighborhoods around the country. He recalls that his concerns were lost on the Yonkers City Council:

In the end, I was left with only seven sites. And because of this, I was forced to put as many as 48 units on one site and 44 on another. Their comparatively large size meant that these two sites would have to have their own internal street systems, at increased cost. But more importantly, I would not be able to make them disappear into the fabric of the city's neighborhoods. . . . Strangely, the city preferred that I choose a few large, isolated sites rather than many smaller sites that were integrated into the community. That way, argued the city, fewer areas would be contaminated by the contact. (Newman 1996, 87)

Construction costs were approximately \$110,000 per unit, and this relatively high cost was a point of considerable controversy. The weakness of the Yonkers housing market during the late 1980s would have made the acquisition of co-ops and other existing units

¹⁰ In general, the smaller complexes are better integrated into surrounding neighborhoods. The two largest complexes (42 and 48 units) have their own street systems and are inward-facing. Future qualitative research will consider effects of design—or built ecology—on behavior. The statistical analyses in this article cannot do so directly.

less expensive than building new public housing. In fact, that approach might also have aroused less political opposition, since the acquired units would have been more widely “scattered” than the seven clusters ultimately built. Land acquisition costs were also hotly debated. The city of Yonkers refused to allocate city-owned sites for the new housing, insisting that the land be purchased from private owners.

Tenants of SSPH, or movers, were chosen by the Yonkers Municipal Housing Authority from two pools in equal proportion: 100 households from the pool of public housing residents and 100 from the waiting list for public housing. Approximately 2,000 (or one-third) of all public housing residents in Yonkers expressed interest in the program initially, but an unknown proportion—perhaps one-half—dropped out because their teenage children did not want to leave peers behind, because they feared harassment and constant monitoring by police and local homeowners, or for other reasons (Newman 1996).¹¹ Once the 100 families in public housing met income, family composition, good payment record, and housekeeping requirements, the residents for the new housing were selected by lottery. The 100 waiting list slots were filled on a first-come, first-served basis, subject to the same eligibility requirements.

Mover and stayer neighborhoods. A close analysis of the poorest census block groups of southwest Yonkers (see table 1) indicates that the largest of the old projects anchor areas characterized not only by high poverty rates but also by comparatively low labor force participation, low educational attainment, and a higher proportion of single female-headed households with children—traits associated with persistent joblessness and poverty (Kasarda 1992). On the other hand, the stayer areas offer African-American and Latino youth much larger pools of coethnic peers, and mover parents may find it hard to build ties across the race/ethnic and class differences that separate them from their new neighbors. Mover youth, like their parents, might be trading one form of social isolation for another, losing out on supportive relations from trusted, socially similar others.

Whether and how census figures are meaningful for the daily lives and life chances of stayer and mover youth and their families is a matter for our study over time. The block groups may or may not be functional “neighborhoods.” They may have strong effects on some aspects of residents’ lives—safety, for example—and weak effects on others. They may or may not reflect bonds of community felt by the

¹¹ These motivation (selection) issues are key challenges for any good research design, which ought to ensure that mobility program effects, if any, do in fact owe to the program and not to psychosocial traits of an “upwardly mobile” poor.

Table 1. Census Profile of Mover and Stayer Neighborhoods, Yonkers Scattered-Site Public Housing Program

	Mover Neighborhoods (East Yonkers)	Stayer Neighborhoods (SW Yonkers)
Total population	14,891	9,299
White non-Hispanic	88%	24%
Ages 12–17, black	3%	46%
Ages 12–17, Latino/Hispanic origin (any race)	9%	40%
Persons in poverty	4%	36%
Households, married-couple families	57%	25%
Male unemployment rate	4%	14%
Youth unemployment rate (ages 16–19)	6%	36%
High-status workers (employed persons 16+ years, managerial and professional occupations)	32%	18%
Owner-occupied households	50%	12%
Density (population per square mile)	7,562	40,141
Adults, 25+ years, never completed high school	20%	51%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 1990 *Census of Population and Housing*, STF 3A.

residents we interviewed. But whatever their effects over time, the mover and stayer areas are quite different in makeup.

Yonkers versus Gautreaux. The Yonkers program—the “treatment” as a series of changes associated with moving rather than the program-as-formally-administered—differs from that of the widely discussed Gautreaux program in at least three important ways. A note on these differences may aid in the interpretation of early results in Yonkers (Rosenbaum 1995):

1. Yonkers’ movers remained *within* the city, moving just 2 to 7 miles from their old neighborhoods into areas that are socially and physically suburban (though not politically autonomous suburbs), whereas Gautreaux’s suburban movers relocated outside of Chicago, 20 to 30 miles from their previous central-city neighborhoods.
2. Yonkers’ movers live in small complexes of public housing (14 to 48 units per site), whereas the Gautreaux households were dispersed individually, often in groups of two families per neighborhood, into privately run units.
3. The desegregation of Yonkers’ public schools eliminated neighborhood schools, so that mover and stayer youth are in the same schools across the city, whereas suburban movers in the Gautreaux program, who changed school districts, experienced a radical change in the quality of their schools and in the race and family income of their classmates.

Beyond the structural and institutional differences of the programs, there appear to be contextual differences between Yonkers and the Chicago suburbs, including the lower availability of low-skill work in Yonkers movers' new neighborhoods. These differences in *geographic scope of the moves, concentration effects, and institutional resources* illustrate just a few of the important dimensions along which mobility programs around the nation vary widely—again, vary above and beyond the details of formal service delivery (counseling, supportive services, etc.).

Data collection and analysis

The sample. As evaluation methodologists have noted, “Devising an appropriate control group is not a mechanical task; it is based on prior knowledge and theoretical understanding of the social processes in question” (Rossi and Freeman 1993, 304). For the purposes of our matching in Yonkers, two criteria are essential:

1. That the matched families “look like” the families in scattered-site public housing in terms of race/ethnicity, family type and size, age of the parent(s), socioeconomic status and human capital (a composite of educational attainment, labor force attachment, income level, and public assistance reciprocity), and (prior) neighborhood of residence.
2. That the matched families also resemble the scattered-site families in terms of apparent motivation, having applied for the scattered-site lottery and lost.

Without the second criterion, we might mistake neighborhood or other effects for selection effects associated with a group of “upwardly mobile poor” who differ by internal disposition or motivation to succeed. As noted earlier, such selection bias is a key source of error in most neighborhood effects studies.

In lieu of random assignment of families by the Yonkers Municipal Housing Authority (see tenancy details presented earlier), and lacking a large enough list of lottery losers to generate a control group of adequate size, we have used chain sampling—sampling along movers' personal networks back to the old neighborhood—to construct the control group. Chain or snowball sampling is a useful alternative to traditional methodologies, especially where the requisite social group is hard to access more directly (Morris 1994). Patterns of similarity within personal networks (Marsden 1988)—the fact that “birds of a feather” do indeed flock together to a remarkable degree across our society—indicated that low-income people of

color in the mover group would be excellent sources of referrals to those with similar traits and even attitudes.

Developing a control group through chain sampling was difficult and expensive.¹² Heads-of-household, most of them unmarried women, were interviewed first, starting in the summer of 1994. Following interviews with the female parent in each household, the adolescent interviews were conducted between the summer and fall of 1995. A completion rate of 95 percent indicates that these analyses do not reflect significant nonresponse bias.¹³ Finally, although we created a sample via social networks, this method does not confound our analyses of networks.¹⁴

Sample makeup. Half (49 percent) of the poor youth in this study (the movers) moved into public housing built in middle-income, mostly white neighborhoods 1 to 36 months before the survey was conducted in summer and fall of 1995 (see table 2). These are the “brown kids in white suburbs.” The other half of the sample (stayers) live in the mostly nonwhite, high-poverty neighborhoods that the movers left behind. All are ages 13 to 18. The overwhelming

¹² At the close of an interview with a mover adult resident, the interviewer obtained nominations of up to 10 other families the respondent knew who were still living in the prior neighborhood and who were considered broadly similar in terms of target traits. The interviewer also asked whether the old neighborhood friend had expressed an interest in public housing or moving to east Yonkers during 1992, when the lottery took place. “Same prior neighborhood” was operationally defined as the same public housing structure, or, for those formerly in private housing, those residing within three blocks of the respondent’s prior residence. Referral families were then contacted, and a brief screening was administered to mothers. Interviewers asked about residential history, attitudes toward the present neighborhood, and interest in “the new public housing in east Yonkers.” They also obtained information on demographics and household composition. The screener questionnaire applied the same eligibility requirements imposed by the housing authority to screen applicants for the new housing: family size, income level, no history of lease violations, current house in clean and sanitary condition. Interviewers also asked about past history of efforts to participate in the lottery or otherwise apply for the new housing. Subsequently, each eligible female adult respondent interviewed was asked to nominate up to 10 others who shared the target traits. This snowball technique yielded confirmed “lottery losers” and others who were part of the broader pool of families who were *both* interested and eligible but not chosen.

¹³ To ensure a high response rate, we maintained a bilingual, multiethnic interview staff, worked closely with tenants’ associations at the public housing sites to gain entry and build trust, developed and managed a community advisory board of respected service providers and clergy, and delivered holiday cards and small gift boxes of food to respondents during the holiday season.

¹⁴ This is true for simple, albeit somewhat technical, reasons. My analyses of movers’ and stayers’ networks are egocentric—that is, limited to whom the individual respondent knows, without data on which of those contacts also know each other. That some movers happen to know some stayers is unimportant in the analyses of what social resources members of each group can access through personal ties.

Table 2. Yonkers Adolescent Sample: Movers and Stayers by Race/Ethnicity; Gender; Parents' Education, Marital, and Welfare Status; Household Composition; and Time in Neighborhood

	Movers	Stayers
Percent male	53	38*
Percent Hispanic/Latino	59	40**
Percent "father figure" in household	22	31
Percent caretaker parent ever on welfare	87	87
Percent parent single, never married	40	36
Percent parent never graduated high school	47	45
Mean age (years)	15.4	15.0
Mean months in current neighborhood	18	87****
Mean number of siblings in household	2.0	2.6*
Sample size (N)	(65)	(67)

Two-tailed chi-square and t-test significance levels: * $p < 0.10$. ** $p < 0.05$. *** $p < 0.01$. **** $p < 0.001$.

majority of adolescents in each group attend one of the four public junior high schools or one of four public high schools in Yonkers; a handful (three) attend parochial schools.

The mover and stayer groups are highly comparable, except for time in current neighborhood, which we would expect to be vastly greater, on average, for the stayers. Time in neighborhood, gender, and ethnicity are each associated with both the size and structure of personal networks (Fischer 1977, 1982) and must therefore be considered potential confounders of housing mobility effects on social ties. Gender and ethnicity differences between the two groups are statistically significant but not substantively large. Still, I use controls to hold gender and ethnicity constant in the analyses that follow. No statistically significant differences were found on mean age (15 years) or distribution by grade in school (data not shown), or on the presence of a "father figure" or parents' welfare status, both of which could impact these adolescents' access to other adults (see Fernandez and Harris 1992; Stack 1974).

Research questions

Given how much we do not know about housing mobility programs and their effects, studies in this area should apply multiple methods to examine a wide array of program impacts on families and neighborhoods. In the domain of effects on family self-sufficiency per se—an especially critical issue given recent federal welfare reform—researchers should examine a number of distinct ways that contexts (including neighborhoods) might affect people (see table 3).

Table 3. Neighborhood (or Housing Mobility Program) Effects on Family Self-Sufficiency: Four Domains for Research

Domains	In the Jargon	Primary Disciplines
Things that have happened to you	Life events, including traumas	Psychology Psychiatry
Things in your head	Norms, attitudes, beliefs, mental health functioning, including self-esteem, coping, and sense of control (self-efficacy or “planfulness”)	Psychology Anthropology Sociology
Things you do and people you know	Behaviors, social ties and exchanges, including “social capital” (sources of social support and leverage)	Anthropology Sociology Economics
Things you attain	Achievement, attainment, social outcomes, including job holding, income, education	Sociology Economics

A meaningful look at such a wide range of processes and outcomes is beyond the scope of this article, not to mention premature, given the stage of the Yonkers housing program and research. This article looks at one aspect of the third item in table 3—early impacts on social ties. Recall that according to prior research, the size, makeup, and usefulness of one’s social networks (the latter measured by various forms of aid available on the network) should provide powerful clues about access to, or isolation from, social capital. Again, the hypothesis, derived from arguments pro housing mobility, is something of a straw man: that movers will—already—show substantially different access to richer social capital. With an eye toward establishing a baseline for tracking the lives of mover and stayer families over time, this research sought to test that thesis by answering the following questions:

1. *Size and localism.* Are mover youth’s social networks as large as stayer networks? Are they more or less localized—that is, limited to the immediate complex or neighborhood?
2. *Diversity.* Are mover networks more diverse in makeup (race/ethnicity, socioeconomic status, etc.) than stayer networks?
3. *Aid.* Are mover networks richer in social support or leverage than stayer networks?

Measures. In addition to a wide range of questions about neighborhood, family practices and perceptions (including level of parental discipline, monitoring, and perceived warmth of parent-child relation), and personal attitudes, our Yonkers survey study asked adolescent respondents, both movers and stayers, about the size of

various types of networks (close friend, kin with whom the respondent was in at least occasional contact, neighborhood adult acquaintances, and neighborhood youth acquaintances). Next, we used a “name generator” to get more in-depth information on a limited number of social ties that the adolescents considered significant. Respondents identified up to 6 close friends, 5 members of their household, 5 nonresident kin, 5 young neighborhood acquaintances, and 5 adult neighborhood acquaintances (for a total of 26 named ties). They then described these contacts (by race/ethnicity, age, educational attainment, job status, welfare status, residential location, school affiliation, and other traits), indicated the *frequency of their contact* with the person, and told us about the *contents* of their ties to them—whether, for example, they felt they could count on the named person for “everyday favors like getting a ride somewhere” or “help in an emergency, like if you needed a place to stay.” Whereas the former traits are indicators of diverse networks, the latter point to supportive or nonsupportive ones and relate directly to what I have called the *social support* and *social leverage* sides of social capital.

Results

Social contact: Barriers and opportunities

Take two of the most outgoing people you know, place them at opposite ends of a freezing football stadium, and see if they get acquainted. If not, send them down a single exit at roughly the same time, and you may be more successful. But dim the lights in that exit alley, throw broken glass across the stark concrete floor, spray graffiti on the walls, and tell them that muggings have been known to occur there as sports fans leave the stadium. Even though your friends may walk out at the very same instant, the last “enhancement” to this thought experiment is apt to make it very difficult for these two otherwise social people to interact.

Clearly, the character of adolescents’ personal networks should be affected by structural barriers to and opportunities for interaction. Our Yonkers team studied these in addition to social networks per se (see data in Yonkers Family and Community Project 1997). In general, there is no evidence that movers are more isolated from social interaction—or lonelier—than stayers. As for access to peers, movers were just as likely as stayers to report having a regular place to meet friends (data not shown). When asked where, movers mentioned fast-food restaurants, movie houses, and other commercial centers in east Yonkers, where they now live, as their peer

hangouts.¹⁵ Stayers were likely to name parks, basketball courts, a community center catering to African-American and Latino youth, and corner supermarkets in southwest neighborhoods as their preferred hangouts. It is striking that movers—the adolescents, their parents, and their younger siblings—perceive their neighborhoods to be much safer and less “tough,” by night as well as day, than stayers do. This could be associated with less *delinquent* peer involvement over time (Dembo et al. 1982).

Organizational participation: Churchgoing. Some prior research on social capital and social isolation emphasizes participation in organizations, especially community associations, as a measure of connection to social resources. High participation in organizations is considered a sign that communities possess social capital (Putnam 1995) and that individuals, though poor, are not socially isolated (Fernandez and Harris 1992; Wacquant and Wilson 1993; Wilson 1987). Based on survey evidence, movers are just as likely as stayers to attend church regularly, but they are much less likely to attend a *neighborhood* church. The message, as open-ended survey items confirm, is that mover youth and their parents are returning to the old neighborhoods in southwest Yonkers, where almost all of the African-American and Latino churches in the city are located, for religious activities, including church-related youth groups. This is not unusual for minority-group families, especially poor ones, moved into neighborhoods whose social institutions have not traditionally served them. Jewish Americans, for example, when in the minority locally, have shown this pattern (Gans 1967). Surprising or not, though, this finding has key network implications. Greenbaum and Greenbaum (1985), in a study of the ecology of adult social networks in urban neighborhoods, found attending a local church to be the largest single predictor of the number of neighborhood acquaintances. Movers have chosen to retain ties to church congregations based in southwest Yonkers, foregoing churches in the east that might connect them to more of their new, higher-socioeconomic-status neighbors.

The size and localism of mover and stayer networks

Overview of results. This section summarizes dozens of separate analyses, presenting one, in graphical form, for reference. By the size and frequency measures at least, movers have just as much access to their most significant ties—close friends and relatives—as stayers do. As predicted by previous research, neighborhood of residence (being a mover) affects the number of neighborhood acquaintances.

¹⁵ One especially popular hangout is Nathan’s fast-food restaurant, which has a large video game room and a lax policy about loitering on the cheap.

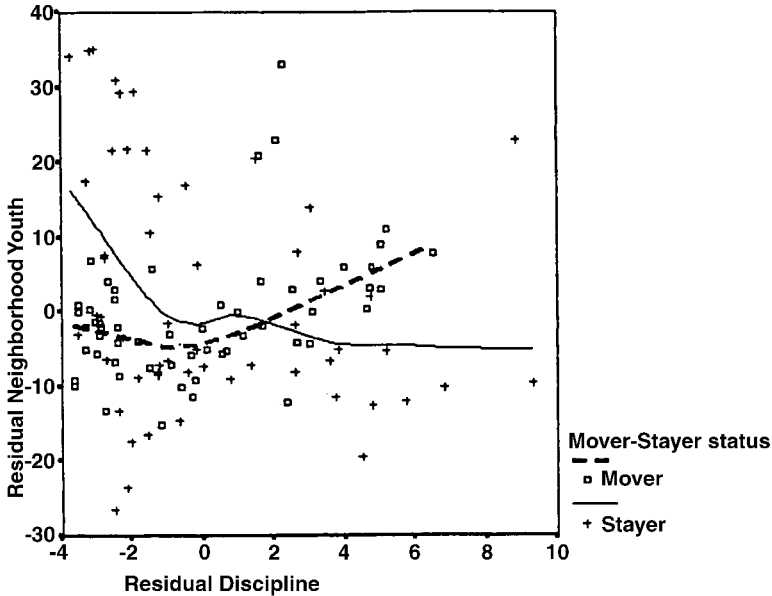
tances reported by youth but not the number of close friends or kin in the network, most of whom live outside the neighborhood. Also, although movers have fewer adult and youth acquaintances, effects of time in the neighborhood are not different for movers and stayers in any clear way: more time means more acquaintances for both groups. Mover youth's neighborhood ties, though, appear more limited to the immediate complex than those of stayers, and this, too, is not surprising, given the racial/ethnic and social-class borders that separate residents of the SSPH from the larger, mostly white middle-income communities.

Important effects of ethnicity and immigrant status, scale of housing design, and parenting on network structure are also apparent in these data. Holding other traits equal, Latinos have fewer neighborhood acquaintances and socialize less frequently with peers. They also have less access than African Americans to their kin, who are, in some cases, overseas. These patterns are strongest for the children of foreign-born Latino immigrants. Next, for youth in the larger mover complexes—complexes that provide larger pools of socially similar and age-similar peers—regardless of ethnicity or gender, acquaintanceship networks are larger and involve more frequent socializing. Adolescents at the smaller, outward-facing sites, who have fewer adolescent peers within the complex and somewhat smaller local networks overall, tend to spend more time at home alone and caring for siblings than other mover youth. Finally, as the analysis below indicates, parents in the higher-risk stayer neighborhoods are bounding their kids from problem peers in the area—a family management strategy, long documented by ethnographic research on high-poverty neighborhoods (Furstenberg 1993; Jarrett 1992; Jeffers 1967), that mover parents need no longer practice.

Analyses of parenting strategy and network size: A sample. Because of the high correlation between being a mover and time in neighborhood (see table 2), multiple regression analyses are not helpful for the analyses of network size. Figure 2 employs a “locally weighted scatterplot smoother” (LOWESS plot).¹⁶ It shows the association between number of neighborhood acquaintances reported by the youth and degree of parental discipline, once gender, ethnicity, and time in the neighborhood are accounted for. The result is a striking con-

¹⁶ LOWESS procedures are more robust to outliers than ordinary least squares (OLS) regression and directly detect nonlinear relationships among data (Cleveland 1985). Here, I have estimated two regression equations and then produced a scatterplot using the residuals. Adding a LOWESS curve shows the association between time in neighborhood and size of neighborhood acquaintance network, controlling for the important covariates gender and ethnicity. Since separate curves were fit for movers and stayers, the (non)effect of this variable is also detected graphically. When effects are not as immediately apparent in LOWESS plots, standard error bands may be added.

Figure 2. Moving to Safer Neighborhoods Changes How Parents Manage Risk for Their Children



Note: Coefficient of smoothing $f = 60$.

firmation of the ethnographic evidence on family management in high-risk neighborhoods. It also provides powerful evidence of the ways that families act as mediators of the effects of neighborhoods. High discipline in the stayer areas is associated with sharply circumscribed neighborhood peer relations for the youth. Among mover parents, living in the safer neighborhoods of east Yonkers, this is not the case. In fact, mover parents appear to use discipline to focus their adolescent children's attention on the new neighborhood in east Yonkers instead of the prior, high-crime neighborhoods of the southwest. It is telling (data not shown) that the adolescent movers who return to the prior neighborhood frequently are more likely than all other movers to report delinquent behaviors.

Network diversity: The kind of company they keep

Whereas the number of social contacts a person has provides some information about what types of resources, or social capital, those contacts provide, the traits of those contacts—or network diversity—provide clues to where those contacts are in the social structure. Here, again, I present key findings and spare the reader the dozens of network-analytic tables generated.

Ethnic diversity. I began by looking for signs that mover adolescents—all African-American or Latino—were, in fact, crossing racial/ethnic borders in some of their more significant social ties. A majority of both movers and stayers named friends and acquaintances who were not coethnic, and Latinos were the frequent “border crossers” by that broad measure. Very few of the youth named white contacts of any type. A closer examination of the sources of white ties was instructive: for movers and stayers alike, most named white contacts were their few white neighbors in public housing. Other whites tended to be schoolmates; only a handful were peers drawn strictly from the neighborhood outside the public housing complex. In addition, active parent involvement at school made it significantly more likely that the youth would have a white friend or white adult acquaintance. Being a mover was not associated with any of these patterns.

Socioeconomic diversity. Next, I looked for signs that the youth had some access to educated and steadily employed kin and acquaintances. Beginning at home, fewer than half of the parents of these youth are employed or have a high school diploma or better, and just a little over half (55 percent) named a relative who had graduated from high school. Logistic regression analyses revealed that the most significant predictor of parents’ work status was having that diploma (data not shown). Movers have limited access to employed kin, no more and no less than that of stayers, once parents’ education and immigrant status is accounted for. One-third of all the adolescents identified active ties to relatives on welfare, with no mover-stayer difference. Precious few youths in either group report ties to kin with college degrees or professional jobs, and despite the census data on the education and occupational status of whites in the neighborhood beyond, movers appear no more likely than stayers to know neighborhood adults with these status traits. Now that we know how local to the immediate (scattered-site) public housing complex most of these acquaintanceships are, the latter point is not surprising. Ethnicity and immigrant status, not being a mover, appear to be the fault lines along which potentially important network differences are organized. Beyond involving fewer acquaintances overall and less peer socializing, the children of foreign-born Latino youth are much less likely than African Americans to have a parent with high school or better credentials or ties to steadily employed kin or neighborhood adults.

Network contents: Looking for social support and leverage

The Yonkers adolescents we interviewed in 1995 were asked whether their named, active social contacts could be counted on for particular types of aid. I used three types of aid to examine patterns

of social support available to movers and stayers: (1) everyday aid (e.g., “getting a ride somewhere, borrowing a little money, or running errands”); (2) crisis aid (help, e.g., “in case of a serious illness or if you needed a place to stay”); and (3) confiding (someone to talk to “if you were having trouble with family relationships”). Three other types of aid were used as proxies for social leverage: (1) job information (“a good source of information about getting a job or getting a better job than the one you have now”); (2) advice on future plans (someone you can talk to “about plans for the future”); and (3) school advice (“a good source of advice about programs or classes to take at school”).

Overview of results. Multivariate analyses indicate few significant differences between the typical mover and stayer networks in either social support or leverage. Most striking and worrisome is the fact that over one-quarter of all the adolescents cannot think of a single significant adult in their lives (but outside the household), whether kin, acquaintance, or friend, who would be a good source of information on getting a job. And in direct corroboration of Wilson’s (1987, 1996) arguments about social isolation and the effects of joblessness on young people of color, knowing just one employed adult or one white adult (and these categories are correlated) *dramatically* increases the chances that the young person will report at least one reliable source of job information in his or her network of active adult ties.

Social support. More striking than any mover-stayer difference is the proportion of kids in each group who have no one in a particular category to whom they feel they can turn for aid. One-third, for example, named no kin on whom they felt they could count in a crisis. Again, the children of foreign-born Latinos are most isolated from kin aid. Overall, the youth are more confident that strong ties, especially employed ones, would provide these kinds of supports, and most have at least one adult contact, whether friend, neighborhood acquaintance, or relative, to whom they feel they could turn.

The salience of employment deserves mention, since Wilson’s (1996) recent research on high rates of neighborhood joblessness indicates that employed adults should provide youth with a range of important supports or social buffers. Indeed, mover and stayer youth alike perceive the steadily employed adults, if any, in their lives as more reliable sources than other adults of *both* support and leverage aid.

Social leverage. Aggregating types of aid across types of ties indicates that mover and stayer youth have fewer sources of leverage aid (school advice, job information, advice on “future plans”) and more of “emotional-expressive” supports—confiding, for example.

Movers show no advantages in these simple cross-tabulations, although the previous several sections make us wonder: Net of immigrant and size effects, could movers indeed be better placed to access information on jobs?

Ordinary least squares (OLS) regression results, corroborated in graphical (LOWESS) analyses, indicate that access to job information from kin, like access to employed kin, is about ethnicity and parents' immigration, not being a mover—at least not yet. Kids who are in contact with more kin overall, and have more employed kin in their network, have better access to job information. The logistic regression models in table 4 examine access to weak ties (adult acquaintances) in the neighborhood whom the youth consider good sources of job information. The basic model is at left, network size and parents' work status are added in the middle, and a measure of network diversity—knowing at least one white adult—is added in the model at the far right. The result is quite striking. Whereas the basic model (3a), including personal traits, household tenure, and movership, explains little, parents' work status has robust effects in an elaborated model (3b) that includes network size. Having a working parent appears to promote access to job information via other adults in the neighborhood. So does knowing at least one white adult. Net of size, ethnicity, being a mover, and other factors, the kids who said they know at least one white adult were four times more likely to also say that they knew at least one adult who could provide job information. The effect is similar if “knows at least one employed adult” is added: net of other factors, just one such person can fairly dramatically improve the adolescents' perceived access to critical job information. This is clear evidence that network diversity—having wider, “social border-crossing” ties—can significantly enhance access to *leverage*-type social capital for poor youth of color.

Summary and discussion

Key concepts and findings

Individuals of all backgrounds need a two-sided treasure chest of social capital: access to *social support* that helps us cope with life's stresses and challenges (“get by”) and access to *social leverage*, the key to mobility or “getting ahead.” These findings suggest that the potential link between social capital and housing programs is quite multidimensional and even subtle—but somewhat predictable. Overall, the early experiences of adolescents in the Yonkers SSPH program (movers) point to the support benefits of living in enclaves of socially similar families—the microneighborhoods of the immedi-

Table 4. Social Leverage as Job Information from Neighborhood Adults: Logistic Regression Models (Odds Ratios, 95 Percent Confidence Intervals)

Covariates	Probability of Having at Least One Neighborhood Adult Who Is Good Source of Job Information		
	Model 3a	Model 3b	Model 3c
Female	1.39 (0.66–2.92)	1.34 (0.59–3.04)	1.41 (0.61–3.26)
Tenure	0.99 (0.32–1.78)	0.99 (0.99–1.00)	0.99 (0.99–1.00)
Foreign-born Hispanic parent	0.44 (0.18–1.05)	0.59 (0.23–1.50)	0.47 (0.17–1.29)
Mover	0.75 (0.32–1.77)	0.68 (0.26–1.81)	0.65 (0.23–1.79)
Parent works at least part-time		2.73 (1.19–6.30)	2.67 (1.14–6.27)
3–5 neighborhood adult (acquaintances) ^a		1.88 (0.64–5.47)	1.91 (0.64–5.76)
6–10 neighborhood adults		7.26 (2.05–25.7)	5.50 (1.49–20.3)
11 or more neighborhood adults		5.26 (1.52–18.2)	5.14 (1.43–18.4)
Knows at least one white adult			4.03 (1.15–14.1)
Chi-square (N)	5.11** (131)	13.93*** (131)	30.49**** (131)

^aThese are contrasts levels for network size, coded categorically. Omitted reference category is “0 neighborhood adults.” Two-tailed chi-square significance levels: *p < 0.10. **p < 0.05. ***p < 0.01. ****p < 0.001.

ate housing complex—and not the leverage benefits of living in more affluent and racially diverse areas.

As the sociology of neighboring would predict, movers' local ties are largely confined to the complexes they live in, although their overall networks draw ties from school, from the old neighborhoods in southwest Yonkers, and other domains. The seven mover complexes, and the largest ones most of all, show early signs of functioning as ethnic fishbowls sited in, but only partially integrated into, the residential areas that surround them. These results suggest that receptive local institutions—churches, community groups, and so forth—could go a long way to help integrate new, socially different families.

There are many positives to the story these data tell about adjustment to new neighborhoods. Mover youth appear quite resilient socially; most have found new hangouts in east Yonkers. Movers are no more cut off from close friends and relatives than are stayers. Based on the limited locational data available, they retain ties to the old neighborhoods, go to church (in the old neighborhood) as often as stayers, and have added new ties where they live. In addition, and far more dramatically, moving has had large and quite rapid effects on parenting: mover parents are not struggling to isolate their kids from neighborhood risks as stayer parents are doing.

On the other hand, few differences in network diversity or types of aid were found. There is evidence that the SSPH complexes in which movers live, especially the large, inward-facing ones, function as partially bounded enclaves that support mover social adjustment but inhibit socializing with the surrounding white community. Few movers or stayers have significant ties to whites, and most of these are to their (very) few neighbors in public housing. Most alarming is the finding that about one-quarter of the youth, movers and stayers alike, have no kin, including parents, with a high school diploma and cannot think of a single significant adult outside the household who would be a good source of job information or career advice. Moreover, corroborating Wilson's (1996) arguments about the broad and profound effects of high neighborhood joblessness on young people, these youth consider steadily employed kin and other adults more reliable providers of various kinds of social support, in addition to considering them much more reliable providers of what I have termed "leverage" aid. Knowing at least one white or at least one employed adult (of any race/ethnicity) dramatically increases the adolescents' perceived access to job information.

What all these patterns mean for movers' self-sufficiency gains over time remains to be seen. It is, for example, too early to properly assess the impacts of moving on delinquent behavior—a key predictor

of career entry, especially for young, low-income black and Latino males. Clearly, though, it is fair to say that delinquent movers retain ties to problem peers in their old neighborhoods. Students and designers of mobility programs cannot assume that kids pick friends like they pick soft drinks, with a preference for the choices near at hand.

Implications for urban theory and research

I have argued that where individual access to social capital is concerned, we should focus on the “goods” at stake. What specific forms of aid, or “social resources,” are people isolated from, and how isolated are they? Conversely, when, despite poverty, particular individuals are found to have rich stores of social resources or social capital, which kind(s) do they possess—leverage as well as social support?

The poor but close-knit community of black women that Stack (1974) immortalized in her classic ethnography had a great deal of stock on one side of the treasure chest (social support) but little on the other (social leverage). Both are viable and important dimensions of social capital, and each encompasses valuable social resources from which the chronically poor are at great risk of being isolated. A two-way split of social capital makes it abundantly clear why close, insular ties might be enormously beneficial on one side and disastrous on the other, especially for those about to enter the workforce.

Finding neighborhood effects. The problems associated with guessing about social interaction from census or other aggregate data, as many neighborhood effects studies continue to do, are especially serious when the study area is heterogeneous. And although the construction of these particular public housing enclaves may seem anomalous, mixed-income and mixed-race suburbs are not any longer. Residents of neighborhoods have countless routines with which to “shield” themselves from the ecological effects that researchers typically seek to uncover. And it seems another aspect of “studying down” that we attribute to low-income people an extreme degree of network localism and local dependence that probably exists nowhere but in language-isolated ethnic enclaves. More network-based approaches that explicitly conceive of partially bounded social units in larger residential areas are sorely needed in the effort to understand the effects of a range of neighborhoods on young people and adults. At the broadest level, and although I have offered little discussion of normative effects per se, these results argue against the application of simple ideas about neighborhoods or so-called strong communities as socializing agents. As Galster and Killen

(1995, 23) observe, “The influence of neighbors on the development of youth can range from negligible to overwhelming, depending on the particular context in which the youth find themselves.” I would add that ethnicity, class, and parent origins, not just neighborhood context, appear to organize youth contacts, and must affect socialization, in the immediate neighborhood. Some youth have few, if any, social ties in their neighborhoods; their important strong ties lie beyond that domain, like the strong ties of most Americans.

In general, students of social capital and housing policy would do well to pay more attention to the role of families as mediators. It is tempting to give the neighborhood an all-powerful role in the socialization of young people—or the social horizons of their parents, for that matter—but there is little evidence that it deserves such a role in most urban areas. For many movers, there appear to be two “social neighborhoods”: the microneighborhood of the complex, with family and peers mediating its effects, and the old neighborhood, not too far away, where social contacts again channel youth interactions and exposure to norms and opportunities. Whether, and for which movers, the old neighborhood and its ties become less salient over time is a matter for follow-up research.

Implications for housing policy and programs

Assumptions about housing mobility and its benefits. To the extent that the federal court intended that a group of public housing residents in Yonkers be given the choice to move to safer environments, it succeeded brilliantly. Beyond this, however, the package of benefits that accrue to movership, and the extent of the court’s assumptions about what moving would do for movers, is still unclear. School desegregation eradicated Yonkers’ neighborhood schools and created citywide busing. Unlike Gautreaux, the Yonkers SSPH program has not necessarily provided new or better schools to young movers. There is some evidence, in fact, that movers’ classmates are still mostly nonwhite. Whatever advantages were enjoyed by Gautreaux’s young movers who attended suburban schools may be utterly missing in Yonkers. Even Yonkers’ movers who have been in place for two years or more show few signs of being bound for very much contact with the white social world—a world that Gautreaux opened for inner-city Chicago kids because of the racial mix of schools, not just housing, in the suburbs of that city. Only time will tell whether Yonkers movers somehow gain more diverse social ties and the career benefits that seem to come with them.

Yonkers is embedded in a regional economy that has shifted jobs in two directions for several decades now: outward to suburban office

parks and malls and inward to a white-collar business-services core (Harris 1991). Mover youth are living closer than stayers to the mostly low-wage service-sector jobs in retail and fast-food establishments of east Yonkers, but it is very early to assess whether they are, at a minimum, much better placed to get these jobs, given their relatively low education levels and a scarcity of child care, let alone better placed to access job growth in the wider region. It remains to be seen whether mover youth and their parents will show job gains (relative to stayers) over time, and whether these will owe to improved spatial access to jobs, to feelings of safety that make single mothers more confident that they can leave kids at home and go to work, or to the potentially inspiring example of employed neighbors. According to objective data as well as respondent reports, all three of these factors contributed to the job gains made by Gautreaux parents (Rosenbaum 1995). Mobility policy must respond, then, to the economic and social geography of particular metro areas more than to generalized assumptions about where opportunity lies.

The design of housing mobility programs. Students and advocates of housing mobility programs speak of two broad varieties: *unit mobility* programs, which involve the acquisition and management of housing by public entities, typically a public housing authority; and *tenant mobility* programs, which provide rental subsidies to participants who seek rental housing, often with the assistance of an intermediary, such as Gautreaux's Metropolitan Leadership Council (Polikoff 1995). As discussed in the introduction, my results strongly suggest that concentration of movers is more salient than ownership of the units. Early as it is in their experience, Yonkers movers show clear signs of enclavism, and these signs are clearest, predictably enough, at the two large, inward-facing sites, which, at least in urban design terms, have few, if any, residential neighbors.

It is quite possible that group placement favors retained social support, something the large number of Gautreaux "dropouts"—as much as 40 percent by some accounts—may have lacked in their new neighborhoods (Rosenbaum 1995). But greater social support may come at the expense of expanded social leverage and reduced social stigma. Chandler (1991) found that few homeowners in Cleveland knew that the county housing authority had acquired homes in their area as part of a court-ordered desegregation program. In fiscal terms, that (unit mobility) program resembles Yonkers' program more than Gautreaux's, but where emphasis is placed on occupancy details, the opposite would be true: Cleveland movers could not be labeled as public housing residents by most of their neighbors, nor did they have a pool of socially similar families around them.

Yonkers' contentious struggle to implement the court order was capped off with the decision to buy land and build new housing at high per-unit cost in a market that favored the acquisition of existing properties. New complexes of 14 to 48 units have without a doubt set in motion a different set of social processes than a (more) scattered set of 200 co-ops might have—different processes, that is, among movers, and possibly among the whites who surround them as well.

Concentration, or enclave, effects, more than ownership details, should be emphasized in designing and evaluating moving-to-opportunity programs of various kinds. It is quite possible that some middle ground between individual dispersion and large-enclave concentration—six to eight units in a microarea, say—would balance the support and leverage equation. Without questioning the value of support from socially similar others, the objective of mobility is surely not to transplant (intact) concentrations of people who are poorly connected to jobs, job information, and in the most extreme cases, to regular job habits.

Closing thoughts

More careful thinking about the multiple faces of social capital would highlight at least three problems that should concern advocates of housing mobility:

1. The extent to which movers and prospective movers weigh the social resources, not just financial, safety-related, or other benefits, available to them in new neighborhoods when they apply to move and when they decide to do what a few thousand Gautreaux movers decided not to do—stay put.
2. The extent to which losses of one form of social capital are, or are not, compensated by gains of another form—a trade of social support, for example, for additional social leverage.
3. The options available for easing that trade-off: providing van service, for example, so that movers without cars can reach the people and institutions that will support them, whether in their prior neighborhoods or in still farther-flung suburban locations. Many observers have emphasized transportation as a missing piece in the jobs puzzle for poor suburban movers, but transportation helps people reach critical social resources as well.

Discussions of housing mobility invoke three of the most contentious issues in American social life and public policy: race, space, and class. Beyond the discrete findings that may be valuable, this

study argues for a view of neighborhoods that places valued others—significant social ties—at the heart of such discussions. Some may look for dramatic effects on schooling and delinquency to be convinced that networks matter, but in a very real sense, the relative paucity of clear “neighborhood effects” so far speaks volumes. By insulating movers from some interactions and retaining their exposure to others, social networks are playing a central role in the mobility experience.

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