Social Ties, Social Support, and Collective Efficacy among Families from Public Housing in Chicago and Baltimore

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Recommended Citation

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This paper explores the social ties and capital of women relocating to low-poverty neighborhoods through the Moving to Opportunity program and a "regular mover" group who did not. Findings suggest the low-poverty movers seldom made close ties in their new neighborhoods; they also had fewer childhood friends and exchanged less support than the regular movers. Many, however, welcomed escaping the constant exchange that characterized their former neighborhoods and moved to areas higher in collective efficacy—experiencing neighborhoods rated high in child supervision, facing less conflictual relations with neighbors, and exhibiting greater trust in others—relative to the regular movers.

Key words: *social ties, social support, collective efficacy, public housing, Baltimore, Chicago*

Over the last decade and a half, tens of thousands of people have moved from public housing developments through federally- and locally-sponsored housing mobility initiatives such as HOPE VI and Moving to Opportunity (Popkin et al., 2004).

The implementation of these policies has resulted in a marked transformation in the physical landscapes of many cities, particularly in those (like Baltimore and Chicago) where many of the high-rise developments have been demolished and thousands of families relocated to two- or three-story housing units. Redevelopment and housing mobility policies have also transformed the social landscapes of individual families and, potentially, the neighborhoods where they once lived or currently live. In fact, recent housing policies partially rest on the assumption that such transformations will not only occur but will benefit relocated families. The idea behind these policies is that relocating families into less-disadvantaged neighborhoods will result in improved social ties, resources, opportunities, and, therefore, well-being. Nevertheless, some, especially those familiar with previous federal initiatives such as urban renewal (see Gans, 1962), might argue that despite recognizing the importance of social ties for mobility, the massive relocation of families typically has failed to consider adequately the existing social networks of those who are being moved.

In these analyses, we investigate the social ties and the deployment of resources made available through them (i.e., social capital) for two sets of low-income public housing residents who moved under different circumstances. One group received a Section 8 voucher (now called a Housing Choice Voucher) which required that they rent a unit from a private landlord in a low-poverty neighborhood (the tenant pays a portion of the rent based on her income, with the government covering the remainder up to a certain threshold). Another group did not receive this restricted voucher but, nonetheless, usually moved after the public housing in which they lived was demolished as part of other housing initiatives, such as HOPE VI.

Overall, our findings suggest that changes in social ties and social capital occurred for those families who moved to low-poverty neighborhoods. Most notably, the analyses indicate that this group may have experienced a significant loss of social support social capital at the individual level (e.g., assistance with cash). On the surface, this may be cause for concern, as one might worry that these relocated families would struggle, for instance, to make ends meet after having lost some in-kind and cash support to which they might have been

accustomed. We find, however, that many of the respondents did not lament these changes in social support—instead, they saw moving as a welcome opportunity to disrupt the social exchange networks in which they were once embedded and had felt trapped. Moreover, we find some indications that the low-poverty movers were living in neighborhoods at least slightly higher in collective efficacy—they were more likely to describe having more positive and less conflict-ridden interactions with neighbors (especially regarding children's behavior) and were less likely to distrust others in their communities. These findings highlight the importance not only of investigating how relocation might influence the social ties of relocated families. but also hearing directly from those being relocated about how they interpret any such changes that occur.

Literature Review

Whether policy-makers push for investment in low-income neighborhoods or advocate for families to move out of high-poverty ones into more advantaged areas, the underlying assumption is that place matters for the well-being of families. Wilson (1987, 1996) argued that neighborhood disadvantage results in individual disadvantage, as residents of high-poverty neighborhoods are socially isolated from the mainstream world of educational and job opportunities. Moreover, he suggested that the quality of resources embedded in an individual's personal social network may be contingent on neighborhood-level factors.

Those interested in "neighborhood effects" often employ the concept of social capital—or the "resources embedded in social relations that actors can use to garner benefits and improve their life chances" (Offer & Schneider, 2007, p. 1126). As Domínguez and Watkins note (2003), the concept has been invoked to analyze processes at the individual level (e.g., to analyze poor mothers' coping strategies), as well as at the aggregate level (e.g., to analyze neighborhood social organization, see Sampson, Raudenbush, & Earls, 1997). At the individual level, two types of social capital exist—bridging or leverage social capital and bonding or support social capital (Briggs, 1998; Warren, Thompson, & Saegert, 2001). Leverage social capital includes resources or information that help people with

social mobility (e.g., a lead on a good job), whereas support social capital characterizes the assistance that people receive from their ties to survive (e.g., food). Neighborhoods can shape individual-level social capital, as high-poverty neighborhoods may compromise social interaction if individuals mistrust one another, disengage from the local environs because they are fearful, and/or move in and out of areas before long-standing ties form (Ross, Mirowsky, & Pribesh, 2001; Wilson, 1987, 1996).

Research also suggests, however, that those living in high-poverty neighborhoods might actually have a greater reason than those living in moderate- to low-poverty areas to form attachments and maintain close ties with others as they try to survive and solve local problems (Stack, 1974; Suttles, 1972). Thus, while it is true that their social networks may be highly local, dense, and homogeneous and not the type generally associated with enabling upward mobility (Dominguez & Watkins, 2003; Stack, 1974), individuals living in poor communities may have many close ties, interact with others often, and commit a great deal of resources and time to their personal relationships. These social networks may then act as a private safety net, providing low-income families with in-kind and financial assistance (such as cash loans and gifts, food, transportation, clothing, housing, and childcare), as well as emotional and informational support (Edin & Lein, 1997; Henly, Danziger, & Offer, 2005; Lein, Benjamin, McManus, & Roy, 2005; Scott, Edin, London, & Kissane, 2004; Stack, 1974).

At the aggregate level, social capital is an attribute of a collective, where prevailing norms, trust, and social relations are employed for the public good or community benefit (Putnam, 2000). A related concept, which we employ in this analysis, is collective efficacy. Collective efficacy includes "active engagement" by the individual and community and is a "task-specific construct," while social capital focuses on the *potential* resources in one's network (Sampson, Morenoff, & Earls, 1999, p. 635). Sampson, Raudenbush, and Earls (1997, p. 918) contend that collective efficacy—"social cohesion among neighbors" and a willingness to work for common values—is a critical neighborhood-level indicator of neighborhood disadvantage (or advantage). Communities with high levels of collective efficacy are characterized by neighbors who trust one another and look out for each other—watching each other's children

when they are in public space and intervening when problems arise.

Improving the level of collective efficacy that poor individuals experience may not be the primary aim of housing mobility and poverty deconcentration efforts. However, it is likely that advocates of such policies, in line with the research that suggests concentrated affluence is positively associated with collective efficacy (Sampson, Morenoff, & Earls, 1999), assume that relocated families will come to reside in areas higher in collective efficacy when they move to low-poverty areas. No study, of which we know, has studied this topic qualitatively and in depth. More common, though still limited, are studies that investigate issues related to the social ties and individual-level social capital of people who participated in housing initiatives. Studies that exist in this vein typically explore whether individuals lost connections with others or were able to make new ties after relocation, with a handful investigating changes in exchange activities. Some of these analyses use data from the Moving to Opportunity (MTO) housing mobility demonstration. After volunteering for MTO, residents living in public housing or Section 8 project-based housing located in extremely poor neighborhoods in Baltimore, New York, Chicago, Los Angeles, and Boston were randomly assigned into one of three groups. The "experimental group" received housing counseling and a special voucher that could only be used in census tracts with 1990 poverty rates of less than 10 percent. A second treatment group received a regular voucher with no geographic restrictions. A third group, the "controls," received no voucher through MTO, although they could remain in their public housing units or apply for other housing assistance that became available to them (e.g., a regular Section 8 voucher).

Pettit (1999, 2004) examined the impact of MTO on social connections for families in Los Angeles 6 to 10 months after the program move. While she acknowledges that she cannot account for the location of social ties in her data, she finds that most relocated families were able to construct new social ties in the short term. Pettit (2004) also suggests that neighborhood-level factors promoted interaction among the residents. In particular, she argues, "Moving to low-poverty, safe neighborhoods enabled [MTO] parents and their children to make social connections—relationships with friends and

neighbors and linkages to institutions" (Pettit, 2004, p. 298). Moreover, survey follow-up on MTO families in five cities revealed no differences between the experimental and control group adults in neighboring activities or in the proportion of individuals with three or more close friends (Orr et al., 2003). Notably, though, the experimental group was significantly more likely to have college-educated friends or friends earning more than $30,000 (Orr et al., 2003), an indication that the MTO treatment improved the chances of having friends with more resources, and, perhaps, the potential for leverage social capital.

Recent work from the three-city MTO qualitative study (based on research in the Boston, Los Angeles, and New York sites) indicates a wide array of network arrangements among those MTO families who moved to low-poverty neighborhoods. Some of these families centered their networks on kin who lived outside of their MTO placement neighborhoods; others avoided kin and focused their networks on friends they made at work, during childhood, or in former neighborhoods. For some, the move was problematic as it strained communication and coordination with their networks, but for others, moving away from "needy" ties was experienced as relief (Briggs, Popkin, & Goering, 2010).

Research on families who moved through HOPE VI has found that relocated individuals frequently experience a loss in their social ties and a decrease in exchange activity (Curley, 2009; Greenbaum, Hathaway, Rodriguez, Spalding, & Ward, 2008; Clampet-Lundquist, 2004). In their study of two Tampa neighborhoods receiving relocated HOPE VI families, Greenbaum et al. (2008) found that adults experienced a decline in neighborhood social ties after their relocation. Moreover, they reported less exchange with neighbors, as adults instead were relying more on exchange within their kinship networks. Similarly, Clampet-Lundquist (2004) documented that individuals who moved through HOPE VI in Philadelphia experienced a decline in local ties and support exchange. And, in her longitudinal investigation of low-income women relocated through HOPE VI in East Boston, Curley (2009, p. 242) found that "relocation resulted in less instrumental and emotional support (which in turn had a detrimental effect on

some women's economic stability and mental health)" but that for some, relocation provided a way to sever ties that were experienced as "draining."

Recent research has begun to unpack how housing mobility policies affect poor women's social ties and individual-level social capital. In this paper, we seek to contribute to this growing, yet still relatively small, literature through a qualitative examination of the experiences of poor women in two MTO sites (Chicago and Baltimore) in which researchers have not previously studied these topics in depth. We also further expand this literature by investigating whether the low-poverty movers lived in neighborhoods characterized by high collective efficacy and by offering a comparison of social support for two groups of individuals relocated under different circumstances. The rich qualitative data allow for a detailed account of these issues, permit unexpected findings to emerge, and provide an opportunity to investigate how the participants themselves interpreted any changes they experienced.

Method

In this article, we examine the following broad research questions: What are the implications for social ties, social support, and collective efficacy for women who move from high-poverty to low-poverty neighborhoods compared to those who do not make such a move? How do such women interpret any changes that emerge across these areas? And, how might we explain any changes that seem to exist?

To address these questions, we use data from the MTO qualitative study in Baltimore and Chicago, in which a random subsample of MTO participants were interviewed 6 to 9 years after having signed up for the demonstration. In all, 233 families were included in this sample. The research team completed interviews with 188 adult respondents across the two cities —124 in Baltimore and 64 in Chicago—for a response rate of 81%.

All families in the MTO experimental group received vouchers to move to a low-poverty neighborhood, but across the five cities, just under half actually used their vouchers. Thus, here, we focus our analyses on those families that used a

MTO voucher to move to a low-poverty neighborhood (hence-forth, "low-poverty movers") and those that were not given a voucher through the program to move (henceforth, "regular movers"). We chose to restrict the sample in this way primarily because we were interested in exploring qualitatively how a low-poverty move might relate to social support and collective efficacy (i.e., in quantitative language, a treatment-on-treated analysis), not how assignment to a particular program group, per se, might relate to these issues (i.e., an intent-to-treat analy-sis). Moreover, the sampling design in Chicago did not include those in the experimental group who did not make a program move. We understand that our decision to limit the analysis in this way prevents us from exploiting the full benefits of MTO's experimental design. We cannot, for instance, determine if the low-poverty movers differed from those who were offered the MTO voucher but who did not make a program move in ways that influence our results. Other analyses of the MTO data have revealed that the low-poverty mover group was more likely to be younger, enrolled in school, living in smaller households, and dissatisfied with their baseline neighborhood environ-ments than those in the low-poverty group who did not use their MTO voucher (Clampet-Lundquist & Massey, 2008).

Our goal is to compare two groups of people who spent time raising their families in extremely high-poverty neigh-borhoods but who moved under different circumstances. One group (the "low-poverty movers") moved to a low-pov-erty neighborhood through MTO (they were required to live there for at least 1 year), while the other group (the "regular movers") experienced "normal" housing policy during this time—staying in their developments, moving out with an unrestricted housing voucher, or moving to another public housing development. Notably, housing authorities destroyed and revitalized the developments in which the majority of the sample had lived at baseline, and, indeed, the families who originally signed up for MTO were quite mobile in the years fol-lowing the start of the demonstration (much like other families struggling to find affordable shelter in unstable and, at times, exploitative low-income rental markets). In fact, 92% of those assigned to the control group in Baltimore and Chicago (our "regular movers") moved since the start of the demonstration.

In all, our subsample includes 133 respondents—71 regular movers and 62 low-poverty movers. Interviews with these respondents were conducted between July 2003 and August 2004, with interviewers using an in-depth interview instrument to explore each respondent's neighborhood, social status, employment, children, and health. On average, these tape-recorded interviews took 2 to 5 hours to complete. Generally, we conducted the interviews in the respondents' homes, paying them $50 to $85, depending on household type. To ensure confidentiality, we use pseudonyms chosen by the respondents throughout the paper.

The two groups of respondents were remarkably similar across a number of basic characteristics at the time of the interviews, including median age (39 years old), median number of children (three children), and median length of time residing at their current address (3 years). Furthermore, over half of the respondents were employed at the time of the interview (59% of the regular movers and 63% of the low-poverty movers), with most of these women working full-time (71% of the employed regular movers and 62% of the employed low-poverty movers). The majority had achieved a high school diploma or GED (55% of the regular movers and 58% of the low-poverty movers), with only a small subset having received an associate's or bachelor's degree (4% of the regular movers and 7% of the low-poverty movers).

Importantly, the families in the low-poverty mover group, on average, were living in less disadvantaged neighborhoods than the regular mover group at the time of the interviews, which was 6 to 9 years after joining the demonstration. The census tracts in which the low-poverty mover group lived in 2003 and 2004 had a higher percentage of persons with an associate's degree or better (20.7% versus 14.3%), lower percentage of persons below the poverty line (20.9% versus 34.4%), and higher percentage of persons employed (51% versus 42.8%) than those in which the regular movers lived. All of these were statistically significant differences (at $p < .05$, $p < .001$, and $p < .001$ levels respectively). Thus, while many of the members of both groups had moved multiple times after joining the MTO demonstration, the low-poverty movers were still in less poor neighborhoods than the regular movers when we talked to them in 2003 and 2004.

A team of trained graduate students performed prelimi-
nary coding of the transcribed interviews, entering them into
a Microsoft Access database. These initial codes were primar-
ily descriptive rather than analytic. One of these descriptive
fields, for example, was "friends," in which all data related to
the friends or acquaintances of the respondents were placed.
If a respondent identified family members as friends, this was
included as well. We imported this field, as well as one that
captured any discussion of exchange of resources, protective
observation and supervision of property or children, and in-
teractions with neighbors regarding children into QSR NVivo,
along with quantitative descriptor variables for each respon-
dent (what NVivo refers to as "attributes").

All subsequent coding and analyses occurred through
NVivo, in which we analyzed the data in line with an induc-
tive, grounded theory approach, where findings emerge from
the data themselves rather than from predetermined hypoth-
eses (see Charmaz, 1995; Strauss & Corbin, 1990, for details
on this analytic approach). Accordingly, we began by coding
the interview text into various conceptual categories (or what
NVivo refers to as "nodes") until we reached theoretical sat-
uration (Strauss & Corbin, 1990). As new nodes emerged in
our analyses, we returned to text that was previously coded
to ensure uniformity in our coding across cases. We then re-
examined the data to explore patterns across the codes and
cases and to develop an overall account that would accurately
portray the lived experience of the respondents.

Results

Close Social Ties

When public housing empties through voluntary or man-
datory means, a concern is that families may experience a net
loss of close ties as they lose touch with friends and family
from their old neighborhoods and fail to make ties in their new
ones to replace them. This may be of particular concern when
families move some distance away from their original public
housing addresses, as in the case of the low-poverty movers
in our sample. We find, however, that neither group appeared
bereft of close social ties—about half of the low-poverty
movers could identify currently having at least three close ties,

compared to about 60% of the regular movers. Notably, some of these close ties were with biological family members, but many were with individuals whom scholars commonly refer to as fictive kin (Stack, 1974).

Similar to accounts of MTO respondents in other cities (Briggs et al., 2010), our respondents in Baltimore and Chicago discussed a number of ways by which they had met their current close ties, including meeting them through work, church, mutual acquaintances, and various programs (e.g., drug rehabilitation). One of the most common ways that both the low-poverty and regular movers claimed that they had met their current close ties, however, was as adults "from the neighborhood." In essence, they described how close relationships developed over time from running into the same individuals over and over or from other mechanisms by which "the neighborhood" threw adults together. For example, LaShea, a Chicago low-poverty mover, explained how she became friends with two women (to whom she still is close despite her moving):

> Truthfully, I met them [while] living in the projects...
> [our kids] ended up putting us at different times together ... we had our babies, we put them in [the same] daycare, then we didn't live that far, you know, almost directly across from each other, then we started going to school, to get our GED and we ended up in the same class.

Few of the low-poverty movers (and the regular movers as well), however, expressed that they had met a currently identified close tie from living in their current neighborhood; rather, those close ties that they reported having met "through the neighborhood" as adults, as in LaShea's example, were generally ones that they had made from living in other neighborhoods, most often while living in the projects. This indicates that an important mechanism of bridging social capital may be lacking, as the low poverty movers were not forming close ties with their present neighbors. It should be remembered, however, that the respondents, on average, had only resided in their current neighborhoods for 3 years, which may not be enough time for such ties to develop.

Additionally, some respondents reported that they had met a current close tie not as adults but from "growing up." These respondents discussed becoming close to someone while they were children, often through interactions during elementary, middle school, and high school. They also emphasized that such long-standing relationships provided a level of understanding that others did not, largely because they had been "through so much" with their childhood friends over the years. For example, Alanda, a regular mover from Chicago, explained about one of her close ties, "Well, we grew up together, so she understands me more so than anybody."

Notably, the most common way that the regular movers claimed they had met their current close ties was from "growing up." Moreover, they were twice as likely as the low-poverty movers to have a close tie that they met this way as children, suggesting that moving to a low-poverty neighborhood may be more disruptive to these sorts of ties than a regular move. Thus, if there is any support for a social disruption hypothesis (Pettit, 2004), it exists only for a subset of ties in this study— those made as children. As long-term, close connections may enhance the exchange of material and nonmaterial aid, the findings here provide a potential explanation for the differences in social support that we report next.

Individual Social Support

The respondents talked about a range of resources they exchanged with their network ties, which we categorized under the rubric of social support. All in all, they reported exchanging slightly more nonmaterial than material assistance—over three-quarters had given or received nonmaterial support, but less than three-fifths had given or received material support. They also reported receiving help more than giving it, although one should note that the interviewers focused more on receipt of help than the giving of it in the interviews.

When we compared the regular movers with the low-poverty movers, we found that the regular movers were more likely than the low-poverty movers to exchange social support, with some variation by type. Yet, it is not as simple a story as critics of housing mobility policy suggested when they warned that social support would plummet as people moved

from their local social networks. In fact, the stories shared from the women in our sample reveal that some of them (both in the regular mover and the low-poverty mover groups) were relieved to move away from needy ties or from an environment where local norms encouraged heavy exchange.

Exchange among Social Ties

All in all, the regular movers gave and received a great deal of social support. Some was intangible, such as offering emotional support to a friend or family member. In fact, about 90% of the regular movers discussed how they gave or received emotional support within their social networks. Melissa, a regular mover living in Baltimore, for instance, told us how she supported one of her friends who lived nearby:

> [My buddy is] the one that really needs some help. She's just going through [a lot]. I called her a couple days ago just to see how she's doing, and she's just really down and depressed, talking about how she's ready to give her kids away 'cause they don't listen to her. They disrespectful, and it's like she's really going through a lot and she doesn't [get] no support ... So it's like a lot of that comes down on her sometimes, and she goes through it, and I try to talk to her and really be a good friend to her.

The vast majority of regular movers (70%) also reported receiving help with babysitting. Typical among them were cases like Granny Ann, a Baltimore resident, who reported having a friend who would watch her grandchildren, as well as get them ready for and pick them up from school when she worked. She described how appreciative she was to have this person in her life:

> It's a very good friend that, through everything I've been through, that he was right there for me, you know, he's just been my friend. And if I call him and say, "Do me a favor, I gotta run to the market, come watch the kids," [*snaps fingers*] he'll be there like that.

Exchanging tangible support, such as food, housing, cash,

transportation, and other in-kind items (such as clothing or appliances) was also quite common among the regular movers. For example, when we asked Billie, a Baltimore regular mover, how often her friend lent her money, she replied, "Almost ever[y] pay period, or something ... we running low on money before it's time to get paid, you know, I can borrow a couple dollars from her." Tammy, also a regular mover in Baltimore, told us that her friend "probably need[s] me more than I need her because of her [drug] situation. So therefore, I help her with her children, food, money, whatever, support, anything. You know, 'cause we're just friends. And she helps me with absolutely nothing [*laughs*]."

While, certainly, most of the low-poverty movers were involved in some type of social support exchange, particularly the receipt of emotional support (where regular movers and controls were comparable), our data suggest that, overall, they were giving and receiving less social support than their regular mover counterparts. In fact, the low-poverty movers were about a quarter less likely to have received childcare from others, a third less likely to have received cash or housing assistance (e.g., allowed to double up with someone), about half as likely to have received transportation help, and about half as likely to have received other in-kind items. Furthermore, the low-poverty movers were almost a third less likely than the regular movers to report giving emotional support and advice to others, half as likely to provide childcare for others, and almost two-thirds less likely to have given cash to others.

One important type of intangible resource that can flow through social ties is information or connections that may lead to jobs. Policymakers predicted that the low-poverty movers would be able to access improved resources and social connections for jobs (bridging or leverage social capital), yet the data indicate this has not occurred. We found no difference in the proportion of regular movers and low-poverty movers who gave or received information about jobs through their close ties (about a third of each group did so), and nothing to suggest that the low-poverty movers were leveraging better job opportunities from their social ties than the regular movers, as the low-poverty movers held similar types of jobs (in terms of wages and working conditions) as the regular movers at

the time of the interviews. These results are consistent with Turney, Clampet-Lundquist, Edin, Kling, & Duncan's (2006) research on the MTO Baltimore sample, where they found that low-poverty movers typically used friends and family outside of the low-poverty neighborhoods for information on jobs, and that neighbors were more likely to have jobs and careers that were not accessible to the low-poverty movers due to lack of education.

Norms around Exchange

All in all, the data suggest that more of the regular movers, relative to the low-poverty movers, were immersed at the time of the interviews in the kind of exchange networks described decades ago in Carol Stack's (1974) seminal ethnography, *All Our Kin*, in which poor individuals feel obliged to both give and receive material and non-material aid to survive. Accordingly, one could interpret the comparably lower social support among the low-poverty movers negatively—that these movers were missing out on the kind of support desperately needed when poor. But, as researchers have found in other locales (Briggs et al., 2010; Curley, 2009), our analyses reveal that for many of the low-poverty movers (and some regular movers as well), relocating provided the welcomed opportunity to remove themselves from draining reciprocal relationships. Entering into a new neighborhood, these respondents chose not to give out food or cash to their new neighbors because, as Mariah, a low-poverty mover who has remained in her first low-poverty Baltimore suburb, put it, "it starts up something." They also avoided asking their new neighbors for help or, at times, inter-acting with them much at all, concerned this would instigate a never-ending exchange cycle. Shawnies, a low-poverty mover, for example, described why she does not get involved in ex-change networks: "I'm not gonna go to nobody and borrow no sugar...if you tend to start borrowing from somebody, it seem like they always wanna borrow more."

Moreover, many of the low poverty movers perceived differences in exchange norms across the neighborhoods in which they had lived. These neighborhoods represented a wider socioeconomic variation than those through which the regular movers passed, with much lower poverty levels. When

asked about exchanging support, those who had moved often replied, "That's ghetto," and in doing so, differentiated their new neighborhoods from where they used to live. Stacey, a Baltimore low-poverty mover, described borrowing as "project business" and claimed, "You don't do that junk around here." Thus, while a few bemoaned the lack of exchange in their present neighborhoods, for many, it was a relief to be out of an environment where the norm consisted of neighbors asking to borrow items as varied as money, milk, or a mop.

All things considered, a number of factors likely contributed to the differences we observed in social support. Though both the low-poverty movers and the regular movers (for the most part) moved out of their baseline neighborhoods, the low-poverty movers had a voucher to support a more radical move (i.e., to a low-poverty neighborhood farther from their baseline address); and, in fact, the low-poverty movers were indeed living, on average, farther away from their baseline neighborhoods than regular movers years after random assignment (Turney et al., 2006). It seems likely, therefore, that those social ties at greatest risk to dissolve with such moves would be those with the most disadvantaged individuals, as they may not be able to afford traveling to the areas where their friends and family lived. While we cannot test this claim with the available data, a net loss of needy ties would likely result in the low-poverty movers giving less social support than their regular mover counterparts did, as we found in this analysis. Moreover, the fact that the regular movers were more likely to report having met their close ties as children leads us to believe that the low-poverty movers' relocation severed some long-standing relationships (e.g., ties that were made as children) that previous research and our data suggest are particularly receptive to social support exchange. Additionally, the differences in social support may relate to how the low-poverty movers considered whether exchange was appropriate in their new neighborhoods and whether they wanted to develop new neighborhood-based exchange networks or maintain certain previous ones. Interestingly, previous research indicates that those in the MTO experimental group who felt dissatisfied about their baseline neighborhoods were more likely to use their voucher (Clampet-Lundquist & Massey, 2008), and,

perhaps, some of the dissatisfaction was related to norms of exchange.

Neighborhood Collective Efficacy

One of the hopes of housing mobility programs like MTO is that when people move, they will land in neighborhoods abundant in social capital. While we recognize that neighborhood-level social capital can be operationally defined in many ways, here we focus on two related indicators commonly associated with collective efficacy to look more specifically at network resources in action for a common good—the amount and kind of supervision witnessed in regard to neighborhood children and the degree of trust felt towards others in the neighborhood.

When discussing whether other residents could be counted upon to watch out for each other or for each other's children, many of the regular movers responded that they could not. Patty, a Baltimore regular mover who lives in a Section 8 apartment, for example, argued that "nobody looks out for the next person['s] kids around here. They don't. They don't. They see things happening in this area dealing with kids, and they don't care. That's how they feel, it ain't my child."

Moreover, the regular movers often described having to interact with other parents about fights and threats among children and discussed at length the problematic nature of dealing with other parents in their communities. More specifically, they described avoiding bringing issues to other parents because such interactions were viewed as: (1) futile, because the parents did not care how their children acted or would deny that their children did anything wrong and (2) dangerous, because they might lead to physical or verbal confrontations with the parents. Kristine, a regular mover in Baltimore, argued that sometimes parents are in denial about their children and alluded to the potential for conflict,

> I have a real problem because when I see kids doing stuff, I [want to] be like, "What are you doing? Excuse me." But who their parents are, no [you can't do that]. And no, you don't know people like that. People don't like you coming in and telling them what their kid is doing and what their kid wasn't doing 'cause they ain't trying to hear it ... It's like that type of aggressiveness.

You know, where I don't particularly feel comfortable
even getting involved in or trying to get involved in
that.

The interviews also revealed that many members of the
regular mover group distrusted others—both in their neigh-
borhoods and generally. Some worried that getting close to
others would invite gossiping or people getting in their "busi-
ness." Robin, a Baltimore regular mover, explained why she
didn't have many people in her life to whom she felt close: "I
communicate and talk to them [people around her], but to me
they could still be back-stabbers, you know, they just maybe
wanna be in your business, then before you know it, they're
telling somebody." The case of Charnette, a Baltimore regular
mover, illustrates nicely how some might close themselves off
so completely from others near them that they may not even
notice the potential for close ties around them. Charnette failed
to notice for 8 months that one of her friends (from a previ-
ous neighborhood) moved in next door. She explains how this
could happen.

If you, you just come down the street, and I wouldn't
look at you dead in your face … never look up, never,
I never look up to people … One night she said, she
called me by my name and I said, "Oh, my God, all this
time [she's been living next door]." [*laughter*]

As a contrast, many of the low-poverty movers described
living in communities where people looked out for one
another and were more likely than the regular movers to be
in neighborhoods where we classified supervision of children
as "high" based on the interviews. In these "high supervision"
neighborhoods, respondents claimed they could count on
others to watch their children and to intervene if issues arose.
For instance, Joyce, a low-poverty mover who now owns her
home in Baltimore, claimed, "Everybody watch out for the
children … I can let him [my 2-year old] go outside, and I
really don't even necessarily have to stay out on the porch to
watch him, 'cause I know … one of those families are out there,
they watching the children." Similarly, Janelle, a low-poverty
mover in Chicago, told us, "I know so many people around
here, and so … people do come and tell me what they're doing.

And I like that ...because like certain things my boys can't get away with because somebody going to come tell on them."

Moreover, many of the low-poverty movers described congenial interactions with parents in the neighborhood. Catrina, who still lives in her low-poverty MTO placement neighborhood in the Chicago suburbs, told us, "Out here, it's like us parents as parents, we can get along with each other and we can talk ... It's like a family." Tisha, a low-poverty mover who owns a home on a quiet block in Baltimore, recounted a recent experience which exemplifies Catrina's comment about getting along—even when problems arise.

> One little boy busted my basement window ... I went to the mother ... She said, "Give the receipt, get the window fixed, whatever you got to do, and we will pay for it." So when I did get the window fixed, I gave the receipt today, the next day my money was in my mailbox. And she was really apologetic to me.

A number of the low-poverty movers were quick to note how dealing with issues surrounding children was quite different in their previous high-poverty neighborhoods—contexts, remember, where many of the regular movers continued to parent. Mariah, a low-poverty mover living in a Baltimore suburb, recalled a situation where her son fought with girls about twice his age, and she decided to talk to the girls' mother:

> I'm about ready to go down there and really get crazy [with the girls' mother] ... And, anyway, the mom called me on the phone and say, "You know what, if my girls give you any more problem, call the police on them." ... I felt better then ... See that's one thing about moving to that [low-poverty] area, I learned I had time to think before acting. In the city too much going on, you ain't [have] no time to be doing no thinking.

Furthermore, while there were some low-poverty movers that indicated they had problems trusting others, as a group, they were half as likely as the regular movers to report that trust caused problems for their maintaining or forming relationships with friends, family, and neighbors. Given that the regular movers were living in more disadvantaged

neighborhoods at the time of the interviews across a number of indicators than the low-poverty movers (described previously), this finding might be expected and is in line with previous research that demonstrates a positive correlation between neighborhood disorder (e.g., crime, vandalism, graffiti, and noise) and reports of mistrust among residents (Ross et al., 2001). Additionally, as discussed above, the low-poverty movers' interactions with neighbors over children's behavior were more collegial and, perhaps, this is indicative of community trust—a key element in collective efficacy. Motunrola, a low-poverty mover in Chicago, waxed eloquently about how her community pulls together in times of need and alludes to this type of trust:

> This neighborhood where if someone get sick, oh [*sighing*], everybody come running... And I know we talk about each other and get mad at each other, but when push comes to shove, something happens to someone on this block, we all come together. And that's, see it's like a family.

Conclusion

We began this investigation interested in comparing the social ties and capital of two sets of poor families who had lived in public housing in Baltimore and Chicago. One set moved with a voucher restricted to a low-poverty neighborhood and the other was subject to regular federal and local housing policies, which involved a substantial amount of relocation in Baltimore and Chicago. We find little evidence that the low-poverty movers (or those relocated through other housing initiatives) in our study were forming close ties with people in their current or placement neighborhoods, or that they were using social ties to leverage better job opportunities. Moreover, the findings suggest that the low-poverty movers were less likely than the regular movers to exchange most types of social support with their ties. In particular, we found that women in the regular mover group were more likely than the low-poverty movers to have given and received most types of material and some types of non-material aid (e.g., cash, clothing, transportation, housing, and babysitting). The regular movers and low-poverty movers did not differ in their

receipt of emotional social support, however, nor was either group socially isolated.

Some might argue that by not exchanging as much material aid with their networks as the regular mover group, the low-poverty movers may be better able to reserve their resources in such a way that fosters upward mobility. The low-poverty movers themselves often expressed how moving allowed them to escape the constant exchange of support that characterized many of the projects and communities in which they had once lived. They also were more likely to reside in areas we rated as high in child supervision, seemed to experience less conflictual relations with their neighbors (especially over children's behavior), and exhibited more trust in others than the regular movers—all of which indicate stronger collective efficacy at the neighborhood level. While it may appear to be a contradiction that the low-poverty movers have lower exchange levels relative to regular movers yet report higher levels of informal supervision and community trust, it is not, as these are different types of indicators. One's exchange patterns may be among people who may or may not be neighbors, and it is possible for communities to hold norms that do not include expectations of regular (and perhaps draining) exchange, but do entail looking out for one another and trust.

By and large, we have taken the stance that these different types of moves (low-poverty versus regular public housing policies) affected the respondents' ties and access to social capital. Essentially, we have two groups of families with similar basic demographic characteristics, yet differing levels of individual social support and, to a lesser degree, neighborhood-level social capital, specifically collective efficacy. We make the claim that moving to a low-poverty area and living there for at least one year may have impacted these social resources. Some research (e.g., Carol Stack's *All Our Kin*), however, indicates that being deeply immersed in resource-poor social exchange networks might actually discourage residential mobility. Thus, those who are already disengaged from long-standing social ties and support networks may be those more willing to move. While we cannot definitively dismiss this alternative explanation for some of our findings, we do know from other MTO research that no significant differences exist between those in the experimental group who used their voucher and

those who did not in terms of having friends or family in the neighborhood at random assignment, though there were other differences, as described previously (Clampet-Lundquist & Massey, 2008). Additional research that can elucidate comprehensively how social ties and support interact with one's willingness to move is certainly needed, as are studies that can address the issues of causality that these analyses cannot.

Rarely did either the regular or low-poverty movers have a close tie that they made from their current neighborhoods and many (particularly the regular movers) distrusted those living around them (and others generally). Perhaps housing mobility program counselors might help foster connections among movers and other residents, so that those relocating might leverage better opportunities. Recent research from a second Gautreaux mobility program suggests that landlords might also help their tenants "integrate socially into the neighborhood" and that a "friendly neighbor or a helpful landlord served as a point of entry into the neighborhood network" (Boyd, Edin, Duncan, & Clampet-Lundquist, 2010, pp. 132, 136). In addition, our findings on how the respondents made their close ties suggest that neighborhood activities, programs, and routines that bring individuals together repeatedly over time can provide an avenue for individuals to forge ties to others. Thus, as recent work by Mario Small (Small, Jacobs, & Massengill, 2008; Small, 2006) suggests, community organizations, such as childcare centers, may offer a way to enhance the social networks and resources of relocated families. While certainly more research is needed on these potential mechanisms for social tie formation, post-relocation counseling that includes information on local activities, institutions, and groups (e.g., churches, recreation centers, block associations, childcare centers), as well as incentives to participate, seems prudent.

As the next wave of studies on relocated families commence, we hope that researchers pay particular attention not only to what changes families experience over time, but also to how they understand these changes and what they see as important to their lives and those of their families. As our findings indicate, what may on the surface appear as a negative outcome (loss of social support) may not be perceived as such by those involved. By approaching research in this way, perhaps, we can be in a better position to advocate for housing

policies that meet the needs of some of our most vulnerable families and improve their well-being.

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