



6-1-1993

# Can the Kerner Commission's Housing Strategy Improve Employment, Education, and Social Integration for Low-Income Blacks

James E. Rosenbaum

Nancy Fishman

Alison Brett

Patricia Meaden

Follow this and additional works at: <http://scholarship.law.unc.edu/nclr>



Part of the [Law Commons](#)

---

## Recommended Citation

James E. Rosenbaum, Nancy Fishman, Alison Brett & Patricia Meaden, *Can the Kerner Commission's Housing Strategy Improve Employment, Education, and Social Integration for Low-Income Blacks*, 71 N.C. L. REV. 1519 (1993).

Available at: <http://scholarship.law.unc.edu/nclr/vol71/iss5/8>

# CAN THE KERNER COMMISSION'S HOUSING STRATEGY IMPROVE EMPLOYMENT, EDUCATION, AND SOCIAL INTEGRATION FOR LOW-INCOME BLACKS?

JAMES E. ROSENBAUM,\* NANCY FISHMAN,\*\* ALISON BRETT,\*\*\* & PATRICIA MEADEN\*\*\*\*

The Kerner Commission placed a heavy emphasis on racial integration, calling it "the only course which explicitly seeks to achieve a single nation rather than accepting the present movement toward a dual society."<sup>1</sup> And, as the introductory Essay to this Symposium indicates, "only in the housing area did the Commission prescribe solutions tailored to address the urban/suburban racial isolation that had been central to its analysis of the underlying problem."<sup>2</sup> Calling for the elimination of "the racial barrier in housing," the Commission stated: "Residential segregation prevents equal access to employment opportunities and obstructs efforts to achieve integrated education. A single society cannot be achieved so long as this cornerstone of segregation stands."<sup>3</sup>

But were these hopes for integration, expressed twenty-five years ago, actually workable? Were they attainable? Does residential integration lead to employment gains, educational gains, and social integration?

---

\* Professor of Education and Social Policy, Northwestern University. Ph.D. 1973, Harvard University; M.S. 1968, Harvard University; B.A. 1966, Yale University. The Charles Stewart Mott Foundation, the Ford Foundation, the Spencer Foundation, and the Center for Urban Affairs and Policy Research, Northwestern University, provided support for the studies reported here. Julie Kaufman, Marilyn Kulieke, Susan J. Popkin, and Len Rubinowitz made major contributions to these studies. Of course, the ideas expressed here are those of the authors and do not necessarily represent those of any other individual or organization.

\*\* Ph.D. student in Human Development and Social Policy, Northwestern University; B.A. 1988, Yale University.

\*\*\* Ph.D. candidate, Counseling Psychology, Northwestern University; M.A. 1989, Northwestern University; B.A. 1985, Cornell University.

\*\*\*\* Ph.D. candidate, Counseling Psychology, Northwestern University; M.S. 1991, Northwestern University; B.A. 1988, Elmhurst College.

1. REPORT OF THE NAT'L ADVISORY COMM'N ON CIVIL DISORDERS (Bantam Books 1968) [hereinafter KERNER COMM'N REPORT] 407.

2. See John Charles Boger, *Race and the American City: The Kerner Commission in Retrospect; an Introduction*, 71 N.C. L. REV. 1289, 1304 (1993).

3. KERNER COMM'N REPORT, *supra* note 1, at 475.

Given the persistence of de facto racial segregation in this country, our ability to address these questions and assess the Kerner Commission's aspirations for this strategy has been limited. In this paper, we attempt to overcome this limitation by examining evidence from ten years of research on a program which in many ways embodies the approach advocated by the Commission: Chicago's Gautreaux Program. Gautreaux gives low-income blacks<sup>4</sup> housing vouchers to move to many different kinds of communities, including white middle-income suburbs and low-income black city neighborhoods. This paper reports the program's impact on the employment of participating adults and on the education, employment, and social integration of their children.

### I. THE KERNER COMMISSION'S PREMISES

In its study of cities where civil disorder had broken out, the Kerner Commission found "widespread discontent with housing conditions and costs. In nearly every disorder city surveyed, grievances related to housing were important factors in the structure of Negro discontent."<sup>5</sup> Recommending that six million new low- and middle-income housing units be made available over the next five years, the Kerner Commission stated: "If the effort is not to be counter-productive, its main thrust must be in nonghetto areas, particularly those outside the central city."<sup>6</sup> Part of this wariness stemmed from the Commission's belief that "future jobs are being created primarily in the suburbs."<sup>7</sup> This assumption has been borne out since the Commission's report was issued. In recent decades, large numbers of employers have left the central cities and relocated in the suburbs.<sup>8</sup> For example, between 1975 and 1978, 2380 firms in Chicago, Illinois moved from the city to its suburban ring.<sup>9</sup> More recently, Cook County experienced a 1.5% decline in jobs over the 1980-1988 period, while the surrounding counties gained from 7.6% to 59.5%.<sup>10</sup>

---

4. Editor's Note: The contributors to this Symposium have used the terms "African American," "black," and "black American," often interchangeably, in their articles. The *North Carolina Law Review* has elected to defer to its contributors' choices in the absence of any universally accepted racial or ethnic designation.

5. KERNER COMM'N REPORT, *supra* note 1, at 472-73.

6. *Id.* at 482.

7. *Id.* at 406.

8. John D. Kasarda, *Urban Industrial Transition and the Underclass*, 501 THE ANNALS AM. ACAD. POL. & SOC. SCI. 26, 26-47 (1989); John D. Kasarda, *Urban Employment Change and Minority Skills Mismatch*, in CREATING JOBS, CREATING WORKERS: ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND EMPLOYMENT IN METROPOLITAN CHICAGO 65, 82 (Lawrence B. Joseph ed., 1990).

9. WILLIAM JULIUS WILSON, THE TRULY DISADVANTAGED 135 (1987).

10. NCI RESEARCH, IDENTIFYING EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES FOR INNER CITY RESIDENTS 5 (1991).

"Chicago's share of metropolitan employment is also forecast to decline from 38.4% in 1986 to 32.8% in 1995. . . . This . . . pattern represents a serious labor market barrier for inner-city residents, especially those with minimal education and work skills."<sup>11</sup>

In spite of the stronger job market in the suburbs, low-income blacks have not followed jobs to the suburbs. Because of housing discrimination, housing costs, and personal preferences, low-skilled workers have not left the cities as rapidly as low-skilled jobs have.<sup>12</sup> Long commutes between home and work impede employment for low-income blacks, who, because of existing patterns of residential segregation, are largely restricted to central cities.<sup>13</sup> This fact may also reduce the effectiveness of job training programs, most of which have only modest success at improving employment for low-income people, perhaps because job training cannot help people become employed if the employers have moved away.<sup>14</sup>

The Commission's assertion that a failure to build new housing accessible to low-income blacks outside of the central cities would be "counter-productive" seems to stem also from the Commission's belief that "racial and social-class integration is the most effective way of improving the education of ghetto children."<sup>15</sup> That analysis has been supported empirically. A nationwide study found that blacks in predominantly black schools achieve at lower levels than blacks in integrated schools, and that socioeconomic segregation has similar effects.<sup>16</sup> Studies also indicate that desegregation has positive effects on black achievement.<sup>17</sup>

## II. THE GAUTREUX PROGRAM

The Gautreaux program is the result of a 1976 Supreme Court deci-

11. *Id.*

12. David T. Ellwood, *The Spatial Mismatch Hypothesis: Are There Teen-age Jobs Missing in the Ghetto?*, in *THE BLACK YOUTH UNEMPLOYMENT CRISIS* 148 (1986).

13. John F. Kain, *Housing Segregation, Negro Employment, and Metropolitan Decentralization*, 82 Q. J. ECON. 175, 175-97 (1968); CHRISTOPHER JENCKS & SUSAN E. MAYER, *RESIDENTIAL SEGREGATION, JOB PROXIMITY, AND BLACK JOB OPPORTUNITIES: THE EMPIRICAL STATUS OF THE SPATIAL MISMATCH HYPOTHESIS 2* (Center For Urban Affairs and Policy Research, Northwestern University, Working Paper 1989).

14. ANDREW HAHN & ROBERT LERMAN, *WHAT WORKS IN YOUTH EMPLOYMENT POLICY?* 22-23 (1985).

15. KERNER COMM'N REPORT, *supra* note 1, at 407.

16. *See* J.S. COLEMAN ET AL., *EQUALITY OF EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITY* 330-31 (1966); CAROLINE HODGES PERSELL, *EDUCATION AND INEQUALITY* 150-52 (1977).

17. *See* EFFECTIVE SCHOOL DESEGREGATION: EQUITY, QUALITY AND FEASIBILITY 35-152 (Willis D. Hawley ed., 1981) [hereinafter *EFFECTIVE SCHOOL DESEGREGATION*].

sion in a lawsuit brought against the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) on behalf of public housing residents.<sup>18</sup> The suit charged "that these agencies had employed racially discriminatory policies in the administration of the Chicago low-rent public housing program."<sup>19</sup> Administered by the non-profit Leadership Council for Metropolitan Open Communities in Chicago, the Gautreaux program allows public housing residents and those who had been on the waiting list for public housing since 1981 to receive Section 8 housing certificates and move to private apartments either in mostly white suburbs or in the city of Chicago.<sup>20</sup> The agency finds landlords willing to participate in the program, notifies families as apartments become available, and counsels them about the advantages and disadvantages of the move; counselors accompany them to visit the units and communities. Since 1976, over 4500 families have participated, and over half have moved to middle-income, predominantly white suburbs.

Because of its design, the Gautreaux program presents a singular opportunity to test the effect of helping low-income people move to areas with better labor markets, better schools, and better neighborhoods. Racial and economic homogeneity remains the rule in most neighborhoods in the United States. It can be argued that those who break the residential barriers of race and class are themselves exceptional people, so their subsequent attainments may reflect more about themselves than about the effects of neighborhoods. Thus, when researchers study black employment in suburbs, they must assess whether the suburbs facilitated black employment or whether the blacks who happen to live in suburbs are different, perhaps moving to the suburbs *after* getting a job.<sup>21</sup> Similarly, most studies of black achievement in suburban schools cannot determine whether black children's achievement is due to the suburban environment or to some unmeasured family assets or values that may have drawn their families to the suburbs.

The Gautreaux program circumvents racial and economic barriers to living in the suburbs. The program offers rent subsidies permitting participants to live in suburban apartments for the same cost to them as

---

18. *See Hills v. Gautreaux*, 425 U.S. 284 (1976).

19. KATHLEEN A. PEROFF ET AL., U.S. DEP'T OF HOUSING & URBAN DEV., GAUTREUX HOUSING DEMONSTRATION: AN EVALUATION OF ITS IMPACT ON PARTICIPATING HOUSEHOLDS 1 (1979).

20. The Section 8 program is a federal program that subsidizes low-income people's rents in private sector apartments, either by giving them a Section 8 certificate that allows them to rent apartments on the open market or by moving them into a new or rehabilitated building in which the owner has taken a federal loan that requires some units to be set aside for low-income tenants.

21. JENCKS & MAYER, *supra* note 13, at 26-41.

public housing. Moreover, unlike the usual case of black suburbanization—working-class blacks living in working-class suburbs—Gautreaux gives low-income blacks access to middle-income white suburbs.<sup>22</sup> Participants move to a wide variety of over 100 suburbs throughout the six counties surrounding Chicago. Predominantly black suburbs were excluded because of the desegregation goals, and very high-rent suburbs were excluded by funding limitations of Section 8 certificates.

The program tries to avoid overcrowding, late rent payments, and building damage by not admitting families with more than four children, large debts, or unacceptable housekeeping.<sup>23</sup> These criteria are only slightly selective, however, and all three only reduce the eligible pool by less than thirty percent.<sup>24</sup> Most participating families are very low-income, are current or former welfare recipients, and have lived most of their lives in impoverished inner-city neighborhoods.

The program's procedures create a quasi-experimental design. While all participants come from the same low-income, black city neighborhoods (usually public housing projects), some move to middle-income white suburbs, while others move to low-income black urban neighborhoods. In theory, participants have choices about where they move, but in practice, participants are assigned to city or suburban locations in a quasi-random manner. Apartment availability is determined by housing agents who do not deal with clients; counselors offer units as they become available according to the clients' position on the waiting list, not according to their locational preference. Although clients can refuse an offer, very few do because they are unlikely to be offered another in the six months that they remain eligible. As a result, participants' preferences for city or suburbs have little to do with where they later move.

#### A. *Suburban Obstacles: Four Questions*

Despite the superior economic and educational opportunities in the suburbs, there may be obstacles to participants benefitting from these opportunities. Virtually all the mothers in Gautreaux have received public aid (most for five years or more), many have never had a job, and half grew up in families on public aid. They may lack the skills, motivation, or work experience necessary to obtain work. Moreover, they may face racial discrimination in the suburban labor market. Similarly, the chil-

---

22. *Id.* at 26.

23. On a prescheduled day, a Leadership Council housing counselor visits the apartment, looking primarily for serious property damage.

24. See JAMES E. ROSENBAUM & SUSAN J. POPKIN, CTR. FOR URBAN AFFAIRS & POLICY RESEARCH, NORTHWESTERN UNIVERSITY, ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL IMPACTS OF HOUSING INTEGRATION 8 (1990) (report to the Charles Stewart Mott Foundation).

dren lack the home advantages of their suburban classmates, and their city schools may not have prepared them for the more demanding suburban schools. This raises the following questions: Will they be able to compensate for these disadvantages? Will these low-income black youths face rejection and harassment or whether they interact with and receive support from their middle-income white classmates? The following sections outline the questions this Essay will explore.

### 1. Will Low-Income Blacks Get Jobs in the Suburbs?

There are a number of reasons to expect that low-income blacks may not find jobs in the suburbs. After living in low-income environments for many years, these adults and children may have motivational problems that prevent them from doing well even after their opportunities improve. Some scholars contend that the primary problem of the urban underclass is a lack of motivation and social obligation among ghetto residents. In the 1960s, much debate centered around Oscar Lewis's theory of the "culture of poverty."<sup>25</sup> Lewis argued that low-income children are socialized into a value system that reduces their motivation to succeed in the labor market: "By the time slum children are age six or seven, they have usually absorbed the basic values and attitudes of their subculture and are not psychologically geared to take full advantage of changing conditions or increased opportunities that may occur in their lifetime."<sup>26</sup> A variation of this view argues that current welfare policy encourages low-income people to feel no obligation to contribute to the larger society.<sup>27</sup>

Even those who subscribe to a structural, as opposed to cultural, approach to poverty might foresee employment difficulties for Gautreaux participants. Factors such as inadequate education due to the poor quality of Chicago ghetto schools, lack of skills and experience because of the diminished job market in the inner city, and racial bias among white suburban employers, individually or, more likely, in combination, might pose insurmountable obstacles to black job seekers in the suburbs.

---

25. See Oscar Lewis, *The Culture of Poverty*, in *ON UNDERSTANDING POVERTY: PERSPECTIVES FROM THE SOCIAL SCIENCES* 187 (Daniel P. Moynihan ed., 1968).

26. *Id.* at 188.

27. LAWRENCE M. MEAD, *BEYOND ENTITLEMENT: THE SOCIAL OBLIGATIONS OF CITIZENSHIP* 1-17 (1986); see also STEPHEN STEINBERG, *THE ETHNIC MYTH: RACE, ETHNICITY AND CLASS IN AMERICA* 106-27 (1981) (discussing the effect of current welfare policy on recipients' attitudes toward their productivity).

## 2. Will Early Disadvantages Keep Children from Benefitting from Suburban Schools?

In the case of children's academic achievement, two conflicting outcomes seem possible. Low-income black youths might be permanently disadvantaged in the suburban schools, for various reasons: Their economic backgrounds may make them less prepared or less motivated than middle-income suburban youths, they may have attitudes and habits deemed "undesirable" by suburban teachers and employers, or racial discrimination may deny them full access to suburban resources. For any or all of these reasons, the transplanted black youths may achieve at lower levels in the suburbs than, for instance, their city Gautreaux counterparts who do not face these barriers. Previous research has shown that school desegregation does not always have positive effects on black student achievement,<sup>28</sup> and it sometimes has negative effects.<sup>29</sup> In addition, suburban Gautreaux children face the added burden of having moved away from familiar surroundings to a very different environment.

A contrary prediction is that instead of being hindered by these disadvantages, children who move to the suburbs will benefit from better educational resources and greater employment prospects, and that their fellow suburban students may serve as positive role models for achievement. Some research has found that school desegregation may have a beneficial influence on blacks' achievement.<sup>30</sup> Of course, we do not know which of these processes will operate or, if both do, which will dominate.

## 3. Will Harassment and Discrimination Accompany Residential Integration?

Although large numbers of young, affluent blacks moved out of central cities and into surrounding suburbs during the 1970s, blacks remained significantly more isolated in those suburbs than either Hispanics or Asians.<sup>31</sup> Research also documents extensive antagonism to racial integration. While the majority of whites have become increasingly supportive of racial integration in principle, they nevertheless remain

---

28. MARTIN PATCHEN, *BLACK-WHITE CONTACT IN SCHOOLS: ITS SOCIAL AND ACADEMIC EFFECTS* 257-94 (1982).

29. Donald R. Winkler, *Educational Achievement and School Peer Group Composition*, 10 J. HUM. RESOURCES 189, 189-204 (1975).

30. NANCY H. ST. JOHN, *SCHOOL DESEGREGATION OUTCOMES FOR CHILDREN* 36 (1975) ("[D]esegregation has rarely lowered academic achievement for either black or white children."); see also William L. Taylor, *The Continuing Struggle for Equal Educational Opportunity*, 71 N.C. L. REV. 1693 (1993) (discussing this issue).

31. Douglas S. Massey & Nancy A. Denton, *Trends in the Residential Segregation of Blacks, Hispanics and Asians: 1970-1980*, 52 AM. SOC. REV. 802, 803 (1987).



opposed to any government intervention to promote such integration.<sup>32</sup> Blacks moving into predominantly white areas have faced threats, physical attacks, and property damage.<sup>33</sup> A small-scale private effort to move black families from Chicago housing projects to Valparaiso, Indiana, in the late 1960s was generally unsuccessful. The families encountered organized resistance from the town government as well as verbal harassment and violence.<sup>34</sup> While some families stayed despite the hardship, most moved back to the city.<sup>35</sup> Throughout the past several decades, many black families who moved into white neighborhoods of Chicago were driven from their homes by racial violence.<sup>36</sup> These incidents of harassment, while dramatic, may not reflect the views of all residents, and other neighbors may welcome black newcomers. This Essay examines the harassment, threats and fears that blacks face in predominantly white schools as a racial and socioeconomic minority.

#### 4. Will Residential Integration Lead to Social Integration?

Given the daily headlines about troubled race relations in American society, social integration may seem to be hopeless. But daily life is too mundane to make the headlines, and daily life may tell a very different story. This study looks at whether the black Gautreaux youths experience acceptance, establish friendships, and interact positively with white classmates, and assesses the relative frequency of positive and negative interactions.

The impact of school desegregation has been studied extensively.<sup>37</sup> Because blacks rarely live near whites, however, many of the school desegregation programs studied have entailed special busing efforts, and a busload of students entering a white community may create high visibility for the program, leading to backlash and stigma against participants. In addition, the long periods of time children spend every day riding together on a bus may reinforce a feeling of group separateness from those who live near the school. Moreover, the logistics of commuting

---

32. See Howard Schuman & Lawrence Bobo, *Survey-based Experiments on White Racial Attitudes Toward Residential Integration*, 94 AM. J. SOC. 273, 274-75 (1988).

33. See BRIAN J. L. BERRY, *THE OPEN HOUSING QUESTION: RACE AND HOUSING IN CHICAGO, 1966-1976*, at 163, 190, 198-203 (1979).

34. See JOHN GEHM, *BRINGING IT HOME* 83-109 (1984) (describing the Valparaiso experiment).

35. See *id.*

36. See GREGORY D. SQUIRES ET AL., *CHICAGO: RACE, CLASS AND THE RESPONSE TO URBAN DECLINE* 127-51 (1987).

37. See HAROLD B. GERARD & NORMAN MILLER, *SCHOOL DESEGREGATION: A LONG TERM STUDY* *passim* (1975); *EFFECTIVE SCHOOL DESEGREGATION*, *supra* note 17, *passim*; PATCHEN, *supra* note 28, *passim*; ST. JOHN, *supra* note 30, *passim*.

make after-school activities difficult. Thus, busing as a method of desegregating creates its own limits on racial interaction.

In contrast, this study examines a program that is distinctive because it creates both residential and school integration. In the Gautreaux program, low-income black families receive housing subsidies allowing them to move into private apartment buildings occupied largely by middle-income whites, and located in middle-income, mostly white suburbs. As a result, children arrive in the suburban schools as community residents, not as outsiders in a busing program, and they come to school in the same buses as their white neighbors. Moreover, this program accomplishes residential integration with low visibility, reducing the likelihood of backlash and stigma.

Youths in this program, however, face an additional barrier—socioeconomic differences. While researchers do not know much about social integration across racial groups, we know even less about social integration across socioeconomic groups. The participants in this program come from very low-income families and face two kinds of barriers simultaneously—racial and socioeconomic. These low-income blacks enter schools and communities that are overwhelmingly white and middle-class. Students who have spent over six years in all-black urban housing projects, for example, may have different habits and tastes, and have fewer economic resources than their classmates. Even the other black students they meet are different because their families are middle-class. Given these barriers, observers have worried that youths in such a program would remain socially isolated.<sup>38</sup>

### III. THE STUDIES

#### A. *Methods and Sample*

The remainder of this paper summarizes studies of the Gautreaux program, comparing participating families moving to white middle-income suburbs with participating families moving to low-income black city neighborhoods. These 'city movers' are a strong comparison group for judging the effects of the suburban move because both groups meet the same selection criteria and receive better housing, varying significantly only on the destination of their moves. Thus we can have more confidence in attributing any observed effects to those destinations than we would through comparing suburban movers, for instance, with a group of Chicago housing project residents, whose lives had not under-

---

38. See John Yinger, *Prejudice and Discrimination in the Urban Housing Market*, in *CURRENT ISSUES IN URBAN ECONOMICS* 430 (Peter Mieszkowski & Mahlon Straszheim eds., 1979).

gone any comparable systematic change. The effects of moving to the suburbs, judged in comparison to moving within the city, are, if anything, underestimated through this stringent comparison.

To examine adults' employment, we surveyed 332 women and conducted detailed interviews with another ninety-five women.<sup>39</sup> The first study of children interviewed one randomly selected school-age child (age eight to eighteen) from each of 114 families in 1982, as well as their mothers, and the second study followed up the same children (and mothers) in 1989 when they were adolescents and young adults and examined their educational and employment outcomes.<sup>40</sup> In both of these studies, our adult respondents have been women: This is because a large majority of our sample group—ninety-two percent in the adult employment study and eighty-seven percent in the mother and child study—were female-headed households with no male present. There were not enough men available in the sample for analysis.

### B. *Study of Adult Employment*

The results of our study showed that those persons transplanted to the suburbs were more likely to be employed than city movers. Although both groups started from the same baseline, after moving, the new suburbanites were at least 25% more likely to have had a job than city movers: While 50.9% of city movers had a job after moving, 63.8% of suburban movers did.

Table 1 compares the pre- and post-move employment status of the city and suburban movers. Among respondents who were employed at some point before their moves, suburban movers were about 14% more likely than city movers to have a job after moving. In contrast, for those who had never been employed before their move, 46% found work after moving to the suburbs while the figure for those in the city was only

---

39. Our refusal rate on the interviews was less than 7%. There are no systematic differences between the interview and survey respondents, but the interview sample is used only for qualitative analysis. Responses to the self-administered questionnaire were consistent with those from the in-person interviews. For a complete description of the sample, instrument, and other analyses, see ROSENBAUM & POPKIN, *supra* note 24, at 6-8.

40. Low-income people move often and are difficult to locate over a seven-year period. We located 59.1% of our participants, a reasonably large percentage for such a sample. Of course, we must wonder what biases arise from this attrition, and whether we were more likely to lose the least successful people (because they were harder to find) or the most successful ones (because they got jobs in distant locations). We suspect that both happen, but if one happened more often, then the 1989 sample could be quite different from the original 1982 sample.

The mothers from the program's early years are less educated than those in the above survey of adults because they are older and come from an earlier era when high school dropouts were more common.

30%. For this group of "hard-core unemployed," those who ended up in the suburbs were much more likely to have a job after moving than were the city movers.<sup>41</sup>

TABLE 1. PERCENT OF RESPONDENTS EMPLOYED POST-MOVE AS COMPARED WITH PRE-MOVE EMPLOYMENT, FOR CITY AND SUBURBAN MOVERS

	City		Suburb	
	group no.,	%	group no.,	%
<i>Those Employed Pre-Move:</i>				
Employed Post-Move	65	64.6%	144	73.6%
<i>Those Unemployed Pre-Move:</i>				
Employed Post-Move	43	30.2%	80	46.2%
<i>Total Employed Post-Move:</i>	<u>108</u>	<u>50.9%</u>	<u>224</u>	<u>63.8%*</u>

\*Indicates Chi-square significant at the 0.05 level.

City and suburban movers did not differ in hourly wages or number of hours worked per week. Among those who had a job both before and after moving, both city and suburban movers reported gains in hourly wages and no change in hours worked.<sup>42</sup>

41. The suburban advantage arises from a decline in employment for city movers. The 15.4% decline in employment by the city movers is virtually the same as the 16.3% decline found in the Current Population Surveys (CPS) between 1979 and 1989 among poorly educated central-city black adult males, while their noncentral-city CPS counterparts experienced little or no decline. Although selectivity concerns make the CPS data somewhat suspect, the quasi-random assignment makes selectivity less of a threat in our sample; we find the same city/suburban differences as did the CPS. Apparently, the suburban move permitted low-income blacks to escape declining employment rates in central cities during the 1980s.

Moreover, multivariate analyses reveal that suburban movers are significantly more likely to have a job than city movers, even after controlling for many other factors. That analysis finds that some of the following factors also influence employment: previous work experience, years since move, age (which is inversely related to employment), and young children (also inversely related to employment). The likelihood of employment is reduced by a low internal sense of control and by being a long-term Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC) recipient (five years or more), but not by being a second generation AFDC recipient. Employment is barely influenced by education, and it is not affected at all by obtaining a high school equivalency diploma or college after the move. For details of these analyses, see ROSENBAUM & POPKIN, *supra* note 24, at 60-65.

42. Multivariate analyses on post-move hourly wages and on hours worked per week (controlling for the same variables, plus months of employment and the pre-move measure of the dependent variable (wages or hours, respectively)) confirm the findings discussed above: Suburbs have no effect on either dependent variable. Job tenure, pre-move pay, and the two "culture of poverty" variables (internal control and long-term AFDC) significantly affect post-move wages. Job tenure, pre-move hours worked, and post-move higher education have significant effects on post-move hours worked. None of the other factors had significant effects. For details of these analyses see *id.*; see also *supra* notes 25-27 and accompanying text (discussing Oscar Lewis' "culture of poverty" thesis).

When asked how the suburban move helped them get jobs, all suburban participants mentioned the greater number of available jobs in the suburbs. Improved physical safety was the second most mentioned factor. Adults reported that they did not work in the city because they feared being attacked on their way home, or worried that their children would get hurt or get into trouble with gangs. The suburban move allowed mothers the freedom to go out and work.

Many adults also mentioned that positive role models and social norms inspired them to work. This comment supports Wilson's contention about the importance of role models and social norms.<sup>43</sup> Upon seeing neighbors who worked, Gautreaux adults reported that they felt that they too could have jobs, and they wanted to try. In the city, adults had few such positive role models in their neighborhoods.

In sum, the employment rates of suburban movers surpassed those of city movers, particularly for those who had never before had a job. The causes of unemployment in the past—lack of skills or lack of motivation—were not irreversible, and many held jobs after moving to suburbs. The Gautreaux program apparently helped close the gap between low-income black adults and their white middle-income neighbors.

### C. *The Study of Children*

Recognizing the Gautreaux children's initial poor preparation in city schools and their social disadvantages, we wondered how they would fare in suburban schools. In 1982, we studied how the Gautreaux program affected children, comparing Gautreaux children who moved within the city with those who moved to the suburbs.<sup>44</sup> The two groups were similar in average age, proportion of female children to male children, and mothers' education. The families typically were headed by females in both the suburban and city groups.<sup>45</sup>

We found that suburban movers initially had difficulties adapting to the higher expectations in the suburban schools, and their grades suffered in their first years there. By the time of our study, however, after one to six years in the suburbs their grades and relative school performance were the same as those of city movers (according to their mothers' reports). In addition, compared to city movers, suburban movers had smaller classes, higher satisfaction with teachers and courses, and better

---

43. See WILSON, *supra* note 9, at 63-92.

44. For a complete description of the sample, instrument, and other analyses, see JAMES E. ROSENBAUM, ET AL., CENTER FOR URBAN AFFAIRS AND POLICY RESEARCH, NORTH-WESTERN UNIVERSITY, *LOW-INCOME BLACK CHILDREN IN WHITE SUBURBAN SCHOOLS* (1986) (report to the Spence Foundation of Chicago).

45. Women headed 86% of the suburban households and 88% of the city households.

attitudes about school. Although the mothers noted instances of teacher racial bias, the suburban movers were also more likely than city movers to say that teachers went out of their way to help their children, and to mention many instances of teachers giving extra help in classes and after school.

It is hard to measure academic success or improvement, and the first study had no systematic indicator. Yet the suburban movers clearly felt that the suburban schools had higher academic standards. They reported that the city teachers did not expect children to make up work when they were absent, to do homework, to know multiplication in third grade, or to write in cursive in fourth grade. "Passing grades" in the city did not indicate achievement at grade level, and even "honor roll" city students were sometimes two years behind grade level.

The Gautreaux mothers were in a good position to notice the changes in their children when they moved from the city to suburban schools. One mother commented: "[The suburban school] said it was like he didn't even go to school in Chicago for three years, that's how far behind he was. And he was going every day and he was getting report cards telling me he was doing fine."<sup>46</sup> Indeed, another mother related her own empirical test:

The move affected my child's education for the better. I even tested it out . . . (I) let her go to summer school by my mother's house (in Chicago) for about a month . . . [and] she was in fourth grade at that time . . . Over in the city they were doing third grade work; what they were supposed to be doing was fourth grade.<sup>47</sup>

The city curriculum apparently was one to three years behind the suburban schools.<sup>48</sup>

While many suburban movers seemed to be catching up to the higher suburban standards by the time of the interviews, most had only been in the suburbs a few years, and were still in elementary school, so it was hard to know how successful they later would be. Therefore, we were eager to do a follow-up study to see how things were turning out for these children.

#### D. *The Follow-up Study of Youth*

To document some of the Gautreaux program's longitudinal results,

---

46. James E. Rosenbaum et al., *White Suburban Schools' Responses to Low-income Black Children: Sources of Successes and Problems*, 20 URB. REV. 28, 32 (1988).

47. *Id.* at 30-31.

48. *Id.* at 32.

we interviewed the children and their mothers in 1989.<sup>49</sup> By this time, the children were, on average, eighteen years old. To understand their responses, it is first necessary to understand a little about the schools that the youths attended. In 1990, the Illinois Department of Education collected average standardized test scores for all schools in the state. For the schools attended by the children in our sample, the suburban schools' average eleventh grade reading test score (259) was just above the state average (250), but significantly higher than the city schools' average (198). Suburban schools' scores (21.5) on the ACT (the college admissions test most often taken in Illinois), were close to the state average (20.9), but significantly higher than the city schools' scores (16.1). Moreover, there was almost no overlap between the scores of city and suburban schools these children attended. While less than six percent of the city sample attended schools with ACT averages of twenty or better (i.e., roughly the national average), over eighty percent of the suburban sample attended such schools. Just as the 1982 study suggested higher standards in suburban elementary schools, these results indicate that the higher standards in the suburbs continued in high school.

Of course, higher standards create new challenges as well as new opportunities. The suburban movers must face much higher expectations than they had been prepared for in the city schools. The higher levels of achievement in suburban schools may be a barrier to students moving from city schools where they had been poorly prepared, and this could lead to a higher drop-out rate, lower grades, lower tracks for those still in school, less college attendance, and less employment for those over age eighteen. The results of this study, shown in Table 2 below, contradict those expectations.

---

49. For a complete description of the sample, instrument, and other analyses, see James E. Rosenbaum & Julie E. Kaufman, *Educational and Occupational Achievements of Low-Income Black Youth in White Suburbs*, Paper presented to the Annual Meeting of the American Sociological Association (August 1991) (on file with James E Rosenbaum).

TABLE 2. YOUTHS' EDUCATION AND JOB OUTCOMES: CITY-SUBURBAN COMPARISON

	City	Suburb
Drop-out of school	20%	5%
College track	24%	40%
Attend college	21%	54%
Attend four-year college	4%	27%
Employed full-time (if not in college)	41%	75%
Pay under \$3.50/hour	43%	9%
Pay over \$6.50/hour	5%	21%
Job benefits	23%	55%

### 1. Dropping Out and School Grades

Although test scores were not available for individual respondents, grades provide a good indication of how students are achieving in the judgment of their teachers and relative to their peers. We found that suburban movers had virtually the same grades as city movers.<sup>50</sup> Since the national High School and Beyond (HSB) survey of high school sophomores indicates that suburban students get about a half grade lower than city students with the same achievement test scores, the grade parity of the two samples implies a higher achievement level for suburban movers.<sup>51</sup>

In addition, as Table 2 indicates more city movers (20%) dropped out of high school than did suburban movers (5%).

### 2. College Preparatory Curricula

Most high schools offer different curricula, through tracking systems, to college-bound and noncollege-bound youth, and these different curricula can affect college opportunities.<sup>52</sup> Researchers find that blacks are under-represented in the college tracks in racially integrated schools.<sup>53</sup> Indeed, after being desegregated, the Washington, D.C. public schools initiated a tracking system, which a federal district court subse-

50. Both city and suburban students had C-plus averages.

51. See Rosenbaum & Kaufman, *supra* note 49.

52. JAMES E. ROSENBAUM, MAKING INEQUALITY: THE HIDDEN CURRICULUM OF HIGH SCHOOL TRACKING 81 (1976). See generally James E. Rosenbaum, *Social Implications of Educational Grouping*, in ANNUAL REVIEW RESEARCH EDUCATION 361 (1980) (describing academic tracking systems and their effects on student performance and socialization).

53. See COLEMAN et al., *supra* note 16, at 479-80; JEANNIE OAKES, KEEPING TRACK: HOW SCHOOLS STRUCTURE INEQUALITY (1985); James E. Rosenbaum & Stefan Presser, *Voluntary Racial Integration in a Magnet School*, 86 SCH. REV. 156, 167-70 (1978).



quently ruled undercut integration.<sup>54</sup> Given the higher standards and greater competition in suburban schools, we might expect suburban movers to be less likely than city movers to be in college-track classes. The results showed the opposite; suburban movers were more often in college tracks than city movers.<sup>55</sup>

### 3. College Attendance

Higher suburban standards might be expected to be a barrier to the Gautreaux youths attending college. The results indicate the opposite. Suburban movers had significantly higher college enrollment than city movers.<sup>56</sup>

### 4. Four-year Colleges

The type of college is important: Four-year colleges lead to a bachelor's degree, two-year junior or community colleges lead to an associate's degree, and trade schools lead to a certificate. Moreover, while transfers to four-year colleges are theoretically possible, in fact trade schools almost never lead to four-year colleges, and two-year colleges rarely do. Only 12.5% of students in the Chicago city colleges, which are two-year programs, ultimately earn a four-year college degree—less than half the rate of some suburban community colleges in the area.<sup>57</sup>

Among the Gautreaux youth attending college, almost 50% of the suburban movers were in four-year institutions, whereas only 20% of the city movers were. Of those not attending four-year institutions, two-thirds of the suburban movers were working toward an associate's degree while just half of the city movers were.

Clearly, the suburban students have not suffered from the challenging competition in the suburbs. Indeed, they have benefitted from the higher academic standards found there.

### 5. Youths' Employment

For youths who were not attending college, a significantly higher proportion of those in the suburban area had full-time jobs than did their

---

54. *Hobson v. Hansen*, 269 F. Supp. 401, 443 (D.D.C. 1967) (holding that ability grouping as practiced in the Washington, D.C. public school system denied equal educational opportunity to the poor and to a majority of black students), *appeal dismissed*, 393 U.S. 801 (1968).

55. Of the suburban movers, 40.3% were in college-bound tracks, while 23.5% of the city movers were so situated.

56. Fifty-four percent of suburban movers were enrolled in college in 1989, as compared with 21% of the city movers.

57. GARY ORFIELD, CHICAGO STUDY OF ACCESS AND CHOICE IN HIGHER EDUCATION (1984).

city counterparts.<sup>58</sup> Suburban youth also were four times as likely to earn over \$6.50 an hour than were city youths.<sup>59</sup> In addition, the suburban jobs were significantly more likely to offer job benefits than city jobs.<sup>60</sup>

## 6. Youths' Social Integration

Suburban movers had increased opportunity for interacting with whites because there were many more whites in their schools than in the city schools. That proximity did not guarantee that interaction would take place, however, or that the experience would not be problematic.

We expected that the suburban youths would experience more harassment than the city movers. The most common form of harassment was name-calling. In the suburbs, 51.9% of the Gautreaux youth reported at least one incident in which they were called names by white students, while only 13.3% of the city movers experienced name-calling by whites. This might be explained in part by the fact that there are simply fewer white students in the urban schools. Interestingly, however, 41.9% of the city movers experienced name-calling by other black students. As hypothesized, city movers did receive significantly less harassment than suburban movers; however, the city movers also experienced a great deal of verbal harassment.

A second, more severe form of harassment was measured by asking respondents how often they were threatened by other students. As expected, many suburban movers were threatened by whites: 15.4% of the suburban movers reported being threatened by whites a few times a year or more; 19.4% of city movers, however, were threatened as frequently by blacks. Moreover, when we consider those who were threatened at least once a year (by blacks or whites), city movers are as likely to receive a threat as suburban movers.<sup>61</sup>

A third and serious form of harassment experienced by study youths was actual physical violence. When asked how often they were injured by other students at school, very few members of either group reported such incidents. A similar proportion of both city and suburban movers

---

58. Of the suburban youth, 75% had jobs, while only 41% of the city youths were employed.

59. Twenty-one percent of the employed suburban youths earned more than \$6.50 an hour, while only 5% of the working city youths earned that much from their jobs.

60. Benefits (such as health insurance and paid leave time) were offered by 55.2% of the suburban jobs, but by only 23.1% of the city jobs in which sample youths were employed.

61. City movers received more threats than suburbanites: 22.7% of the city dwellers had been threatened as compared with 21.2% of the suburban students.

said they had never been hurt by other students.<sup>62</sup> In sum, the expected difference is not confirmed: Suburban movers are not more likely than city movers to be threatened or hurt by others at school.

### 7. Social Acceptance

The second aspect of social integration studied was whether suburb-moving youths experience less social acceptance at school and develop fewer friendships than city movers. Several questions in the interview were designed to discern how the children viewed themselves in the social context of the school and how they felt peers regarded them. Both city and suburban movers tended to agree somewhat with the statement, "I feel I am a real part of my school," and there were no statistically significant differences between the groups.<sup>63</sup> To the statement, "Other students treat me with respect," the suburban movers had more positive responses than the city movers, although the difference was not significant.<sup>64</sup> We asked the children how they believed others viewed them in a series of questions, including, "Are you considered a part of the 'in-group'?" "Do others think you do not fit in?" "Do others see you as popular?" and "Do others see you as socially active?" For each of these queries, no significant differences were found between the city and suburban movers.<sup>65</sup> Both groups showed positive social integration for all questions. Contrary to our expectations, the suburban movers felt just as accepted by their peers as the city movers. The majority of the children in both groups felt that they fit into their schools socially and that they were regarded by others as at least somewhat socially active and popular.

We also expected that the suburban movers actually might have fewer friends than city movers. Given that the suburbs were overwhelmingly white, the suburban movers came in contact with fewer black peers than city movers. Suburban movers, however, had almost as many black friends as city movers. The mean number of black friends in the suburbs was 8.81, while the mean number of black friends in the city was 11.06, a statistically insignificant difference.

The suburban movers had significantly more white friends than city

---

62. The difference was less than 1%: 93.5% of the city and 94.1% of the suburban students reported that they never had been physically hurt.

63. Those surveyed were asked to choose from a five-point scale, in which "strongly agree" earned five points and "strongly disagree" earned only one point. The mean answer to this question was a 3.55 for the city students; their suburban counterparts averaged 3.37 points. This difference is not statistically significant.

64. The mean for the city students was 3.93 points; suburban students averaged 4.00. The difference between these results is not statistically significant.

65. These responses were reported on a three-point scale, where the response "not at all" earned zero points, "somewhat" earned one point, and "very" earned three points.

movers. The mean number of white friends was 7.37 for suburban movers and 2.37 for city movers.<sup>66</sup> While only 17.3% of the suburban youths reported no white friends, 56.3% of the city sample did.<sup>67</sup> Only one of the city movers and one of the suburban movers reported having no friends at all.

Suburban Gatreaux youths spent significantly more time with white students outside of class than did the city movers, as documented in Table 3A. Compared with city movers, the suburban movers more often did things outside of school with white students, did homework with white students, and visited the homes of white students. When asked how friendly white students were, the suburban movers again were much more positive than the city movers.

TABLE 3A. FREQUENCY OF ACTIVITIES INVOLVING WHITE STUDENTS BY PERCENT

How often do white students do things with you outside of school?		
<u>Code</u>	<u>Suburb (n=52)</u> (%)	<u>City (n=30)</u> (%)
Almost every day	44.2	6.7
About once a week	13.5	16.7
About once a month	1.9	16.7
A few times a year	23.1	10.0
Never	17.3	50.0
t=3.65; p<.001		
How often do white students do schoolwork with you?		
<u>Code</u>	<u>Suburb (n=52)</u> (%)	<u>City (n=30)</u> (%)
Almost every day	40.4	23.3
About once a week	21.1	16.7
About once a month	21.2	13.3
A few times a year	9.6	0.0
Never	7.7	46.7
t=2.92; p<.005		

66. This result is statistically significant. All determinations of significance are made at the p<.01 level. Some of the statistics, however, were more strongly significant than others.

67. This result is statistically significant.

How often do white students visit your home or have you to their home?

<u>Code</u>	<u>Suburb (n=52)</u> (%)	<u>City (n=29)</u> (%)
Almost every day	28.8	6.9
About once a week	25.0	10.3
About once a month	7.7	13.8
A few times a year	19.2	17.2
Never	19.2	51.7

t=3.75; p<.0001

When the same questions were asked about socializing with black students, no significant differences existed between city and suburban movers, as documented in Table 3B.

TABLE 3B. FREQUENCY OF ACTIVITIES INVOLVING BLACK STUDENTS BY PERCENT

How often do black students do things with you outside of school?

<u>Code</u>	<u>Suburb (n=52)</u> (%)	<u>City (n=31)</u> (%)
Almost every day	59.6	54.8
About once a week	19.2	32.3
About once a month	5.8	6.5
A few times a year	11.5	6.5
Never	3.8	—

t=.70 (statistically insignificant)

How often do black students do schoolwork with you?

<u>Code</u>	<u>Suburb (n=52)</u> (%)	<u>City (n=31)</u> (%)
Almost every day	46.2	64.5
About once a week	25.0	16.1
About once a month	7.7	9.7
A few times a year	11.5	—
Never	9.6	9.7

t=1.34 (statistically insignificant)

How often do black students visit your home or have you to their home?

<u>Code</u>	<u>Suburb (n=52)</u> (%)	<u>City (n=31)</u> (%)
Almost every day	50.0	25.8
About once a week	25.0	45.2
About once a month	3.8	22.6
A few times a year	15.4	3.2
Never	5.8	3.2

$t=0.43$  (statistically insignificant)

To get an overview, two index variables were computed based on the summed responses to each of the three items for interactions with whites and for interactions with blacks. The findings, set out in Table 4, suggest that the suburban movers divided their time almost equally between blacks and whites, while the city movers spent significantly more of their time with blacks than with whites. The experience of the suburban movers seems to reflect a more racially integrated peer network, despite the small numbers of blacks in suburban schools.

TABLE 4. COMPARISONS OF INDEX VARIABLES MEASURING TIME SPENT WITH BLACK FRIENDS VS. TIME SPENT WITH WHITE FRIENDS

	<u>Suburb (n=60)</u>		<u>City (n=38)</u>	
	<u>mean</u>	<u>(std dev)</u>	<u>mean</u>	<u>(std dev)</u>
Time with black friends	12.02	(3.09)	12.45	(2.17)
Time with white friends	10.41	(3.64)	6.89	(3.48)
	$t=3.05; p<.003$		$t=9.04; p<.000$	

#### 8. Are Harassment and Acceptance Inversely Related?

Our results indicate that negative behaviors are associated with each other: White name-calling correlates strongly with white threats. Positive behaviors also correlate: Doing activities with whites is associated with visiting with whites in their homes.

We found, however, that *negative behaviors do not predict an absence of positive behaviors*. In fact, the experiences of the suburban movers indicate that the two are not usually associated, and they are sometimes positively correlated. Suburban Gautreaux students who report being threatened by whites are slightly (but not significantly) *more* likely to participate in school activities,<sup>68</sup> interact with whites after

68. This result is statistically insignificant:  $r=0.11$ . The "r" is the Pearson product-mo-

school,<sup>69</sup> or visit with whites in their homes.<sup>70</sup> Those reporting being called names by whites are also slightly *more* likely to do activities with whites after school,<sup>71</sup> and to visit with whites in their homes.<sup>72</sup>

While these correlations are not statistically significant, they are substantively very important. They indicate that many of the same individuals who are being threatened and harassed by whites are also being accepted by whites, interacting with whites, going to each others' homes, and participating in school activities. That does not make the threats and name-calling pleasant, but it does make it easier for these youths to feel as though they are a part of these white suburban schools.

The statements of mothers and youths help us understand how these youths handled the racial harassment they faced in the suburbs. Many seemed to take harassment in stride as a minor annoyance that they ignored.<sup>73</sup> Other suburban movers felt that the racial problems were likely to exist anywhere or discounted the name-calling because they discounted the people who were doing it.<sup>74</sup> Some youths said that the advantages of living in the suburbs far outweighed the disadvantages. Although mothers were unhappy that their children were being harassed in the suburbs, they felt these incidents were relatively unimportant compared with the fear, crime, and violence that had limited their lives in the inner city.<sup>75</sup> Both the youths and their mothers felt they had overcome many of the problems they faced in the suburbs with patience and

ment correlation coefficient, a statistical indicator of the degree of association between two variables. The closer the r-coefficient is to 1.00, the stronger the observed correlation.

69. This result is statistically insignificant:  $r=0.50$ .

70. This result is statistically insignificant:  $r=0.09$ .

71. This result is statistically insignificant:  $r=0.08$ .

72. This result is statistically insignificant:  $r=0.17$ .

73. One respondent said: "It's not awful like maybe what you see on TV. It's the kind of stuff where you ignore it . . . you grow so accustomed to it until it doesn't even matter any more, but you know it's there."

Another said: "The name-calling could have been as often as once a week. That was just a regular thing, but it didn't bother me. . . . All you could do was just be yourself and let this person get to know you as the human being that you were."

74. Another two respondents commented:

When you live out here, you learn to relax and put up with [name-calling], because no matter where you go it would be there. Believe me.

Sometimes a few [prejudices] came out, but it's only one or two incidents. I really couldn't count them because those were really ignorant people. I mean you're gonna find those anywhere you go.

75. Said one mother:

All I can really remember is the eleven years I stayed in the projects I never did let [my children] go out and play unless I was with them. Every time I let [my daughter] go downstairs or out to play, there was a fight. So it was like "you just stay in the house and I'll let you come out when I come home."

endurance.<sup>76</sup>

In sum, although these Gautreaux youths experienced some harassment and some difficulty gaining acceptance in the suburban schools, overall they experienced great success in social integration. Despite some initial difficulties, suburban movers have active social lives and feel they fit into their new environments.

#### IV. INDIVIDUAL CASES

Statistics provide the best indications of the program's effects, but statistics cannot convey the personal experiences of the individuals involved. Indeed, in that respect, statistics can mislead, making the process seem simpler and more mechanical than it is, and by glossing over people's struggles. It is a mistake to infer that educational and social gains come easily and without great sacrifice. The very notion of "program effects" conjures up an image of a simple causal process, like the push that sets a pendulum in motion. But human actions are never so simply caused, and holding onto a simple "program effects" notion can, in fact, have serious consequences. Participants and observers who expect this program to have quick results with little pain would be greatly disappointed.

Unlike "effects" in physics, the Gautreaux program's effects arise and outcomes result from what the program participants do with the opportunities presented to them. The changes "caused" by this program occurred slowly and were due only to the enormous efforts and sacrifices of the participants. We illustrate this with three case studies of individu-

Respondents also talked about the greater security in the suburbs:

This [suburban] neighborhood is better in 1,001 ways [than the city]. As far as peace of mind, it's not overcrowded, the mailboxes are not torn open. You don't have to use a key for the mailboxes out here. No bars on the windows. No bars on the doors. This is how free we are [in the suburbs].

76. One mother put the issue very clearly:

Why would you live there [the projects] when you could move to the suburbs and pay the same kind of rent. . . . [I] only have to deal with people who don't like me, right? They're not doing anything to hurt me as far as I can see. They're not trying to break into my house. They're not trying to bust my child up the side of his head. They're not trying to lure him into [gangs and drugs].

One youth related how her endurance had paid off:

When I first came out here, there wasn't hardly any black people. In my elementary school that I went to, there was about three black kids in the whole school, if that many. A lot of the white kids didn't understand what we're about 'cause we were different—most of us came from the projects or something like that. We were different—we were a lot more hard and rough around the edges. But eventually they got used to it and some of those people . . . are real good friends of mine now so they weren't bad.



als in the Gautreaux program, participants in the children's study described above who were interviewed with their mothers in 1982 and 1989. While the best summary of the program's effects is contained in the statistical data reported above, the complexity of participants' experiences and their own efforts to overcome the obstacles they confronted are key elements to understanding the "program effects" of Gautreaux.

This type of analysis is helpful in two respects. First, it reveals participants' strengths and capabilities, qualities that may have emerged because of their new opportunities. It also exposes characteristics of the suburban communities, both positive ones that help new residents and negative ones that they must confront.

#### A. *Laura*

No one reflects the complexities of the Gatreau experience more clearly than Laura. Laura moved to the suburbs when she was eight. As her mother Noelle said in 1982, almost four years after their move:

For me it was getting her away from the city and all of the crime and . . . because, see, [my kids] grew up in the projects. . . . And I wanted them to see that there was more to life than what these people wanted . . . . And in order to let them see that I had to get her out of the city and move her out here. She's twelve years old and some of her little friends back there are pregnant today. I feel that this would have happened to her. By her being out here she has a more open outlook on life . . . . Getting her out of the projects was the best thing I could have done for all of us.

Laura did not have a positive experience in the city schools. Her grades were good, but both mother and daughter question how much she was actually learning. In 1982, Noelle commented:

Chicago schools are raggedy . . . . The teachers complain that there wasn't enough room in the classroom. It was so crowded . . . nobody is learning anything. She comes home with headaches. . . . The whole attitude [of the teachers was] . . . I don't care I've got mine. Either you learn it or you don't because I'm going to give you a passing grade anyway.

Laura had many complaints about the city schools. She reported that "they really didn't try to teach you anything," the teachers were "mean" and did not listen, and broken glass covered the playground. In addition, Laura was often afraid to go to school because of fights. Noelle would often have to walk Laura and her brothers to school because of their fears.

For eleven years, Laura's family had lived in one of Chicago's hous-

ing projects. Noelle says she did not trust any of the other kids in the neighborhood; the area was dirty and very unsafe. The situation was difficult for both mother and child, as Noelle explained:

Every time I let her go downstairs or out to play there was a fight. So it was just like you just stay in the house and I'll let you come out when I come home or something like that. . . . She didn't like the attitudes of some kids. She would say: "why do they have to do this? Why do they fight?" and I'd just tell her to stay away from them and not be around that type of people.

One of the major reasons Noelle gave for moving out to the suburbs was for "schools to better my children." In 1982, it seemed as though she believed she had been successful. Laura's grades actually went down a little, but, as Noelle explained,

The work out here is much harder than what the kids are doing in the city. Yes her grades have changed because the work is harder now. Because the little math she was doing in the city, it counted for her to get that 'A' in it. Now for her to come out here and just jump into geometry and trigonometry in sixth grade and still be getting B's and C's is good. The reason I feel she is doing better is because the teachers are different.

When they had first moved to the suburbs, Noelle said, Laura had to take a battery of tests to prove she was not "slow," that her problem was merely that she had not had the material that the suburban children had learned already. Laura passed these tests and did not have to repeat a grade, but the experience was difficult. And even though she passed, she still had to deal with the fact that the city schools had not taught her as much as the suburban schools expected of sixth grade students.

But the suburban schools also offered an opportunity for Laura educationally. In addition to the more advanced curriculum, the schools provided the kind of extra attention that impressed both Noelle and Laura. Noelle mentioned this difference several times in the course of her 1982 interview:

The schools . . . are not overcrowded. They had time to give them the help they needed. The teachers out here, they seem to care more. . . . They will call you everyday to let you know how your child is doing in school. And send work home and tell you to help your child with this. Put them on special projects and different things.

It makes me happy because [the teacher] really doesn't have to call me and let me know these things. But she does. I just like talking to her. She calls me in the evenings. If you are

not satisfied with your child's progress, you can always call the school and make a meeting.

Laura commented simply that her teachers "help you more." Her mother related several incidents where teachers went out of their way to help Laura. One teacher arranged for her to make up a missed exam; another, Laura's track coach, made a special effort to keep her from quitting the team.

Laura had a B average in high school, and was in honors English and Math classes. Planning a career in computers or word processing, Laura had finished high school by 1989 and was enrolled in, but not yet attending, the local community college for a two-year degree; she saw herself going on to a four-year program. She was working full time at her fifth job, at a clothing store, making \$4.50 per hour with benefits. She said she liked the job but felt it was not teaching her any new skills.

In 1982, Laura had described herself as having five friends: one black and four white. She had not spent as much time with them as she would have liked, according to her mother, because they lived on the other side of town, and transportation was a problem. Noelle cited "living around whites" as being among the best things for Laura about the move to the suburbs. Part of the reason, in addition to the exposure itself, had to do with the types of amenities that such proximity brought with it. For example, Noelle appreciated the better quality teachers in the suburban schools. As she put it: "The three years that I've been out here I've seen that white people want the best and they're going to get it."

With proximity, however, also came prejudice. While many of their neighbors were friendly, according to Noelle, "[some people from the neighborhood] call [Laura] 'nigger' and say, 'go back to the ghettos where you came from' or 'go back to Africa.'" Laura mentioned in 1982 that the only thing she disliked about her school was the fact that "some kids are prejudiced." Similarly, Laura said that while she felt safer in the suburbs than in the city, she did not feel completely safe because she was black, and "some white people might not like that"; she doubted that they would do anything physical to her, but they might verbally accost her. For both Laura and Noelle, the prejudice in the suburbs was much less threatening than the physical dangers they faced in the city. Noelle said specifically:

[In the city] I was worried about somebody breaking in. I was worried about somebody doing something to my children. I'm not scared about that now. The only thing I have out here is prejudice. There's nothing that can be done about making a person like you because you're you.

Laura is typical of our sample's suburban youths in reporting in 1989 that the majority of her friends were white.<sup>77</sup> There was no difference in the amount of time Laura spent with her white and black friends or in the types of activities in which they engaged. She strongly agreed that she was a real part of her school, and that others saw her as popular, athletic, socially active, and at least somewhat part of the "in-group." Noelle also noted that her daughter's friends were a mixed group of white, black, and Hispanic kids.

Laura was able to achieve some measure of academic achievement and social integration, but she did not avoid difficulties completely; there were teachers who helped and teachers who did not, white friends and hostile white neighbors. Laura said that name-calling happened only a few times a year, and it was done by both whites and blacks.

Noelle's response to prejudice, in addition to going to the school to talk to school officials, was to emphasize, as other mothers did, the learning potential in these experiences:

And I don't care where you live there's going to be somebody that doesn't like you regardless of what race, creed or color they may be . . . 'Cause you can live in Chicago and have Blacks that don't like you or the person around the corner who doesn't even know you. It teaches you to be a strong person. It hurts sometimes to be called names, but I try to teach my kids not to be hurting from that, but to learn from that.

In the end, the bottom line of the suburban experience for both Noelle and Laura was the comparison to life in the city. Laura explained, "I like a lot of the opportunities I have [in the suburbs]. Actually, I just don't like Chicago." When asked what life would have been like had she not moved, she replied:

I don't think I would have had a real good education. Probably would have had more fights than I ever dreamed of. Probably would have been robbed several times. Actually I probably wouldn't know half of the things that I know now if I had still lived in Chicago. Like I wouldn't know about white people and about being prejudiced.

### B. Cheryl

For Cheryl, the suburban move created greater educational gains, but it also created more serious social obstacles. Cheryl had lived in the suburbs for almost five years when we interviewed her in 1982 at age

---

77. See *supra* notes 63-67 and accompanying text for the results of a survey of the youths regarding their friendships.

eleven. Cheryl had been exposed to Chicago public schools for only a short time before moving; she had attended kindergarten there. She did well and was quite advanced for her age. Problems, however, had already begun. According to her mother, Victoria:

Where we used to live, there were fights all the time. She would come home from school—nervous, she wouldn't fight back, she would always get beat up.

[The kids in the city] were fighting all the time, physically fighting machines. . . . I try to tell them why people act the way they act, or treat each other the way they treat each other. I try to use these other people as examples: "Don't be that way—God doesn't like that." But it was too much of a strain on me and a strain on the girls—they couldn't think, even in school, the pressures of getting kicked on the leg and things like this; kids are mean to each other.

Cheryl often did not want to go to school because she was afraid of the fighting. Of their inner-city neighborhood, her mother said:

The drunk people that lay out on the street on Saturday night get so drunk they can't make it home and sleep on the streets. . . . I was burglarized twice while I was there and they took all of my most precious valuables, that's enough. The fact that my children didn't know self-defense, they all got beat up. It was difficult to keep the roaches under control.

At one level, Victoria was pleased with the change the suburbs provided for Cheryl, mentioning particularly the quality of the school system, extra activities such as sports and music, and the extra attention from the teachers, who will "walk that extra mile":

I like the kinds of warmth and the kindness of most of the teachers there. They are concerned; if they feel as though there is a problem, they will call you. They will call you to ask if you have any suggestions on what they can do to help to improve the situation with the child. They want you to call any time, call their homes anytime if you feel that you have a problem or if you need some questions answered. It's like one big family. I like the principal, the way he has things set up there. He takes every child as his own, and whenever the school has activities, the teachers are involved in them.

Victoria said that she "wouldn't want to ever take [Cheryl] out of the school she attends," noting that "she's given a lot of responsibility by the instructors because she is excellent in class. . . . She likes all that, that's something she wouldn't have in Chicago." Cheryl had received mostly A's and B's on her last report card.

The 1989 follow-up interview revealed that Cheryl continued to do very well: She achieved mostly A's and B's her last year in high school and she was in honors classes in English, Math, and two languages, Spanish and French. She studied in South America her junior year in high school, and at the time of the interview was majoring in international marketing at the University of Illinois at Urbana, having received a scholarship. She felt fairly optimistic about her chances for working in international marketing because so far "everything has worked to my advantage." She had had five part-time jobs and was working at the time of the interview for Eastman Kodak as an intern doing research for the sales manager. She liked the job, which paid \$7.75 per hour, and was learning new skills which she felt would help her get a better job. She says she preferred the suburbs overall, because of the education she received and the relative safety. Asked how her life might have been different had they not moved, she responded: "I would be not as well educated, not as cultured, ignorant about whites. I would be hard, street-wise." Responding to the same question, her mother answered:

[Cheryl] probably would not have the drive, the challenge, you know, to want to advance, to get ahead, to compete. She wouldn't have that competitive, you know, that competitive attitude that's needed to get ahead in life. She probably would have just been absorbed with boys and she wouldn't know as much. She wouldn't have had the job opportunities. You know, I think her life would have been pretty stagnant. She wouldn't have been prepared to attend the [University of Illinois]—that's for sure.

While Cheryl's academic experience was very positive, her social experience was more negative than most youth we spoke to. In 1982, her mother reported:

Students occasionally call her nigger. She's offended by that. They have a way of isolating her and that will make her feel bad. If they don't like something about the way she acts, they will stay away in groups and just leave her alone. And they will pass the word[,] . . . ignore her, call her names when they see her . . . This doesn't occur often but when it does occur, it's like "Mom, do I have to go to [school] now, I'm the only black in my class—I have no one to go to"—the teacher is white. If she complains to the teacher about something like that, the teacher will say something like, "well." She isn't going to take it very seriously.

Racism among teachers was less a factor in high school than it was in elementary school. Victoria did mention one teacher whose own prejudice influenced the students in the class; they began calling Cheryl "nig-

ger" and other names in class, knowing they would not be stopped. Cheryl's grades dropped precipitously as a result. Victoria complained to the school and reported to us that the teacher eventually resigned (though it is not clear if the two events were linked). According to her mother, Cheryl's grades improved considerably thereafter.

In 1989, Cheryl stated that in general she did not fit into her school, which had a very affluent student body, and that the other students were unfriendly. Only 17.3% of suburban movers had no white friends, and Cheryl was in this group.<sup>78</sup> She did have friends, two black and one Indian, but "everybody was at the stage [where they were] caught up in cliques" and blacks "hung with themselves." This was a particular problem as far as dating was concerned; boys said they wouldn't date her because she was black. While she did not say if this was the case with black as well as white boys, she did say that "I had no life as far as dating," and when asked what she did about it she said she "got bitter against white guys." Unlike many other Gautreaux youths, Cheryl never visited white students at home or did things outside of school with them, although she did occasionally do schoolwork with them. She felt like she was a real part of her school, but did not think she was seen as part of the "in group."

Both mother and daughter turned their encounters with white bigotry into lessons. As Victoria said in 1989, "It's something that you can adapt yourself to. And you know, you complain at first but then you say well, this is the way it is, and you know, you accept it." Cheryl concluded that had she grown up in the city she would have been "ignorant about whites." Instead of learning the city's lesson of being "hard" to the physical assaults of the streets, she learned the suburb's lesson of being hard to the insults of prejudice. This particular kind of education was probably not on the agenda of Dorothy Gautreaux and her fellow litigants, but it seems to have been inseparable from the other things Cheryl learned in the suburbs.

Because she had not yet entered school at the time of the move, Cheryl did not have to catch up in the suburban schools, and this worked to her advantage. Her academic accomplishments were considerable: She received high grades in honors courses at a very demanding suburban high school and attended a selective four-year university. Escaping the fighting and robberies she had experienced in the city was also a great relief to Cheryl.

Yet while Cheryl got more academic benefits than most of our sub-

---

78. See *supra* notes 63-67 and accompanying text for the results of a survey of the Gautreaux youths' friendships.

urban sample, she enjoyed much less social acceptance. She described more harassment and social barriers than most suburban movers. In some cases those barriers came down, as in the case of the prejudiced teacher, but for the most part they persisted. Both mother and child said they would again choose this mix of high academic and safety benefits and high social costs over the inner city experience, but with serious reservations.

### C. Kevin

For Kevin, the educational advantages were more modest, but the prejudice and social isolation were also much less severe. Kevin left the city when he was eight, five years prior to the 1982 interview. Describing where they had lived in the city, his mother Alice stated: "You know, we were just like in a prison." She compared their new location in the suburbs favorably to the city with regard to all aspects of the family's life. According to Alice, Kevin was in real trouble before they moved. His grades were mostly Fs, she said:

He wasn't improving any in that school. And I think it was that the school was too crowded and they didn't have enough staff to detect [Kevin's] needs, his learning ability or anything . . . so he was just going on and on and getting farther and farther behind . . . . He wasn't progressing any. He couldn't read. He couldn't write. The grade level that he was in, he couldn't even read the book. He couldn't do the math. So I don't think he was progressing at all in that school. And the kids, they would fight. When they get out of school, if you don't go down there and pick your child up, he's liable to come home with a black eye or a ball club hit him in the head or just anything.

In addition to being unable to function successfully in school, Kevin was also showing some other disturbing signs:

His behavior. It was kind of bad when we were in the city. He wouldn't mind. He had started picking up things in the house. Going in my wallet. Taking his sister's jewelry. He wouldn't fight. He wasn't that type of child that would get into fights or anything. But he just started picking up real bad habits. I would let him go outside and tell him to be home in two hours and he'd stay three or four. . . . [M]y oldest daughter, she missed some rings. And he denied it, but we found it in his pocket before he went to school. And I missed two dollars out of my wallet one time.

Alice's response, a common strategy among the mothers in our sample, was to keep Kevin and his sisters inside because she did not trust the



neighborhood or the other children who lived there. He had no friends during the last year before they moved to the suburbs.

For Alice, the move to the suburbs meant a complete turn for the better for her son, both academically and behaviorally. He repeated a grade and was placed in a special program in which he received extra academic help. Both mother and son agreed that this program helped him: his grades went up afterwards. In the seventh grade at the time of the 1982 interview, thirteen-year old Kevin had received mostly Bs on his last report card and had much less trouble with his school work than he had had in the city. He stated that he liked school and living in the suburbs; he remembered little about his life in the city. When asked if he would be someone else if he could, he responded that he would be "a smarter person," a response that seems to indicate both a knowledge of the problems he had had and a desire to improve. Such feelings could have led to the frustration and disruptive behavior Alice noticed in Chicago.

Alice raved about the changes she saw in her son after their move:

He's a different boy now. He's considerate. He minds me. He does anything I say. He doesn't poke out his mouth. He doesn't give me any back talk. And he's very intelligent now. Before we moved out here he was having difficulty with his speech. Now you can understand everything he says.

He understands the work now. He's good with what he's working on. He studies hard. He likes to go to school. He likes his teachers. And [Kevin] likes to impress his teachers, so he works very hard on his school work. He's a charmer.

Alice attributed Kevin's changes primarily to the extra attention he was receiving from teachers and to changes in her own attitudes because of the move: "[N]ow it seems like I've got more interest in things." She particularly praised the amount of information she gets from the teachers about Kevin's work and his behavior: They let her know right away—"it doesn't just go on and on."

Kevin maintained the momentum spurred by the move. According to Alice, he stayed in the special program through his junior year, for a few periods a day. Both mother and son spoke highly of his teachers, who often went out of their way for him and continued their regular contact with Alice about his progress. While school work in high school was difficult for him, he received mostly Bs and Cs. As a member of the school's basketball team, he was required to maintain his G.P.A., but Kevin stated that he also focused on grades because he wanted to go to college. Preparing to enter a two-year program at a local community college, he indicated that he planned to transfer eventually to a four-year

school. At the time of the 1989 interview, he was working full-time as a truck driver. He said he liked the job, was learning new skills, and believed it would help him get a better job in the future.

In 1982, Alice mentioned that she had experienced racism from her neighbors at first, but that there had not been any problems recently. Her own attitudes, she found, changed as well: "At first I think I couldn't face the different nationalities. Now, I find that it's nice living with different nationalities." Their neighbors were friendly, although not as friendly as those in the city, and Kevin had both black and white friends in the neighborhood. He participated in Little League and used other local facilities such as the pool, the parks, and the YMCA—places he had not gone in the city because Alice thought many of them were dangerous. He also was able to play outside more often because of a difference Alice saw in the kids, as well as in the neighborhood: "They have good behavior [in the suburbs]. They don't fight and they don't talk bad. When they go outside, their mother knows exactly where they are. And before nightfall all kids are in the house."

Kevin did not mention any prejudiced behavior. When asked in 1989 what he liked about his school, he replied, "I got along with everyone. Everyone treated me nice." In high school, the majority of his friends were white; he seemed to have divided his time fairly equally between his white and black friends, and he mentioned no incidents of name calling, threats, or other problems. He agreed that he was "a real part of [his] school," and that other students treated him with respect and saw him as very much a part of the "in-group." Alice concurred that her son was a "likable boy" and that, in contrast to her earlier characterization of his behavior in the city, "he don't get in any trouble."

The suburban experience, then, appears to have been a very successful one for Kevin. The progress of what looked to be a downward trajectory in the city was turned around after the move. Alice, when asked how life would have been different had they stayed, is confident, if brief, in her appraisal: "God, it would have been a disaster. The city's the pits." Kevin also answered that his life would have been different, that he would have joined a gang, sold drugs, and would not have finished high school. When asked why they stayed in the area from 1982 to 1989, he said he thought his mom wanted him to stay out of the city, away from the gangs.

It seems likely that the quality of education Kevin received, particularly because of the diagnosis and attention to some kind of learning disability, played a key role in his overall social, academic, and perhaps even work achievements. He went from failing most of his classes to doing eventually average quality work and liking school. Its rewards—teacher

attention and approval—appear to have become both attainable and desirable for Kevin. This was not the case during his early years in Chicago, which possibly had caused some of the discipline problems his mother mentioned. Kevin also did not experience much racial harassment. Alice mentioned some neighbors who were less than friendly, but overall the suburbs proved to be a hospitable environment for Kevin.

All three youths experienced dramatic changes in their lives because of the suburban move. But their success in life was by no means assured by the program. Granted, the program did have some consistent “effects” on the environment for all three children. They, like many other suburban movers, reported that the suburbs offered a safer environment. They also reported that the suburban schools had higher standards and teachers who were more likely to go out of their way for students. These factors were reported by most suburban movers who were interviewed.

Of course, the higher standards initially posed an obstacle to the students. Like many of the children who had moved after several years in city schools, Laura and Kevin’s performance was at first below that of their suburban peers. Laura passed the battery of tests she was given, but she still had to struggle to catch up with her classmates. Kevin did not pass the tests, and the results indicated that he needed to be placed in a special program. Both Kevin and his mother, however, felt that the program had helped Kevin by giving him additional attention and special resources. His mother’s report that he understood, liked, and worked hard at his schoolwork certainly suggests that he responded well to the program. Both Kevin and his mother believed the suburban move prevented Kevin from becoming involved with gangs and drugs, and from dropping out of school.

Not all the suburban teachers were supportive, and some were serious obstacles. One teacher was a serious problem for Cheryl, and this affected her performance in school. Fortunately, Cheryl’s performance improved when she was taught by other teachers.

Anguish, isolation, and harassment were experienced by many individuals. Laura and Kevin experienced these problems mildly, but Cheryl had more difficulty. It is noteworthy that Cheryl was the most successful academically and was the most isolated socially. Both experiences may be a consequence of her attending an affluent school.

## V. CONCLUSIONS AND POLICY IMPLICATIONS

The studies of the Gautreaux program suggest that residential integration can contribute significantly to the Kerner Commission’s aims of improving employment, education, and social integration of low-income

blacks. The suburban move greatly improved adult employment, and many adults were employed for the first time in their lives. The suburban move also improved youths' education. Compared with city movers, the children who moved to the suburbs were more likely to be (1) in school, (2) in college-track classes, (3) in four-year colleges, (4) employed, and (5) employed in jobs with benefits and better pay. The suburban move led also to a considerable amount of social integration, friendships, and interaction with white neighbors in the suburbs.

Of course, the social integration was not complete; while harassment declined over time, some degree of prejudice remained. Similarly, the children's achievement gains were not immediate. Indeed, virtually all the children transplanted to the suburbs experienced great difficulties and lower grades in the first year or two. These difficulties, however, may have been an unavoidable part of adjusting to the higher suburban standards.

Some critics doubt that housing voucher programs can achieve the integration goals set by the Kerner Commission because low-income blacks will not choose to move to middle-income white suburbs. Indeed, a Detroit survey found that few blacks would choose all-white neighborhoods as their first choice.<sup>79</sup> Moreover, some previous efforts to use housing vouchers to encourage racial integration were unsuccessful. The national Experimental Housing Allowance Program had "little if any impact on locational choice, economic or racial concentrations, or neighborhood quality."<sup>80</sup> Similarly, Project Self-Sufficiency in Cook County resulted in very few black participants moving to white suburbs.<sup>81</sup> In both programs, participants were reluctant to make the moves because of strong personal ties to their neighbors, fear of discrimination, and unfamiliarity with the distant suburbs that possibly would have offered them better job prospects.

The results of the Gautreaux program do not conclusively contradict these prior studies. Program design features—the lack of real choice about city or suburban locations—limit any conclusions about low-income blacks' preference about where to live. Still, the results are somewhat encouraging. They suggest that housing vouchers can result in low-income families moving to suburbs with better schools and better labor

---

79. Reynolds Farley et al., *Barriers to the Racial Integration of Neighborhoods: the Detroit Case*, 441 ANNALS AM. ACAD. POL. & SOC. SCI. 97, 109-13 (1979).

80. Francis J. Cronin & David W. Rasmussen, *Mobility, in HOUSING VOUCHERS FOR THE POOR: LESSONS FROM A NATIONAL EXPERIMENT* 107, 108 (1981).

81. James E. Rosenbaum, *An Evaluation of Project Self-Sufficiency in Cook County* (1988) (Unpublished manuscript on file with the Center for Urban Affairs and Policy Research, Northwestern University).

markets, and that adults and children can benefit from such moves. This program has been able to overcome the reluctance that these families might have felt, in part because the poor quality of life in the city limited the attractiveness of staying there. It is noteworthy that participation is voluntary and demand for the program slots is high.

The Gautreaux program indicates that successful residential integration is possible, but that it requires extensive additional housing services. Real estate staff are needed to locate landlords willing to participate in the program, and placement counselors are needed to inform families about life in the suburbs, including addressing their concerns about such moves and taking them to visit the units and communities. Like participants in other voucher programs, Gautreaux participants were reluctant to move to distant suburbs and few would have moved without the counselors' encouragement and visits to the suburban apartments. When contrasted with the failures of previous housing voucher programs, the success of this program indicates the value of having real estate staff and housing counselors.

The study also suggests some ways that the Gautreaux program could be improved. Transportation was the greatest difficulty that people faced in the suburbs. The suburbs had little or no public transportation, so travel was extremely difficult. Mini-bus service is probably not practical because few families move to any one location, and a special mini-bus runs the risk of increasing visibility and labelling of participants. If the program could help people finance the purchase of a car, more people might get jobs, children would have an easier time participating in after-school activities, and participants would face fewer frustrations with daily tasks. Child-care assistance would also have been extremely helpful, since suburban movers are unlikely to have friends or relatives nearby to assist. Finally, while this housing program improved employment more than most education or training programs, Gautreaux participants might have gotten better jobs if the program had also provided additional education or training.

Of course, voucher programs alone are not sufficient to move large numbers of families because of the limited number of housing units available. But if national policy makers made a long-term commitment to expanding the Section 8 program and increasing suburban moves, builders and developers could make long-term investments in building apartments to respond to this program over the next decade. Such a program would not be cheap. The alternative, however, is to sink billions of dollars into current housing projects that keep people in areas of the city that hinder their employment and educational opportunities. As we have seen, that has great human costs for the people living in the housing

projects and great costs to society because adults have limited access to the labor market and children have limited access to good education.

This study supports the basic premises behind the Kerner Commission's proposals for creating housing options outside the ghetto: Moving people to better areas can improve their opportunities. This should encourage Congress to fund housing voucher programs by supplying the resources and services needed for these programs to succeed. The Gautreaux program demonstrated that moving to better neighborhoods can improve adult self-sufficiency and opportunities for their children. Certainly, these results make housing vouchers a promising approach to housing poor families and suggest it is worthwhile to invest more in programs that can produce similar results.

This study also has implications for non-voucher programs. The results indicate three key factors that helped Gautreaux adults find employment in the suburbs: personal safety, role models, and access to jobs. If these factors were improved in the city, city residents could be helped without moving to the suburbs. In fact, the Chicago Housing Authority (CHA), at the initiative of its director, Vincent Lane, has recently made impressive efforts to improve safety, role models, and job access in public housing projects. To improve the safety of the housing projects, the CHA has taken security measures. To provide positive role models, the CHA has initiated a mixed-income housing development, Lake Parc Place, that includes working residents who are positive models for their unemployed neighbors. To improve access to suburban jobs, some housing projects also have provided mini-bus service to the suburbs. These are the same factors that Gautreaux adults noted as helping them, so the CHA measures represent promising efforts. It is not certain, however, how thorough and successful these efforts will be or whether they will result in greater employment. Even improved security may not make the projects as safe as the suburbs, and one-hour commutes may limit the attractiveness of taking a mini-bus to low-paying jobs. It will be some time before we can assess the success of such programs.

The Gautreaux studies indicate clearly that the Kerner Commission's housing strategy can lead to gains in employment, education and social integration for low-income blacks. Contrary to the pessimistic predictions of "culture of poverty" models discussed at the beginning of this paper,<sup>82</sup> the early experiences of low-income blacks do not prevent them from benefitting from suburban moves. The Gautreaux results also support a basic premise of the *Kerner Commission Report*: Geographic location has a substantial and significant effect on people's opportunities.

---

82. See *supra* notes 25-27 and accompanying text.

Programs that help people escape areas of concentrated poverty can improve employment and educational opportunities for those people.