Melody L. Boyd

Race and Space: Racial Experiences in Neighborhood Transitions out of Public Housing

Abstract

This paper focuses on the role of race in the experiences of participants of the Gautreaux Two housing mobility program. The program gave residents of Chicago public housing a voucher to move to more advantaged neighborhoods, designated as neighborhoods in which at least 76.5 percent of households were non-poor and 70 percent were non-black. Four waves of in-depth qualitative interviews were conducted between 2002 and 2005 with a sample of 91 families. A high percentage of program participants made secondary moves away from their placement addresses, and most of these moves were to less advantaged neighborhoods. I analyze the racial expectations and experiences of families living in racially diverse neighborhoods, and the roles that these play in families' mobility decisions. I find that the majority of respondents liked the idea of living in racially diverse neighborhoods, and that racial concerns were not the primary factor in most secondary moves.

Introduction

This paper focuses on the relationship between social ties and space, and analyzes the ways that race, class, and gender intersect in specific spatial contexts to shape access to opportunity and in turn influence families' neighborhood experiences. My goal is to contribute to the larger theoretical discussion of the relationship between social ties, space, and race to consider the ways that network effects specifically influence the lives of low-income women and youth.

Specifically, this project assesses the different ways that social ties influence families' experiences in their neighborhoods by focusing on the types of neighborhoods families moved to as a result of the Gautreaux Two housing mobility program, which was implemented in Chicago in 2002. Like its predecessor, the original Gautreaux program which was implemented in 1976, the Gautreaux Two program gave low-income residents of Chicago public housing a voucher providing them with the opportunity to move to more advantaged neighborhoods. These vouchers had a set of special requirements: they

could only be used for units in census tracts with no more than 23.49 percent of residents living in poverty and no more than 30 percent black residents. Such neighborhoods were designated "opportunity areas." After residing in these opportunity areas for one year, the families could either remain in their units or use their vouchers to move to any neighborhood they wanted, without the poverty and race restrictions. I use in-depth qualitative interview data that was collected by Northwestern University's Institute for Policy Research (IPR) between 2002 and 2005 with a randomly chosen sample of adults and youth in 91 of the participant families. Four waves of adult interviews were conducted during the study, and the youth were interviewed once.

Of the 91 families included in the qualitative sample, 33 remained in their baseline neighborhood and did not move through the Gautreaux program. Families who did not move through the program were not provided with alternative mobility options through Gautreaux, although they could apply to other programs for which public housing residents are eligible. Twenty-seven moved to an opportunity area through the program and remained in that neighborhood for at least two years. Thirty-one families moved to an opportunity area and then made a secondary move to another neighborhood within two years of the original move. This analysis assesses the various factors that contributed to these outcomes, and analyzes the role of race specifically.

Literature

One of the many challenges of urban poverty research is understanding the deeply entrenched nature of the inequalities that exist among neighborhoods and the effects that living in neighborhoods of concentrated poverty have on families. The fact that a disproportionate number of racial minorities, particularly blacks, reside in high-poverty

neighborhoods points to the reality that a main factor influencing black concentrated poverty is racial residential segregation. Racial segregation is the primary residential pattern in cities in the United States, and it is particularly evident in the segregation of blacks from whites (Bobo and Zubrinsky 1996). The history of the United States is pervaded by racism and segregation, and an awareness of these historical realities is required to understand current patterns of racial residential segregation and to recognize the forces that maintain and exacerbate educational, occupational, and other institutional segregation and inequality (Bobo and Zubrinsky 1996; Massey and Denton 1993).

The continuing patterns of racial residential segregation are complicated, and are maintained by a combination of factors. Segregation is not a natural process; rather it is the result of various structural forces and discriminatory housing practices of governmental agencies, organizations, and individuals. Although the majority of blacks favor desegregation, the fact that segregation persists is evidence of the largely involuntary nature of the segregation of blacks (Massey and Denton 1993). For blacks, enduring barriers to residential mobility exist, and blacks' decisions about residential location are largely determined by external forces rather than simply by personal desires (Crowder 2001; Massey, Condran, and Denton 1987).

The literature on racial preferences paints a complex picture of the role that personal preferences play in neighborhood choices. Clark's (1991) work on racial preferences indicates that individual preferences for neighborhood racial composition do contribute to residential segregation. However, blacks and whites have different perceptions of acceptable racial composition levels, and the preferences of whites may influence changes in residential segregation more than the preferences of blacks. Charles

(2005, 2000) finds that whites prefer a higher percentage of same-race neighbors, and blacks are more likely to prefer very diverse or somewhat diverse neighborhoods. Given the historical context of the constraints on neighborhood choice for families living in impoverished neighborhoods, policy responses include both community development in these neighborhoods as well as efforts to provide mobility options.

There have been many changes in housing policy in recent years, and there is much debate over the best ways to provide housing for low-income families - where families should be encouraged to move, what impact low-income housing has for surrounding communities, etc. There is much theoretical and empirical work that considers the effects of living in neighborhoods of concentrated poverty, and there are a variety of policy approaches to ameliorating these neighborhood effects. Place-based initiatives attempt to bring resources to areas of concentrated poverty. Personal mobility programs develop the opportunities available to residents by improving access to jobs and other resources. Residential mobility programs provide families with access to affordable housing in areas where the opportunities are presumably better (HUD 1994). Thus, housing mobility programs take the approach of moving families out of areas of concentrated poverty to promote access to resources, typically providing subsidized housing vouchers to make relocation affordable for low-income families. The first housing mobility program, the Gautreaux program, was implemented in 1976 as the result of a residential segregation lawsuit in Chicago. Subsequent mobility programs expanded to include other local and national level designs.

Research on the experiences of youth transitioning out of public housing to suburban neighborhoods through the Moving To Opportunity program finds gender

differences in youths' ability to navigate new neighborhoods, with girls' activities generally better able to fit into low-poverty neighborhood social control mechanisms than boys (Clampet-Lundquist et al. forthcoming). White (2007) addresses the social regulation of youth and the way that class, gender, race and ethnic differences all shape the construction of space and the social regulation of who uses that space. White gives the example of black males standing on corners as a social event that often elicits negative public and police reaction. This is often particularly true in suburban neighborhoods.

Racial issues are crucial to explore in mobility programs, especially given the lack of neighborhood durability in the outcomes of the Gautreaux Two program. Because so many Gautreaux families made secondary moves back to highly racially segregated and impoverished neighborhoods, one possible explanation is that families simply preferred to live with people who are like themselves and that is why so many moved back to neighborhoods similar to the racial composition of their baseline neighborhoods. However, I do not find evidence of families making decisions to move back to neighborhoods with a high concentration of black residents based on racial issues alone. Instead, subsequent mobility decisions were largely influenced by other constraints related to social ties, financial issues, and landlord and unit quality. While not the primary factor in families' decisions to make secondary moves, racial experiences intersected with class and gender issues to both positively and negatively shape families' experiences in their opportunity areas.

Data and Methods

This project assesses the role of race in families' experiences in their neighborhoods by focusing on the types of neighborhoods families moved to as a result

of the Gautreaux Two housing mobility program, which was implemented in Chicago in 2002. Like its predecessor, the original Gautreaux program which was implemented in 1976, the Gautreaux Two program gave low-income residents of Chicago public housing a voucher providing them with the opportunity to move to more advantaged neighborhoods. These vouchers had a set of special requirements: they could only be used for units in census tracts with no more than 23.49 percent of residents living in poverty and no more than 30 percent African American residents. Such neighborhoods were designated "opportunity areas." After residing in these opportunity areas for one year, the families could either remain in their units or use their vouchers to move to any neighborhood they wanted, without the poverty and race restrictions. I use in-depth qualitative interview data that was collected by Northwestern University's Institute for Policy Research (IPR) between 2002 and 2005 with a randomly chosen sample of adults and youth in 91 of the participant families.

Project funding allowed for in-depth repeated interviews to be conducted with roughly 90 Gautreaux Two participants. Gautreaux Two participants were the leaseholder of the household. To recruit this sample, the research team first enlisted a randomly selected 20 percent of all Gautreaux Two clients who met the program requirements, attended one of the orientation sessions held between May and October of 2002, went to a one-on-one session with a program official, and completed all program paperwork. Four hundred and fifty participants completed these requirements at the time the sample was drawn, yielding an initial sampled group of eighty-four families. To compensate for the initially low take-up of the program (fewer used their voucher to move than was anticipated), the team drew a second sample of 23 program enrollees who appeared likely

to move as part of the program for a total of 107 families.[1]

Ninety-nine percent of respondents were female, with only one male respondent in the sample. Ninety-six percent of respondents were black, and four percent were migrants from the Caribbean, both U.S. (Puerto Rico) and foreign born. The average age of adult respondents at baseline was 30 years, and at baseline respondents had lived in their current housing development for an average of 8.5 years. The average household size was four, the majority of whom were children, apart from the leaseholder. The average age of the youth respondents at the time of the youth interviews was 14 years old, and 47 percent of the youth were female.

The interviews were semi-structured, open-ended interviews that lasted between two and four hours for the adults, and between an hour and a half to three hours for the youth. The baseline interviews were conducted within three months of the respondent's orientation (orientations spanned a six-month period and move-in dates were even more dispersed). Families were contacted bi-monthly to check-in and see how the families were doing and determine any changes in their moving situation. Once a family moved, the second interview was timed at about three to four months after the move. The third interview occurred when the family celebrated its one-year anniversary in a new neighborhood. A fourth and final interview was conducted close to the two-year anniversary of the move. For families who did not move but remained in their baseline

[1] Of the total respondent pool, 78 percent (n=84) of the families were drawn from a random sample of program participants. As program take-up proceeded at a slower rate than anticipated, and it appeared that take-up would be less than 50 percent, the team recruited an additional 23 respondents (22% of sample pool) from a list of "likely movers," that is, participants who already had selected a unit and secured a verbal agreement with the landlord. Pashup et al. (2005) describe some of the difficulties participants faced in moving through the Gautreaux program. These difficulties included both external (tight rental market, landlord discrimination against housing vouchers, family size, and bureaucratic delays) and internal (little exposure to life outside of Chicago's south side, poor understanding of program requirements, large household size, and mental or physical health problems) factors.

neighborhoods, these interviews occurred at about 12, 18, and 30 months after they attended an orientation session.

Interviewers audio recorded the interviews, with permission from the interviewee. The interviews were then transcribed by a group of trained transcribers. I used Atlas.ti to code the data, using a combination of inductive and deductive coding schemes.

Results

"I should be able to go where I want to go": Program Requirements

The Gautreaux program's restrictions that participants could only use their vouchers in census tracts with no more than 23.49 percent of residents living in poverty and no more than 30 percent black residents was a unique attribute of this mobility program. The stated goal of this was to move respondents to low-poverty and racially diverse neighborhoods, but in practice, many of these neighborhoods were not racially diverse and instead were predominantly white. Due to the legacy of racial residential segregation in the Chicago area, few neighborhoods are truly racially diverse. For ease of description, I use the term "diverse" neighborhoods in the way that the Gautreaux program did, but it is important to keep in mind that this broad term does not always accurately reflect the real racial compositions of opportunity areas. Respondents had varied viewpoints on these voucher restrictions, and some respondents disagreed with the concept of a racial requirement. Their narratives reflect a broader outlook on neighborhood racial and resource issues.

Ruth's story illustrates this idea as she exhibits uncertainty about "fitting in" to an opportunity area. In fact, she is one of the few respondents who really does not want to move, and prefers to stay where she lives at baseline in Bronzeville scattered sites

housing, where 98 percent of residents are black. Ruth does not end up moving through the Gautreaux program. She explains her concerns:

> Right. So then the tools that you all are going to use to help me out now, you all are going to give me all this, like just tools, just upper motivation tools. Why you can't give it here, so when it comes up and coming, I can fit in with the environment…Like I don't know, my focus is working, working, working, working. So if you can't get any more hours in the day, which is impossible, but you know, like where I can go. And so as far as a trade, something that helps me get to increase my income, financial management. Show me how to manage the finances that I already have, something of that nature.

She goes on to explain what she means by "fitting in":

> But I just say fit in, you know, as some reason they want to move us out now so they want everybody to blend in together. And I don't know. Why I won't blend in now? Why wouldn't I fit in now? I don't understand. So to me they're discriminating that they said that happened before, they're doing the same thing. Because they're saying, well, in order for you to do this, we think that these type of people will motivate you. Which is not true. So look around here, seeing the people on the corner, seeing the drug addicts, the drunks, is motivation for me to say that I don't want to be like that, or I don't want that for my family.

Ruth provides more detail about wanting to stay in Bronzeville:

> But then I'm saying, this guy over here, he owns this great store over here. Got two kids, a little boy and a little girl. Driving a Lexus, they have a Caravan. So you know…He's already doing it. He's black. So everybody don't need to move out. Everybody just don't need to. I think you should talk to them before you say well, we're going to move you out. When you have your one-on-one with your counselor, and then they decide what program you're going to be in…Gautreaux, I just do not like the program. Because they are stereotyping us…because I think this is discriminating, when you're telling me that I can't live in my neighborhood, and I can't make it, because of the other people in the neighborhood. They're going to bring me down. And that's not true…CHA and Gautreaux is not helping the situation, because you don't blend people in. And that's another thing. You blend people in together that really probably, you know what I'm saying, might not even want to be blended in. So now you're forcing people to be together that even want to be probably be together. I'm not going to tell you that I'm going to be happy. I don't do nothing. I'll be a good neighbor. But I don't know, I don't know, I don't know why we're segregated. It's just I don't want you to fight that.

Ruth explains further that she does not like her unit and would like to move into new

buildings in her same neighborhood:

> New buildings. That would be no problem. My problem is just taking me out of, and then the thing could backfire you. What if you take me out of what I'm used to. I'm used to my people. And things don't go right. And then what?...You just don't fit in, just don't fit in. You know, just don't fit in, you know. OK, there's a difference in knowing that when you move in a place, when I moved in here, and you know, there's going to be some people that don't like me. And who they are, I would never know. Because I would never confront them, but once I move into another neighborhood where there's predominant white or something, it's just like you know, without a doubt, that it's going to be, they don't like you. They don't like you, and then they'd look at you, and you'd see they see you moving in and stuff, and the first thing that they're going to say is, you know, here comes a charity case. And I don't want to be anybody's charity case. So I can stand up and I can, you know…So you know, it's like they'll step on you when you move. And look at Northbrook. Unless, unless, unless you're a doctor or lawyer, or making some good money or something, Northbrook is expensive to live in. So you know, here comes a black family. She's got three kids and stuff. Then you know that stamp is going to be put on her. Automatically. It's a stamp there. So if I move in a townhouse over here, no stamp is coming. No label is put on me. All they know is that I work. They see me come in and they see me go out. And that's it. I don't need no label. No more attention that has to be drawn to me and my family.

Francine also disagrees with the racial requirement. After living in Ickes for eight years she moved through Gautreaux to Alsip, and then made a secondary move to Kenwood, in the city. Ninety-five percent of residents in her Ickes neighborhood are black, twelve percent of residents in Alsip are black, and ninety-six percent of residents in Kenwood are black. Francine is a good example of someone moving back to a neighborhood very similar in racial composition to her baseline neighborhood, and she had misgivings about the racial requirement of the program in the first place. However, race was not her primary reason for making a secondary move. Francine moved from Alsip in order to be closer to her family networks and have ready access to child-care. Also, Francine describes the things the she misses about the opportunity area of Alsip. She mentions liking the unit and landlord better, as well as the school in Alsip. Francine

had a racial incident in her opportunity area; she was called a "nigger" while walking to the store in Alsip. However, after making a secondary move she talks about wanting to move back to an opportunity area. Describing her viewpoint on the racial requirement of the program, she says:

> The only part I don't like, I don't like the Leadership, the 30 percent, the racial rate where you got to move, I don't like that. OK, they say they want us to go in a mixed environment so we could better ourselves. OK, you still could go to a mixed environment and still be gang and violence. What's the difference? You know I think if you decided that you're trying to help me, and you're going to help me do it, I should be able to go where I want to go. That's what I feel, but you know after a year is up you can go where you want to go anyway. After my lease is up here, I can go move back to the city. But I don't know why, you know, to me it's like they're trying to do like the rest of everybody else is per se, put us all, black people, in the suburbs. And I don't feel that's right. Why push us here and push all the other people, make the better houses for the people downtown, and then we can't get in there. They're not making that for us, they're making it out here for us so we can come out here and kill each other, because that's what people are doing. I don't like that part at all, the 30 percent black people. I don't like that. But other than that, I liked the program. I really disagree on that part.

Unlike Ruth and Francine, most respondents liked the idea of living in a diverse neighborhood, but discussed the ways that meeting this program requirement made it harder to find a unit that qualified for voucher use. Some of the program obstacles to successful participation in Gautreaux made searching for qualified units laborious. Dorothy has lived for 20 years in Altgeld Gardens and she explains that she likes the idea of living in diverse neighborhood, but the racial percentage requirement makes it difficult to find a unit. When asked how she feels about the requirements of the program, Dorothy says:

> That's kind of hard, it's really, I can't see me finding, when you find, ok like in Riverdale or Dalton, I'll say Dalton, it's mixed over there, but anywhere it's more blacks than it is whites, or it's more whites than it is blacks, so it's not in between…I mean, I understand that part of it being black mixing with the black and white, I understand, that's real nice, but it's so hard to find it. It's so hard to

find, I don't have no problem with [the racial requirement].

Similarly, Shirley felt like the race and poverty requirements made it difficult to find a qualifying unit. She inquired into 80 or 90 units in her search for a unit, but was unable to locate one and did not end up moving through Gautreaux. When asked how she feels about the race and poverty requirements, Shirley says:

> I didn't care for it. Though I, it wasn't to me to determine it, it was their program, they could set whatever guidelines they see fit. But I think it eliminated a lot of stuff. It, I guess their theory or thinking on this was, we're not gonna have you movin' from one place of poverty to another place of poverty. We want you to expand your horizons, we want you to open your children up to other - to new opportunities. I can respect that. But I think it kind of, it kind of, I don't know. One lady, when we went to the training, one lady was on the elevator just crying. And she was like, I found a place, I found a place - in a black neighborhood. She had already found a place when she came there. When we came there, she had already found a place, so she was on the elevator crying, because she knew she couldn't move her children there. And she kinda had to start from scratch, but I don't know how that went, you know, later - But I was like, man, she's just crying! And it was just really disheartening to see somebody who was so set and so ready to move, and she was like, now I have to find another place. But I think a lot of people, their main thing was, why do we have to move so far into the suburbs and everything?

Respondents' perspectives on the racial requirements of the Gautreaux program often related to their expectations of what it would be like to live in a neighborhood with a very different racial composition than what they were used to. In the next section, I explore these neighborhood expectations.

"I want her to meet different people": Expectations of Living in a Diverse Neighborhood

Another area where racial issues came into play was in respondents' expectations of what it would be like to live in a diverse neighborhood. Paula, who lives in Cabrini Green with her two children, ages five and seven, and is pregnant with her third child,

explains that she is not sure what to expect from living in a diverse neighborhood because she's never experienced that before:

> It would be cool in a way. Probably not cool, but I'd be living in the suburbs period. I already knew. I already know what to expect, but 30 percent black, or African-American, or whatever, I really wouldn't know, because I've seen a lot of black faces. I don't know. I don't know how they're going to react. You know what I'm saying? It ain't just me moving there. Some people move in, I can see us over there. I could get out there, and you know, you never know. I don't care what area it is. You don't know what people think. Ooh, they're moving in? You don't even know me, but they're going to judge me when we move in, you know. So I wouldn't know. I just have to go through it. I'll just wait and see.

When asked what worries her about it, Paula says:

> That they probably won't like us, because you know how these people go. We don't like them anyway. But everybody's not like that. So I just figure how they'll react to me and my kids, that's all.

She then clarifies what she thinks would affect how they would react to her:

> They don't know, they don't know. I won't put a big sign, I'm from Cabrini. You know, if that's the color, you know, with everybody it's all about color, you know. Wherever you go. And then by you being black anyway, they're really going to look at us. That's a black family on this block? You know, somebody might say that, like if a white person moved on a block with a lot blacks and Puerto Ricans, what them white people want? You know, anything. You know, but some you do get the good, and you know you get the good and you get the bad. So that's what's in every neighborhood.

Cherie has really positive expectations of moving from Cabrini Green, where she has lived for 23 years, to a diverse neighborhood through Gautreaux. She explains:

> Leadership is about Gautreaux. You know, the black lady went out and did a lawsuit because she said black people wasn't getting fair housing. So that's what it's basically from. In my opinion, I would have loved Leadership. Honestly, because I get a chance to live in the suburbs. I love the suburb. I may be wrong, but I love it. I love it, I love it. And you get a chance to move in mixed neighborhoods. And that's what I think was the key thing that I really liked was that mixed neighborhood…Yeah. I wanted mixed. I want my kids to know the real world. I don't want them thinking it's only blacks in the world, you know, and when you live here, that's what most of the kids think. You know, they see white people, oooooh. I'm serious. And that's sad, because some of these people

> have never been nowhere…I think it would be great [to live in a mixed neighborhood].

Despite her enthusiasm about the prospect of moving to the suburbs, Cherie does not end up moving through Gautreaux. She and her family inquired into around 80 units, but she had trouble finding a four-bedroom unit, a program requirement given that she has five children and custody of two grandchildren.

Gloria is 53 years-old and was a participant in the original Gautreaux program and moved from Cabrini Green to Schaumburg with her four school-aged children in the early 1980's. She lived in Schaumburg for 13 years and she enjoyed living there and thought it was good for her children. However, she ended up moving back to Cabrini because she had developed significant health programs and wanted to live closer to Northwestern Hospital, and she also could no longer afford her rent in the suburbs. Her participation in Gautreaux Two was motivated by a desire for her four year-old granddaughter, who she is raising, to grow up in a place similar to where her children were raised. Gloria talks about the fact that her granddaughter is racially mixed and how she wants her to be able to live in a mixed race neighborhood. Gloria explains where she is looking for housing and that her kids want her to look in the South Side of Chicago but she does not want to live there:

> My [grand]baby is mixed. I do not want her in an all black area. Nothing wrong with a lot of nice black folks, but I just don't want her in an all black area. I want her to know about all kinds of cultures and different things, and about…now…Hyde Park is a nice area, certain areas in Hyde Park, but it's so expensive too. It's about as high as it is up here, really, but…it's hard to find something there. And, most of the people in the projects are going down south in the hundreds, I don't want to go out here…I don't want to be around…why would I want to go where up where I they, where I just come from, you know.

Gloria ended up moving from Cabrini, which is a neighborhood that is 97 percent black,

to a neighborhood near West Rogers Park that is 1 percent black. At the end of the study Gloria liked living in her opportunity area, but she was considering making a secondary move back to the city because the landlord has not been taking care of the unit well and she would like to be closer to her children and other social networks.

Other respondents had negative expectations of what it would be like to move to a neighborhood that consisted of less than 37 black residents. When asked what she thinks about the racial requirement, Sophie says:

> I think it's so unfair. Yeah, because I'm saying why can't we go where we want to go. We don't want to live there, you know, you just have to stick us over here, and I don't know if these people going to be too keen with me and my kids, you know. And we just got to go in there and try to just push our way, and they're looking like oh yeah, she thinks she's going up here and scare up ourselves, we got some more things coming for her, you know. And I'll be…because I'll be skeptical. You know, because well, nobody told them. You don't want me there, believe me, I ain't trying to come. And then my son, like I said, this is his last year. Why can't we stay where they can keep us closer to the kids' school, and we got to yank them out and then put them all across town or whatever. And it's a problem that they know, you know, the majority of their school year. I know the schools [in an opportunity area] will be good. Because I went to a mixed school and it was good teachers and it was just real nice and stuff. And yeah, a lot more things, everybody sticks together, they have different kind of programs and stuff going on and you know, because when they look out for theirs, they're going to look out for you, you know, because you're in here, so. It's a lot different…Scared the people might lynch me, I don't know. You know, because like said, I stay on my side of town, don't mess with nobody's business, and I don't have no problems with nobody, but I don't want to get in and step on nobody's toes if they don't want me there, you know. And I don't blame them for being, you know, acting funny, because you do got some people that come in there and tear up your neighborhood, and tear up yourself and write on your buildings, their kids going to be all over your yards and stuff. So like I said, I don't know.

Combining Expectations and Past Experience: Public Housing History

Some respondents had experiences living in the types of neighborhoods to which the Gautreaux program aimed to move people. These respondents had interesting narratives that combined expectations of what it would be like to move to diverse

neighborhoods, and previous experiences that shaped these expectations. A higher percentage of stayers (35%) had previously lived outside of public housing in the five years prior to the start of the Gautreaux program than secondary movers had (13%).

Michelle lives in Altgeld Gardens and explains that it has been hard for her to find a landlord that takes Section 8 in a neighborhood that meets the poverty and race requirements. When asked how she would feel about living in a neighborhood that is 30 percent or less black she says:

> I like it. Like I said, I grew up in a mixed area, out in Trumbull Park. I grew up out there, too. And I grew up with white friends, black friends, Mexican. I don't know, it's fun to be around a diverse set of people that know how you might like this, or you might not like that or what foods you eat, what type of celebrations your family has, and stuff like that. And living in the world with diverse set of people, my kids need to learn. You know, how it is that you know this person gets ahead and this person doesn't. So I don't have a problem with it. Actually, that's what I want.

Regarding living in a low-poverty neighborhood, Michelle says:

> I like that, too, because it makes me strive a little harder. It makes me strive a little harder, yeah…I basically get [my kids] the things, something that now, and just to be able to keep it up. Like their bikes and stuff and it gets torn by other kids, your furniture. My last furniture set was destroyed by a neighbor's kids, not my kids. It was cream, and they would come in in the wintertime and put their heels up on the back of my furniture and stuff. Mud and kids was coming in, in particular to play with my kids, and they tended to toys and to the point where I have to limit their company, you know, I don't like to depriving them of being able to play with somebody, but if this person's kid is not well behaved, I don't have time to be bothered.

Lauren talks about wanting to move to a neighborhood like where she grew up in the suburbs, and that her kids spend time in these types of neighborhoods because of kin connections. For Lauren, having social ties outside of her baseline neighborhood influences her perception of where she would like to live. She says:

> …like I say, go back there again, I grew up…right, and I want the same things for my kids, even better. So, if that's what that means, then that's what it means.

> Moving out of here and moving somewhere like that, I don't have no problem with it, I'm aaallll for it…I think you have more opportunity for the children in, on the plus side, and the minus is I can't even think of one right now. [Living in a mostly non-black area] doesn't bother me for one because my brother's wife is white, right, and they live in Rockford, and my kids go around them and interact with other interracial [kids] so…I feel as though my kids are adapt, they could…they will adapt to it…you know, most schools that are in a predominantly black neighborhood don't have whites in their school, so they wouldn't know…they might be like, ooh, she all this, all that or whatever, you know, so I think we'll adapt…There's a lot of positives, a lot of pluses, there's a lot of things in, I'll say interracial neighborhoods that happens because it's an interracial neighborhood, because you got so many races, different things go on in the neighborhood that aren't predominantly black neighborhoods…I mean like you know, like, just say for instance you go in the Humboldt Park area, that's a mixed area, they got, they have their little holiday parades or whatever, you know…a lot of kids, we don't…they don't…what we have is black history month you know so…I mean, it has it's blessings to moving in a mixed area. They get to know more than just African-American. You get to know about a lot of cultural things… it helps nowadays more, educational wise with like you say, the politics and the economy, it helps, it helps.

Tasha talks about how growing up in the suburbs affects her experience in Gautreaux. She moved to an opportunity area where 23 percent of the residents are black and 18 percent are at or below the poverty level. When asked about moving to a low-poverty, racially diverse neighborhood Tasha says:

> For me its normal, you know. Cause my, my mother kept us in areas like that. Up North, suburbs. So really the projects was totally different for us when we moved there…The one thing is that - I mean, to move in the projects versus the different neighborhoods we stayed in when we were kids is that I think you might be in denial about alotta things cause you encounter alotta things livin' in the projects. You see alotta things, you know, and it's totally different. I mean the communities are just totally different. There are certain things that you might do in the projects that you might not even consider doin' nowhere else. Just because of the community. Like when I first moved over there I used to have to fight every day. I didn' know what I was fightin' for but I was fightin', you know. So I mean it taught me a lot, livin' over there. Lotta different things cause I think you wouldn't know about certain things if you didn't stay over there. Cause your parents tend to try and hide those things, you know! So it enlightens you when you learn somethin', its like you get a little more street knowledge over there. Compared to livin' in other areas. So it - I mean, it weighed itself out with me because now I know about certain things that I wouldn't a, wouldn't a known about….Just, I mean, of course [this neighborhood is] a better neighborhood.

Better schools. Beach is not too far away!

Vanessa explains what it has been like living in a mixed race neighborhood when she moved through Gautreaux to Rogers Park, where the racial composition is split pretty evenly between blacks, Latinos, and whites:

> Well, it's good for me. Because as I said, I moved away before coming up and I moved to a mixed neighborhood. So I know what to expect and I know what not to expect. But it's been real fun because my kids - my oldest daughter don't go outside that much. She's not a really outside person. She likes to stay in. She'll go out every now and then. But my youngest daughter, you would think we'd been living over here for like two or three years. She be having so many friends, so many friends. And if I walk through the park or go the restaurant or go to Walgreen's, she has a lot of Puerto Rican friends. And at first it kind of amazed me because she never really been around them, that culture. And it's like now, they all - I mean they all, they teach her, she knows quite a few words. They teach her quite a few words. And I mean it's real nice. I can walk up to the park and they playing with other people. They learned how to play soccer, which they never knew how to play.

Rachelle has spent all 33 years of her life residing at Cabrini Green. She offers an interesting perspective of having never lived outside of public housing and being scared to do so, but her overall story is that she still wants to move:

> I never moved nowhere, I never, you know, lived out of the projects. This'll be my first time in life so - It's kind of scary. Like man, what if these people don't like me, what if they try to do something to get me out their neighborhood…

I now turn to the actual experiences of respondents once they moved to opportunity areas.

"The good outweighs the bad here": Experiences of Living in a Diverse Neighborhood

Adults

For some respondents, moving to opportunity areas was a negative experience, and for others it took a significant amount of time to adjust. Monique explains that she feels like she is watched closely in her opportunity area neighborhood of Elmhurst, where only two percent of residents are black. She explains that she does not feel accepted, and

at one point in the interview she says in some ways she wishes she was still living at Cabrini. However, she also says the good things in her opportunity area outweigh the bad:

> I feel that all eye balls are on me when I first moved in, you know because you can look around in the neighborhood it's no, it's maybe one here, one way over here, black…it's no blacks like that here, no, at all. And mostly everybody on this block is older…And, a lot of prejudice have been from when they were younger. And then they got older, these people stay on this block, have been here for years, 'cause they settled, they probably paid for their house and everything else, and they old and settled and in their ways, you know, and you can't change them, you know so…you know how that is, so…The good outweighs the bad here because even you know, they may have their little ways or something, I can get over it because I'm grown, I know better, you know and I don't have to go to the next level which people go and so I can walk away from prejudice, I can walk away from people looking, whatever, and I can stand on my pride, you know and that I am somebody. You know and don't worry about no one turning heads or anything you know and because you have to still look at, you may get shot at Cabrini, you may, you know. You have to watch for your children, you know what I'm saying and I must say it, after I didn't have my car for a while, I had to start letting my kids go to school by they self, and never once they came home and said somebody was after them, you know, something happened, or anything. I could rest assured that they was coming home. And I would leave my door open when I have to go somewhere, and they would be here when I get here.

Monique goes on to explain that there are a lot of people that come in and out of her house and she feels like her house has a reputation among the neighbors. She says:

> I'm quite sure if I be here a couple of years and you know, people see that I still go in and out, you know, I don't, you know, they would change…[and] accept me for who I am.

Despite Monique's uncertainly about the neighborhood and feeling like she is watched more closely because she is black, she says that overall she likes the neighborhood, citing safety and lack of gang activity as key reasons. She also feels that the school her children attend in the suburbs is more advanced than the city school they attended previously, and she likes her landlord. Monique ends up making a secondary move to another opportunity area, Villa Park, where only one percent of residents are black. She made this secondary

move because her landlord had another unit that was much larger, so she moved to have more space.

Other respondents had very positive experiences with the diversity in their opportunity areas. Sonia, a stayer, told us how much she appreciates the diversity of her Gautreaux neighborhood where eleven percent of residents are black and 38 percent are Latino:

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

Another stayer, Melissa, talks favorably about the diversity of her southwest Chicago neighborhood:

> It's not bad being around black people, but, you know, it's sometimes good to be around another mixture of people. 'Cause it's not just white. It's you know, everything. We see Philippines, you know, Mexicans. It's all, you know, all different types of people… So I don't want to you know, seclude myself, or be ignorant to other people.

Children

The experiences of the children in the new neighborhoods also demonstrate the importance of social networks and the potential barriers to creating new networks. Some children experienced racially motivated incidents in their neighborhoods and schools, and this contributed to the difficulty some of the children had in adapting to their new neighborhoods and schools. Akilah's 10 year-old son was called "nigger" repeatedly by several of the young children in their Gautreaux neighborhood in the North Side of Chicago, where only one percent of the residents are black. Incidents such as this point to the salience of race in creating possible barriers to the formation of social ties in the

respondents' new neighborhoods. Akilah made a secondary move, though her primary reason was because her landlord chose not to renew her lease. She ended up moving to live closer to her family.

Mia's story about her 12 year-old son exemplifies the issue of racial profiling of youth that I presented earlier. She explains how things have been in their Gautreaux neighborhood of Albany Park, which has just a one percent black population:

> No, only the first year a lot of people were wondering what we were doing here, and they would ask me, you live over here? Yeah, I live over here...I just guess they noticed a stranger, and they know maybe there's a certain minority that aren't over here, you know, and they're trying to figure out how did I get here…My son still gets harassed by the police on and off though too…It's not as bad as before, but they still stop him and stuff…Well like if something goes down over here and they say it's somebody black, he's the first one they want to talk to. They'll come over, and he said they'll come and knock on the door and ask him about things, that they think he might know. And I told him, you don't open the damn door for them, because they don't have the right to do that…That was, I think, just before summer began, he told me end of the school year last year…And he said two cops came and knocked on the door and asked him. I don't remember what happened, but I said they don't have that right or that business to ask you any damn thing. I said you're a minor. They can't question you like that…It happened while I was at work. It seemed to happen a lot when I'm at work. And then he don't get their name so I can file a report or file a complaint, you know. And I tried to tell him, look at their badge and just try to memorize his name or something, you know. But he don't do it because I guess he's scared. He just don't want no trouble…Like sometimes when we come from the store I'll notice that they'll slow down and I know they're looking at my son, because sometimes he'll walk ahead of me, and the lady was gonna stop him but then they noticed I'm with him, so they figure I'm his parent, and they don't mess with him.

Mya's 14 year-old son also had trouble fitting in to their opportunity area, where 3 percent of the residents are black and 84 percent are Latino. She explains:

> I mean its, its okay. But its kinda hard on the kids…Because by them bein' the only like African-American on the block, I mean its not too many [other African-Americans] around…Basically its like they stay in the house. Well I know my little one, he's been like that school cause he's the only African-American in his class. Yeah. So it been kinda tough for him…He's - no, he said they picked on

> him but I guess after he defend himself they won't pick on him anymore. Yeah, he don't really have any - he don't have any friends since we been here, he don't, won't even go outside. At the other place he did have friends that lived next door that would come an he would go ride his bike but actually since we've been here he's probably only rode his bike twice.

For other families, children's positive experiences in their new neighborhoods were a key component of what they liked about the neighborhood. Vanessa describes how good the diversity in her Gautreaux neighborhood in the North Side of Chicago has been for her two kids:

> It's been really good for them. [My daughter] has a lot of different friends as far as races, and that's something that I wanted them to experience - the different nationalities of people and how it can be an advantage or disadvantage to you. Well see, I've kind of, by me being moved around a lot, coming up, it really doesn't bother me what area I live in because I can adapt, but as far as for my kids, I think it was. I think it was good for them, because being there, being around all African-American, not getting to experience different cultures, that's what I was worried about. But now, being here in a low poverty level and everything, I think it's great for them and for me, because I feel, I feel more comfortable knowing that I don't have to come in clutching my purse all the time. You know, I still kind of got a nice little grasp on it, 'cause you don't know, it's a fool everywhere, but you know, you don't have to feel like, ok, I'm going out of the house, I got to make sure my CD player is in my purse. You know, how that…sense of fear, as much as you would…I think you have more fear in a high-poverty area, than you do in a non-high poverty area, because you know, people want a lot, you know, people want things, and some people if they can't have it, in their mind, they have to take it. And you know here, you see kids, a lot of kids on bikes, you see a lot of kids with Walkmans, you see a lot of kids wearing jewelry, and as far as there, you have to wear little rings, you can't wear a [lot] 'cause somebody's going to snatch it from you maybe, you know, that's the only thing that's good about that…The issue of race doesn't really bother me because I get along with everybody, I try to at least. And, I just like, I tell my kids to be open to every and anything because you don't know what your future holds. It's not to say, I will tell my kids, you're not guaranteed to marry a black man, don't put in your mind that you have to marry your own race. Be open to any and everything because this person that likes you may not be the best thing for you, but the one that don't like you and keep buying you flowers and roses, you don't like him, don't…give a person a chance. So I tell them to give everything a chance, you might not like it, if you don't like it, then don't be bothered with it, but give it a chance, but you don't know…I really feel accepted in this neighborhood, because the first year I was kind of leery because I didn't know anybody, I didn't know the area, I didn't know how to basically get around here. But now I can go to

> Skokie, I know how to go to, you know, Evanston, to the malls and even here in this area. I know where the different little restaurants and everything, opposed there, you only had [McDonald's], fast food places. You really had to go down town if you really wanted to eat, but it was so expensive, now you know, around here they have a lot of little café's, it seems where you can do, and just take your kids to experience different outings.

In these narratives about adult and youth transitions to new neighborhoods, interactions with institutions and neighbors are evident. In the next section, I focus specifically on the ways that race, class and gender issues intersect in these contexts.

"Basically the single families are the black mothers:" Intersectionality of Race, Class and Gender

The intersection of race, class and gender is evident in respondents' experiences in opportunity area schools and neighborhoods. In this section I highlight the narratives of children and parents regarding school and neighborhood transitions. A common theme in these narratives is the disparate resources that are available in various contexts.

Schools

The issue of schools is complex, and in this section I focus on the ways that race and class issues intersect in school contexts. Yolanda moved to an opportunity area in Hanover Park and then made a secondary move to a different unit in another opportunity area in Hanover Park. She transferred her children to a school in Hanover Park when she initially moved, and she kept them in the same school when she moved again. Her 14 year-old daughter, Temeka, now attends Glenbard North High School, where four percent of the student population is black and four percent qualify for free or reduced price lunch. Prior to moving, Temeka attended Dett, where 99 percent of the students are black and 92 percent are eligible for free or reduced price lunch. Yolanda explains that prior to moving

through Gautreaux, she thought that her daughter would do better in an opportunity area school, but that she is having a difficult time with grades and she has experienced racial incidents. When asked how her daughter's current school serves her needs, she responds:

> Not as well as her last school. Not as well as her last school. Temeka, she be needin' help with things. She like not real good in math. She need help in certain areas, in math…So she said Ma, she said, I'll raise my hand, she said I raise my hand every time I need some help. She said they not helpin' me up there, at the school. She said I raise my hand, she said it be other kids raisin' they hand, she said but I'm always been the last one to be called on. And then she said when they call on me, they'll say, what Temeka? Like they don' wanna be bothered with her or somethin'. You know, and that was botherin' me. I said she is here, you know, at school for you all to help her. Why would you - you know, they don' wanna help, then I don' think they should be workin' at the school. Or in that area of the school, but somewhere else. So Temeka, she had a hard time gettin' help. But when things start goin' bad for her at school, they wanna start callin' Temeka's mom. And I told 'em I said well, Temeka was askin' y'all for help. Temeka came to y'all for help. And she wasn't gettin' the help that I think she should be getting. I said well, they said what kinda help you, you know, that you think that she need. I said first of all, when she was at her other school, the teachers stayed after school, or they'll tell Temeka come a hour before school start. And they would give her the help she need. I said she not gettin' that here. I said it's no one here to take time out to help her with her needs. I said they took time outta they, outta they schedule. They own personal time to help my child. And so they said that, that's what she need? I said yes, that what she need. I said some kids take a - you know, don't learn as quick as the other one. I say and that's how Temeka is, it take awhile, you have to explain stuff, you gotta break stuff down to her. And so it's like they weren't really - I guess it wan't - I don' know what was goin' through they head at school, but to me it seem like they weren't really helpin' her at all. Her grades started fallin', goin' down. Temeka never came home with a F on her, on her grades. Never. And the city, she always kept A's an B's. And I still got all her old report cards. She kept A's and B's. She kept probably one or two C's. She never received a F or a D. And when she got out here, Temeka been receivin' F's an D's. In everything…And I thought it would be helpin' her since we moved out here, and it's not. [One of the reasons I moved out here was] to better her in her schoolin'. An it's not, it got worse. Her schooling got worse. Because they not helpin' her….And then Temeka say Ma, I think they racist at the school. She said they didn', they not gonna show it to us, us she said because, she said because they probably can lose they jobs, she said, I see the difference between the way they treatin' us and some of the other students. She say Ma, they keep pickin' on me about my clothes. I don' let Temeka dress half-naked. I don' let Temeka show her belly, I don' let Temeka show anything. But just a shirt she was wearin', and it just said, and it just said obey me. That's all it said, obey me. Temeka couldn' wear that shirt to school no more. But them

> other kids can go to school with green hair. They can go to school with shirts with you know, them playboy bunny rabbits on it. But Temeka couldn' wear her shirt that say obey me. I say, cause they gonna tell her it wasn' appropriate. I said, green hair is not appropriate either…She says it's not too many blacks in our school, Ma. She said it's a lot a, you know, different other races. Mexican, Puerto Ricans, you know, Assyria. She got a Assyria from around there. She said but it's not too many blacks up in that school. She say and I think we gettin' treated unfairly, she said because they get away with a lot a stuff. And anything that they do and we tell on them, they get away with it. They don' get suspended or in-school suspension. But Temeka's friends, they African-Americans, they get suspended for any little thing. And she said Ma, don' wanna go to that school. And now my little, my younger one, my middle one. She said Ma, don' wanna go to that school Temeka go to cause she havin' too many problems. And she about to go to that school if I end up stayin' here.

Yolanda's daughter describes what it was like for her when she first moved to the opportunity area school. Temeka says:

> Ooh, I don't like it. It was like, like, up in Chicago it was like everybody in the classroom know each other. I can't, at that class we have to switch classes every thirty minutes. And in Chicago you just stay in one class all day. And then, but at that school, then you don't hardly know people and then there's fewer people like you, it's not that many people just like you {referring to race}…Yeah, and it's like, it was different than, I'm like, like we used to talk about social studies up in my old school in Chicago. Wouldn't nobody just stare at one person. Like out here, you talk about social studies or slaves or somethin', slave history or somethin' like that, black history, they'll look dead at us, like, like, turn around, and I hate that. 'Cause we be always, it was always like three black people inside the classroom…I don't know [why they look at us]. They probably just think, they probably think, I don't know, 'cause I really can't say what they think. But they probably just feel uncomfortable or somethin' like that. I dunno. Like they probably think that I feel uncomfortable. I feel uncomfortable when they stare at me. But other than that I don't feel uncomfortable.

Along with four percent of the students being black at Glenbard, ten percent are Latino and nineteen percent are Asian or Pacific Islander. When asked how students are different at Glenbard, Temeka responds:

> Probably the language… 'Cause everybody in Chicago spoke my language, and out here they speaking like fifty different languages and stuff like that. Yeah, then you see like, OK, we didn't learn Spanish in grammar school, but out here we had to take Spanish, and then the only thing that's good about out here is the

> education I guess, but, kind of, not really, not so much, 'cause it's like harder out here and it's easier in Chicago. And I know I like it in Chicago but out here it seem like the teachers can't stand me. They hate me. Yeah. Because they, ever since, I never got a suspended a day in my life. Never detention. Nothin'. But since I came out here and went to the school, and my first time I got suspended because this [white] girl called me a black slave…And they suspended me from February 13th until March 2nd, and they suspended her from February 13th until like February 18th or somethin' like that.

Some respondents felt that suburban schools had different expectations of parents than the schools their children attended in the city. Sharice explains that it was easier to get full-day preschool in her baseline neighborhood of Altgeld Gardens than it is in her opportunity area, and that the opportunity area school has a harder workload for her kids and different expectations of her. She explains:

> And they always had a after-school program goin' on out there. And they had the children's buildin', which is somethin' like a YMCA, it was right there in that area. So they always had some type of activity goin' on. Even though sometimes you might not want your kids to get involved because of the stuff that goes on, and some - sometimes kids, you know, get to fighting, carryin' on, you have to - so some kids, sometimes you don't want your kids involved with it, but as far as the ones was at the school, they were okay. Because - and it was a lot of activities at the school. Another thing about the schools…I loved that school because like in February, they had black history month. They didn't have anything for black history month [here]. And for the ones, you know, the kids that - there was a few Hispanics there, and they…they're Hispanic, you know, the - that a lot of stuff for them for the other kids to learn more about - The background - yeah. And this school don't seem to be doin' that!...Certain services they don't have, cause like, here, for the kindergartens, they have to decide, okay, like we have one kindergarten class where it's full-day. And they test the kids, which kids are gonna go full-day and which kids are not gonna go full-day. But, I mean, some people might need their child to go full-day!...Not only that, I think the kids - okay, like, the kids do work. My son, like he brung a book report home the other day. Usually when they have book reports out there at that school, they tell 'em to do book reports on books that the kids can actually read. You know, kids can read their selves, they can try to scan through 'em - kindergarten kids. They actually supposed to be able to read certain words at certain times, right? So they have them readin', you know, you sit there and you listen at 'em read it to you, and then they'll tell you what they like about it. This kindergarten, they tell 'em to pick Michael Jordan books. And some, some other book - like, little kids can't read that book!...And not only that, I mean, they don't have the - they don't, they

> not there in the school long enough for them to work 'em that much, and for the parents that's not - that's workin', they can't work with 'em because they only at home workin' at certain time, and sometime babysitters work with 'em and sometime they don't, you know!...So, it's kinda like, those kids are kinda on the borderline, because they don't really have anybody to help 'em, unless they have older brothers an sisters that can help 'em, like in my kids case, but the ones that don't, where do they - parents gonna help 'em with they work? And if the school's not, they don't be in the school that long for the school to help 'em so much...Because they expect you more to, they have more programs here where they invite parents out to the school. And they expect you to come at, you know, like, in the evening time, or certain days, they have like, different programs. But out there they didn't have any programs for the parents to volunteer. That they didn't have. But here they have more programs for parents to volunteer, and they like to have the parents there…Like, you must be here. I mean, I can't just take off work cause you feel I must be there!

Other children had really good experiences in the racially diverse schools in opportunity areas. Jennifer's eight year-old son went to school near Cabrini Green until they moved to an opportunity area in the North Side of Chicago. He transferred to Peterson Elementary, where the student population is 24 percent Latino, 32 percent white, 40 percent Asian or Pacific Islander, and 4 percent black. Seventy-one percent of the students are eligible for free or reduced price lunch. Jennifer describes what she likes about Peterson and compares it to her son's previous school:

> My son's been in trouble at school, but over all the teachers there, they seem like they really care, and I wanted my son in a, a mixed school and a diverse school with different races in it. And I'm glad that he's actually…So basically, the school itself is like my parents, when I went to a grammar school…well Newbury Academy, I don't know if you know where that is but I was there when I was younger, but my parents moved, they transferred us to another school which was all black and I didn't like it…But basically, the point I'm getting at is that the schools and, I wanted my children being in a mixed, you know, with different races because you know, you'll be around different races as you get older and it's like, I feel that it's something they should be around regardless of you know, I just want them to be…I feel I had better education being at the school I was at at first. And the, which is that, see the kids were different there than when I was in an all black school. The teachers I had in the black school, they taught, I feel like they taught me well, but it's just the atmosphere you know as far as just being around, just one particular race, I think it's best to be around mixed races and…because you be like that in the work field, you be around different people.

> Everybody has different beliefs and different ways of how they do things but, I know the way things are done, I feel like my children should be around different races, so they'll know different people, regardless of how they look or what color they are, but know that they're, just 'cause they're different in skin color doesn't mean you know, they can still get along, and still be with other people….Yeah, really the schools in Cabrini, they don't have too many, they don't have any funding. It's like there's not much put into those schools. Yeah, you know, because of that, you know, it's like all that has an affect on the children and I think, I know, I really don't know why there's more into, being put into the schools that are in good neighborhoods, because they be…the people that are in good neighborhoods, they really don't have the money to put into the schools, I don't know where the money comes from, but it seems as though the schools are kept up and the…it's just different to me, with how the schools are, you know…Yeah, and I seen the difference because really, with my son, you know, the teacher, like I said the teachers that I had there, they taught us well, it's just the kids that I was around everyday, there's a lot of things I wasn't used to, a lot of swearing and fights every day. When you're around that kind of environment, that doesn't give you room to think, and as a child there's a lot of stuff that's on you and you're around that every day like when you have to fight every day and things are being seen that you're not normally used to, and the way you're being raised at home, has a lot of affect on when you're in school, because a lot of that tends to carry with you at school and then you can't function as a child because you're worrying about things that you shouldn't be worried about. And when…the parents having problems, and then that child is not getting enough, it's really from both parents, you know as far as, I mean, it's from both the parents and the schools to do, 'cause a teacher can only do what they can, and me as a parent, I don't do as much as I can with my son, I'm really kind of busy all the time but I set my mind on set things where I will take time out actually to start spending time and sitting down with my son, me and my daughter, you know even if it's for a couple of hours, you know where I'm reading with him, you know, helping with some math, and buying math books and stuff like that but it has to start from home because basically, like I said, the teacher can only do so much, and they have a lot of students at once and really it's like to me, like there's not a lot of funding in the schools.

Mia discussed the role of race in her son's adjustment to his opportunity area school, and explains that her son did not initially like his new school but he now really likes it and does not want to move away:

> My son is into the hip-hop culture. So he likes that certain language and like, he isn't with it, but, you know he's into the clothes. And he still wears his braids and stuff, so, he wants to go where he knows he can kind of fit in. He don't want to go to school where, you know, they're like, I guess I'll say too preppy and too suburban is what he calls it. He's the only black kid in his classroom, and he's

> really well liked. Don't have a problem with any of the kids. [When we first moved] it was a culture shock to him, because he was, the first year he didn't like it here. And he really hated it. He was the only black kid in his classes. Now he don't want to move from here. He also doesn't like going to the projects anymore….He realized that he had something, a better future with the whites, so, he's, or he's just growing up and maturing. He's liking it over here. Because if I go to try to move in a house next year and he was upset that we were gonna move out of here.

Neighborhoods

Nikki's narrative illustrates how race, class and gender intersect in navigating new neighborhoods. She moved to a neighborhood in the suburbs where six percent of the residents are black and nine percent are below the poverty level. She had multiple bad experiences in her opportunity area but also explains that she likes living there. When asked how it has been living in a low-poverty suburban neighborhood she says:

> The difference is everybody has somewhere to be. And that's a good thing. I don't mind playing, and, and in the, in bad neighborhoods, I know playing can be very deadly. And that's when you get the gunfire and the shooting. So here, at least on the surface, it, it appears as though everyone has somewhere to be. If they're at home with their children, they're cleaning up, they're preparing meals, they're getting things set up, they're going to pick up the kids, so they're occupied. So I think that's, you know, that's good. I like that. I don't like people directly in your business, watching you come and go. I don't like that. I don't like people, can I borrow this from you, can I borrow that, because I don't borrow anything, you know. And I've had my neighbor ask to borrow something, but it, it was once out of the whole time I've been here. But there you had people asking to borrow just the most absurd things, you know, it's like are you kidding me. You know, are you kidding me? You know, can I borrow your microwave so I can, so I can dry this ponytail. Let me think about that. No. Can I borrow some bonding glue? Now I'm hair stylist. Can I borrow some of your materials to do my hair? No-oh. You can pay me to use them on you, yes. So I don't, I don't, I don't, I don't miss any of that. You know, this, this is good.

When asked how much her neighbors made her feel welcome, she responds positively:

> Just, just people when they're out, like during summer months, you know, people speak and how are you. And me, I'm just a big kid, so sometimes from time to time, maybe it's twice out of the whole summer, I'll go outside with the kids, and I'll start, because now the kids don't seem like they know how to play games anymore, so I'll start 'em on a game. And I'll start jumping rope with them, and

> you'll see the parents sitting out on the porch, and I'm like jumping rope with 'em, and I'm like uh-uh, you cheated, it's my turn, you know. I'm really all into it. Then they start coming closer, closer to observe, you know. And then my neighbor, she got into, you know, to start jumping, so I like that, you know. Don't be afraid to just have fun, you know. So I felt, I felt welcome at that point, like they were trying to get to know me.

Some respondents perceived living in a low-poverty, diverse neighborhood as a potential motivational tool. While living in Cabrini Green and asked what she thought about moving to a low-poverty neighborhood, Angel says:

> You know move to a neighborhood where there's less poverty so that you could, they feel that you can advance more when it's less, if it's less poverty level. Yeah. They feel that you can really succeed in the neighborhood like that. I believe you can too. I think it's more motivating than staying in a neighborhood like this where there's poverty, I don't want to do nothing. But I'm motivated everyday, so.

Melissa has a similar perspective about neighborhoods being motivating. She is 28 years old and has spent her entire life in LeClaire Courts. She says:

> [Living in an area where most people work] motivates you to do the same, because if you're around people that's not doing that, you're subjected to do what they do. So you know you don't want to be the only one over here not doing nothing. Or the kids, the only one not getting lessons and ballet lessons and stuff like that because you don't have the money. But you know I want them to have everything, you know, they want.

Melissa goes on to talk about living in a racially mixed area:

> It's good because it prepares them {referring to kids}. That's life, you know. It's not normal to be around, I ain't going to say not normal but that's not the way it is to be around one race. You know, just all black. You know, that ain't how the world is. You're going to meet Asians and stuff like that.

While still living in her baseline neighborhood, Kia explains that she can see both potential positives and negatives of living in low-poverty neighborhood:

> If they look down at you, basically, you know. If they make more money than me, I don't knock nobody. I like to see some people not flaunting it if they're

> making more money than me you know. It doesn't matter about the money thing. It's just how you act, it's your overall attitude. You know if you had it, if it's stinks or sucks or whatever. Or if you don't have to throw up to me well I got a Master's Degree or this and that, or I'm this I'm that. That's when it'll be like she's bragging on everything she has. For what, and you know, you can gain everything in the world but when it comes time when you're checking out of here, if your soul is right, it does not matter anyway. We can't take none of this stuff with us when we leave. We can't put it in our coffins. So that's the way I look at it.

Candace explains that the neighbors in her Gautreaux neighborhood of Wicker Park are more reserved and career-oriented:

> I know the neighbors right next door to me. And I know, you know, we speak. Hey, how you doin'. My husband, I'm not, 'cause I've always, I was always working. My husband would come through so he'd meet everybody. He's always been like that. She, she knows everybody, these two neighbors. But you know what? You don't many people come up in front of their house. It's that type of neighborhood. The lady from across the street, she had twins. You'd see her come out walking the dog with 'em, you know. I just saw someone moving out over there. Other than that, it's pretty quiet…These neighbors here are more reserved [than the neighbors at baseline hood]. You don't see them. I don't know if they're more career-oriented. In the Humboldt Park area there was a lot of, especially on the block, there was a lot of low-income subsidy housing. A lot of people didn't work so you saw 'em all. And I, well, I was the only one working on the block. I'm the only one who left every morning…That's what type of neighborhood that was that I lived in. But this is, you can definitely see, I mean you see the cars come and go sometimes but, definitely more career people. You see a lot of people, families with Mercedes you know. Yes. Lexus trucks. And my little van sits in the back.

Keisha explains some of the gender dynamics she experienced when she tried to get to know her neighbors upon moving to West Rogers Park:

> Initially when we said hello, they just looked at us you know, the woman, it's the woman, 'cause she doesn't have a job, you know she's got a man, and I guess he works you know, so she takes the kids to school in the morning and she has time on her hands to screw with a working single mom, you know, who is trying to make life on her…on their own and sometimes people wonder well you know, how is she making it, she doesn't have a husband and you know, she drives a decent car, blah, blah, blah. How is she making it? I'm making it by getting up with my arthritis out of my bed every morning and going to work.

Fourteen-year old Shanna explains some of the race, class and gender dynamics

as she describes how she would compare her family to other families in the opportunity area of Hanover Park:

> [We're] a lot alike. The black families, the Muslim and white families, most of them got jobs and stuff. So we, the kids can't say that. Because my mom don't work nowhere yet. So I can be a little embarrassed. Like at school if they need to call home if I've been absent and they want to make sure I didn't ditch school so they call home. That's, if my mom don't call the school and tell them I'm going to be absent. Sometimes she'll forget that. And then they'll call the next day that I'm at school, her, to make sure I didn't ditch. They ask what's her work number. I can't say nothing because she doesn't work so I'll be feeling kind of bad. So I'll just say she's at home and then for basketball, the same thing. If they can't come pick me up, then my friends take me home. And their parents ask me why my parents didn't come get me, if it's because they're working. And I can't say yes because they're not. So I felt bad.

Multiple respondents talked about the stigma and cost of being a single mother in opportunity areas. Melissa describes this dynamic in her opportunity neighborhood of Aurora:

> That's the thing, you have to have…[this neighborhood is] for families, for husband and wives, it's not for single mothers, I don't think it's for, you know that's…not for me, you know. I like it but, you know, it's hard for me to maintain. You know, I try but you know like you know, it's spring, and I have to get the carpet done because the winter-time, that's like $200 for the back yard, you have to get the lawn maintained, I always lived in apartments so I don't do that, so that's like $200 and it's just a lot of maintenance you have to do, and if you don't have a husband or somebody to help you, it's, it can be overwhelming, overbearing. You know, it's hard… I see so many mini-vans and stuff 'cause it's for families. It's for families who's husband and wife, and I'm like, ok. Right, 'cause you know, all the kids they have their dad, it's single families here, but you know, basically the single families are the black mothers. You know, the white families, you know they wait 'til they're more stable. And that's one thing that I like about white families, they wait. You know, we just have babies at fourteen and fifteen years old and we say, 'Oh man, why did I do that.' But you know, they think about that, you know, it's something to think about I tell my kids you know, think about it, you know, now, don't' think you have to have no babies, 'cause you know, my brother he just had a boy, and they all, 'I want to go over there, I want him. Ooh, I want to have a baby.' No you don't, they're there when you get thirty, you can wait, I wish, you know, the mothers and dads out here are older, so now, you know my kids they like, 'Where's your dad?' You know the kids ask them, 'Where your dad.' They're like, what's that, you know, they don't

> get offended but you know, you don't have that. So, it's different, I tell them, you have one but if he's not here then we'll manage. Kids do that they ask, but they're curious, my kids are too, but you know, you have to explain it to them the things kids are asking, if they…you know, ask them why they ask that you know, sometimes, but I think, my neighbors think because there's not a man here they, they you know, he'll come, you know, what's going on, you know, you need help with anything, or if he sees the garbage he'll help, you know, he's real nice. He's like, his wife is like, ' You're a little too silly.' But he see I don't have nobody here, and he helps.

She goes on to explain why she goes back to her children's doctor in the city if they need medical care:

> Because when you go up in there {referring to Gautreaux neighborhood}, and I don't know if it's just me or what, 'cause you know, I have three kids and you know, they don't…they treat you different, you know, I don't know, it's not prejudice, it's just single mothers period…You know they…'Oh she got those kids.' You know, my kids, they loud, you know they just loud, but you know the average kid is not that loud out here, that's why, they say, you know, they be bad too but man, it's something, they fight each other, it's just…I don't' know. 'Cause I have a friend, she has six kids, she's twenty-eight, she had six and we'll go to the store, she'll have her six, I have my three, there's nine kids in the store, and you know, them ladies are just like, oh my god…and we get out of one car. And my friend, she's getting mad, like, 'What they looking at!' I'm like, 'You know. It was us.' We'll be staring too, like man, what they doing, sitting on top of each other in there, but we go into Target and you know, they are so loud and they like to run through the store…my kids love to shop. But they know how to do it, you know, they know what to look for. Mostly I just, maybe it's me, but…they don't take medical cards, they don't cover this, 'cause I went to…I went to a doctor in Woodridge and I was asking her for the birth control patch and she was like, 'Medical card don't cover that, but they do in the city.' They're not…they act like they're not familiar with the medical card but I know there is a lot of people that get that, so you know, they just do that, but you know, she didn't want to give it to me. I'm like, 'Well I get it, you know, just write the prescription out. If I don't get it then you will know.' So I ended up getting it but I never went back because she made a big deal out of a birth control patch. I went back to the city [for medical].

Despite these challenges, when asked how living in Aurora has affected her life, Melissa responds positively:

> To me in a good way because I feel like I'm more responsible because out there I knew being in the projects, it is like a crutch. You know, out here they make you

> do…I mean, you pay your bill, you do this, you have to budget you have to…I didn't have to budget, I didn't have to do none of that. I didn't have to pay rent, I had $0 rent in there. Out here, it don't matter what you did, you still… It's different, but it's good because it's teaching me to be responsible and then sometimes you don't have that money, so you have to put it aside, so it be sometimes, I…you know, when I don't have anything I'm glad I put this money, put aside, now I have something, you know, to pay the rest of the bills with, you know, something to pay this bill with. 'Cause you know, you have a lot of bad days.

Shirley explains some of the frustration she felt in the ways that being a single parent affected her search for a unit through Gautreaux. She did not end up moving through the program. She says:

> I liked the fact that initially when we first got started, they, they kind of informed us about things, and it, it kind of gives you a little hope. It was very hopeful that you might get into a new community and have a opportunity for your children to have a different type of life. And that was real good, and it was very encouraging, but throughout the course of the program, I really don't believe I've received the assistance that I thought I could have received. And for a while I was real gung-ho and I was searching everywhere, and I got a little put off because I wasn't finding very much. And then by me being a single parent, and having four boys, some people are very turned off by that. It's their community, so it's difficult, you know, and especially if you're not, if you're not married. And I find a lot, some people just really won't give you a chance to get your foot in the door. So it's kind of discouraging. But I didn't give up, but I found that with the program I guess they're very, I guess they're very busy, overwhelmed, maybe, to the point where I don't, I mean you would call in, people wouldn't call you back immediately. Sometimes when you find a place, you got to jump on it right away, and when you have to go through an agency to get what you need instead of just directly going in, it makes it a bit more hectic.

Shirley's story ties together many of the themes evident in this chapter and raises concern about the way the Gautreaux program was implemented.

Conclusion

In this paper, I discussed the complicated ways that race plays out in Gautreaux families' expectations and experiences of living in racially diverse neighborhoods. I find that some respondents faced racial tensions and incidents in their new neighborhoods, but

overall most respondents liked the idea of living in diverse neighborhoods. Decisions about making secondary moves to neighborhoods similar in racial composition to the neighborhoods from which they came were not based primarily on racial issues. Instead, they were linked with other constraints related to unit and landlord issues, financial burdens, and the difficulty of living in neighborhoods distant from family, jobs, and accessible public transportation.

Respondents' expectations about moving to a neighborhood with a relatively low percentage of black residents were mixed. Some expressed concern about how they would be treated, others were optimistic about the benefits of living in a diverse neighborhood, and many respondents expressed a mixture of both of these expectations. Most respondents who had recently lived outside of public housing explained that they thought they would be comfortable moving to opportunity areas because they were used to similar environments.

Upon moving to opportunity areas, some families did experience racially motivated incidents, while others did not face these types of problems. Some of these incidents occurred at children's schools. For some children, class and race issues combined to make their school experiences challenging, in part because they had previously attended under-resourced schools. Similarly, some adults faced stereotypes and obstacles due to their race, class and gender positionality. Multiple respondents described how it felt to be a single black mother in neighborhoods they perceived as being for married couples.

Despite these complicated racial issues, the decisions that most respondents made regarding secondary moves were the result of concerns other than race. However,

respondents' narratives about the racial aspects of the Gautreaux program and their neighborhood transition experiences provide useful insight into the structure and implementation of housing mobility programs.

References

Bobo, Lawrence, and Camille Zubrinsky. 1996. "Attitudes on Residential Integration: Perceived Status Differences, Mere In-Group Preference, or Racial Prejudice?" *Social Forces* 74(4):883-909.

Charles, Camille Zubrinsky. 2005. "Can We Live Together? Racial Preferences and Neighborhood Outcomes. Pp. 45-80 in *The Geography of Opportunity: Race and Housing Choice in Metropolitan America*, edited by Xavier de Souza Briggs. Washington, DC: Brookings Institution Press.

------. 2000. "Neighborhood Racial-Composition Preferences: Evidence from a Multiethnic Metropolis." *Social Problems* 47(3):379-407.

Clampet-Lundquist, Susan, Kathryn Edin, Jeffrey R. Kling, and Greg J. Duncan. Forthcoming. "Moving At-Risk Teenagers out of High-Risk Neighborhoods: Why Girls Fare Better than Boys." Forthcoming in *American Journal of Sociology*

Clark, William A.V. 1991. "Residential Preferences and Neighborhood Racial Segregation: A Test of the Schelling Segregation Model." *Demography* 28(1):1-19.

Crowder, Kyle D. 2001. "Racial Stratification in the Actuation of Mobility Expectations: Microlevel Impacts of Racially Restrictive Housing Markets." *Social Forces* 79(4):1377-1396.

Massey, Douglas S., Gretchen A. Condran, and Nancy A. Denton. 1987. "The Effect of Residential Segregation on Black Social and Economic Well-Being." *Social Forces* 66:29-56.

Massey, Douglas, and Nancy Denton. 1993. *American Apartheid: Segregation and the Making of the Underclass*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.

United States Department of Housing and Urban Development. 1994. "Residential Mobility Programs; Urban Policy Brief No. 1" Available at http://www.huduser.org/portal/publications/urbaff/upb1.html

White, Rob. 2007. "Public Spaces, Consumption, and the Social Regulation of Young People." Pp. 223-248 in *Youth, Globalization and the Law*. Edited by Sudhir Venkatesh and Ronald Kassimir. Stanford: Stanford University Press.