

Changing the Geography of Opportunity by Expanding Residential Choice: Lessons from the Gautreaux Program

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Abstract

The concept of “geography of opportunity” suggests that where individuals live affects their opportunities. While multivariate analyses cannot control completely for individual self-selection to neighborhoods, this article examines a residential integration program—the Gautreaux program—in which low-income blacks are randomly assigned to middle-income white suburbs or low-income mostly black urban areas.

Compared with urban movers, adult suburban movers experience higher employment but no different wages or hours worked, and suburban mover youth do better on several educational measures and, if not in college, are more likely to have jobs with good pay and benefits. The two groups of youth are equally likely to interact with peers, but suburban movers are much more likely to interact with whites and only slightly less likely to interact with blacks. The article considers how attrition might affect the observations and speculates about the program’s strengths and pitfalls.

Introduction

The concept of “geography of opportunity” suggests that where individuals live affects their opportunities and life outcomes. Galster and Killen (1995) propose that individuals’ lives can be profoundly changed if they move to environments that offer new opportunities. They suggest that geography influences social networks and normative contexts, and they review studies indicating influences on education, crime, and employment. However, since most geographic moves are chosen by the individual, research on geographic influences cannot completely control for individual effects. For instance, when surveys find a few low-income people in a middle-income neighborhood (or vice versa), one suspects that these are atypical low-income people or else they would not be there. What is needed to test Galster and Killen’s propositions is a randomized experiment, but such experiments are unusual. This article describes such an experiment, the Gautreaux program in Chicago.

The Gautreaux program gives low-income blacks housing vouchers to move to many different kinds of communities, including white middle-income suburbs and low-income black city neighborhoods.¹ Because participants are assigned to city or suburban locations in a quasi-random manner, inferences can be made about the effects of residential moves. This article reports the program's impact on adult employment and on youth education, employment, and social integration. It considers how much attrition might affect the observations.

The Gautreaux program has become a model that other cities have sought to follow. Boston, Cincinnati, Dallas, and Hartford have initiated programs, and other cities have considered programs (Feins 1993; Fischer 1991). In addition, the national Moving to Opportunity program will test a version of the Gautreaux program in five cities across the United States.

Yet as we plan to replicate this program in other cities, we must consider what it is that makes this program work. A housing mobility program has many elements, and each may influence its operation and outcomes. The final section of this article examines what elements of the Gautreaux program are crucial to its success and what pitfalls future programs should avoid.

If the speculations presented here are generally on target, they suggest some guidelines for future programs. This is not to say that every program must make the same choices. Programs must base their choices on their own priorities and the ways they value various tradeoffs. However, all programs must consider these details, for they are likely to contribute to the effect of the program in important ways.

The Gautreaux program

The Gautreaux program is a result of a 1976 Supreme Court consent decree in a lawsuit against the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) on behalf of public housing residents. The suit charged "that these agencies had employed racially discriminatory policies in the administration of the Chicago low-rent public housing program" (Peroff, Davis, and Jones 1979, 4). The Gautreaux program, administered by the

¹ The program permits moves to black city neighborhoods if they are considered "revitalized." Only Gautreaux families moving to low-income black neighborhoods were included in the city mover sample for the studies reported here.

nonprofit Leadership Council for Metropolitan Open Communities in Chicago, allows public housing residents, and those who were on the waiting list for public housing in 1981, to receive Section 8 housing certificates and move to private apartments either in mostly white suburbs or in the city of Chicago.² The program provides extensive housing services. Two full-time real estate staff find landlords willing to participate in the program. Then placement counselors notify families as apartments become available, counsel them about the advantages and disadvantages of moving, and take them to visit the units and communities. Since 1976, more than 5,000 families have participated, and more than half moved to middle-income white suburbs.

Because of its design, the Gautreaux program presents an unusual opportunity to test the effect of helping low-income people move to better labor markets, better schools, and better neighborhoods. The United States has little experience with economic and racial integration of neighborhoods. Racial and economic homogeneity is the rule in most neighborhoods, so we generally do not know how low-income blacks are affected by living in middle-income white neighborhoods. Moreover, even when exceptions exist, we must suspect that blacks who break the residential barriers and get into white neighborhoods are themselves exceptional people, so their subsequent attainments may reflect more about them than about the effects of neighborhoods. Therefore, when researchers study black employment in suburbs, it is hard to tell whether the suburbs increased black employment or whether the blacks who happen to live in suburbs are different, perhaps moving to the suburbs *after* getting a job (Jencks and Mayer 1989). Similarly, most studies of black achievement in suburban schools cannot tell whether black children's achievement is due to living in the suburbs or to some unmeasured family assets or values that drew these black families to the suburbs.

Gautreaux participants circumvent the ordinary barriers to living in the suburbs, not by their jobs, personal finances, or values, but by getting into the program. The program gives them rent subsidies that permit them to live in suburban apartments for the same cost as public housing. Moreover, unlike most black suburbanization—working-class blacks living in working-class suburbs—Gautreaux permits low-income blacks to live in

² The Section 8 program is a federal program that subsidizes low-income people's rents in private sector apartments, either by giving them Section 8 certificates that allow them to rent apartments on the open market or by moving them into new or rehabilitated buildings whose owners have accepted federal loans that require some units to be set aside for low-income tenants.

middle-income white suburbs (Jencks and Mayer 1989). Participants move to any of more than 115 suburbs throughout the six counties surrounding Chicago. Suburbs with less than 70 percent whites were excluded by the consent decree, and very high rent suburbs were excluded by funding limitations of Section 8 certificates. Yet these constraints eliminate only a small proportion of suburbs. The receiving suburbs range from working class to upper middle class and are 30 to 90 minutes' drive away from participants' former addresses.

The program tries to move more than one family to a neighborhood to provide some social support, but it also avoids moving many families to one neighborhood. While the program mandates did not specify how many families could move to any location, the program tries to avoid sending disproportionate numbers to any one community, and in fact it has succeeded in this goal (Paul Fischer, unpublished tables, 1992). As a result, the program has low visibility and low impact on receiving communities.

Applying for the program is largely a matter of luck and persistent telephoning on registration day, since many more people try to call than can get through. The program also has three selection criteria: To avoid overcrowding, late rent payments, and building damage, it does not admit families with more than four children, large debts, or unacceptable housekeeping. None of these criteria is extremely selective, and all three reduce the eligible pool by less than 30 percent. Although these criteria make those selected an above-average group compared with housing project residents, they are not a "highly creamed" group. All are very low income blacks, are current or former welfare recipients, and have lived most of their lives in impoverished inner-city neighborhoods.

In any case, 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, others to low-income black urban neighborhoods. In principle, participants have choices about where they move, but in practice, they 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 and is unrelated to client interest. Counselors offer clients units as they become available according to their position on the waiting list, regardless of clients' locational preference. Although clients can refuse an offer, few do so, since they are unlikely to get another. As a result, participants'

preferences for city or suburbs have little to do with where they end up.

Adult and child studies: Methods and sample

The next several sections of this article summarize studies of the Gautreaux program, comparing families moving to white middle-income suburbs (“suburban movers”) with families moving to low-income black city neighborhoods (“city movers”). The city movers are a good comparison group for judging the effects of the suburban move, since both groups meet the same selection criteria and get improved housing. But city movers are a particularly stringent comparison group because they receive better housing and move to better city neighborhoods than they had in the housing projects. We expect that housing-project residents would fare considerably worse than either of the Gautreaux groups. In effect, the suburban effects (relative to city movers) in this study may be considered lower bound estimates of the effects.

My colleagues and I at Northwestern University conducted three studies of this program. To examine adult employment, in the fall of 1988 we surveyed 332 adults and conducted detailed interviews with another 95.³ The first study of children interviewed one randomly selected school-aged child (ages 8 to 18) from each of 114 families in 1982, and the second study followed up the same children in 1989, when they were adolescents and young adults, and examined their educational and employment outcomes.⁴ As implied by the quasi-random assignment procedure, suburban and city movers are highly similar in most attributes in both samples (tables 1 and 2).

³ Our refusal rate on the interviews was less than 7 percent. 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 and Popkin (1991).

⁴ Low-income people move often and so are difficult to locate over a seven-year period. We located 59.1 percent, a reasonably large percentage for such a sample. Of course, one 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 both happen, but if one happens more often, then the 1989 sample could be seriously different from the original 1982 sample.

**Table 1. Characteristics of the Adult Study Sample:
City-Suburban Comparison**

	City (<i>n</i> = 108)	Suburb (<i>n</i> = 224)
Years on Gautreaux	5.85	5.37
Age (years)	36.67	35.39
Age of youngest child (years)	9.56	7.85*
Number of children	2.51	2.56
Education premove (years)	11.68	11.91
Education postmove (years)	12.51	12.34
Marital status		
Married now (percent)	8.33	6.25
Never married (percent)	44.4	44.6
Getting AFDC (percent)	53.7	47.8
Long-term AFDC recipient ^a (percent)	68.5	59.8
Second-generation AFDC recipient (percent)	51.9	50.9

Note: Asterisk indicates significance level of difference between city and suburban samples, by chi-square or *t* test.

^a Ever received AFDC for five years or more.

* $p < 0.01$.

**Table 2. Characteristics of the 1989 Children Sample:
City-Suburban Comparison**

	City	Suburb
Age (years)	18.2	18.8
Male (percent)	45.5	56.8*
Mother not married (percent)	88	86
Mother's education postmove (years)	12.03	12.09
Mother finished high school (percent)	43	47

Note: Asterisk indicates significance level of difference between city and suburban samples, by chi-square or *t* test.

* $p < 0.01$.

Results from the adult study: Will low-income blacks get jobs in the suburbs?

There are several reasons to expect that low-income blacks may not get jobs in the suburbs. After living in low-income environments for many years, these mothers and children may have motivational problems that prevent them from doing well even after their opportunities improve (Lewis 1968; Mead 1986). Discrimination by employers or lack of skills may also prevent low-income blacks from getting jobs. In addition, Gautreaux adults were educated in poor urban schools, and many lack job training or job experience. Furthermore, 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.

Premove and postmove employment status of city and suburban movers is compared in table 3. Suburban movers were more likely to have jobs than city movers. Although both groups started from the same baseline (60.2 percent of city movers and 64.3 percent of suburban movers were employed premove), after moving, suburban movers were more than 25 percent more likely to have a job than city movers. While 50.9 percent of city movers had a job after moving, 63.8 percent of suburban movers did.

Among respondents who had been employed before, suburban movers were about 14 percent more likely than city movers to have a job after moving. In contrast, for suburban movers who had never been employed before their move, 46.2 percent found work after moving to the suburbs, while the comparable figure

Table 3. Percent of Respondents Employed Postmove by Premove Employment for City and Suburban Movers

Postmove Status	Premove Status					
	City			Suburb		
	Employed	Unemployed	Total	Employed	Unemployed	Total
Employed	42 (64.6%)	13 (30.2%)	55	106 (73.6%)	37 (46.2%)	143
Unemployed	23 (35.4%)	30 (69.8%)	53	38 (26.4%)	43 (53.8%)	81
Total	65	43	108	144	80	224

Note: Numbers in parentheses are column percentages.

for city movers was only 30.2 percent. For this group of hard-core unemployed, suburban movers were much more likely to have a job after moving than city movers.⁵

City and suburban movers did not differ in hourly wages or number of hours worked per week (table 4). 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.⁶ The roughly 20 percent gain in wages for both suburban and city movers may represent gains from moving out of housing projects, but since we lack a control group (individuals who are similar to those selected in Gautreaux but remained in housing projects), we have no basis for testing this explanation. Of course, attrition may also contribute to these gains, but attrition is likely to be small, and it can cut both ways: Some attrition comes from people whose wages surpass program income limits.

⁵ The suburban advantage arises because city movers decline in employment. The 15.4 percent decline in employment among the city movers is virtually the same as the 16.3 percent decline found in the Current Population Surveys (CPS) between 1979 and 1989 among poorly educated central-city black adult males, while their non-central-city CPS counterparts have little or no decline (Danziger and Wood 1991, tables 5 and 6). Although selectivity concerns arise in interpreting differences in the CPS data, the quasi-random assignment makes selectivity less of a threat in our study, which finds the same city-suburban differences as the CPS does. Apparently, the suburban move permitted low-income blacks to escape the declining employment rates in central cities during the 1980s. Moreover, multivariate analyses find that suburban movers are significantly more likely to have a job than city movers, even after controlling for many other factors. These analyses find that other factors also influence employment: previous work experience, years since move, age (inversely), and young children (inversely). Employment is reduced by low internal sense of control and 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 at all affected by postmove general equivalency diploma or college. For details of these analyses, see Rosenbaum and Popkin (1991).

⁶ Multivariate analyses on postmove hourly wages and on hours worked per week—controlling for the same variables, plus months of employment and the premove measure of the dependent variable (wages or hours, respectively)—confirm the above findings: Living in the suburbs has no effect on either dependent variable. Job tenure, premove pay, and the two “culture of poverty” variables (internal control and long-term AFDC) have significant effects on postmove wages. Job tenure, premove hours worked, and postmove higher education have significant effects on postmove hours worked. None of the other factors had significant effects. For details of these analyses, see Rosenbaum and Popkin (1991).

Table 4. City and Suburban Comparison of Wages and Hours Worked

	Premove Mean	Postmove Mean	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>
City movers, postmove earners (<i>n</i> = 55)				
Hourly wages (\$)	5.04	6.20	6.52	0.01
Hours per week	33.27	31.92	-0.60	0.55
Suburban movers, postmove earners (<i>n</i> = 143)				
Hourly wages (\$)	4.96	6.00	6.50	0.01
Hours per week	33.62	33.39	-0.60	0.55

When asked how the suburban move helped them get jobs, all suburban participants mentioned the greater number of 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 the way home from work, or they feared that their children would get hurt or get in trouble with gangs. The suburban move allowed mothers to feel free to go out and work. Many adults also mentioned that positive role models and social norms inspired them to work. These comments support Wilson's contention about the importance of role models and social norms (Wilson 1987). Seeing neighbors work, Gautreaux adults reported that they felt that they too could have jobs, and they wanted to try. In the city, few adults saw neighbors working.

In sum, the employment rates of suburban movers surpassed those of city movers, particularly for those who had never before had jobs. Whatever prevented some people from being employed in the past—lack of skills or lack of motivation—was not irreversible, and many took jobs after moving to the suburbs.

Results from the first study of children: Will early disadvantages keep children from benefiting from suburban schools?

Housing moves may affect children even more than adults, since children are at a formative stage and are still acquiring education. Moreover, being less mature, children may have even more difficulty coping with the challenges posed by a suburban move. The obstacles are similar to those for adults. Children's low-income background may make them less prepared or less motivated than middle-income suburban children, 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, they may have lower achievement than their city counterparts who do not face these barriers. On the other hand, suburban movers will benefit from better educational resources and greater employment prospects in the suburbs, and their fellow suburban students may serve as role models for achievement. Of course, we do not know which process will operate or, if both do, which will win out.

Given the children's initial poor preparation in city schools and their social disadvantage, we wondered how they would do in the suburban schools. In 1982, we studied how the Gautreaux program affected children, comparing Gautreaux children who moved within the city and those who moved to the suburbs (Rosenbaum, Kulieke, and Rubinowitz 1988; Rosenbaum, Rubinowitz, and Kulieke 1986).⁷ The two groups were similar in average age, proportion of females, and mothers' education. The families were predominantly female-headed in both the suburban (86 percent) and city (88 percent) groups.

We found that suburban movers initially had difficulties adapting to the higher expectations in the suburban schools, and their grades suffered in the first years in the suburban schools. However, by 1982, after one to six years in the suburbs, their grades and school performance (judged by their mothers) were the same as those of city movers. In addition, suburban movers had smaller classes, higher satisfaction with teachers and courses, and better attitudes about school than city movers. 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 they mentioned many instances of teachers giving extra help in classes and after school.

It is hard to measure academic standards, 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 city students on the honor roll were sometimes two years behind grade level.

⁷ For a complete description of the sample, instrument, and other analyses, see Rosenbaum, Kulieke, and Rubinowitz (1988).

These mothers were in a good position to notice these differences when their children moved from the city to suburban schools. One mother commented that 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” (Rosenbaum, Kulieke, and Rubinowitz 1988, 32). Indeed, another mother reported an 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. . . . 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. The city curriculum seemed to be one to three years behind the suburban schools. (p. 32)

While many suburban movers seemed to be catching up to the higher suburban standards by the time of the interviews, most had been in the suburbs only a few years, and most were still in elementary school, so it was hard to know how they would do later. Many of these children were still struggling to catch up, and it was not clear whether they would succeed. Therefore, we were eager to do a follow-up study to see how things were turning out for these children.

Results from the second study of children: Education and employment

To study later outcomes, we interviewed the same children and their mothers in 1989.⁸ By this time, the children had an average age of 18.

However, before turning to those results, I will describe the schools that the youth attended. In 1990, the Illinois Department of Education collected average standardized test scores for all schools in the state. For the schools attended by our sample, the suburban schools’ average 11th-grade reading test score (259) was just above the state average (250) but significantly higher than the city schools’ average (198). On the ACT examination, the college admissions test most often taken in Illinois, suburban schools’ scores (21.5) were close to the state average (20.9), but significantly higher than the city schools’ scores

⁸ For a complete description of the sample, instrument, and other analyses, see Rosenbaum and Kaufman (1991).

(16.1). Moreover, there was almost no overlap between the scores of city and suburban schools these children attended. While less than 6 percent of the city sample attended schools with ACT averages of 20 or better (i.e., roughly the national average), more than 88 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 face much higher expectations than they have been prepared for in the city schools. The higher levels of achievement in suburban schools may be a barrier to poorly prepared students and may lead to increased dropping out, lower grades, and lower tracks for those still in school and to less college attendance and less employment for those over age 18. The results of this study contradict those expectations (table 5).

Table 5. Youth Education and Job Outcomes: City-Suburban Comparison (percent)

Outcome	City	Suburb
Dropped 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***

Note: Asterisks indicate significance level of difference between city and suburban samples, by chi-square or *t* test.

* $p < 0.10$.

** $p < 0.05$.

*** $p < 0.025$.

Dropout rates

Lower dropout rates for suburban high schools may encourage Gautreaux children who move to the suburbs to stay in school. On the other hand, higher academic standards or discrimination based on race or class may discourage suburban Gautreaux

children and make them more likely to drop out. Results from the second study of children supported the first scenario, as more city movers (20 percent) than suburban movers (5 percent) dropped out of high school.

Grades

Although test scores were not available for individual respondents, grades provide a good indication of how students are achieving relative to their peers and whether teachers judge students' work acceptable. We found that suburban movers had virtually the same grades as city movers (a C-plus average in city and suburbs). Since the national High School and Beyond survey of high school sophomores indicates that suburban students average about half a grade lower than city students with the same achievement test scores, the grade parity of the two samples implies a higher achievement level among suburban movers (Rosenbaum and Kaufman 1991).

College preparatory curricula

Most high schools offer different curricula to college-bound and non-college-bound youth, and these curricula affect college opportunities (Rosenbaum 1976, 1980). Researchers find that blacks are underrepresented in college tracks in racially integrated schools (Coleman 1966; Oakes 1985; Rosenbaum and Presser 1978). Indeed, after being desegregated, the Washington, DC, public schools initiated a tracking system, which a court ruled to be undercutting integration (*Hobson v. Hansen* 1967). 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 (40 versus 24 percent).

College attendance

Higher suburban standards might be a barrier to these youth's attending college. The results indicate the opposite: Suburban movers had significantly higher college enrollment than city movers (54 versus 21 percent).

Four-year colleges

The type of college is also 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 percent of students in the Chicago city colleges ultimately complete a four-year college degree—less than half the rate of some suburban community colleges in the area (Orfield 1984).

Among the Gautreaux youth attending college, almost 50 percent of the suburban movers were in four-year institutions, whereas only 20 percent 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.

Youth's jobs

For the youth who were not attending college, a significantly higher proportion of the suburban youth had full-time jobs than city youth (75 versus 41 percent). Suburban youth also were four times as likely to earn more than \$6.50 per hour than city youth (21 versus 5 percent). The suburban jobs were significantly more likely to offer job benefits than city jobs (55 versus 23 percent).

Results from the second study of children: Harassment and social integration

Will residential integration lead to harassment and rejection of youth?

Blacks are significantly more isolated than either Hispanics or Asians (Massey and Denton 1987). Research also documents extensive antagonism to racial integration. While the majority of whites have become increasingly supportive of racial integration in principle, the majority remain opposed to any government intervention to promote such integration (Schuman and Bobo 1988). Blacks moving into predominantly white areas have faced threats, physical attacks, and property damage (Berry 1979). Throughout the past several decades, black families who moved into white neighborhoods of Chicago were driven from their homes by racial violence (Squires et al. 1987). Yet incidents of

harassment, while dramatic, may not reflect the views of all residents, and other neighbors may willingly interact with black newcomers. We can examine the harassment, threats, and fears that blacks face in white schools in which they are a racial and socioeconomic minority.

We expected that the suburban youth would experience more harassment than the city movers. The most common form of harassment was name-calling. In the suburbs, 51.9 percent of the Gautreaux youth reported at least one incident in which they were called names by white students, while only 13.3 percent of the city movers experienced name-calling by whites. Of course, there are few whites in the urban schools to call anyone names. However, 41.9 percent of the city movers experienced name-calling by blacks. As hypothesized, city movers do receive significantly less harassment than suburban movers, but the city movers experience a great deal of name-calling, too.

A second, more serious, indicator 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 percent reported being threatened by whites a few times a year or more. However, 19.4 percent of city movers were threatened this often 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 (22.7 percent city versus 21.2 percent suburb).

A third indicator of harassment, the most serious, is whether youth were hurt by other students. When asked how often they were actually hurt by others at school, very few members of either group reported such incidents. A similar proportion of both city and suburban movers say they have never been hurt by other students (93.5 versus 94.1 percent).

Social acceptance: Will residential integration lead to social integration?

Given the daily headlines about troubled race relations in American society and schools, social integration might seem hopeless. But daily life is too mundane to make the headlines, and daily life may tell a very different story. The following discussion looks at whether these black youth experience acceptance, friendships, and positive interactions with white classmates, and it assesses the relative frequency of positive and negative interactions.

School desegregation has been extensively studied (Gerard and Miller 1975; Hawley 1981; Patchen 1982; St. John 1975). However, this form of desegregation has some attributes that may limit its benefits. Because blacks rarely live near whites, many of the school desegregation programs entail special busing efforts, and a busload of students may create high visibility, backlash, and stigma. In addition, as children spend long periods every day riding together on a bus, these commutes reinforce blacks' sense of togetherness and their separateness from those who live near the school. Moreover, the logistics of commuting make after-school activities more difficult. Thus, busing as a method of desegregation creates its own limits on racial interaction.

In contrast, the Gautreaux program creates both residential and school integration. As a result, children live in apartment buildings occupied largely by middle-income whites; they 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, the program accomplishes residential integration with little visibility and in small numbers that raise little threat, thus reducing the likelihood of backlash and stigma.

Youth in this program also must face an additional barrier: socioeconomic differences. Researchers know even less about socioeconomic integration than they know about racial integration. Gautreaux children face both kinds of barriers simultaneously. These low-income blacks enter schools and communities that are overwhelmingly white and middle class. Even the blacks they meet are different, since their families are middle class.

Given these barriers, observers have worried that youth in such a program would remain socially isolated (Yinger 1979). Having spent more than six years in all-black urban housing projects, these children have learned habits and tastes different from those of their classmates, they have fewer economic resources than their classmates, and their skin color is different from that of most of their classmates. There is a great risk that these youth will have difficulty being accepted by their suburban, middle-class, white classmates.

Several questions in the survey and interview were designed to measure the children's sense of social acceptance. Both city and suburban movers tended to agree somewhat with the statement, "I feel I am a real part of my school" (on a five-point scale from strong agreement to strong disagreement), and there were no

significant differences between the groups (city mean, 3.55; suburban mean, 3.37). On the item “Other students treat me with respect,” the suburban movers had more positive responses than the city movers, although the difference was not significant (city mean, 3.93; suburban mean, 4.00). We asked the children how they believed others saw them in a series of questions:

1. “Are you considered part of the in-group?”
2. “Do others see you as popular?”
3. “Do others see you as socially active?”
4. “Do others think you do not fit in?”

For each of these items, no significant differences were found between the answers of city and suburban movers (table 6). Both groups showed positive social integration for all questions.

Table 6. Frequency of Responses to Questions about Social Integration (percent)

Code	Suburb	City
Are you considered part of the in-group? ($t = 0.36, df = 67.6$)		
	($n = 49$)	($n = 31$)
Very much	32.7	32.3
Somewhat	44.9	51.6
Not at all	22.4	16.1
Do others see you as popular? ($t = 0.95, df = 59.52$)		
	($n = 50$)	($n = 31$)
Very much	36.0	29.0
Somewhat	60.0	61.3
Not at all	4.0	9.7
Do others see you as socially active? ($t = 0.18, df = 63.40$)		
	($n = 50$)	($n = 31$)
Very much	46.0	48.4
Somewhat	44.0	41.9
Not at all	10.0	9.7
Do others think you do not fit in? ($t = 1.13, df = 52.42$)		
	($n = 50$)	($n = 30$)
Very much	2.0	3.3
Somewhat	16.0	26.7
Not at all	82.0	70.0

Note: No differences between city and suburban samples are significant at $p < 0.05$.

Contrary to our expectation, the suburban movers were 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 were regarded by others as at least somewhat socially active and popular.

Friendships. We expected that the suburban movers 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. However, suburban movers had almost as many black friends as city movers. The mean number of black friends in the suburbs was 8.81, while the mean in the city was 11.06 (difference not significant).

The suburban movers had significantly more white friends than city movers. The mean number of white friends was 7.37 for suburban movers and 2.37 for city movers ($t = 4.71$; $p < 0.0001$). While only 17.3 percent of the suburban youth reported no white friends, 56.3 percent of the city sample did ($t = 3.43$; $p < 0.001$). Only one of the city movers and one of the suburban movers reported having no friends at all.

Interactions. Suburban youth spent significantly more time with white students outside of class than city movers (table 7). Compared with city movers, the suburban movers more often did things outside 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 significantly more positive than the city movers ($t = 3.24$; $p < 0.002$). When the same questions were asked about socializing with black students, no significant differences existed between city and suburban movers (table 8).

To get an overview, two index variables were computed from the summed responses to each of the three items for interactions with whites and for interactions with blacks. The findings suggest that the suburban movers divided their time almost equally between blacks and whites, while the city movers spent significantly more time with blacks than with whites (table 9). The experience of the suburban movers seems to reflect a more racially integrated peer network, despite the small numbers of blacks in suburban schools. As one suburban mover reported to us, "We went into a new school and had the opportunity to be with white people, Indian people, just a mix of races and actually get to know people and have people get to know you."

Table 7. Frequency of Activities Involving White Students (percent)

Code	Suburb	City
How often do white students do things with you outside of school? ($t = 3.65$; $p < 0.001$)		
	($n = 52$)	($n = 30$)
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
How often do white students do schoolwork with you? ($t = 2.92$; $p < 0.005$)		
	($n = 52$)	($n = 30$)
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
How often do white students visit your home or have you to their home? ($t = 3.75$; $p < 0.0001$)		
	($n = 52$)	($n = 29$)
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

Are harassment and acceptance inversely related?

News accounts of racial harassment are particularly disturbing because the stories often carry the implication that harassment and threats reflect rejection by the entire community. Sometimes that may be true, but it seems possible that it is not true.

Our results indicate that negative behaviors are associated with each other: White name-calling is associated with white threats ($r = 0.53$, $p < 0.01$). Positive behaviors are also associated with each other: Doing activities with whites is associated with visiting with whites in their homes ($r = 0.85$, $p < 0.01$).

However, negative behaviors do not predict an absence of positive behaviors. In fact, the experience of the suburban movers indicates that the two are not usually associated, and they are sometimes positively correlated. Suburban movers who report

Table 8. Frequency of Activities Involving Black Students (percent)

Code	Suburb	City
How often do black students do things with you outside of school? ($t = 0.70$)		
	($n = 52$)	($n = 31$)
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	0.0
How often do black students do schoolwork with you? ($t = 1.34$)		
	($n = 52$)	($n = 31$)
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	0.0
Never	9.6	9.7
How often do black students visit your home or have you to their home? ($t = 0.43$)		
	($n = 52$)	($n = 31$)
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

Note: No differences between city and suburban samples are significant at $p < 0.05$.

Table 9. Comparisons of Index Variables Measuring Time Spent with Black Friends versus Time Spent with White Friends (scale of 1 to 15)

Index Variable	Suburb ($n = 60$)		City ($n = 38$)	
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD
Time with black friends	12.02	3.09	12.45	2.17
Time with white friends	10.41	3.64	6.89	3.48
	$t = 3.05, p < 0.003$		$t = 9.04, p < 0.001$	

Note: SD = standard deviation.

being threatened by whites are slightly (but not significantly) *more* likely to participate in school activities ($r = 0.11$), to do activities with whites after school ($r = 0.05$), or to visit with whites in their homes ($r = 0.09$). Those reporting being called names by whites are also slightly (but not significantly) *more*

likely to do activities with whites after school ($r = 0.08$) and to visit with whites in their homes ($r = 0.17$).

These correlations are not statistically significant, but 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 whites' homes, and participating in school activities with whites. That does not make the threats and name-calling pleasant, but it makes it easier for these youth to feel a part of white suburban schools.

How much does attrition reduce program effects?

One criticism of the Gautreaux studies is the absence of information on the dropouts from the program. If substantial numbers drop out, then the results could be quite different. In the survey of heads of households, we made extensive efforts to locate everyone, yet we could locate only about two-thirds of the sample, and the rate was somewhat lower for suburban movers (60 percent). Of course, most studies have great difficulties in locating low-income people.

Note that people may not be found for either positive or negative reasons. Some may have left the program because they got good jobs and their incomes exceeded the program limit. Indeed, the study located some people who had such successful outcomes. On the other hand, some may have left the program because of negative outcomes: dissatisfaction, poor jobs, or poor children's outcomes. There is no way of knowing what percentage of those we did not find had positive or negative outcomes. We can only conclude that our results may either understate or overstate the program's effects.

Although we do not know exactly how many people left the suburbs, we can still estimate how much attrition could affect our results. Since we located 60 percent of our suburban movers in the suburbs, 40 percent is the upper limit for attrition. It is not likely that all of these 40 percent moved back to the city. But as a mental exercise, we can assume that they all did and that their success rates are the same as the city movers' rates. These assumptions allow us to see how much suburban attrition might reduce our findings.

We can use these hypothetical assumptions to recalculate the adult employment findings. The 224 suburban adults came from

an original pool of 373 adults (224/0.60), and the additional 149 individuals we did not find will be assumed to have a city rate of employment of 50.9 percent, so 76 would have been employed. Adding those hypothetical 76 to the actual 143 adults with jobs and dividing by the total of 373 yields an employment rate of 58.7 percent. Thus, while the actual findings for employment were 50.9 percent city, 63.8 percent suburbs, the hypothetical difference is 50.9 percent city, 58.7 percent suburbs—under the extreme (and unlikely) assumption that all unfound people returned to the city and subsequently experienced the same employment rates as those who originally moved to the city. If we use a more realistic assumption, that half of all unfound people returned to the city, the results would be 50.9 percent city, 61.3 percent suburbs.

In sum, even making extreme assumptions yields a substantial suburb-city difference in employment. More realistic assumptions yield a difference that is not far from the original finding. Moreover, most of the children's outcomes show even larger differences, so if these procedures are applied to the children's outcomes, the most extreme adjustments still yield impressive benefits to the suburban movers.

It would be desirable to get better information on the people we did not find. In particular, we would like to know how many returned to the city, their reasons for moving, and the relative distribution of positive and negative reasons. Indeed, such data could have practical applications in helping new movers cope with the suburban move. However, that information is not likely to alter our conclusions. Even a worst-case scenario yields substantial benefits to suburban movers.

Implementation issues

According to Murphy's Law, anything that can go wrong will go wrong. A corollary of Murphy's Law might suggest that there are few ways to do things right but many ways to do things wrong. The rest of this article presents speculations about why this program has such strong effects and, by extension, how it could be done wrong.

In 1985, at the height of the Reagan years, the results of the first study of the Gautreaux program went out over the news wires and were ignored by all but a few local newspapers. In 1988, as the luster of the Reagan years was subsiding, a journalist "discovered" the Gautreaux program, and many major newspapers

carried the story of the 1985 study (later studies were still ongoing). Today, stories about housing mobility appear regularly in every major newspaper. Housing mobility is beginning to be seen as a panacea.

Obviously, I will not say anything to discourage the enthusiasm for this approach. My research findings have persuaded me of its value. However, “housing mobility” is not a single entity, and not all forms of housing mobility will have the same effects. I am voicing these cautions because I do not want the current enthusiasm to lead us to forget the important details that make the program successful. If the details are done badly, then the aphorism may be an apt warning: “The devil is in the details.”

While the Gautreaux program had remarkably positive effects, those results probably depend on the program’s having done a lot of things right. This is not to say that the Gautreaux program was perfect or did everything it could to increase success. As I will note, the program intentionally made some choices to lower costs and reduce potential benefits.

Alexander Polikoff (the lawyer who took the case to the U.S. Supreme Court and helped design the consent decree) and Kale Williams and his staff at the Leadership Council (who implemented the Gautreaux program) made many big and small decisions about the form the Gautreaux program would take. As Williams reports, some practices emerged without conscious decisions, but they nonetheless became enduring features of the program (personal communication, March 3, 1994). Obviously, given the observed outcomes, they did something right. The following analysis examines the many details that I believe were relevant to these outcomes. Of course, these are speculations; it is not possible to analyze the separate effects of various program components.

A federal program, Moving to Opportunity (MTO), is now being started to test the Gautreaux approach in five cities across the United States. In addition, many localities are adapting aspects of this program. These programs need to make many specific decisions about how to implement the program in their particular settings, and these decisions need not be the same as those made by the Gautreaux administrators. I hope that these speculations may help these programs think through their decisions.

When considering the replicability of the Gautreaux experience, it is important to bear in mind that Chicago is a unique setting. It is one of the most racially segregated metropolitan areas in

the nation (Farley and Frey 1992). The city also has a very large population living in extremely poor and distressed neighborhoods (Kasarda 1993). How these extreme conditions affected program outcomes is unknown, so results from a similar program in a different environment may be different.

Central features of the Gautreaux program

A useful way to consider the details of the Gautreaux program is to consider hypothetical alterations of what was done and to speculate about their implications. To do this, one must ask how the Gautreaux program could be done differently. A program that moves people to new places can vary four features: people, places, services, or expectations. Ignoring these possible variations, some people have assumed that any program that moves any people to any suburbs will have results similar to those of the Gautreaux program. This is probably not true. Indeed, the program would probably have worked very differently if it had varied any of these features. The following sections discuss why these features should be important considerations in program design.

People who may not match the program's demands

There is a tradeoff between seeking to move the maximum number of people to better housing and seeking to move only the kind of people who are likely to benefit. The Gautreaux program chose the latter strategy, and it developed clear criteria.

Many kinds of people might have difficulty benefiting from the program: people who cannot handle the rigors of the program, the costs, or the behavioral norms required. The Gautreaux program took steps to help improve the chances of getting people who were appropriate. It selected people who had good rent-payment records and no large debts that would prevent their paying rent, and those who did not cause property damage that would lead to their eviction from suburban apartments. These two criteria eliminated about 12 and 13 percent of otherwise eligible families, respectively. The program also excluded families with four or more children, who would not fit into the available two- to three-bedroom apartments, but this criterion eliminated only about 5 percent of eligible families.

These steps seem reasonable, but not all social programs take such steps. Well-intentioned social programs sometimes seek to

help the “most needy.” This is certainly a worthy group to serve, but it may be ill suited to a mobility program. If the most needy have large outstanding debts or lack experience at regular budgeting to pay rent, then they are likely to have trouble paying rent regularly. If they do not know how to take care of apartments, or if they have violent family members or visitors, then property damage will be likely. Not only will these circumstances lead to eviction, but even one such eviction can give the program a bad reputation, leading many landlords to avoid taking any more program participants.

Another related problem can arise from taking the most needy. One program took people on the public housing waiting list—people who generally were desperate for any kind of housing. According to informal reports (I know of no systematic information on this program), one consequence was that these people were not very patient about waiting until an appropriate integrated neighborhood was available; they wanted a roof over their heads immediately.

Programs that are concerned about community acceptance might use other criteria. While the Gautreaux program did not do this, some have suggested that such programs should screen out people with felony records. Some protesters against the Baltimore residential mobility program (MTO) were quoted as being concerned about felons moving into their neighborhoods.

The Gautreaux program seeks to integrate low-income people into the private sector housing market. Therefore, the program must select people who can meet the expectations of the private sector: regular rent payment and lack of property destruction. It must also select people who can wait until appropriate housing becomes available.

One important side effect of this strategy is that the Leadership Council came to be known and trusted by landlords. The Leadership Council’s selection procedures became an unofficial warranty of participants’ capabilities. Informal reports suggest that even landlords who harbored prejudices against low-income blacks felt they could trust the people selected by the Leadership Council. In effect, the Leadership Council informally certified participants in ways that overcame landlords’ prejudices, much as some job training programs serve as warranties of people’s job skills and work habits (Kariya and Rosenbaum forthcoming).

Avoiding selecting people who would benefit anyway

On the other hand, the program must not be so selective that it chooses only people who would succeed without it. On the basis of the above-noted criteria that eliminated 12, 13, and 5 percent of applicants, I estimate that the Gautreaux program eliminated about one-third of eligible applicants. The program was selective, but not so selective that it can be called “creaming.”

As an aside, people have commented on the Gautreaux families featured on television reports, such as those on *60 Minutes*, *CNN*, and *ABC World News Tonight*. Those families are articulate, and observers have noted that they do not seem like typical housing project residents. That is true, but they are not typical Gautreaux participants, either. The reason articulate families appear on television is that television producers want to feature articulate families. Average families do not make good TV.

It is noteworthy that the Gautreaux program did not apply more restrictive criteria. For instance, the program did not check on previous neighbors' complaints, children's problems in school, or mothers' work histories. These are all plausible criteria. They would probably have improved the success rate of the program, but the Gautreaux program did not choose to use them.

Such selection criteria were apparently unnecessary. The program had quite good results without them. While the Gautreaux program suggests that some selection criteria may be necessary, it also indicates that some other potential criteria are not necessary for generally successful outcomes.

Places that may not match the program's demands

There is a tradeoff between seeking to move the maximum number of people to better housing and seeking to move people to only the right kinds of places. The Gautreaux program chose the latter strategy, and it developed clear criteria for defining the right kinds of places.

Places can be inappropriate in a number of ways: They can be too expensive, too racist, too vulnerable to white flight, or too vulnerable to flight by the black middle class. The Gautreaux program was sensitive to all of these potential problems.

If housing is too expensive, the program is subject to political criticism. In addition, increased costs per unit limit the number

of families who can be helped. The maximum rent limitation is built into the Section 8 program. While some waivers were obtained to include some upper-middle-class communities, some suburbs still had rents that were beyond the scope of Section 8.

In the six-county area surrounding Chicago, there are few places where Gautreaux participants do not live, and most of those places are in the more distant outreaches of this large area, where two-hour driving times, not expense, reduced participation. Fewer than 10 suburbs had no housing units with rents within Section 8 guidelines.

Participants live in more than 115 suburbs surrounding Chicago, and they are widely distributed across these communities. Even upper-middle-class suburbs tend to have pockets of more reasonable rents amid their high-priced housing. While some economic segregation occurred within some suburbs, this was not necessarily class segregation, since many participants reported that they interacted with young highly educated neighbors (apparently people who started their families in apartments with affordable rents).

The Gautreaux program eliminated only two communities because of “intractable racism.” Cicero and Berwyn have active Ku Klux Klan groups and a long history of violent attacks on black residents. The program sent no families to those areas.

The Gautreaux program also eliminated communities considered to be too near a “tipping point” (a level of black population above which white residents might feel threatened and flee). While some research has tried to specify the tipping point at around 7 percent black (Farley, Bianchi, and Colasanto 1979), it seems likely that the proportion depends on historical conditions and the rate at which the community has arrived at its current composition. A community that has quickly shifted from 0 to 7 percent is likely to be much more upset and prone to resist integration than one that has shifted over a decade. In many metropolitan areas, there are communities that went from predominantly white to predominantly black in less than a decade. To avoid contributing to such a process, the Leadership Council sent no Gautreaux families to suburbs thought to be near a tipping point.

The program was also careful not to send too many families to any one location in a single year. A town that receives 10 families each year over 10 years will react quite differently from one that receives 100 families in a single year.

As a court-ordered desegregation program, the Gautreaux program was not allowed to send black families to predominantly black suburbs. Other programs, such as MTO, are allowed to do so and thus risk contributing to another kind of tipping point. Black middle-class residents might be alarmed if they felt that MTO was sending too many low-income residents to their suburbs.

It would be all too easy for this to happen. If a program has many families needing to be placed and only a few communities where those families feel comfortable, the easiest way to place more families is to send them to the same locations. This process is similar to real estate “blockbusting,” in which an agent instigates neighborhood panic to maintain a high volume of families moving into an area. Of course, we do not expect MTO staff to have such a motivation, but they could inadvertently contribute to such blockbusting. It is easier for a staff person to fall into a habit of sending people to a few well-known places than to discover new ones. And while the program may see its 300 families as a small number relative to the suburb’s population of 50,000, the community can see a sudden annual influx of 300 families as a threat, particularly if rental housing is concentrated in one part of town.

Participants’ choices also contribute to such a process. Given a choice about where to move, low-income blacks are likely to choose suburbs with substantial black populations where they do not have to worry about racial harassment. Yet this free-choice process is likely to lead to racial and economic resegregation, as whites and middle-class blacks fear the worst and flee. Indeed, the regular Section 8 program relies on free choice, and it sometimes creates these results. Similarly, the national housing voucher experiment found that given free choices about where to move, most recipients moved to areas very similar to the areas they left (Cronin and Rasmussen 1981).

Yet large influxes of low-income blacks can upset middle-class blacks just as they upset middle-class whites, leading to fears of increased crime and deteriorating property values. Indeed, middle-class blacks may perceive their middle-class status as more precarious than their white counterparts do. Some Gautreaux participants reported that white neighbors were sometimes more friendly than middle-class black neighbors, who seemed to act “snooty” and “too good to be friendly with us.” We suspect that middle-class blacks may worry that these low-income blacks will be stigmatized and that some of the stigma will spill over to them. While we have no systematic information

about the magnitude of this concern, we expect that middle-class black suburbs may be concerned about large influxes of low-income blacks.

Unfortunately, MTO programs could inadvertently create such a process. Because MTO legislation seeks to avoid the issue of race, it has no guidelines to prevent large numbers of moves into middle-class black areas. Nor does it have any guidelines to avoid moves into areas that might be near a tipping point. This is a serious shortcoming in the legislation, and we can only hope that the national program will develop program guidelines that prevent such practices and that local programs will be as sensitive to these issues as the Leadership Council has been. It would be a tragedy if this well-intentioned program inadvertently upset the racial or economic balance in a community by panicking residents.

Providing the right amount of help

To help families find housing in areas far from the central city, the Gautreaux program provided extensive help in locating housing. Two people located landlords willing to participate, and four housing counselors took participants to see the housing. Without this help, it was assumed, participants would not be aware of housing opportunities in white suburbs and could not visit these suburbs because of poor public transportation.

While the Gautreaux program provided extensive help in locating housing, it gave little help to families after the move. One staff person served up to 200 new participants for their first six months after moving. This person could not provide extensive help and mainly made referrals to other sources of help in the participants' new communities. Postmove help was limited in order to reduce program costs.

There are numerous nonhousing services that the Gautreaux program does not offer but that could enhance program impacts. For example, transportation was the greatest difficulty facing participants in the suburbs, which had little or no public transportation. If the program could help participants finance the purchase of a car, more people might get jobs, children would have an easier time attending after-school activities, and participants would face fewer frustrations with daily tasks. Child-care assistance would also have been extremely helpful, since suburban movers cannot rely on relatives. Finally, Gautreaux

participants might have gotten better jobs if the program had also provided additional education or training.

As a result of the decisions to provide little postmove assistance, the total cost of the Gautreaux program was only about \$1,000 per family. This average takes all the Gautreaux program costs and divides them by the number of families served in a year. The number was somewhat more in years when fewer families were moved and somewhat less when more families moved, so there may be some economies of scale.

In setting up the program, there was a concern that if the program provided more help, it would be too costly to be politically feasible in other locations. There was also the opposite concern, that it might provide too little help and thus not succeed. It is noteworthy that the program had great benefits despite the minimal postmove help it provided. Apparently, most families were able to cope with the difficulties they encountered.

Creating the right expectations

Programs can fail by creating excessive expectations. Expectations are a very real constraint on programs, since unrealistically high expectations will quickly be disappointed, and can lead to the program being abandoned before it has had time to succeed.

This is a great concern for the national MTO program. Founded in part on the *long-term* results of the Gautreaux program, MTO may be expected to show the same benefits *right away*, particularly because policy makers must make extravagant promises to convince Congress and local policy makers to support the program. Moreover, evaluations have been mandated, and their early results will be expected to show immediate benefits.

Thus an oversimple model of change may ignore difficulties that arise in the early years. Such a model might posit that if middle-class areas are beneficial, their benefits will show up immediately in test score improvements. However, the Gautreaux program research (Kaufman and Rosenbaum 1992; Rosenbaum 1993) suggests that low-income suburban movers experience enormous difficulties in their first one to three years after moving. The emotional reactions to these difficulties might lead to test score declines in the first few years, even though increases could occur thereafter. The experience may be similar to moving to a foreign land, where some neighbors are hostile and the

school curriculum is years more advanced than in one's former school. Indeed, some children reported that the dialect of white suburban teachers was hard to understand initially. Test score gains may not emerge immediately in such circumstances.

An alternative model may even hypothesize that short-term losses are necessary for long-term gains. This might be termed the "no pain, no gain" model. If children move to areas where the schools are no harder than the city schools they had attended, they may experience fewer difficulties, and their scores will not decline in the first years. Such unchallenging placements might not hurt test scores in the short term, but they might not lead to the long-term gains noted among the suburban Gautreaux children. This potential tradeoff between short term and long term is a speculation, but if true, it indicates that short-term evaluations could give the wrong message.

Other concerns about the Gautreaux program

The Gautreaux program deprives the central city of its leaders

Some have criticized the Gautreaux program for removing the most qualified people from the central city. This would be a serious problem if true. The central cities certainly need good black leaders. Yet the people who are selected for the program are not able to exert strong leadership in their communities; they are mostly single mothers on Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC) struggling to survive and keep their children safe. Being able to go out and get jobs in the suburbs is new for many of them—something they could not do in the housing projects.

The concern about the loss of leaders and talent in the inner city is a serious one. But as Wilson (1987) documented, this loss began two decades ago, when the black middle class began moving to the suburbs. The black middle class could provide leadership, jobs, and positive models to the central city; the Gautreaux mothers cannot do this nearly as well.

The Gautreaux program is too expensive

The program costs \$1,000 per family for placement services, plus a Section 8 housing certificate (approximately \$6,000 per year) to maintain people in private apartments. Section 8 is already a

large national program, so the incremental cost of converting a subset of existing Section 8 certificates to housing mobility is a one-time charge of \$1,000 per family. Of course, a major national mobility initiative would require additional Section 8 assistance and would therefore be more expensive.

The other aspect of the cost question is that Gautreaux takes money that could be applied to improving the city. This is wrong on two counts. First, the incremental cost of Gautreaux over the existing Section 8 program is only \$1,000 per family—very little money compared with existing urban programs. Second, no one would advocate doing such a program instead of investing in the city. Both should be done.

The Gautreaux program can only be a small program

Many people criticize the Gautreaux program by saying that it can move only a small number of families. This is probably mistaken. While such a program can move only a small number of families into *any single* neighborhood over the course of a few years, it could move large numbers over a decade if it included many scattered neighborhoods in a hundred suburbs surrounding major cities. The key is widely scattered locations.

To estimate the potential magnitude of the program, consider that the Chicago metropolitan area has a population of roughly 7 million, of whom 4 million live in the suburbs. Most suburbs are more than 90 percent white. If a program selected only the “better” half of families in the Chicago Housing Authority buildings—roughly 50,000 families comprising 150,000 individuals—and moved half of them to city apartments and half to suburban apartments, it would have negligible influence on any suburban community. If these 75,000 individuals were evenly spread among 4 million people in the suburbs, that would change the suburban population by less than 2 percent. A 90 percent white suburb would become 88 percent white. This is not the kind of change that panics anyone.

These numbers are larger than anything that is likely to happen. There is no source of funding for a program to move 50,000 families in the Chicago vicinity over the next decade. So these rough estimates are all about a hypothetical program that is beyond the scope of implementation. The point is that suburbs would not be greatly altered by a mobility program much larger than anything that is likely to be implemented, if the program involves a wide variety of areas.

Of course, housing availability is an additional potential constraint. But if the government can create a 10-year housing mobility program, then the housing industry is likely to be able to build new housing to accommodate this new population along with other population growth over the course of a decade. Moreover, as noted, the fact that the program would extend over a decade or more would further reduce its psychological impact.

Serious problems arise only if the program does not involve a wide variety of areas. Indeed, even a program of 300 families a year (smaller than the Gautreaux program) could create panic and rejection if it is narrowly focused on only a few communities.

Although the Gautreaux idea can be expanded to a much larger program, it still seems likely that small programs have stronger benefits than large ones. If three low-income families move to a middle-income neighborhood (of 500 residents), the neighbors and church may provide extensive hospitality. If 30 families move in, neighbors may be friendly, but 30 may be too many to give hospitality. Yet the children of 30 families will be scattered across many teachers and so still may receive extra individualized help in school. If 300 families move in, conflict and panic may be more likely than hospitality and help.

Numbers also alter the internal dynamics of movers. Children in three new families must interact with neighbors if they are to have friends their age. If children in 30 new families live close together, they can interact with one another and constitute a segregated enclave. The greater ease and comfort of segregated interaction may keep new movers from reaching out to white middle-class neighbors.

This is all speculation. If true, it suggests that numbers do affect the strength of effects of the moves and that as numbers increase, the amount and kinds of help decline.

Conclusions and policy implications

Results of the Gautreaux program show that residential integration can further the aims of improving employment, education, and social integration of low-income blacks. The suburban move greatly improved adults' employment rates, and many adults got jobs for the first time in their lives. The suburban move also improved youth's education and employment prospects. Compared with city movers, the children who moved to the suburbs are more likely to be (1) in school, (2) in college-track classes,

(3) in four-year colleges, (4) in jobs, and (5) in jobs with benefits and better pay. The suburban move also led to social integration, friendships, and interaction with white neighbors in the suburbs.

These results provide strong support for the propositions advanced by Galster and Killen (1995), who indicate that segregation discourages educational attainment and employment, and for the effects of moves out of segregated environments. Moreover, unlike the evidence they cite, which relies on multivariate controls, the present findings are based on quasi-random assignment of families to neighborhoods. Since multivariate analyses have difficulty controlling for all the factors that lead to individuals' neighborhood choices, this social experiment provides a useful alternative approach. Galster and Killen also put forward a number of propositions about the mechanisms leading to these outcomes, particularly information, norms, and social networks. We find indications of different social networks in the social interaction findings. While this study lacked systematic indicators of information and norms, these are important issues for future research.

Of course, the social integration was not total, and while harassment declined over time, some prejudice remained. The mothers and youth developed ways of dealing with it, and these unpleasant events were offset by acceptance by many white neighbors and classmates.

Similarly, the children's achievement gains were not immediate. Indeed, virtually all suburban movers experienced great difficulties, and many got lower grades in the first year or two. However, these difficulties were an unavoidable part of adjusting to the higher suburban standards and gaining from the move.

Some critics doubt that housing mobility programs can achieve the integration goals because low-income blacks will not choose to move to middle-income white suburbs. Indeed, a Detroit survey found that few blacks would make all-white neighborhoods their first choice (Farley, Bianchi, and Colasanto 1979; Farley et al. 1993). Moreover, some previous efforts to use tenant-based assistance to encourage racial integration were unsuccessful. The national Experimental Housing Allowance Program "had virtually no impact on the degree of economic and racial concentration experienced by participants" (Cronin and Rasmussen 1981, 123). Similarly, Project Self-Sufficiency in Cook County, IL, moved very few black participants to white suburbs (Rosenbaum 1988). In both programs, participants were reluctant to make these moves because of strong personal ties to

their neighbors, fear of discrimination, and unfamiliarity with the distant suburbs that could have offered them better job prospects.

The results of the Gautreaux program cannot be considered conclusive evidence contradicting these prior studies. Program design features—the lack of real choice about city or suburban locations—that strengthen the research conclusions described above limit any conclusions about what locational choices low-income blacks would make without such constraints. Still, the results suggest that tenant-based assistance can succeed in moving low-income families to suburbs with better schools and better labor markets, and that adults and children will benefit from such moves. The Gautreaux program was 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 program slots is high.

The Gautreaux program indicates that success 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 these suburbs, to address their concerns about such moves, and to take them to visit the units and communities. Like participants in other tenant-based assistance programs, Gautreaux participants were reluctant to move to distant suburbs that they had never seen before, 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 successes of this program indicate the value of having real estate staff and housing counselors.

We have noted a number of pitfalls that such programs must strive to avoid. Programs must select appropriate people, appropriate places, and appropriate services, and they must project appropriate expectations. This does not mean that the program must be very selective and very small, but it must make its operations effective. Nonetheless, the potential benefits make Gautreaux a promising approach, and it is worthwhile to invest more in programs that can lead to these benefits.

Its strategy had the consequence of allowing the Leadership Council to gain the trust of landlords. The Leadership Council's selection procedures became an unofficial warranty of participants' capabilities. Informal reports suggest that even landlords

who harbored prejudices against low-income people felt they could trust the people selected by the Leadership Council. In effect, the Leadership Council informally certified participants in ways that overcame landlords' prejudices.

This study also has implications for other housing programs. The results indicate three key factors that helped Gautreaux adults get jobs in the suburbs: personal safety, role models, and access to jobs. If these factors were improved in the city, they might also help city residents. In fact, the Chicago Housing Authority, 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 authority has initiated security measures. To provide positive models, it 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 have provided minibuses to the suburbs. These are the same factors that Gautreaux adults noted as helping them, so they are promising efforts. However, it is not certain 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 suburbs, and one-hour commutes may limit the attractiveness of taking a minibus to low-paying jobs. It will be some time before we can measure the success of such programs.

The Gautreaux studies support the basic premise of the "geography of opportunity" concept: that where someone lives has an important impact on his or her social and economic prospects. These studies clearly indicate that this housing strategy can lead to great gains in employment, education, and social integration for low-income blacks. Contrary to the pessimistic predictions of "culture of poverty" models, the early experiences of low-income blacks do not prevent them from benefiting from suburban moves. Programs that help people escape areas of concentrated poverty can improve employment and educational opportunities.

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