

New Lessons from the Gautreaux and Moving to Opportunity Residential Mobility Programs¹

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I. Introduction

The first study of the impacts of the Gautreaux residential mobility program was conducted nearly two decades ago.² It documented dramatic improvements in the lives of low-income African-American families placed by the program in Chicago's mostly white suburbs. Many interpreted these results as dramatic confirmation of Wilson's *The Truly Disadvantaged* picture of the debilitating role played by poor urban neighborhoods in the lives of their residents. Gautreaux moves appeared to demonstrate that families growing up in ghetto neighborhoods could take advantage of the opportunities provided by much better neighborhoods.

Publicity accorded the results also helped to inspire the Moving to Opportunity (MTO) program, an ambitious residential mobility experiment launched by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development in the mid-1990s. Unfortunately, interim results from the MTO experiment are not nearly as positive as the early Gautreaux research led us to anticipate.

This paper sheds new light on these programs in two different ways. First, we update Gautreaux's lessons with highlights from a new wave of research that draws its data from administrative records rather than surveys and provides a much longer-run picture of residential and personal outcomes. In the case of MTO, we interpret some of the program impacts in the light of findings from the systematic qualitative research conducted in the past several years.

II. Gautreaux and Moving to Opportunity

The Gautreaux program moved thousands of Chicago families who were in public housing or on waiting lists for public housing to other neighborhoods in and around Chicago. It began in 1976 and ended in the late 1990s, with most families moving during in the 1980s (Table 1). A second, much smaller wave of Gautreaux moves took place in 2002 (Pashup et al., 2006).

The Moving to Opportunity experiment was run by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development in five cities, including Chicago, from the mid- to late-1990's.³ Similar to Gautreaux, it provided thousands of families with an opportunity to move to more affluent neighborhoods.

One important difference between Gautreaux and MTO lies in their definitions of what constituted a "better" neighborhood. Gautreaux was part of a legal settlement involving racial discrimination and was designed to provide families living in highly segregated neighborhoods of concentrated poverty in Chicago the opportunity to move to more *racially integrated* neighborhoods.⁴ In contrast, Moving to Opportunity focused exclusively on a neighborhood's *economic status*. It provided families with opportunities to move to more affluent neighborhoods, defined as those with poverty rates under 10 percent, but attached no racial criteria whatsoever to the destination neighborhoods. In fact, most MTO families moved to highly segregated, if more affluent, neighborhoods (Orr et al., 2003).

Program evaluation. In evaluating the two programs, it is crucial to understand the nature of the comparisons that are being made (Table 1). The potential impact of a housing mobility program can be defined by the difference between how a family that benefited from a program's mobility opportunities fared *relative to what would have happened to that family had it not been given those opportunities*. Since MTO's evaluation design is based on random assignment, it is well suited for estimating program impacts. When families living in public housing in MTO's five cities were recruited for the program, they were told that they would be in a lottery in which they had roughly a two out of three chance of being able to move in conjunction with the program.⁵ Essentially, a coin was then flipped, determining which families would be able to participate in the program (the experimental group) and which would not. As a result, the fortunes of MTO control group families can be contrasted with their counterparts in the experimental group.

There is no control group in the Gautreaux program, rendering direct comparisons between the two studies impossible. Studies have only been able to contrast various subgroups of families, *all* of whom moved in conjunction with the program. The best known compare the program families placed in neighborhoods within the city of Chicago, who made up roughly half of the total, with the rest of the families, all of whom were placed in Chicago's suburbs (Rubinowitz and Rosenbaum, 2001).

In principle, Gautreaux participants had choices about where they moved. In practice, qualifying rental units were secured by rental agents working for the *Gautreaux* program and offered to families according to their position on a waiting list, regardless of their locational preference. Although participants could refuse an offer, few did so, since they were unlikely ever to get another. As a result, participants' preferences for placement neighborhoods had relatively little to do with where they ended up moving, providing a degree of exogenous variability in neighborhood placement that undergirds *Gautreaux* research. At the same time, both Votruba and Kling (2004) and Mendenhall (2004) document significant correlations between baseline family and neighborhood characteristics and suburban placements. Although these characteristics are controlled in their statistical analyses, there remains the possibility of selection bias.

More recent research has expanded these comparisons by examining families according to the poverty rates, racial characteristics and other features of their placement neighborhoods (Keels et al., 2005; Mendenhall et al., 2006; see also Deluca et al., forthcoming). Although counselors in Gautreaux strove to place families in low-poverty, racially integrated neighborhoods, there were in fact periods during its operation when it was very difficult to find housing in neighborhoods that met these criteria. About one-fifth of the families in Gautreaux were placed in high-poverty, highly segregated neighborhoods. The new research goes beyond the city/suburb dichotomy to compare the fortunes of the one-fifth of families placed in these neighborhoods with the four-fifths placed in more affluent and less segregated neighborhoods, some but not all of which were in suburban communities.

The permanence of Gautreaux residential successes. What have we learned from the more recent look at Gautreaux? Its most stunning success is revealed by tracking families' addresses in the late 1990s, up to 22 years after their original moves (Keels et al., 2005). With two-thirds of Gautreaux families who were placed in the suburbs still residing in the suburbs, there is great persistence in the residential successes of the families that moved as part of the program.

Even more impressive is the program's *intergenerational* residential successes: The children who were placed in the suburbs with their mothers but old enough to be living on their own by the late 1990s continued to reside in neighborhoods that have lower poverty rates, higher rates of educational attainment and a more integrated population than their original neighborhoods. Figures 1 and 2 provide a more detailed look at the residential fortunes of Gautreaux mothers and children. On average, these families came from very poor neighborhoods, with census-tract poverty rates averaging 40%, the lower boundary commonly used to define concentrated-poverty or "ghetto" neighborhoods.

Gautreaux cut these mean neighborhood poverty rates by more than half – to 20% (Figure 1). As of the late 1990s, both the mothers and the children were living in communities with poverty rates that were similar to those of their placement addresses – 18% for both mothers and their grown children. The sustained residential success of families moving in conjunction with the Gautreaux program is indeed striking.

In terms of the racial composition of the neighborhoods (Figure 2), Gautreaux families began in highly segregated settings: on average 87% of their neighbors in their origin communities were African American. The program placed its families in communities that reduced this percentage by two-thirds, to 30% African American. In contrast to rates of neighborhood poverty, the subsequent moves of Gautreaux families were to somewhat different neighborhoods – on average, they contained a fairly even balance of African Americans and individuals from other races. Almost none of the Gautreaux mothers and children ultimately moved to an area that was in the vicinity of their original neighborhoods.

MTO impacts on mental health. Although control families were not given assistance in moving to low-poverty neighborhoods, many of them moved of their own accord. Given their interest in this program, it is hardly surprising that most control families were able to move to a somewhat better neighborhood. However, their new neighborhoods had far higher poverty rates and more crime than the placement neighborhoods of the MTO families that moved in conjunction with the program (Figure 3).

The most striking success for MTO, and the first impact explored in qualitative section below, was improvement in a battery of mental health measures (Kling et al., 2007). Considerably fewer MTO mothers were depressed than control-group mothers. The reductions in rates of depression were similar in magnitude to those observed in clinical studies testing best-practice depression treatment regimens. It is not surprising that mental health would improve among the experimental group, given the goals of these families in seeking help from the MTO program in the first place. Almost all families enrolling in MTO reported that their primary motivation in signing up for the program was to have the opportunity to trade violent, gang-ridden neighborhoods for safer ones. Moving to neighborhoods with less crime and violence is likely to have been closely associated with the striking improvements observed in participants' mental health. Based on what mattered most to them, therefore, MTO was very successful.

Few effects on self-sufficiency in either program. MTO was much less successful in promoting economic self-sufficiency. Program designers hoped that MTO moves would improve mothers' employment prospects, reduce their welfare dependence, and boost the school achievement of children. On these counts, the results have been disappointing. MTO families were no more likely to be employed, earned no more and received welfare no less often than families assigned to the control group. Here it is important to remember that MTO's evaluation

took place in the late 1990s, in the midst of welfare reform and a booming economy. MTO families nearly doubled their employment and reduced their reliance on welfare, but these changes were no different, on average, from those experienced by the comparison group.

Early evidence from Gautreaux conducted by James Rosenbaum and his colleagues compared maternal employment rates for city and suburban movers and found substantial differences. But the longer-run look at employment and welfare receipt taken by Mendenhall et al. (2006), drawing on data from the late 1990s, showed no employment advantages to being offered housing in a suburban rather than a city neighborhood. Instead, there was some evidence that mothers placed in the worst (i.e., poorest and most segregated) neighborhoods had lower earnings than mothers placed in better neighborhoods. But the size of these differences was modest. Overall, however, the most recent evidence from MTO and Gautreaux does not replicate the dramatic employment improvements observed in the original Gautreaux research.

MTO's null effects on school achievement and mixed effects on problem behavior. A disappointing finding, and one better documented in MTO than Gautreaux, is that moves to better neighborhoods did not boost children's test scores. Sanbonmatsu et al. (2007) document these results. Using scores on a standardized achievement test administered during the interim MTO survey, they find no significant differences in test scores between experimental and control-group children, either as a whole or for subgroups defined by sex or age.

Although children's achievement was little affected by the MTO offer, their behavior was (Kling et al., 2007). Girls in the experimental group generally did better than their control-group counterparts, matching some of their mothers' mental health improvements, becoming more engaged in school and exhibiting fewer behavior problems. Unexpectedly, behavioral problems – measured both by the youths' own reports and in property crime arrest statistics – *worsened* for boys in the program relative to their control-group counterparts.

In the next section, we turn to the qualitative evidence to try to make sense of these sometimes puzzling patterns of results.

III. Qualitative insights into some key results

Rigorous social experiments like MTO are focused much more on estimating policy impacts than on explaining how those impacts came to be.⁶ Qualitative studies can help provide an explanation (Kling et al., 2005; Gibson and Duncan, 2005). Systematic analyses of detailed accounts of a subset of program and control families can generate many ideas regarding program impacts and nonimpacts, as well as identify subsets of families who appeared to profit the most (or least) from the program.

Qualitative studies were embedded in both the MTO and Gautreaux programs and can be used to provide detailed descriptions of families whose experiences are consistent with the quantitative evidence emerging from these studies. Kling et al. (2005) conducted open-ended interviews with a number of MTO participants living in Boston and discovered that nearly all participants viewed crime and violence as the most important reasons for enrolling in the program. Kathryn Edin and Jeffrey Kling led a large qualitative study of MTO adults and youth in Chicago and Baltimore (Turney et al., 2007; Clampet-Lindquist et al., 2009; Deluca and Rosenblatt; 2009), while Susan Popkin headed an exploratory qualitative study with both adults and youth in all five MTO cities (Popkin, Harris et al., 2001). Popkin and Xavier Briggs

conducted more in-depth qualitative studies in New York, Boston and Los Angeles. Here we highlight a few of the findings from these studies.

Better neighborhoods and mothers' mental health. As described in Duncan et al. (2006), the role of safer neighborhoods in improving mental health is readily apparent in the Gautreaux program move of Diane (a pseudonym) and her family. After several months of a concerted housing search, Diane, her two children, and her new husband moved to a suburb of Chicago, more than 30 miles from her original neighborhood.

Diane was much happier in her new neighborhood. Her sense of personal safety was markedly increased and she felt better about her children's safety. When asked how she would describe her new neighborhood to a friend back in the city, she said:

I'd tell them it's nice. It's almost like living in the country (laughing). But it's nice and it's quiet. And it's good because the children, they're not only playing with just black children. It's a mix, you know, so that's what I like most about it, my kids don't have a problem with going out there, playing. They're not running in, [saying], 'He beat me up.' We don't have a problem with them going out playing, and then I don't have to literally sit there and watch them. I keep checking on them because that's just ME, but they can honestly go out there and play and I really don't have no worries. So I tell them, it's a WONDERFUL neighborhood. It's wonderful.

As shown in Figure 3, quantitative evidence also shows how much safer post-move neighborhoods were compared with origin neighborhoods. It is hardly surprising that residential mobility programs had such a positive impact on the mental health of mothers.

Employment. Despite predictions that Gautreaux and MTO moves would place mothers closer to good jobs, there was no evidence in payrolls records that either the MTO treatment or, in the case of Gautreaux, suburban placements led to employment gains.

Turney et al. (2006) examined job-related information in qualitative data from Baltimore and Chicago, while Mendenhall (2004) interviewed Gautreaux mothers about their employment experiences. They found that employed respondents in both groups were heavily concentrated in retail and health care jobs. To get and keep jobs, many of these respondents relied heavily on informal referrals from work contacts, acquaintances, or casual associates who already held entry-level jobs in these sectors. Turney et al. (2006) found that none of the members of the MTO experimental group said they found their current job through a neighbor. "A lot of neighbors, they don't, they don't tell you too much about a job," said 37-year-old Renee.

Transportation problems were also a concern. Tisha won the MTO lottery in Baltimore and moved to a Baltimore County low-poverty suburban neighborhood. But she did not have a car. She explained: "*I had to get back into the city where more buses run on a frequent basis than in the County. . . . If you miss the [bus], if you missed it, go back home, sit down at the table, whatever. 'Cause the next bus comes an hour and a half to two hours later. So that was ridiculous and there was a lot of stress. When I moved back to the city, I told my sister, I said, 'I feel so good. And much as I hate the bus I was never so happy to be back in the city where I could catch the bus to get anywhere I needed to go.'*" (Turney et al., 2006)

Achievement and schools. One reason for the limited impact of MTO on children's achievement scores is that the quality of schools improved far less than did neighborhood quality for children in the experimental group. Figure 4 provides quantitative evidence on this point by comparing MTO experimental movers and their control-group counterparts. For the first

comparison, all tracts in the five states containing MTO cities are ranked according to the percentage of residents with household incomes below the poverty line. The poverty rate dividing the worst (i.e., highest poverty) 20% of neighborhoods from all others is used to classify MTO families according to their success in escaping bad neighborhoods. Only 26% of control families escaped by this definition, as compared with nearly three times as many (76%) experimental movers.

The second pair of columns repeats this comparison for school quality, with “bad schools” defined as having a student body with average reading test scores in the bottom 10% of students statewide. Here there is much less evidence of MTO program effects; 28% of control families escaped bad schools, compared with 41% of MTO experimental movers.

Qualitative data in both Popkin et al. (2006) and Deluca and Rosenblatt (forthcoming) show that families moving in conjunction with the program did not always attend a local school; all five MTO cities had citywide school districts with school choice programs. Despite the greater distance, some MTO families chose to remain in their familiar original schools. Others appeared to pick schools that were close to relatives who might provide after-school care.

Why didn't MTO mothers take full advantage of the better schools that were available to them in their new neighborhoods? Deluca and Rosenblatt (forthcoming) investigated this issue and found evidence that a majority of mothers subscribe to the fatalistic view that school quality matters much less than a child's inherent commitment to being a good student. Here is how one mother described it:

That school is crazy. I have to pray for her [my daughter], it's like I send my child to hell every day and then I expect her to get good grades and learn. But like I said it's up to the individual 'cause she could separate herself from that and she could get what she needs. And she could keep going or she could fall into that crowd to which she's a follower and she'll mess herself up.

Another expresses a similar sentiment: *I just don't care for that school much, but like I say, it all depends on how the children make it. If you go up there and you're willing to learn, then you're gonna learn. If you ain't willin to do nothin, then you're gonna do nothin.*

When asked “Did you ever think about sending him to another school?”, a third mother replied: *Mmm, not really... a lot of parents think if they, if I send my child to a private school, you know, he would learn better. Well, you can send a hard head to a private school and it's not gonna make a bit of difference. You can send a good child to what you might think is a not so good school and as long as they focus and pay attention it'll benefit them.*

Girls do better; boys do worse. A final puzzle explored in the qualitative studies is why the MTO experiment appeared to have helped girls but, if anything, worsened behavior problems for boys. Some of these gender differences are quite striking. For example, the Orr et al. (2003) report shows that the fraction of male youth ages 12-19 ever arrested for a property crime increased from 15.0% in the control group to 26.1% for boys whose families moved in conjunction with the program. Insignificant decreases in property crime arrests were observed to females. A self-reported index of risky behavior (e.g., smoking, drinking, marijuana use and sex) was significantly lower for experimental-group females relative to control-group females but higher (at the margin of statistical significance) for their male counterparts.

Susan Popkin et al. (2006) identify sexual predation as a key factor. Briana, the experimental-group mother of a daughter, described her old neighborhood this way: *They go for the 12-year-olds, the 11-year-olds, and give them drugs and that's not good . . . I have seen a lot of young girls like that . . . I refuse for my daughter to be like that.* When the interviewer asked Brianna if she thought there were those same kinds of pressures on girls in her new, lower-poverty neighborhood, she said that it was different.

I pay attention and it's different. The girls, they're different around here. I always say that. It's different. It really is. You know, if I would compare them to out here, out here they better. . . . You don't see them walking and hanging out and drinking and something that a teenager don't supposed to do with a grown man.

Clampet-Lundquist et al. (2006) do not find many reports of sexual predation in their qualitative data but instead find patterns of hanging out, friendship-making, and ties to social fathers that led boys moving from high-poverty to low-poverty neighborhoods to have a more difficult time than girls when it came to fitting in and benefiting from the improved environment. Their qualitative data are drawn from in-depth interviews conducted with a random subsample of 86 teens 14 to 19 years old in Baltimore and Chicago.

A first pattern noted in Clampet-Lundquist et al. (2006) was a counterintuitive one – although control boys lived in more dangerous neighborhood, their familiarity with those neighborhoods enabled them to deploy conscious strategies for avoiding neighborhood trouble. Many experimental boys, in contrast, had more trouble fitting into their new neighborhoods. They quote from sixteen-year-old Scott, a member of the Baltimore control group, who had lived in the same Baltimore public housing development his entire life and had been encouraged by his strict mother to stay away from the drug corners. He said: “I know [the guys on those corners] but they ain't my friends. They [are into] drugs and loitering and stuff like I don't really [do]. I mind my business” (p. 20).

Second, experimental group girls' patterns of activity fit in more easily in low-poverty neighborhoods than boys', whose routines tended to draw negative reactions from community members and agents of social control. Experimental girls adjusted well to their new schools, made friends easily, and were thus not as dependent on the pool of neighborhood peers as experimental boys, who report fewer friendships at school and less hanging out with schoolmates outside of school. Experimental boys felt that police were tightly monitoring their activities. Clampet-Lundquist et al. (2006) report on Ron, an 18 year-old living in the Baltimore suburbs, who claimed that his neighbors call the police when he and his friends, all African American, chose to congregate publicly: “You can't really [hang out in the neighborhood] because it's like mixed out here with like white and black . . . So if you see a group of black people and then like white people look out the window and call the police and they just say you gotta leave, and there's nowhere to go” (p. 23). Such surveillance made it difficult for Ron to engage in the main social activity he had become accustomed to in the city -- hanging out on street corners, basketball courts or vacant lots.

Ironically, the peace and quiet so appreciated by experimental mothers was not viewed in the same way by their sons. Clampet-Lundquist et al. (2006) tell the following story: “When an interviewer asked Bart, a 16-year-old who had moved back to a poor East Baltimore neighborhood, what his experimental move neighborhood in the suburbs was like, he said, ‘It was just too quiet. I don't like a lot of quiet. I don't like that. It was too quiet.’”

IV. Summary and implications

Drawing policy implications from Gautreaux and MTO requires us to weigh the considerable successes achieved by these programs against some disappointments. Both programs succeeded admirably in delivering what their participants were looking for when they signed up. Families were able to flee their violent, gang-ridden neighborhoods, and, as best documented in MTO, their mental health improved. But in terms of what many policy makers were hoping for – more work and higher earnings, greater independence from welfare, second-generation successes – the programs produced a mixed to null pattern of successes.

The MTO results presented here were drawn only four to seven years after the point families were first offered the chance to move. A new and very ambitious wave of data collection is underway and will soon provide a much more definite, 12- to 14-year post-baseline, judgment on the permanent changes occasioned by the MTO program. A long-run perspective was vital in the case of Gautreaux, since only then was it clear how permanent the residential successes of the suburban movers proved to be both for the mothers and their now-grown children.

Of greatest immediate policy interest in the MTO follow-up will be impacts for the group of families offered Housing Choice (formerly called Section 8) vouchers. In contrast to the MTO Experiment group, the moves of the so-called Section 8 group were not restricted by low-poverty or any other neighborhood characteristics. As with Housing Choice voucher recipients generally, these families were free to move to any apartment that met HUD-dictated quality standards. Fortunately, it is easy to summarize MTO impacts on the Section 8 group: they were generally smaller than, and often roughly half of the size of the impacts for the Experimental group. So neighborhood conditions improved for them, but not by as much as for Experimental families. Impacts on mothers' and daughters' mental health were present, although not as large and consistently significant as in the case of the MTO Experimental families. There were neither labor market nor welfare impacts for Section 8 families. There were few differences in school achievement and behavior between Section 8 and control-group children.

Bearing in mind the need to wait for the upcoming longer-run impact data, we can offer some speculation regarding policy directions. First, the transformational successes coming out of the initial round of Gautreaux research are not a likely product of any residential mobility program that the government might actually offer. Merely changing neighborhoods, even changing to much better neighborhoods, did not add to the labor market gains produced by the Clinton-era welfare reforms. As shown by the qualitative research, such moves can disrupt job information networks and impose insurmountable commuting burdens. One could imagine job-market policy approaches (e.g., job clubs, subsidized car leases) that might be linked with residential mobility programs to help address these problems, but that would add to their cost and administrative overhead.

By the same token, MTO-type moves are not a cure-all for the achievement problems of disadvantaged minority children attending our nation's troubled urban schools. In this case, a key problem appears to be the fatalistic attitudes of mothers in their school choices. Most MTO experimental families did not move beyond the boundaries of their initial school districts, and many of those who moved to neighborhoods with better school choices failed to take full advantage of them. Here again, one could imagine information-based policy changes that could help ensure that children ended up in the best possible schools. Another idea might be for

housing mobility programs to determine which neighborhoods provided high-quality charter or other public schools and work with local landlords to offer rental units in those neighborhoods.

More generally, it would be useful to test a new round of mobility programs that went beyond merely placing families in better neighborhoods and provide them with needed family and personal services and supports. Although the refrain of “more policy research is needed” is often sung by policy researchers, it seems particularly appropriate in the case of residential mobility programs. Longer-run MTO results will soon become available. Unless long-run impacts are much larger those found in the interim assessment, there will be a need for a better conceptualization of a truly effective residential mobility program.

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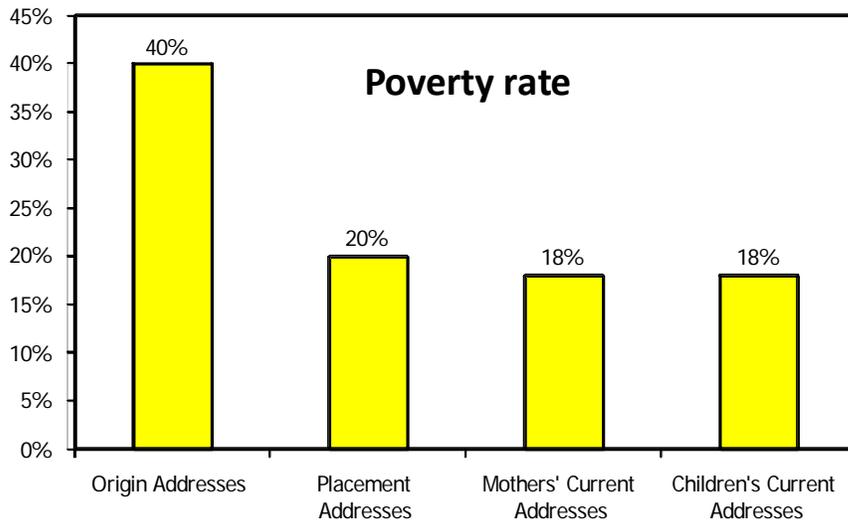
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Table 1: Program and Evaluation Elements of Gautreaux and Moving to Opportunity

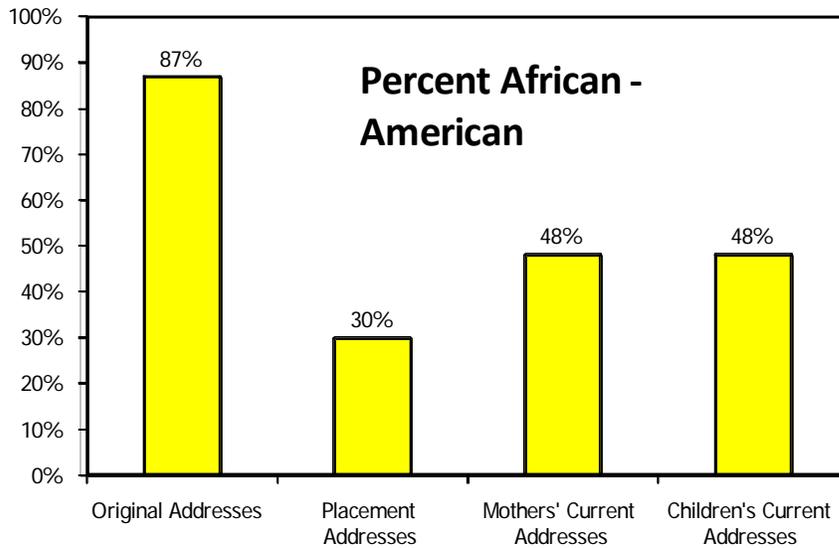
	<i>Gautreaux</i>	<i>Moving to Opportunity</i>
Timing of placement moves	Most moves in the 1980s	Mid-to-late 1990s
Placement neighborhood criterion	Most moves to white neighborhoods	Moves to low-poverty neighborhoods
Program operation	Program found units for most people	Most participants found their own units
Randomly assigned control group?	No	Yes
Research comparison	(i) City vs. suburban movers (ii) 20% who were placed in poor and black neighborhoods vs. other placements	MTO experimental group vs. control group
Quantitative results	Rosenbaum et al. surveys in 1980s; administrative data from late 1990s	Interim impacts 4-7 years after random assignment
Qualitative results	Rosenbaum in 1980s; Keels and Mendenhall in early 2000s	Edin, Kling, Deluca and others in Chicago and Baltimore; Popkin

Figure 1: Gautreaux : Census Tract Poverty Rate



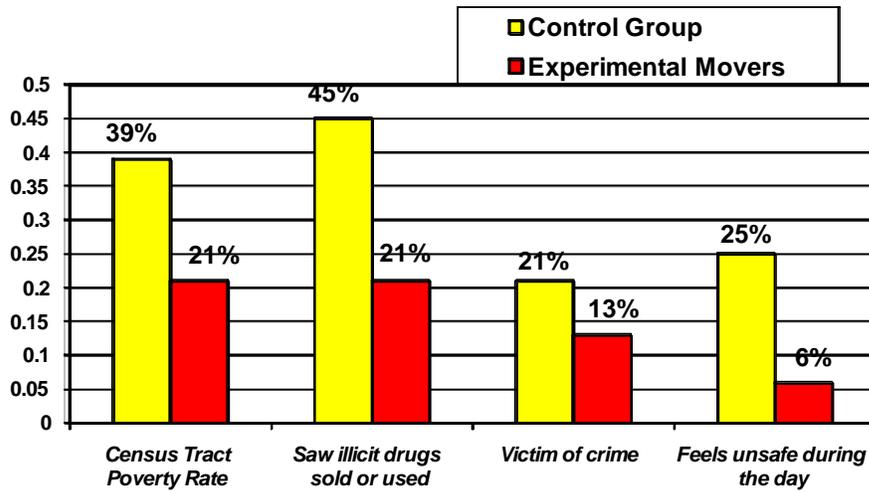
Keels et al., 2005

Figure 2: Gautreaux : Census Tract % African -American



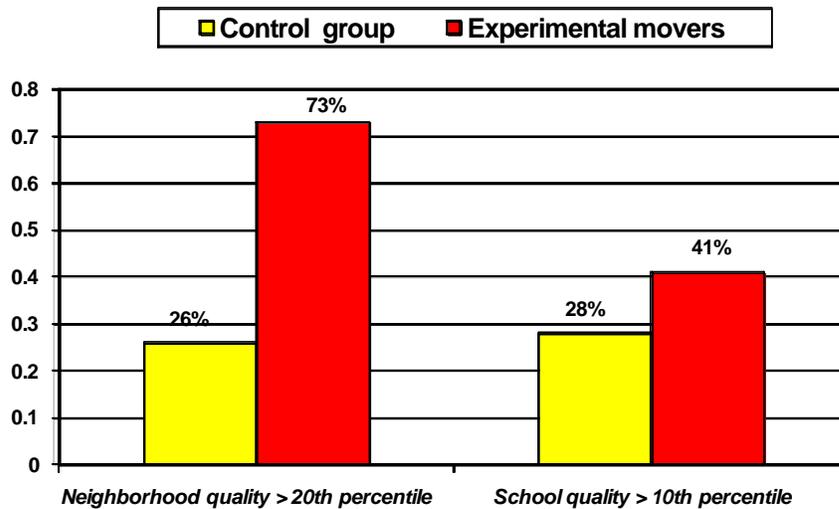
Keels et al., 2005

Figure 3: MTO Interim: Better Neighborhoods



All differences are statistically significant at the $p < 0.05$ level. Source: Orr et al. 2003

Figure 4: MTO neighborhoods vs. school improvements



All differences are statistically significant at the $p < 0.05$ level. Source: Sanbonmatsu et al. 2006

¹ This paper parallels and extends portions of Duncan and Zuberi (2007) and Deluca et al. (forthcoming).

² For a comprehensive review of the history of the *Gautreaux* lawsuit, the implementation of the program, and early research results, see Rubinowitz and Rosenbaum (2000).

³ Orr et al. (2003) provides a detailed description of the Moving to Opportunity Program, and documents experimental impacts. Goering and Feins (2003) provide a broader perspective on the MTO experiment.

⁴ The Gautreaux program was designed to place families in neighborhoods with less than 30% Black residents. In 1981, program rules changed so that families could move to neighborhoods with more than 30% Black residents if the neighborhoods were deemed to be revitalizing.

⁵ A random lottery assigned MTO participants into three groups: Experimental, Section 8, and Control (Orr et al., 2003). The experimental group received a housing voucher which could only be used to move into a low-poverty census tract (i.e., less than 10 percent poverty). Counseling services were also available to assist the experimental group in finding a unit. The Section 8 group received a housing voucher which could be used in any census tract regardless of poverty level, but they did not receive any counseling to help them. The control group did not receive a housing voucher or counseling through MTO, however they could move using other resources available to them outside of the program. We concentrate on the Experimental and Control groups in this paper.

⁶ To some extent process measures were built into the quantitative evaluation. Suppose, for example, we hypothesize that maternal mental health improved in MTO because the MTO vouchers enabled families to move to much less violent communities. If we measure and estimate experimental impacts on both mental health and neighborhood safety and find large impacts on both, then the hypothesized process is supported (although obviously not proven). On the other hand, if the positive mental health impacts were not accompanied by positive impacts on neighborhood safety, then we would have to look for alternative explanation. Note that this procedure has little power to explain non-results such as the absence of employment impacts in both MTO and (in the recent follow-up studies) Gautreaux.