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The Neighborhood Contexts in Which Low-Income Families Navigate Welfare Reform: Evidence from the Three-City Study

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Abstract

We investigate the neighborhood contexts in which low-income families negotiate the new environment created by welfare reform. Using data from the Three-City Study and U.S. Census, we follow 1,059 low-income women from 1999 to 2005 tracking their neighborhood quality, employment, and welfare use. Despite living in similar neighborhoods in 1999, women who left welfare experienced larger reductions in neighborhood disadvantage than women who remained on welfare. Likewise, women who left welfare with employment achieved larger increases in neighborhood quality than those who left welfare without work; the latter experiencing neighborhood change no different than those who stayed on welfare. Results indicate that neighborhood conditions are, at minimum, associated with welfare outcomes. We evaluate whether improvements in residential contexts facilitate transitions to economic self-sufficiency, but also test the reverse possibility. Findings suggest that neighborhood quality increases after women leave welfare, though we cannot reject the possibility that better neighborhoods lead to better outcomes.

Since the passage of the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act (PRWORA) in 1996, there has been much interest in the social and economic well being of welfare recipients as they traverse the new social benefits terrain created by welfare reform. Although it has become clear that welfare reform was not as harmful to recipients as initially feared, it is the case that reform failed to create a single pathway along which recipients successfully transitioned from it (see Haskins 2006). To be sure, some recipients have transitioned from welfare to work, becoming financially self-sufficient, perhaps after increasing their human capital. However, others left welfare without the benefit of employment or remained on welfare until their benefits expired, at which point they were left to provide for themselves and their families without federal cash support. The extent to which welfare reform is deemed successful is largely determined by which of these outcomes characterizes the majority of welfare recipients. Therefore, the broadest understanding of the social forces that contribute to these outcomes is of interest to both social scientists and policymakers.

To that end, social scientists have investigated welfare recipients' rates of transition from welfare and rates of employment, but few have analyzed the neighborhood contexts in which they make such transitions or become employed. Yet, sociology has always been concerned with the ecological conditions in which individuals and groups find themselves, as such conditions may facilitate or constrain behavior (Park 1926; Park and Burgess 1967 [1925]). Since the work of Park and Burgess, studies of neighborhood context have suggested the importance of ecological conditions for adult outcomes like labor market participation and employment (e.g., Wilson 1987), as well as the developmental progress and well-being of children (e.g., Bronfenbrenner 1979). Therefore, we investigate the neighborhood contexts of a representative sample of low-income families in three major U.S. cities to better understand the relationship between ecological conditions and welfare use in the post-welfare-reform era.

Using 2000 Census data to create an index of neighborhood concentrated disadvantage, we find that even among low-income populations, there exists variation in neighborhood socioeconomic conditions that are associated with welfare use. Moreover, better neighborhood conditions are associated with better welfare outcomes, such as leaving versus remaining on welfare and transitioning from welfare to work versus unemployment. Within the constraints posed by non-experimental longitudinal survey data, we attempt to shed some light on causality issues. We also consider the implications of our work, as well as make suggestions for future directions.

Background

Although not designed to evaluate the neighborhood contexts of those on welfare, housing mobility studies have come closest to shedding light on the importance of ecological conditions for welfare recipients. Housing mobility programs originated with the Gautreaux program, which arose from lawsuits against the Chicago Housing Authority and the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) in 1969 for having operated and funded a racially-discriminatory system of public housing. As compensation for violations of the constitutional rights of black public-housing residents (and applicants), plaintiffs' attorneys obtained a housing mobility program that allowed plaintiffs to relocate to better neighborhoods in Chicago or to predominantly white neighborhoods in the city's suburbs.¹ Studies of Gautreaux participants indicate that those who relocated to the suburbs experienced better neighborhoods than those who moved to new neighborhoods within the city. Along with more advantaged residential contexts came better outcomes for both adults and children (Rosenbaum 1995). Although suburban participants experienced initial difficulties in their new environments, they reported larger gains in employment among adults as well as larger gains in academic performance, educational attainment, and employment among youth compared to their city counterparts (Rubinowitz and Rosenbaum 2002). Access to increased social support from neighbors, a greater sense of safety, greater job opportunity, and higher quality schools are factors thought to have contributed to the improved socioeconomic status of suburban participants (Rosenbaum, DeLuca, and Tuck 2005). Taken together, studies of Gautreaux suggest that when the residential contexts of the

¹See Rosenbaum and DeLuca (2000) for more details on the design of the Gautreaux program.

poor improve, so, too, will their socioeconomic status and their well-being. As the title of one study suggests, the poor will develop “new capabilities in new places” (Rosenbaum et al. 2005).

Particularly relevant for our purposes are findings related to the Gautreaux housing mobility program and welfare use. Analyzing use patterns among a 50% sample of Gautreaux participants, Rosenbaum and DeLuca (2000) find that residential location was strongly associated with later welfare use. Despite comparable rates of AFDC-participation among program participants before relocation, those who moved to neighborhoods characterized by low levels of education were more likely to use public assistance than those who had moved to neighborhoods with better-educated residents. A subsequent analysis of duration of AFDC participation revealed that neighborhoods characterized by high resources and low levels of black segregation were ones in which Gautreaux participants spent significantly less time on welfare than those in less privileged places (Mendenhall, DeLuca, and Duncan 2006). Based on these patterns, which were observed prior to the passage of PRWORA, the authors conclude that “neighborhoods can affect the success of welfare reform,” either complicating it through the effects of neighborhood educational disadvantage or facilitating it should poor families have the opportunity to relocate to neighborhoods that encourage and support their transition to work (p. 6).

Similar to and inspired by Gautreaux, the Moving to Opportunity (MTO) program is a federally-funded housing mobility program created by HUD that was designed to test whether the positive outcomes observed in Gautreaux could be replicated in other places. HUD launched MTO in five cities—Baltimore, Boston, Chicago, Los Angeles, and New York—within which low-income families of any race were given the opportunity to move from poor to non-poor neighborhoods. Between 1994 and 1998, 4,608 families were admitted to the MTO study. A portion of these families were assigned to a control group that remained in public housing, another portion assigned to a “Section 8 group” and offered Section 8 vouchers that allowed them to relocate to any neighborhood they wished, and a third portion were assigned to the experimental group, which meant that they had to use their vouchers to relocate to neighborhoods with poverty rates of 10% or less. Like Gautreaux, MTO participants who relocated to new neighborhoods experienced improved residential conditions, such as better housing quality and greater sense of safety (Orr et al. 2003).

In contrast to expectations, however, improved neighborhood conditions had little effect on the economic outcomes of MTO participants. Adults who relocated to better neighborhoods reported no better rates of employment and welfare use than their counterparts who remained in public housing (Orr et al. 2003). However, Clampet-Lundquist and Massey (2008) argue that traditional analyses of MTO data do not consider the *exposure* of individuals to improved neighborhood conditions, but only whether individuals were given the opportunity to move to better neighborhoods. They re-analyze the MTO data, foregoing its experimental design, in order to estimate the effects of time spent in poor and non-poor neighborhoods. Treating MTO as a longitudinal study, Clampet-Lundquist and Massey find that exposure to non-poor residential environments is associated with lower odds of welfare receipt. Those results, however, have been criticized on the grounds that they are contingent

on the rather strong assumptions made by the authors (Sampson 2008). But evidence in support of neighborhood effects comes from a site-specific study of MTO participants in Baltimore. It indicates that rates of welfare use among those who moved to low-poverty neighborhoods (i.e., the experimental group) were 11 to 16 percent lower than among participants who remained in public housing (Ludwig, Duncan, and Pinkston 2005).

With few exceptions, then, findings from MTO contrast with those from Gautreaux regarding the possibility of improving the socioeconomic conditions of the poor, including welfare recipients, by improving their neighborhood conditions. However, there is a robust debate about the extent to which the MTO experiment achieved substantial change in the neighborhood contexts of its participants, writ large. Most agree that MTO made a significant impact on its neighborhood characteristic of interest—neighborhood poverty. Nevertheless, others argue that the neighborhoods of experimental group participants varied little from those of the control group on other neighborhood characteristics like racial composition (Clampet-Lundquist and Massey 2008). Indeed, after analyzing the MTO Chicago data, Sampson (2008:202) concludes that “MTO induced residential outcomes over the long run that differ in poverty but not necessarily in racial integration or the constellation of factors that define the concentration of disadvantage.” Therefore, the largely negative findings in MTO, which are based on its interim evaluation, may result from its specific focus on neighborhood poverty. We await findings on the program’s long-term effects to get a complete picture of what MTO tells us about the relationship between neighborhood conditions and welfare use.

Using data from the Fragile Families and Child Well-Being Study, a nationally-representative longitudinal study of births to married and unmarried parents in large cities, Casciano and Massey (2008) find that the odds of using welfare are highest for women who reside in neighborhoods of concentrated poverty and lowest among women who live in affluent neighborhoods. Place-specific studies like that conducted in Atlanta (Gurmu and Smith 2006), Baltimore (Hetling, Tracy, and Born 2005), Boston (Osterman 1991), and an unspecified mid-Atlantic state (Siegel, Green, Abbott, and Mogul 2007) suggest that neighborhoods with high employment among adults, few problems, and low rates of welfare receipt are associated with lower odds of welfare use and longer periods between welfare spells, while data from Detroit (Allard and Danziger 2003) suggest that residence in high-poverty neighborhoods is negatively associated with exiting welfare, though the results were inconsistent for blacks but consistent for whites.

Moreover, analyses of nationally-representative data from the PSID (1968–1986) suggest that neighborhood quality (as measured with census data) is associated with the *type* of exits women make from welfare (Vartanian 1997). For example, multiple neighborhood quality indicators like poverty and unemployment lowered the odds that whites left welfare by means of increased incomes; yet, only the occupational mix in neighborhoods affected the chances that blacks would do so. However, just the opposite is true of leaving welfare via marriage. Occupational mix and employment among males was associated with a higher likelihood of black women transitioning from welfare through this path, while the odds that whites would do so was not associated with any indicator of neighborhood quality.

With the notable exception of most MTO studies, results from previous analyses suggest that neighborhood context matters for the outcomes of welfare recipients—their use of public assistance, whether and how they exist from it, as well as whether and when they return to using welfare after transitioning from it.² However, the literature and our knowledge are in need of updating for two reasons. First, most of what we know comes from analyses of data that reference the experiences of respondents that took place prior to welfare reform. And those that occurred in the post-PRWORA era are dominated by analyses of MTO data. Moreover, these studies vary greatly in the exposure of their respondents to welfare reform. Respondents in the full set of MTO data had 4 to 6 years of exposure, while respondents in the Baltimore data have three years. Respondents in the Casciano-Massey analysis of data from the Fragile Families and Child Well being Study have two years of exposure to welfare reform. Additionally, that study is the only one to date to our knowledge that analyzes entry into and exits from welfare use during the post-PRWORA era.

Second, the dominance of MTO data in post-welfare reform studies is problematic for substantive reasons. Because MTO produced significant changes in neighborhood poverty, but little change in other neighborhood characteristics, it is a clear test of the effects of neighborhood poverty on welfare outcomes, but is not a particularly good test of neighborhood effects writ large (Sampson 2008; Clampet-Lundquist and Massey 2008). Moreover, housing mobility studies are based on samples of current and former residents of public-housing and/or publicly-subsidized private housing in very poor neighborhoods. Yet, most public-housing residents do not participate in welfare programs (HUD 1998), and most families that receive welfare do not reside in public housing (Sard and Waller 2002). Further, studies from Atlanta and Chicago suggest that the two populations are rather different, with residents of public housing being more disadvantaged than families who do not receive housing assistance even among families on Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) (Gurmu, Ihlenfeldt, and Smith 2008; Lewis and Ward n.d.). Therefore, studies comprised mainly of public housing residents may underestimate the relationship between neighborhood conditions and welfare outcomes due to the greater disadvantage of such families relative to low-income families who live outside of public housing.

The Three-City Study represents a unique opportunity to reassess the relationship between neighborhood conditions and welfare outcomes, as it addresses the three concerns with the existing literature articulated above. The Three-City Study contains data on respondents who have had at least 6 years of exposure to welfare reform policies, but could have had up to 9 years of exposure. Moreover, findings from these data can speak to the relationship between neighborhood context and welfare outcomes almost one decade after President Clinton achieved his goal of “ending welfare as we know it.” Additionally, the Three-City Study was specifically designed to evaluate the well-being of low-income families in the context of welfare reform. As such, it contains low-income families that received and did not receive welfare benefits, among whom only a small proportion resided in public housing. Finally,

²Like MTO studies, Gurmu, Ihlenfeldt, and Smith (2008) find no support for the effects of neighborhood poverty and proximity to public transportation on the economic outcomes of welfare recipients in Atlanta. That study predicts full-time employment among women on TANF rather than welfare use, exits from welfare, and welfare recidivism.

because we combine U.S. Census data with the neighborhood data from the Three-City Study, we include numerous indicators of neighborhood conditions in our analysis. Collectively, these benefits allow for a study of the relationship between multiple dimensions of neighborhood quality and welfare use among a broad, diverse sample of low-income families that have substantial exposure to welfare reform.

Data, Methods, and Analytical Strategy

The Three-City Study is a study of low-income families that began in 1999 with a random-sample survey of 2,402 children and their caregivers in low- and moderate-income neighborhoods in Boston, Chicago, and San Antonio. The survey was conducted as follows: In households in low- and moderate-income neighborhoods (93 percent of the selected block groups had poverty rates of 20 percent or more) with a child age 0 to 4 or age 10 to 14, with a female primary caregiver, and with incomes below 200 percent of the federal poverty line, interviewers randomly selected one child and conducted in-person interviews with that child's primary caregiver (a mother in over 90 percent of the cases). Families receiving benefits from TANF, the main cash welfare program, were over-sampled. The response rate was 74 percent.

A second wave of interviews was conducted from September 2000 to June 2001 with the same children, their initial caregivers, and any new caregivers if the children's living arrangements changed; and a similar third wave was conducted in 2005. Retention in the second and third waves was high; 80 percent of the families that had been interviewed in 1999 were successfully re-interviewed in the 2005 wave. There were no significant differences between the 1999 characteristics of the caregivers who were re-interviewed in 2005 and the 1999 characteristics of those who were not re-interviewed in 2005 with respect to age, race and Hispanic ethnicity, educational attainment, welfare usage, or marital status.

Information on welfare use and employment was obtained from monthly retrospective calendars for the interval between wave 1 and wave 2 interviews. At wave 3, two-year monthly retrospective calendars were again collected. The two-year retrospective time frame is consonant with the retrospective time frames in major national surveys, such as the Panel Study of Income Dynamics (PSID) and the National Longitudinal Study of Youth (NLSY), and is widely thought to be an acceptable period for recall. The two-year retrospective window does, however, create a discontinuous record of employment and welfare receipt between waves 2 and 3.

We include women in our analytical sample if they participated in all three waves of data collection and had valid information on their welfare use and employment. These criteria yielded an analytic sample of 1,059, which includes 429 African-American, 522 Hispanic, and 88 white women. We use data on respondents' welfare use across waves to assign them to welfare status groups. First, we distinguish between those who had ever used welfare by wave 1 ("welfare recipients") and those who reported never receiving welfare at wave 1 and who did not receive assistance during the study period ("non-recipients"). Second, among welfare recipients at wave 1, we further distinguish between those who remained on welfare at wave 3 ("stayers") and those who were not on welfare at wave 3 ("leavers"). Finally,

among the leavers, we identify those who were employed at wave 3 (“employed leavers”) and those who were unemployed at wave 3 (“unemployed leavers”) (Cherlin, Frogner, Ribar, and Moffitt 2009). We define as employed those women who reported working at a job for wages during the previous week.

With welfare status groups identified, we describe their neighborhood contexts with data from the Three-City Study augmented with data from the 2000 Census. Like the Three-City Study, the 2000 Census provides us with a description of the neighborhoods in which respondents lived in wave 1, which was collected in 1999 and 2000. The Three-City Study also provides data on the characteristics of the neighborhoods in which respondents lived in wave 3, which was collected in 2005. The Census Bureau, however, does not provide data at the census tract level between decennial censuses. Therefore, we paint a portrait of the neighborhoods of our respondents at wave 3 with data from the 2000 Census. This approach to describing the wave 3 neighborhood conditions of our respondents is reasonable to the extent that the neighborhoods in our sample did not change dramatically between 2000 and 2005.

We use a variety of measures to describe respondents’ neighborhoods. From the Three-City Study we use respondents’ reports of the number of problems in their neighborhoods, along with the degree of collective efficacy that might be used to combat them.³ From census data, we describe neighborhoods in terms of their racial composition, family structure, education, homeownership, labor market participation, employment, poverty, and use of public assistance. Following Sampson and associates (1997, 2008), we use principal component analysis to determine the degree to which these measures cohere so that they may be combined to create a single measure of neighborhood quality. The percent of non-Hispanic blacks, percent of female-headed households, percent of homeowners, percent employed, percent poor, and percent on public aid in neighborhoods all loaded onto a single component. We used their loadings as weights to create a continuous measure of neighborhood concentrated disadvantage.⁴

Our analytical strategy involves four parts. We describe the neighborhood contexts of welfare recipients in 1999 and 2005 to determine whether and which groups of welfare recipients experienced, on average, improvements in their residential circumstances. Second, we assess whether neighborhood change was associated with changes in neighborhood quality. For each of these components, we draw comparisons between welfare status groups⁵ by presenting mean differences in neighborhood conditions between (a) those who were ever on welfare compared to those who never received it, (b) those who left welfare by 2005 compared to those who did not, (c) those who left welfare without employment compared to those who remained on welfare, (d) those who left welfare with employment

³Collective efficacy is measured with a summary variable that reflects respondents’ perceptions of how likely their neighbors would be to intervene if important resources in their neighborhood were threatened or children were observed doing such things as skipping school, fighting, spraying graffiti, disrespecting adults, etc.

⁴Principal component analysis was conducted in Stata version 9.2. Although the variables mentioned above loaded together on a single component, Stata uses information from all variables in the analysis to create component scores. Because other variables (i.e., percent Hispanic and percent of adults not in the labor force) loaded more weakly, they are weighted less than other variables.

⁵We use the term *welfare status groups* when referring jointly to those who used welfare and those who did not (i.e., nevers, evers, stayers, leavers, employed leavers, and unemployed leavers). The term *welfare usage groups* refers only to those who used welfare (i.e., evers, stayers, leavers, employed leavers, and unemployed leavers).

compared to those who remained on TANF, and (e) those who left welfare with employment compared to those who left welfare without employment. In other words, we draw comparisons between welfare recipients and non-recipients and between “stayers” and all “leavers.” We then disaggregate leavers by employment status to compare each group to “stayers,” as well as to one another. Third, we assess changes in neighborhood quality between welfare status groups with a multivariate model. Specifically, we estimate OLS regression models that predict changes in concentrated disadvantage in respondents’ neighborhoods across waves 1 and 3, controlling for respondents’ race, ethnicity, and socioeconomic background. Finally, we assess whether neighborhood improvement preceded or followed transitions from welfare. All analyses are weighted to correct for over-sampling and to give equal weight to the experiences of families in each of the three cities (see Cherlin, Fomby, and Moffitt, 2002).

Findings

Initial Neighborhood Conditions

Table 1 displays mean differences in neighborhood characteristics between welfare status groups in waves 1 and 3. Although we anticipated little variation among respondents, the top panel of the table shows qualitative differences in the wave-1 neighborhood conditions of welfare status groups, even among a sample of residents from low- and moderate-income neighborhoods. Those with a history of welfare use resided in neighborhoods with greater levels of concentrated disadvantage compared to those who never used welfare (column A). The neighborhoods in which welfare recipients lived have a mean score of 4.79 on our measure of concentrated disadvantage, whereas non-recipients resided in neighborhoods with an average score of only 2.30, a difference of 2.49 points, or nearly one standard deviation, that is statistically significant ($p < 0.001$).⁶ Examining individual measures of neighborhood quality reveals that the residential contexts of welfare recipients are reported to have less collective efficacy and more problems compared to the neighborhoods of those who never used welfare. As indicated by census data, the neighborhoods of welfare recipients also contained, on average, proportionately more black but fewer white and Hispanic residents, more female-headed families, fewer persons in the labor force, and among those that were, fewer who were employed than in the neighborhoods of non-recipients. Additionally, the neighborhoods of welfare recipients were economically disadvantaged relative to the neighborhoods of respondents who had no prior welfare use, as indicated by the larger percentage of persons in poverty and percentage of households that receive public assistance. In sum, welfare recipients were disadvantaged relative to non-recipients as reflected by concentrated disadvantage, but also by virtually every individual indicator of neighborhood conditions that we consider.

Consistent with expectations, there are relatively few differences in initial neighborhood conditions *among* those with a history of welfare use (columns B, C and D). All welfare usage groups resided in neighborhoods with a mean concentrated disadvantage score

⁶Values for neighborhood concentrated disadvantage ranged from -1.02 to 12.30, and averaged 3.55 with a standard deviation of 2.78 in wave 1. Values for wave 3 ranged from -2.36 to 10.98, and averaged 2.45 with a standard deviation of 2.51. Descriptive statistics for other neighborhood variables are available upon request.

between 4.54 and 4.86. Neighborhood racial composition, family structure, employment, and poverty vary little among these groups. Surprisingly, low levels of education and non-participation in the labor force had been more prevalent in the neighborhoods of unemployed leavers than stayers, though the neighborhoods of the former appear to have been somewhat more stable in 2000 than those of stayers given their higher rate of homeownership. Employment status differentiates little among leavers, as there is no clear indication that respondents who left welfare between 1999 and 2005, whether employed or unemployed, lived in better neighborhoods compared to those who remained on welfare during this period.

Neighborhood Conditions Six Years Later

By wave 3, neighborhood conditions had improved for each welfare status group. Whereas our sample respondents lived in neighborhoods with a mean concentrated disadvantage score of 3.55 in 1999, six years later they lived in neighborhoods with an average score of 2.45, a statistically significant difference at $p = 0.000$. Moreover, each group experienced improvements in neighborhood conditions on almost every indicator of neighborhood quality.

At the same time, differences in neighborhood conditions became more numerous and pronounced for some groups, but attenuated for others. For example, differences in neighborhood characteristics between welfare recipients and non-recipients were smaller than they were in wave 1. On almost every measure of neighborhood conditions, there is indication of less residential inequality between welfare and non-welfare families than at wave 1. At the same time, some neighborhood differences between leavers and stayers grew larger. By 2005, leavers had improved their neighborhood conditions over that of stayers, as indicated by relatively lower rates of female-headed households and higher rates of homeownership, while employed leavers made larger gains than stayers in neighborhood concentrated disadvantage, employment, and poverty. Moreover, employed leavers also experienced relative advantages over their unemployed counterparts in the areas of concentrated disadvantage, neighborhood problems, education, poverty, and the percentage of families that relied on public assistance.

In sum, the neighborhoods of our respondents were qualitatively better in wave 3 than they were in wave 1. The differences that existed between welfare status groups were more in line with expectations than at the start of the study period. And at this point in the study, employment among leavers is clearly associated with better neighborhood quality.

Residential Mobility and Changes in Neighborhood Quality

Table 1 paints a portrait of the neighborhood conditions of welfare status groups at two static points in time. We now turn to a consideration of residential mobility and associated changes in neighborhood quality in order to paint a more dynamic portrait of neighborhood change over time. That is, we consider shifts in neighborhood quality for those who moved between waves.

Residential mobility was the modal experience for respondents; more than half (57.7%) changed neighborhoods between waves 1 and 3. The propensity to move was higher among respondents with a history of welfare use (67.9%) than among those without (47.4%). Yet, mobility appears unrelated to *whether* one transitioned from welfare, but rather *how* one made the transition. That is, rates of neighborhood change were similar among stayers (65.9%) and leavers (68.4%), but varied substantially by employment status among leavers (62.3% versus 75.2% for unemployed and employed leavers, respectively).

Table 2 compares the neighborhoods of those who moved between waves to those who remained in the neighborhoods in which we originally observed them. The first data column indicates whether movers and non-movers differed in their original neighborhood conditions, while the second column describes differences in their residential contexts six years later. Clearly, movers and non-movers differed very little in their original neighborhood contexts. However, by wave 3, the residential conditions of movers differed significantly, and on some indicators substantially, from those of non-movers. Indeed, the positive effects of moving were experienced by welfare recipients and non-recipients, alike. Among non-recipients, movers overcame their deficits in collective efficacy and neighborhood problems, and enjoyed greater neighborhood quality than their stationary counterparts on all but two measures, including our summary measure of concentrated disadvantage.

Likewise, moving yielded benefits for welfare recipients. Movers were already living in slightly better neighborhoods than non-movers in wave 1, as indicated by relatively more homeowners and fewer adults who were not participating in the labor force. By wave 3, eventual movers resided in even higher quality neighborhoods relative to their non-moving counterparts, given greater collective efficacy and more employed persons, as well as proportionately fewer families headed by women, families in poverty, or households on public assistance. Overall, then, Table 2 reveals a pattern of neighborhood improvement for those who relocated. On almost every indicator considered, including concentrated disadvantage and reports of collective efficacy and neighborhood problems, respondents who changed neighborhoods experienced significant and positive changes in neighborhood quality. Further, it is noteworthy that the dividends to residential mobility were even larger among welfare recipients than non-recipients.⁷

Next, we use a multivariate framework to estimate changes in neighborhood quality among welfare status groups. We estimate OLS regression models that predict changes in concentrated disadvantage in respondents' neighborhoods across waves 1 and 3, net of respondents' socioeconomic background. Control variables include race, ethnicity, nativity, measures of respondents' socioeconomic status and household composition (e.g., education, marital status, number of children, age of youngest child, and homeownership), measures of

⁷Recall that we use 2000 Census data to describe neighborhoods in wave 1 and wave 3. For non-movers, this means that the quality of the neighborhoods in which they remained in 2005 is unobserved. For movers, it means that the quality of the neighborhoods into which they moved, as of 2005, is also unobserved. Thus, it is more precise to say that, on average, movers relocated to neighborhoods that were, *as of 2000*, of higher quality than the neighborhoods in which non-movers remained. To jeopardize the validity of our findings, the neighborhoods in which non-movers remained would have had to improve in quality between 2000 and 2005 more so than the neighborhoods into which movers entered. There is little reason to believe this occurred.

respondents' socioeconomic family background (e.g., parental education and whether the respondent's family received public assistance when the respondent was a child), and a dummy variable that indicates whether the respondent moved between waves.

Table 3 contains two sets of data columns; they differ only in that the second set distinguishes between employed and unemployed leavers, whereas the first set does not. Within each set of columns are two regression models. The first model includes only respondents' welfare status; the second model adds respondents' sociodemographic characteristics. Results indicate that respondents who transitioned from welfare experienced, on average, larger reductions in concentrated disadvantage than women who remained on welfare ($b = -0.73, p = 0.003$), even when controlling for respondents' socioeconomic status and family background ($b = -0.59, p = 0.008$). However, the second set of models reveals that this is true only for those who transitioned from welfare to work (see column C). Respondents who left welfare without employment experienced changes in neighborhood quality that were no different than those achieved by women who remained on welfare. The full model suggests that differences between employed and unemployed leavers in neighborhood quality are related to the different characteristics of the women in these two groups. In particular, it appears that the greater residential mobility of employed leavers relative to their unemployed counterparts helped them to achieve larger average improvements in neighborhood quality than was achieved by unemployed leavers who, on the whole, were less likely to move.⁸

As previously suggested by Table 2, moving is associated with reductions in neighborhood disadvantage. Education, both a respondent's and her father's, is associated with larger reductions in concentrated disadvantage. Finally, African Americans were no different than whites in changes in neighborhood quality. Hispanics, however, gained less from relocating than did whites.

Figure 1 describes changes in neighborhood concentrated disadvantage across waves in each of the three cities. Plotted in each sub-graph are the mean values for neighborhood disadvantage for each welfare status group in waves 1 and 3. Values for wave 3 were obtained from regression models that predict level of neighborhood concentrated disadvantage, controlling for respondents' background characteristics and initial level of neighborhood quality. As indicated by the regression results, the figure shows that employed leavers lived in less disadvantaged neighborhoods compared to stayers. Likewise, employed leavers lived in less disadvantaged neighborhoods than their unemployed counterparts. Both findings hold true in all three cities, but especially in Chicago.

In addition to comparisons among welfare status groups, Figure 1 permits us to make comparisons among cities in terms of patterns of change in neighborhood disadvantage. For example, it is clear that disadvantage is greater in Chicago than in Boston and San Antonio. Yet, it is also in Chicago where we see the largest improvements in neighborhood

⁸We also estimated OLS regression models that predict the *level* of concentrated disadvantage in respondents' neighborhoods. Results from those models are consistent with those reported above.

conditions. Still, by wave 3, welfare recipients in Chicago remained in more disadvantaged neighborhoods than their counterparts in Boston and San Antonio.

Collectively, our results suggest that, at a minimum, neighborhood characteristics are associated with welfare outcomes. In order to assess whether improved neighborhood conditions helped women transition from welfare (i.e., a “neighborhood effects” hypothesis), we must be able to identify when welfare transitions occurred relative to the timing of residential moves. To do this, we follow Frogner, Moffitt, and Ribar (2009) in distinguishing between early and late welfare leavers. “Early leavers” are women who were on welfare in 1999, but who had left welfare by 2001 and were still off welfare in 2005. “Late leavers” are women who were on welfare in 1999, were still on welfare in 2001, but had transitioned off TANF by 2005. We make a similar distinction among movers, such that “early movers” are those who moved by 2001 and “late movers” are those who had not moved by 2001 but had done so by 2005.

Using these categories, we identify two groups for whom we can determine the temporal ordering of welfare transitions and residential moves and two groups for whom we cannot make such a determination. We cannot determine the order of events for respondents who both left welfare and moved early in the observation period (i.e., early leavers who are early movers) or for those who both left welfare and moved late in the observation period (i.e., late leavers who are late movers). Therefore, we place both groups in a residual category (“others who moved”) to bracket them in our assessment of the neighborhood effects hypothesis.⁹

We can determine the order of events for women who moved early in the observation period and transitioned from welfare after the move (i.e., early movers who are late leavers). This is our group of interest for an assessment of the neighborhood effects hypothesis, as they experienced neighborhood change prior to leaving welfare. Therefore, we compare this group of women to respondents who both remained on welfare throughout the observation period and made residential moves. We refer to this group as “stayers who moved” and they serve as our control group. If transitions from welfare followed improvements in neighborhood conditions, we would expect to see that the early movers/late leavers achieved significantly larger reductions in neighborhood concentrated disadvantage than women who moved and remained on welfare (i.e., stayers who moved). This pattern of results would lend support to the neighborhood effects hypothesis that improved neighborhood quality lead to better welfare outcomes.

Additionally, we can determine the order of events for women who transitioned from welfare early in the observation period but moved after leaving welfare (i.e., early leavers who are late movers). This allows us to assess an alternative “welfare effects” hypothesis—that transitioning from welfare helped women to relocate to better residential environments. If these early leavers/late movers experienced larger decreases in concentrated disadvantage than did stayers who moved, that pattern would support the welfare effects hypothesis. If we

⁹The category “others who moved” also includes non-recipients who moved.

find evidence of this pattern and the one described above, then it will be difficult to adjudicate between the two hypotheses.

Table 4 presents OLS regression models with the same control variables used in the previous table. Results provide little to no support for the neighborhood effects hypothesis, but provides support for the welfare effects hypothesis. That is, women who changed neighborhoods prior to leaving welfare experienced declines in concentrated disadvantage that were no different than those achieved by women who remained on welfare and moved. In contrast, women who left welfare early in the observation period then moved achieved declines in concentrated disadvantage that are significantly larger than those obtained by women who remained on welfare and relocated ($b = -2.22, p = .000$). Moreover, the larger reductions in neighborhood disadvantage by early leavers/late movers is not explained by differences between them and stayers in sociodemographic characteristics ($b = -1.97, p = 0.000$ in Column B). In other words, women who experienced the “treatment” of neighborhood change were comparable to welfare stayers in both changes in neighborhood quality and levels of concentrated disadvantage, whereas women who left welfare early achieved larger declines in disadvantage and moved to significantly better places than did both groups.¹⁰ These findings suggest that improvements in neighborhood quality *followed* women’s transitions from welfare, rather than preceded them.

Discussion and Conclusions

In this paper, we have used data from the Three-City Study and the 2000 U.S. Census to investigate the neighborhood conditions of welfare recipients in order to understand one of the social contexts they navigate as they traverse the new social benefits terrain created by welfare reform. We, thus, analyzed the relationship between neighborhood conditions and welfare use. Our objective was to determine whether families who ultimately left welfare were living in more advantaged residential contexts than those who remained on public assistance. If so, it would suggest that neighborhood conditions are positively associated with welfare exits.

That our respondents resided in disadvantaged neighborhood conditions in wave 1 is no surprise given that they were sampled from low- and moderate-income neighborhoods. But even among such a sample, there were significant differences in initial neighborhood conditions between those with a history of welfare use and those without. Yet, there were relatively few differences among welfare recipients (i.e., stayers, leavers, employed and unemployed leavers). Six years later, however, respondents who had left welfare resided in better neighborhoods than those who remained on welfare. Even among leavers, those with better outcomes—employment versus unemployment—enjoyed better neighborhood environments. Thus, residential conditions and residential mobility appear to be associated with whether one transitioned from welfare as well as how one made the transition (i.e., with or without work).

¹⁰Not only did early movers/late leavers experience similar changes in neighborhood quality as did stayers who moved, but the two groups also lived in neighborhoods with similar levels of concentrated disadvantage, net of controls ($b = -0.14, p = 0.649$). However, early leavers/late movers lived in better neighborhoods in wave 3 than did either stayers who moved ($b = -1.17, p = 0.000$) or women who moved before leaving welfare ($b = 1.03, p = 0.001$).

Nevertheless, we are reminded of Sharkey's (2008) distinction between residential mobility and "contextual mobility;" the latter referring to *substantive* changes in neighborhood environment. Sampson's (2008) study of residential mobility among MTO residents in Chicago demonstrated a lack of contextual mobility among those participants. Although MTO residents evidenced much residential mobility, they moved from one disadvantaged neighborhood to another, leading Sampson to characterize their mobility patterns as "moving to inequality" rather than "moving to opportunity."

It is certainly possible that some of our respondents did the same, but on the whole, their new locations were less disadvantaged than their original ones, and this was true for those who remained on welfare for the duration of the study as well as those who transitioned from welfare. On almost every indicator, the destination neighborhoods of movers were better than their neighborhoods of origin. There was variation in the degree of neighborhood improvement, however. Employed welfare leavers experienced significantly larger gains in neighborhood quality and, ultimately, relocated to better neighborhoods than did stayers, whereas unemployed leavers did not.

However, it is not the case that leavers resided in neighborhoods that we would describe as *advantaged*. On the positive side, those who transitioned from welfare and relocated across waves moved from neighborhoods with high levels of poverty to neighborhoods with moderate levels of poverty.¹¹ Likewise, the new neighborhoods of this group had rates of public assistance that were only about half of those in their former neighborhoods. Levels of black concentration fell by almost double digits. Yet, other indicators of neighborhood conditions are not so bright. Almost a third of the adults in their neighborhoods had less than a high school diploma, the neighborhoods were still racially concentrated, about a quarter of families were headed by single parents, and roughly 42 percent of adults did not participate in the labor force.

To put the residential conditions of our leavers in context, we compare their neighborhoods to those of Chicago public housing residents who participated in the Gautreaux housing mobility program. That program is widely recognized as having made substantial (and lasting) improvements in the neighborhood conditions of its participants. Rosenbaum and colleagues (2005) report that participants moved from neighborhoods where, on average, 42 percent of non-elderly persons were poor to neighborhoods where 17 percent of such persons were poor; a dramatic difference to be sure. With respect to racial concentration, participants' original neighborhoods were 83 percent black, whereas their new neighborhoods were 28 percent black (Keels, Duncan, Deluca, Mendenhall, and Rosenbaum 2005). In comparison, the unemployed leavers in our study who relocated between waves moved from neighborhoods that were, on average, 42 percent poor and 58 percent black to neighborhoods that were 28 percent poor and 46 percent black. Our employed leavers made slightly larger gains with respect to poverty, but somewhat smaller reductions in black concentration relative to our unemployed leavers. That is, they relocated from neighborhoods that were 42 percent poor and 60 percent black to ones that were 24 percent

¹¹Following Jargowsky (1997), we consider neighborhoods with poverty rates below 20%, 20–39.9%, and 40% or more as low-, moderate-, and high-poverty neighborhoods, respectively.

poor and 51 percent black. In sum, then, Gautreaux participants moved from high- to low-poverty neighborhoods, while our respondents moved from high-poverty to moderately-poor neighborhoods. Gautreaux participants moved from neighborhoods of high to low black concentration, as was required by the program, whereas our respondents remained in neighborhoods of moderate racial concentration (see Figure 2).

We draw several conclusions from these and other findings. One, in this era of welfare reform, when many expected disastrous outcomes for welfare recipients, we find that they achieved improvement in their neighborhood conditions. Two, the magnitude of those changes are sufficient, we think, to constitute contextual mobility and not merely residential mobility. Moreover, welfare recipients managed to increase their neighborhood quality without the help of a residential mobility program. Three, employment meaningfully distinguishes between the experiences of welfare leavers, such that those who left without employment were scarcely different from stayers in their neighborhood conditions over time. In contrast, women who left welfare with employment achieved substantial and significant improvements relative to women who remained on welfare, as well as those who left welfare without the benefit of work.

Regarding the relationship between neighborhood conditions and welfare usage, our findings contrast with previous work that suggests the possibility of neighborhood effects on welfare participation (Osterman 1991; Casciano and Massey 2008; Clampet-Lundquist and Massey 2008). For example, Rosenbaum and DeLuca (2000) investigated the same relationship prior to the passage of PRWORA, and suggested that housing mobility programs may be “the key to welfare reform” based on reduced rates of welfare use among families who had relocated from Chicago public housing to predominantly white, middle-class neighborhoods in the city’s suburbs through the Gautreaux housing mobility program. Such programs represent an important mechanism through which low-income families may experience neighborhood change. Results from this study, however, suggest that the causal ordering may also run in the opposite direction—leaving welfare may help low-income women relocate to better neighborhoods.

To be sure, we must exercise caution when drawing conclusions from our results. Although there are two groups for which we could determine whether neighborhood conditions preceded or followed transitions from welfare, women in those groups represent slightly less than half (45.8%) of the women who both left welfare and moved. Unfortunately, the experiences of the other half of leavers who experienced neighborhood change are not reflected in our assessment of the neighborhood effects and welfare effects hypotheses. While our results suggest that leaving welfare may facilitate improvements in neighborhood quality, we fall short of being able to make causal claims about the residential consequences of leaving welfare. Likewise, we cannot firmly reject the possibility of neighborhood effects on welfare outcomes.

With those important limitations in mind, our results from Chicago, Boston, and San Antonio indicate that even among a disadvantaged population, neighborhood conditions and welfare use are at minimum related. To know with more certainty whether improved neighborhood conditions facilitate welfare exits in the era of welfare reform or whether

leaving welfare helps women move to better neighborhoods, we must have data that allow us to identify the precise order of welfare transitions relative to neighborhood change for an entire sample of women who both leave welfare and make residential moves. Such data must also describe families that experience not only residential mobility but substantial improvement in their neighborhood environments during the new welfare regime. Moreover, it would be informative to know exactly how welfare recipients and non-recipients achieve improvements in their residential contexts without the help of residential mobility programs. Qualitative interviews of welfare recipients and other low-income groups that are followed over time could shed light on this important question. While we await future research with data that permit stronger claims and insights about how neighborhood improvement is achieved among this vulnerable population, the current findings suggest that improvements in neighborhood quality may be another way in which families benefit from the transition from welfare to economic self-sufficiency.

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Figure 1.
Change in Neighborhood Concentrated Disadvantage by Welfare Status Groups and Employment Across Waves by City, 1999–2005.

Figure 2. Changes in Neighborhood Poverty and Racial Composition Across Waves in the Three-City Study and Gautreaux Mobility Program.

Source: Gautreaux values are from Rosenbaum et al. (2005) and Keels et al. (2005).

Table 1

Mean Differences in Neighborhood Characteristics in Wave 1 by Welfare Status Group, Weighted. (n=1059)

Variable	Welfare Recipients			
	(A)	(B)	(C)	(D)
	Recipients v. Non-Recipients	Leavers v. Stayers	Unempl. Leavers v. Stayers	Empl. Leavers v. Stayers
Wave 1				
Collective Efficacy	-2.90 ***	-0.26	0.31	-0.90
# Neighborhood Problems	3.78 ***	0.26	0.50	-0.00
Concentrated Disadvantage	2.49 ***	0.32	0.33	0.31
% Non-Hispanic Black	34.53 ***	1.02	1.62	0.36
% Non-Hispanic White	-3.44 **	-2.16	-1.76	-2.59
% Hispanic	-29.40 ***	4.68	3.31	6.18
% Female-Headed Fam. w/Kids	13.95 ***	-0.36	-0.55	-0.15
% Owner-Occupied Housing Units	-15.89 ***	4.26 *	5.15 *	3.26
% Without High School Diploma	-3.52 ***	2.55 *	4.02 ***	0.93 ^
% Persons Employed	-9.29 ***	-1.98	-2.34	-1.59
% Persons Not in Labor Force	2.51 ***	2.05 **	1.72 *	2.41 **
% Persons in Poverty	10.83 ***	2.74	2.51	3.00
% Households on Public Aid	8.32 ***	1.44	1.78	1.06
Wave 3				
Collective Efficacy	-3.33 ***	0.58	-0.09	1.30
# Neighborhood Problems	2.49 ***	0.14	0.84	-0.61 ^
Concentrated Disadvantage	1.53 ***	-0.41	-0.16	-0.69 *^
% Non-Hispanic Black	28.54 ***	1.92	2.50	1.29
% Non-Hispanic White	-3.60 *	-3.16	-2.66	-3.70
% Persons who are Hispanic	-23.95 ***	3.91	2.73	5.21
% Female-Headed Fam. w/Kids	8.76 ***	-4.52 **	-3.82 *	-5.29 ***
% Owner-Occupied Housing Units	-10.64 ***	11.07 ***	9.19 ***	13.15 ***
% Without High School Diploma	-2.94 **	-0.84	1.09	-12.97 *^
% Employed	-5.36 ***	0.50	-0.27	1.34
% Not in Labor Force	1.46 **	0.07	0.77	-0.71
% Poor	5.59 ***	-2.60	-0.65	-4.74 ***
% Households on Public Aid	4.96 ***	-0.31	0.81	-1.54 ^

*
p<.05,**
p<.01,

 $p < .001$.

^
Significant difference at $p < .05$ between unemployed and employed leavers.

Table 2

Mean Differences in Neighborhood Characteristics Among Those Who Moved and Did Not Move Between Waves 1 and 3, Weighted.¹ (n=1059)

Variable	Wave 1	Wave 3
Non-Recipients (n=357)		
Collective Efficacy	-4.39 ***	1.58
# Neighborhood Problems	2.91 ***	-1.44 *
Concentrated Disadvantage	-0.07	-1.31 ***
% Non-Hispanic Black	-0.56	-3.46
% Non-Hispanic White	3.70	20.11 ***
% Hispanic	-2.76	-16.01 ***
% Female-Headed Families with Kids	-0.01	-5.18 ***
% Owner-Occupied Housing Units	-0.68	10.22 ***
% Without High School Diploma	-2.24	-14.79 ***
% Persons Employed	0.25	2.26 ***
% Persons Not in Labor Force	-1.44	-6.99 ***
% Persons in Poverty	-1.46	-11.39 ***
% Households on Public Aid	0.62	-2.44 ***
Welfare Recipients (n=702)		
Collective Efficacy	0.11	2.20 **
# Neighborhood Problems	-0.16	-2.40 ***
Concentrated Disadvantage	-0.35	-2.58 ***^
% Non-Hispanic Black	-1.67	-12.52 ***^
% Non-Hispanic White	-2.10	9.11 ***^
% Hispanic	5.15	3.93^
% Female-Headed Families with Kids	-1.97	-13.21 ***^
% Owner-Occupied Housing Units	4.23 *	19.56 ***^
% Without High School Diploma	-1.52	-9.42 ***^
% Persons Employed	1.15	8.34 ***^
% Persons Not in Labor Force	-1.79 **	-7.21 ***
% Persons in Poverty	-1.55	-16.18 ***^
% Households on Public Aid	-1.03	-8.11 ***^

¹ Values represent the effect of moving.

* $p < .05$,

** $p < .01$,

 $p < .001$.

^ Effect of moving for welfare recipients is significantly different from that for non-recipients at the $p = .05$ level. Tests conducted for wave 3 only.

Table 3

OLS Regression Models Predicting Change in Neighborhood Concentrated Disadvantage Across Waves 1 and 3, Weighted. (n=1059)

Variable	(1)			(2)		
	b	SE	(A)	b	SE	(D)
<i>Welfare Status Group</i>						
Leavers (Ref.=Stayers)	-0.73 **	0.24	-0.59 **	0.22		
Nevers (Ref.=Stayers)	0.38	0.24	-0.18	0.25		
<i>By Employment Status</i>						
Unemployed Leavers (Ref.=Stayers)			-0.49	0.27	-0.45	0.24
Employed Leavers (Ref.=Stayers)			-1.00 *** ^a	0.27	-0.75 **	0.25
Nevers (Ref.=Stayers)			0.38	0.24	-0.19	0.25
<i>Controls</i>						
Mover			-1.75 ***	0.14	-1.73 ***	0.14
Black (Ref.=white)			-0.22	0.33	-0.22	0.33
Hispanic (Ref.=white)			0.67 *	0.33	0.67 *	0.33
Other (Ref.=white)			-0.04	0.54	-0.03	0.54
Foreign-Born			-0.12	0.19	-0.10	0.19
H.S. Diploma (Ref.= No Diploma)			-0.35 *	0.17	-0.33	0.17
Some College			0.16	0.15	0.18	0.16
Bachelor's Degree or More			-0.89 *	0.38	-0.86 *	0.38
Married			-0.34 *	0.16	-0.33 *	0.16
# of Minors in Household			-0.03	0.05	-0.04	0.05
Age of Youngest Child in Household			0.03	0.02	0.03	0.02
Owens Home			-0.04	0.18	-0.03	0.18
ME: 12 Years (Ref.= < 12 Years)			0.14	0.19	0.14	0.19
ME: Some College (Ref.= < 12 Years)			0.20	0.31	0.18	0.31
ME: BA or More (Ref.= < 12 Years)			0.31	0.40	0.30	0.40
FE: 12 Years (Ref.= < 12 Years)			-0.39	0.21	-0.38	0.21

Variable	(1)			(2)		
	(A)	(B)	(C)	(D)	(E)	(F)
	b	SE	b	SE	b	SE
FE: Some College (Ref.= < 12 Years)			-1.30***	0.30	-1.31***	0.30
FE: BA or More (Ref.= < 12 Years)			-0.52	0.40	-0.53	0.40
Family on Welfare in R's Childhood			0.17	0.15	0.18	0.15
Boston (Ref.=Chicago)			0.68***	0.18	0.68***	0.18
San Antonio (Ref.=Chicago)			0.49*	0.21	0.49*	0.21
Constant	-0.97***	0.22	-0.16	0.46	-0.97***	0.22
Adjusted R ²	0.05		0.25		0.05	

* p<.05,

**

p<.01,

p<.001.

^A Significant difference between employed and unemployed leavers at p .05.

Table 4

OLS Regression Models Predicting Change in Neighborhood Concentrated Disadvantage Across Waves 1 and 3 for Welfare Status and Moving Groups, Weighted. (n=1007)^a

Variable	(A)		(B)	
	b	SE	b	SE
<i>Welfare Status and Moving Groups^b</i>				
Early Movers/Late Leavers	-0.59	0.38	-0.46	0.37
Early Leavers/Late Movers	-2.22 ***	0.35	-1.97 ***	0.34
Others Who Moved	-0.12	0.27	-0.31	0.27
Non-Movers	1.38 ***	0.27	1.24 ***	0.28
<i>Controls</i>				
Black (Ref.=white)			-0.31	0.34
Hispanic (Ref.=white)			0.58	0.34
Other (Ref.=white)			-0.14	0.55
Foreign-Born			-0.04	0.19
H.S. Diploma (Ref.= No H.S. Diploma)			-0.31	0.17
Some College			0.13	0.16
Bachelor's Degree or More			-0.95 *	0.38
Married			-0.37 *	0.15
Number of Minors in Household			-0.07	0.05
Age of Youngest Child in Household			0.03 *	0.02
Owens Home			0.05	0.17
ME: 12 Years (Ref.= < 12 Years)			0.22	0.19
ME: Some College (Ref.= < 12 Years)			0.09	0.31
ME: BA or More (Ref.= < 12 Years)			0.09	0.40
FE: 12 Years (Ref.= < 12 Years)			-0.43 *	0.21
FE: Some College (Ref.= < 12 Years)			-1.23 ***	0.30
FE: BA or More (Ref.= < 12 Years)			-0.42	0.42
Family on Welfare in R's Childhood			0.15	0.15
Boston (Ref.=Chicago)			0.59 ***	0.18
San Antonio (Ref.=Chicago)			0.42 *	0.21
Constant	-1.38 ***	0.25	-1.53 **	0.49
Adjusted R ²	0.20		0.27	

^aDue to missing data for some respondents in wave 2, 52 cases were lost. Therefore, the sample size for this regression model is reduced from 1,059 to 1,007.

^bStayers who moved comprise the reference category.

* p .05,

** p .01,

*** p .001.

[^] Difference between early movers/late leavers and early leavers/late movers is statistically significant at p .05.