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**Moving and Changing:
How Places Change People
Who Move Into Them**

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Abstract

Recent research suggests that residential mobility can improve the lives of parents and children. Literature has conceptualized the process under the rubric "mixed-income housing," implicitly assuming that low-income people benefit simply by being surrounded by affluent neighbors. However, affluence may not be sufficient to accomplish benefits. This paper examines an alternative "social capital hypothesis" — that social norms and reciprocity provide a form of capital that gives individuals increased capability. Using open-ended interviews with low-income black mothers who moved to mostly white middle-class suburbs, this paper presents a modest preliminary investigation that tries to discover underlying processes. Our analysis suggests that middle-class suburbs are both constraining and enabling to these new residents. Mothers report that suburban norms constrained their behaviors in some ways, but also liberated them in other ways. The mothers also report social responsiveness, which provided resources. Just as the social capital hypothesis suggests, the results suggest the productive power of norms and reciprocity — participants acquired capabilities from living in the suburbs.

Introduction

Traditionally, housing assistance aims only to provide shelter. However, recent research suggests that housing assistance, if combined with residential mobility, also can provide access to social and economic opportunity and improve the lives of parents and children. Research on residential mobility programs (such as Gautreaux and MTO) has discovered remarkable changes in individuals' attitudes, behaviors, and outcomes. Compared to those who moved to the city, mothers who moved to the suburbs were more likely to have jobs than their city counterparts. Similar gains in employment are suggested by MTO results in Los Angeles (Hanratty, McLanahan, and Pettit, 1997), but not in Boston, at least in the first two years of the program (Katz, Kling, and Liebman, 1997).

As Briggs (1997) has stressed, this research has focused on outcomes, not process. Most of these studies have been unable to examine what features of the social environment are influences, and they have not examined the underlying mechanisms that might explain observed outcomes. This is an important shortcoming, for it means that we do not understand what it is about the residential moves that makes outcomes happen, so we cannot be sure when we replicate some features of the program that we have captured the necessary elements. Moreover, research which discovers that residential moves increase individuals' capabilities allows us to make inferences about long-term outcomes, beyond the short time span of our studies.

Studies have found that the presence of middle-class, affluent, and professional-managerial neighbors is positively related to adult employment and child's educational attainment and earnings. Brooks-Gunn, Duncan et al. (1993) and Clark (1992) found positive effects for whites, and other studies have shown positive effects for black male teenagers (Crane, 1991; Ensminger, Lamkin, and Jacobson, 1996). Other studies also suggest positive influences of affluent working class neighbors by showing that youths achieve greater academic success if they live in areas with lower proportions of blacks, unemployed males, low-income people, female headed households, or welfare dependent families, and higher proportions of managerial or professional workers (Datcher, 1982; Corcoran et al., 1990; Brooks-Gunn et al., 1991; Crane, 1991; Clark and Wolf, 1992). These studies also reveal that the higher the percentage of unemployed males and welfare recipients in a given neighborhood, the fewer hours a person will work. As Brooks-Gunn, Duncan et al. (1997) point out, "It may be that affluent neighbors really do have more resources and characteristics conducive to child well-being than do middle-income or low-income neighborhoods" (p. 297).

Many people assume that the superior resources in the suburbs explain these results: the

availability of better schools, more activities, and greater affluence. If so, it is conceivable that these benefits might occur regardless of whether individuals interact with their neighbors. One might imagine that low-income black families could benefit from the superior resources in their new affluent communities, while having no meaningful interaction with their neighbors. This tends to happen in some school busing programs: children have educational gains but their after-school interaction with their schoolmates is limited because of the need to get on the school bus for the long commutes back to their homes (Crain and Wells, 1996).

The affluence hypothesis is the implicit model of many policymakers. The MTO program and many others have been characterized as "mixed income." If low-income people benefit, it is assumed that they benefit simply by being surrounded by affluent neighbors, although the mechanism is not entirely clear.

In fact, there are reasons to believe that affluence may not be sufficient. Neighborhood affluence may not necessarily have benefits for all residents — low-income outsiders may not be included. Resources in suburbs require transportation, fees, and acceptance. A superior public library, theater, summer camp, YMCA may charge entry fees and be unavailable by public transportation. If a camp or other activity has a limited number of positions, admission may be limited to people whose social networks provide early notification, or to people who have connections. Although a strong labor market means that jobs are available, employment is only possible for workers with the right job skills and self-presentation skills (Rosenbaum, 2001), and for those who have access to good child care and transportation (Rubinowitz and Rosenbaum, 2000). Since the social class differences often correlate with race, as they do in this study, racial biases and suspicions may further reduce the benefits of neighborhood affluence. Affluence and resources alone are not necessarily sufficient to guarantee access and improved outcomes.

Social Capital Hypothesis

James Coleman (1988) has suggested another mechanism that might explain the greater capabilities people show when they move to the suburbs. Social capital has been defined in a number of ways. Lang and Hornburg (1998, p. 4) state that "social capital commonly refers to the stock of social trust, norms, and networks that people can draw upon in order to solve common problems. Social scientists emphasize two main dimensions of social capital: social glue and social bridges." While their definition allows for a broad variety of socially supportive phenomena, James Coleman's original proposal referred to a more narrowly defined set of mechanisms, and he contended that they had powerful impact on individuals' capabilities. He suggested that some aspects of social environments provide social capital, which enable people to

take actions that they could not otherwise do. Social capital takes three forms: 1) Social norms that guide behavior, 2) Reciprocity — "people always doing things for each other," which provide "credit slips" on which individuals can draw, and 3) Information channels — social networks providing information about jobs and other resources. Social capital is more than merely social acceptance or social support. Coleman contends that "social capital is productive, making possible the achievement of certain ends that in its absence would not be possible." (1988, p.98). In other words, social capital confers ability: it gives people capabilities that they would not have in other social situations.

While Coleman provides persuasive examples of the enhancing effects of communities, his examples leave some doubt about the possibility that social capital can be created in more ordinary social settings in modern life. Coleman's examples are taken from close, tightly integrated ethnic communities, which have little resemblance to American suburbs. In addition, his examples mostly involve insiders; the individuals who benefit are part of the social fabric of these closed communities. Indeed, in many of the cases, they were born in these communities and have always lived there. It is not clear from his account whether someone who recently moved to a community would receive the same benefits as long-term residents. This is even more problematic if the movers are of a different income level and race, visibly distinct from the vast majority of those in the community. Consequently, in considering the applicability of Coleman's social capital explanation, the Gautreaux program provides an opportunity to test an extreme, and extremely problematic, form of this question — can new residents who formerly lacked social capital, acquire it by moving to a new community? Indeed, we are posing an even more extreme question — Do middle-class white suburbs provide social capital to new residents who are black and low-income?

Despite the wild enthusiasm about social capital, the social norms and cohesion required for social capital could actually be harmful to some individuals (Portes, 1998). Social norms sometimes coerce, ostracize, and constrain. The enthusiasm about social capital often ignores this aspect. In the 1940s, sociologists noted the ways that social norms suppress individualism, dissent, and disagreement (Riesman et al., 1955; Whyte, 1943). Such processes may be particularly constraining on minorities. Suburbs may impose norms and expect behaviors that are uncomfortable, undesirable, or impossible for low-income black families.

Coleman presents a model in which social norms are freely accepted, inclusive, and enabling. Residents accept social norms because they have always lived with them, and they take them as desirable and inevitable. A residential mobility program raises the question of whether social capital is transferable and, if so, how is it transferred? Can new residents who formerly

lacked social capital, acquire it by moving to a new community? If so, is it something that permeates the social atmosphere, such that people adopt social norms unconsciously by being immersed in them? Or is it a cognitive process, explicitly decided, perhaps with some awareness of potential benefits? Participants may choose to comply with these norms because they believe that compliance will lead to the benefits of inclusion, including perhaps social capital benefits.

The social capital hypothesis seems highly problematic in this case. As Briggs (1997, p.197) has noted, "geographic proximity does not a neighbor make — at least not in the social sense." Social cohesion in the suburbs may be a mechanism for excluding outsiders, particularly those of another race and a lower income level. Social norms in white middle-class suburbs may constrain low-income blacks, or prevent their access to activities.

On the other hand, the new residents may choose not to adopt the new norms. Do low-income blacks choose to comply with middle-class white norms, even norms that conflict with their prior experience? The adults in this program have lived their entire lives in housing projects, and they are accustomed to different social norms. Rather than finding their new communities to be sources of social capital, they may feel they are highly constraining, intolerant of the kinds of behaviors and attitudes with which they are comfortable.

In addition, it is not certain that normative compliance by low-income black recent residents will give them the same acceptance and social capital benefits that other neighbors would get. Do middle-class white suburbs provide social capital to new residents who are black and low-income? The question entails many separate questions. Do middle-class white suburbs, which are often characterized as lacking in community, offer social capital to anyone? According to some stereotypes, suburbs are not real communities. They are "bedroom communities" where people come to sleep, before returning to school or jobs or visiting friends in some other location. Gans (1967) has presented evidence indicating that suburbs are communities; however this has not been shown in the kinds of apartment complexes where the Gautreaux families lived.

Even if suburbs are communities, many other questions remain. Do the suburbs offer acceptance to new arrivals, especially new arrivals of a different race and income level? If so, does this lead to social capital processes, shared norms, and reciprocity obligations? Do these social capital processes enhance the capabilities of low-income black residents, or do they exclude and constrain them?

In previous analyses of surveys, we have shown that these low-income black mothers and children did interact with their white suburban neighbors, and their level of interaction was similar to the amount of interaction of their counterparts who move to mostly black neighborhoods in the city (Rubinowitz and Rosenbaum, 2000). We found that mothers talked

with their neighbors, and the children played with their neighbors and did homework with their classmates. Contrary to our worst fears, these families were not ostracized, but had many kinds of interaction with their neighbors.

But interaction alone is not sufficient to demonstrate social capital. Social capital implies that social relationships confer capabilities, and that is hard to demonstrate with our survey data. Do these suburbs relieve mothers of anxieties and demanding obligations? Do the suburbs free up time or energy for other activities? Do the suburbs actually provide support, services, or social or material resources that enhance mothers' capabilities?

Consequently, this paper uses open-ended interviews that we conducted with mothers who moved to mostly white suburbs. We interviewed 69 mothers in 1989 and 80 mothers in 1996. We examine participants' reports about their interaction with their suburban neighbors, how it differs from their own experiences in the city, and how they believe these differences affected their behavior and their capabilities.

This report is a modest preliminary investigation. We are not trying to provide definitive evidence to prove any point. We are trying to discover underlying processes about which we know practically nothing currently. Unlike prior studies of this program, which used surveys on over 300 families or administrative data on over 1500 families, this study is examining the statements volunteered by individuals. We take individuals' descriptions of changes and their interpretation of causality at face value.

Methodologists correctly warn that there are risks that individuals may misperceive or may misinterpret their experiences. However, they do know more about their experiences than we do, so it's very likely we can learn from their reports. These participants have seen aspects of society that few people in our society will ever see firsthand. They have clarity of vision about the suburbs that comes from having lived many years in a radically different environment. Since social scientists currently know very little about the processes that occur in residential mobility programs, and since we have many doubts about whether these low-income black families would receive social capital benefits in mostly white suburbs, it will be noteworthy if we find any examples where this occurs. Such examples may help us to understand underlying mechanisms, which are difficult to detect by other methods.

We shall focus on descriptions of concrete behaviors more than on impressions or attitudes, so the risks of distortion are reduced. We shall examine families' reports of their experiences and whether families report any examples that illustrate the social capital processes. If the very same individuals act differently and have different capabilities in a new location, and if they attribute these changes to certain aspects of their location, then we will have some

indication that these locations provide social capital. This study examines whether and in what ways participants report enhanced capabilities from moving to the suburbs.

Normative Suppression of Self

Contrary to the widespread enthusiasm about the effects of social cohesion and social norms implicit in the social capital theory, Gautreaux participants in the suburbs were not always so happy about it. Suburban movers describe their new neighborhoods as much more demanding than their previous neighborhoods. They speak of an up-tight, highly constraining environment that does not tolerate loud partying, public drinking, and other disturbances, which were common in their prior neighborhoods. Some mothers describe struggling with the more restrictive environment.

I partied more freely in the old neighborhood, without fear of offending the neighbors. It was more relaxed. I felt more comfortable. I felt that I didn't have to explain anything about myself or about my background. It was accepted because we were all the same race.

Suppression of self is necessary; I go to the city for release. I liked the freedom of movement and parties in my old neighborhood.

These highly constraining norms were also difficult for some children. Some mothers report that their children struggled with the strict expectations about their behavior.

So he [son] usually has more activity when he goes to the city with his friends. Because he can just let himself go — let his hair down, so to speak. Feel freer, I think.

When we first moved out here, they would call the police when his [son] music is turned up.

It makes me so upset. It's like these little kids out here. They're perfect. They don't do anything but go to school and come home. They do just as much as the little black kids do. I just can't understand it.... Just something that a ten-year-old boy is going to get into. That's the way I look at it. I wouldn't say he had a problem or anything. I don't know if it's me or if it's them.

Some mothers reported that the suburban move required them to change their own behavior. Several mothers state that their participation in such activities as partying and drinking became much less frequent once they moved to the suburbs, where they perceived the activities would not be tolerated.

I think more suburban now. I do. Well, and then another thing, see I used to like go out and stuff like that. But I don't do that anymore. I'm mostly just interested in church and stuff like that. It's a change within me.

Drink and party. I don't feel that way now like I did then. I don't care for that type of life anymore...it's me. I chose another life to live.

Similarly, mothers report feeling obligated to keep their houses and buildings clean and take care of their yards and neighborhoods. Mothers perceived that they were regarded with suspicion. They had to prove themselves, prove that they could meet the standards expected in the suburbs.

When I first moved here I had little problems with the people. But now they know what to expect from me. They know I'm clean. I think they were worried more about my coming in and messing up. Somehow white people get the idea that black people are nasty. I mean they don't take care of anything. I think now they know I'm clean and they accept me more now.... I think the first few days we were living here they just wanted to see how nasty we were going to be. See if we gonna keep the house clean or have paper all over the yard. And when they saw we were going to keep our grass done, I think that they began to accept us.

The Benefits of Normative Constraints

Norms are constraining, especially for new residents who must prove themselves and who come from communities with different norms. Some mothers really had to struggle to comply with the new norms in the suburbs.

However, if norms constrain everyone equally, then these mothers can count on others complying with these norms, and these norms create dependable benefits. Even as mothers struggled to meet expectations, they perceived that the normative constraints had many benefits.

The social norms in the suburbs prevented many actions. Some mothers perceived less tolerance for drugs in the suburbs than in their city neighborhoods. This normative constraint helped them to feel safer.

I mean that it's zero tolerance out here. Especially over here on the side of town where I live.

I don't feel that there was a lot of drugs around [in the suburbs], and I didn't have to worry about [my children]... being involved [in drugs] because out there it wasn't as free as it was in some communities. And that made me feel good about myself and them, too.

Because it was so easy to get drugs [in the city], a lot of kids are strung out on drugs because of their environment.... A single parent, you can't be with your child 24 hours a day. Some of the adults and older kids influenced them to do certain things that they might not do, and so by me moving away, it cut down the influence of them being in drugs.

Some mothers perceived stricter constraints over adolescents in the suburbs than in their city neighborhoods. Initially, mothers perceived some of these constraints as biased, and directed disproportionately against them and their teenagers. Mothers noted many instances where police and neighbors treated their children with suspicion and bias (Rubinowitz and Rosenbaum, 2000). There were many instances of police harassment and unwarranted detention and arrests.

However, in later years, mothers reported that these constraints also helped them to feel safer. High standards for safety were kept and enforced. They describe a strict, active, concerned police force and systems of rules concerning curfews and loitering.

Out here they have a curfew. I think it's 10:00. You don't see anybody on the streets. If the police are in the area, they will want to know what's happening.

Here in the suburbs, the police are much stricter. I guess they have smaller territory to cover. In the city they have so many things to do, but here they are very strict. And if you need any assistance from the police, or if any problems come up with these teenagers or anything, they're right on the spot and working with you as a concerned parent to alleviate the problem.

In the city, [teens] hang on the corners. Here they can't hang on no corner, and he would be with his friends, and they'd be on the corner. Police would stop them.... They think they was being harassed by the police, and they just telling you to get off the corner.

Here the policemen are much nicer. There's a difference in the city and burbs' policemen. My kids like policemen. In Chicago, kids do not like policemen. Out here they are really "officers friendly." When you see them on the street, they wave. The kids are comfortable with them.

The police were not the only enforcers. Neighbors were constantly watchful, and they had a low tolerance for crime. Neighbors looked out for each other's safety. Suburban participants report neighbors who keep watch for them at night, watch over their homes and cars, and are willing to call the police or come to help in times of emergency.

Specifically, suburban participants describe how interaction with their neighbors leads to looking out for one another's safety, and how this type of community protection is different from what they experienced in the city. Suburban movers reported that their city neighborhoods were not responsive.

[In the city] I was robbed. My purse was snatched and when I screamed, no neighbors called the police.

[In the city] They broke into my house, and the people next door said they didn't even hear it. They broke into our house, and a lot of more people's houses where I lived and nobody ever called for help. I've seen people...I've heard people saying that they've seen people getting beat up on the street and people won't even call for help. It's like they're afraid to even go to the phone and call.

In my Chicago neighborhood, no one would call if I needed help because that was a common thing. Somebody was always down there fighting their girlfriend or somebody hollering, "Help, help, help." That was a common thing. ...You weren't sure whether you should could get involved or not.

In contrast, in the suburbs, neighbors look out for each other.

In the summer, most of the families in the complex look out for each other. In my old neighborhood in the city, I would run from the front door to back door, fearful about my kids' safety...but not here.

I mean, it's quiet, and they, I guess to a certain extent they will let me know if they see something or hear something. I do have a neighbor on the side of me that, you know, every now and then, you got someone coming around trying to break in, and we watch out for one another. So this here neighborhood is like, really they're watching out for one another.

They also report that neighbors care about each other.

Everybody spoke and they really cared about what was going on with the other people—if somebody's car got broken into or something. People were concerned about what was going on with their neighbors.

Cause she has grown up here she had been here almost ten years now so she knows everybody, and basically everybody knows her, so when you know the people in your community you can come and go and feel safe and people look out for you.

If they see the lights on in your car, they'll come right up here to your door, or if they thought they see anybody tampering around, they kind of watch out.

You can leave and rest assured that someone will watch your house. You can swap keys and neighbors will take care of your house.

Similarly, Gautreaux participants feel that, unlike their city neighbors, their suburban neighbors would call the police in a time of emergency, or they would come to help themselves.

They seem to be concerned, and look out for one another. In the suburbs, the whole neighborhood would call the police.

[Describing a domestic disturbance in her neighborhood.] They all came out. It was like a big street thing. Everybody came out and was talking to the husband. The men took the husband to one side and the women took the wife. No one was hurt. He was just mad she had did something and she told him not to do it and she wasn't home when he got home or something like that. Some stupid thing.

Suburban norms and neighbors' willingness to enforce them prevented noise, late parties, drugs, gangs, hanging out, etc. These suburban norms were initially perceived as constraining, and these new residents were often viewed with suspicion and subject to special scrutiny. The mistrustful watchfulness of neighbors, and the detention and scrutiny by police, were probably discriminatory. We suspect that they arise from the dark side of social norms and cohesion — a community's tendency to preserve its norms and to mistrust outsiders, particularly those who look different and about whom social prejudices exist. The discriminatory actions that were taken were unfair and at times illegal (Rubinowitz and Rosenbaum, 2000), however they are perfectly understandable. These negative actions flow from negative aspects of the same processes Coleman described so positively.

However, these actions did not persist. It is truly amazing that many participants now feel their neighbors and police are watching out for them, not against them. When norms are enforced in a discriminatory manner, and special scrutiny is directed against a certain group of people, those norms are a constraint, not a protection, for that group. However, when norms are enforced universally, they constrain everyone's behavior, and those normative constraints become a protection for all. Police were there to enforce these norms, neighbors were watchful, looking out for violations and calling the police when infractions were noted. But the actions of neighbors and police were no longer perceived as directed against them, they were perceived as providing assurance to everyone, including them.

Norms were highly constraining, and many of these new residents came to appreciate those constraints. These norms gave them piece of mind, and reduced their concerns about their own safety and the safety of their children. These norms reassured mothers that someone cared about the safety and well-being of their children and themselves. Social norms, which initially had been a barrier, became a form of social capital upon which Gautreaux participants could draw.

Liberating Constraints: Collective Child Care and Giving Children More Freedom

Ironically, these constraints were liberating. These constraining norms reassured mothers

that their children would not get in trouble or get hurt, and this permitted mothers to give their children more freedom.

Mothers perceived that children were kept under better control in the suburbs than they were in their prior city neighborhoods, and that these normative constraints reduced the risks that their children would get hurt or would get in trouble.

While city neighbors were more likely to ignore their children, Gautreaux mothers reported that suburban neighbors did not. They felt they benefited from environments in which other adults would watch their children and care for them when they were not around.

The mothers report that neighbors are watchful enforcers of community norms. Neighbors watch each other's children's behavior and report observed activities to parents, who feel peace of mind from these normative constraints.

You know, from moving from [the city], you've got peace and you've got quiet. You got neighbors that would look out or, "I see your daughter running over in so and so..." But [in the city] it was nothing like that.

If they see your children participating in an activity and they figure you're the type of person that doesn't allow that, they'll come and tell you, or they will try to talk to your child about it.

The collective caring for children that occurs in some neighborhoods is an important example of social capital. Ironically, Coleman described a similar process.

A mother of six children, who recently moved with husband and children from suburban Detroit to Jerusalem, describes one reason for doing so as the greater freedom her young children had in Jerusalem. She felt safe in letting her eight-year-old take the six-year-old across town to school on the city bus and felt her children to be safe in playing without supervision in a city park, neither of which she felt able to do where she lived before.

The reason for this difference can be described as a difference in social capital available in Jerusalem and suburban Detroit. In Jerusalem, the normative structure ensures that unattended children will be "looked after" by adults in the vicinity, while no such normative structure exists in most metropolitan areas of the United States. One can say

that families have available to them in Jerusalem social capital that does not exist in metropolitan areas of the United States. (1988, p. S99-S100)

However, social capital and watchfulness may be relative. As Coleman observes, they are greater in Jerusalem than in American suburbs, but they are greater in the suburbs than in the inner city. While Coleman did not detect social capital in American suburbs, Gautreaux mothers saw social capital in suburbs compared to conditions in inner city neighborhoods. These suburban mothers describe enjoying relationships with neighbors in which neighbors would watch out for their children's safety and report observed behavior and activities to the children's parents. Coleman notes that this type of "intergenerational closure" is helpful in child raising and promotes maximum benefit from social capital:

When the parents' friends are the parents of their children's friends, a closed community is formed in which behavior can be monitored and guided. Parents decide on norms and sanctions, monitor each other's children, and aid in child raising. (Coleman 1988, p S106-S107)

For example, Gautreaux mothers describe how children were watched for collectively by the adults in the neighborhood.

We speak and we talk. We all show concern about, you know, the neighborhood and keeping it safe for the children and for ourselves. We all kind of watch, too, for the kids because we don't want anything happening around here.

He [son] don't have to be afraid. He goes to the 7-11 with no fear of being bothered by older peer groups, older boys. In the city when he would go to the store they would take his money. We lived right next door to the store. But out here he goes right down the street to the 7-11 when he has his little 50-cent allowance and nobody ever bothers him. Mostly everybody knows us.... Here I don't worry about things like that so much because out here you have more of a community protection type thing. You can know that they know that it's your child....They'll tell you when they see something going wrong. They'll monitor him.

Ironically, normative constraints can be liberating. Normative constraints allowed

mothers to give more freedom to their children. Briggs (1998) has shown that moving to safer neighborhoods changes how parents manage risk for their children. Parents in more dangerous areas closely regulate their children's neighborhood peer relationships, but those living in safer neighborhoods feel less need to do so (Briggs,1998, p. 203). Gautreaux mothers also describe the suburbs to be much freer of violent crimes and gang activity than their city neighborhoods were. They could let their children go out and play without hovering over them. "In the suburbs there are no gangs. I don't have to stand in the window and watch out for my kids. They know not to leave the complex. Any time I call, they can hear me.

The violence in the area was shocking and scary...I was always uneasy....Here in the suburbs I don't have to worry about people shooting at people, seeing people chase people and shooting, fighting.... I didn't care too much for letting my daughter go out for fear of her life. I was always afraid that a fight would break out when she was down the street... My fear was that a stray bullet would come from one of the higher floors and you would never know who shot you.

Mothers did not have to carry weapons. "In the city...we were often broken into, robbed.... I used to always carry knife. Not anymore since I moved out to suburbs. I feel safe night and day.

Conversely, the absence of normative constraints can be constraining. The city environment where everything was permitted was like living in a prison. As two Gautreaux mothers describe:

I think it was the richness in the atmosphere that the children realized...they no longer had to be in the projects. They no longer had to dodge bricks and things coming in the building where they lived. Here they could just sit out and enjoy themselves, and they did. And they just fit right in. They was more happy than I was, I believe, you know, just to get out of there. Because it was like living in a prison, you know. And when you can't go out whenever you like and play or whatever—I had to go out with my kids—it's hard. But up here, it's a lot different; it's quieter, much quieter. I'm able to sleep at night.

I give them more leeway, more freedom. I don't try to enforce some of the rules I tried to enforce on my other kids. The neighborhood was a violent place so I had to keep them

inside most of the time because I feared for their lives. It's just an entirely different breed of people around here. These people are hard working, they make money. Therefore, you don't have that much fear. It's a different breed of people over here. In fact, this is a different neighborhood entirely. It really is.

Suburban social norms constrained behavior, and these constraints gave mothers and children more freedom than they had in the city. These constraints reduce mothers' worries about their children's safety. They also help children to be less worried about their own safety and thus free to play and go outside. This situation is much different from the Gautreaux participants' experiences in public housing, where danger put extreme limits on their activities.

Social and Material Resources

The affluence hypothesis is problematic because it lacks a mechanism. Living in the midst of affluent neighbors does not automatically confer affluence to low-income people. Indeed, mothers were surprised to find that suburban public libraries charged a fee for library cards, which were free in the city, and suburban summer camps and YMCAs charged a fee for activities, which were free in the city. In addition, summer activities sometimes filled up quickly by word of mouth, even before they were formally announced in the local paper. Affluent suburbs had many opportunities, but barriers existed to access.

However, mothers report that they received many kinds of resources through social relations with neighbors. Gautreaux mothers say they feel able to ask for help from their neighbors, and they describe a living environment in which people help one another.

I think if I needed something and went to them, it would be okay. For example, if my car broke down or if I had a flat, if they had the time, they would help me with it.

We have a list of everyone's name, address, phones. You feel free to call them if you want to. They are all very nice neighbors. If they have prejudice they don't let you know it. We get along. I think that's the way it should be...very friendly.

When something went wrong [in the city, neighbors] wouldn't help each other. Stuff like that. There's a big difference out here.

Suburban mothers report enjoying relationships with their neighbors in which they would do

favors for one another. They describe incidents when neighbors would help each other out by doing such things as getting each other's mail, shoveling each other's sidewalks or driveways, helping each other move, borrowing ingredients from each other, and offering to pick things up for each other at the store.

I guess I'm the closest to the lady across the hall....She will get my mail for me and I do the same for her. She looks out for my house.

They [neighbors in suburbs] shovel my walkway. It's hard for me to do it in my condition. They have those snowblowers and they come over and blow the walkway. Sometimes I come home from work and my yard is all shoveled — my garage. He doesn't have to do it. I got locked out and he climbed up on the roof and let me in.

The suburbs help you out more and they have more to offer.... Out here when Christmas time comes they help you. They help the needy...whereas in the city, you're on your own.

If they are going to the store, they will ask if we need anything there.

Neighbors went out of their way. Like I didn't have any sugar,.... and she was downstairs and she said, "Oh, you can have some of mine." She was very friendly about that.

If I need anything, I have neighbors I can go to and say, "Well, I need an egg." It's nice to know that there's someplace you can go other than the neighborhood grocery store fifteen minutes away.

Especially during times of need, Gautreaux mothers were often pleasantly surprised by the "neighborly" behavior of suburban residents who would bring gifts at times of celebration or provide extra help. Some mothers received acts of kindness like gifts for their newborn babies, and meals for housewarming occasions.

We let each other know if we need anything. When I had my baby, I was surprised because everyone came and brought gifts for her. They were nice. Once when I went to

the hospital, a neighbor cooked dinner... When I lived in Chicago, nothing like that ever happened.

My neighbor right next door, she made me a casserole the very first day I moved in. And her kids came over to talk to me and to try to help me get my house together.

My neighbor across the street came over when we first moved in to offer to help.

Similarly, other mothers report receiving passed-down items that their neighbors did not want.

I just accumulated stuff. People would throw away stuff and would always remember to ask me if I wanted it. Or they gonna have a moving sale or a garage sale and they always give me a deal on things. I've been very blessed. And this house—all the stuff—look at it. I'm proud of it. When I moved out here I had nothing. I've been carrying in all the stuff since I've been here. Most of it's hand-me-downs, but I like it. I'm very proud of what I got.

He didn't have a bike, so the people in the community provided one. There's always a bike being handed down.

I was going to get a rug for myself and she was getting rid of hers and she gave it to me.

In emergencies, other suburban Gautreaux mothers report that neighbors came to their rescue.

At Christmas when I had to bury the [stillborn] baby that I had, they didn't know, but when they found out, the phone was ringing and they were offering all sorts of help.... They were extremely for real about help. They offered to keep the kids.

When my water pipe busted we had to get water from the neighbors next door, who had just moved in, and they were always bringing things over.

Once my lights were turned off and out of the clear blue sky, she [a neighbor] gave me \$50 to put on my lights. Now, you hardly find friends like that. So I could put her in the category of a friend.

In some cases, there were bartering relationships. Some Gautreaux mothers saw the situation as a system of give and take. As one suburban mother describes:

You do something for me and I'll do something for you. It helps considerably when people don't have money. When people didn't have money before, they did something for you and you turned around and did something for them. This is the way it was at the time when money was not so important. You could very well easily get someone to vacuum the halls and take some off of their rent for doing that.... If my car broke down and I couldn't make it to work, they'd see to it that I got to work. If I got stranded at any time...if I needed anything they were always there and vice versa because with five babies you were always needing.

Given the meager public transportation in the suburbs, transportation was often a problem. Some mothers had cars, but they were old vehicles that sometimes broke down.

Gautreaux mothers report participating in car pools and receiving rides from their neighbors.

It was a white girl across the hall. Now, she went out of her way to be nice...and she was taking me to work. And she was always on hand trying to help me. She was a young girl, too.

They are helpful and participate, we help one another, it's just nice. Neighbors let me use their car three times a week.

Any time my car would break they would take us somewhere.

They're [suburban neighbors] friendly. If you don't have a ride, they'll ask if you need a lift.

Mothers also mention several occasions when members of their community would give their children rides to school or other activities.

One teacher, like if I didn't have transportation for her to get to school, he'd see to her getting there.

They [neighbors] pick up things at the store, drop my kids off at school.

My neighbor down the way there — she's real nice. Because like on some days, like I work late, and [my daughter] didn't have her car, she would go and pick her up for me. Like when I had problems with my car she would help out and stuff like that. She's real nice.

School activities required money and transportation. These could have been obstacles, but sometimes school staff took steps to remove these obstacles.

A teacher paid the way for my child to go to a ranch for three days with his class because I couldn't afford it.

The school counselor took my daughter and other kids on ski trip and brought her home afterwards. I thought that was very nice and I don't think we would have got that in Chicago.

Most of them [suburban neighbors] are friendly. The other day a white lady volunteered to take my daughter to the Bluebird meeting and bring her home. She gets invited to quite a few things.

Gautreaux mothers report that neighbors frequently watched over their children and that they looked after their neighbors' children as well.

I like the cooperation of the neighbors....Usually, they keep the kids.... My mind is so at ease here.

They [neighbors] used to babysit my son and I'd take care of their daughter for a couple of hours.

My daughter baby-sits two little boys of the very nice neighbors next door.

If I need a favor from a neighbor, I can get it—Babysitting. I had no contact with neighbors in Chicago.

With school-aged children, working mothers did not need regular babysitting, but they sometimes needed someone to watch children if they were ill or got out of school early.

A ball player's wife, they moved upstairs. (white friend). If I needed somebody to keep my kids she'd keep my kids. If she needed somebody to keep her kids, I'd keep her kids

It [the move] helped me to raise my kids because of the nice neighborhood we was in.... And most of the people who stayed next door were real nice. I could leave me kids with them.

Based on the interview responses of Gautreaux participants in both the suburbs and the city, we can see that Gautreaux participants who moved to middle-class suburbs were aware of a system of cooperation based on community norms. By participating in a set of shared obligations and favors, they were able to enjoy the benefits of their new neighborhoods. Norms about property upkeep, tranquility and order, safety, childcare, and neighborly assistance were constraining and enabling.

New Capabilities: Social Capital Prerequisites for Employment

As Coleman points out, social norms and reciprocity obligations provide a form of capital that enhances people's capabilities. Indeed, we find that social norms and reciprocity obligations permitted Gautreaux mothers and children to have capabilities they would not have otherwise.

Some mothers and children perceive their city neighbors' behaviors of damaging and vandalizing buildings and their failure to maintain them as indicating more general attitudes of "not caring" and fatalistic acceptance of unacceptable conditions. They seem to sense that their city neighbors did not care about anything, based on the physical decay that they saw everywhere.

Over there [the city], the kids didn't care about anything, you know. They'd break windows out, tear up gardens and....the flowers, shrubs, and everything, so...these are types of things they were looking at everyday. So I feel that they [my children] might

have grew up and started doing some of the same stuff those kids was doing. And I was just glad to get them out of there. ...Up here (in suburbs), people like to keep up the, you know, the house, the apartment, the building, the grounds around the building

Some participants even describe learning how to keep things nice as a result of their suburban neighbors and their well-kept environment:

I don't like it [in the city] because some of the people would throw their trash all over the place and trash up in the ground and everywhere. They have parties in the middle of the night and wake people up... [In the suburbs,] you learned how to be, you learned how to take care of things better.

Suburban neighbors expected them to be clean and to maintain their apartments and the neighborhood. This gave the new residents a message that their neighbors cared about something, that actions can, and indeed must, be taken to maintain one's environment, and that individuals' actions do make a difference. It is possible that the clear physical evidence that neighbors care and will take actions may have taught participants to take similar actions, and more generally, how to make a difference in their own lives. Of course, this is only a speculation.

Less speculatively, mothers' ability to work was clearly affected by various kinds of social capital. One mother reported that being able to depend on neighbors made it possible for her to make a commitment to work. It made no sense for her to commit to a job if she had to rely on her old undependable car. But her neighbors provided a dependable backup option. "They'd see to it that I'd get to work if my car broke down."

Similarly, while many mothers reported that they did not take jobs in the city because of the great risk of being attacked on their way home from work in the dark, one suburban mover reported that a watchful neighbor allowed her to take a job that required her to come home late. "Because I usually come in at 10 PM, the man on the first floor, he knows what time I come in, he usually stands at the door when I come in. The parking lot is too dark."

Similarly, neighbors permitted other mothers not to worry about their children while they are at work.

"A couple of times I asked her [neighbor] if my son could stay here until I get home from work because he's afraid to stay here by himself.... If I call her and ask her if my son

could stay over there she always says yes. She never turned me down for any favors or anything like that."

Because when I was working days, they watched out for my kids, and if anything happened, they would come see what it was about.... I thought that was great. If anything happened, or if my kids did anything that they shouldn't have done, they reported it to me.... My children were secure when I wasn't there.... I think that helped them too, knowing that even though I wasn't at home someone was watching.... They would say, "I can't do this 'cause this person is watching me."

My daughter was the only child and I worked. I had a neighbor that had an extra key to my house because my daughter was a latch-key child, so I had a good neighbor. I would watch her kids, and she had three, and I knew her whole family, so she could check on my kid in case anything had happened.

In order for me to go back to school at that time...I had a babysitter. I had got a babysitter next door. The lady introduced herself to me. So I got a chance to go to school and get some skills.

Sometimes neighbors provided backup support in case children had unanticipated needs or mothers' jobs made additional demands.

In the city, if you leave your nine- or eight-year-old child to watch his baby brother, you always have to keep calling home more often than you do here. Because the neighbors out here, they kind of help watch, too. ..When I was working, I had the neighbor next door to make sure my son was going to school, and make sure my door was locked. But in the city you just can't do that because everything would be gone.

Or if my children need something and I'm not here, I make sure I've got a back up to get somebody here within a matter of minutes to take care of it. And I've got that. I don't have to worry about a thing. If I'm at work and I have to work a sixteen-hour shift or if something jumps up I can call the young lady that used to live next door to me and tell her, "Hey, my kids are in a rut. I need you to go over there." She will get her husband to come home from work to get her car and come get my kids. Now a thing I can be very

assured of: If I cannot get to them fast enough she will do that. And he will do that. So it gives me pretty good reassurance that they'll be taken care of. And there's someone there that cares.

These forms of social capital were not available in the city, and as a result, mothers had less capability to hold a job.

Conclusion.

Social norms can be constraining or confining. Several mothers noted difficulties initially in adjusting to suburban norms, which were unfamiliar and intolerant to some of their prior behaviors. However, many of those who mentioned having difficulty with these norms ultimately came to the decision that they wanted to comply. Mothers who have lived all their lives in housing projects where these norms did not exist, found these norms to require adjustments, but they saw benefits to complying with these norms, and they decided to adopt them and behave accordingly.

These results indicate capabilities of suburbs. In contrast with stereotypes about the social emptiness of suburban "bedroom communities," these participants reported a strong sense of community, and they uncover social benefits that come from residence in the suburbs. This program poses a test on suburbs, that suburbs ordinarily would not face, and the resulting processes reveal a great deal about suburbs, how they work, and what social capital they confer. These participants discovered that white suburbs were capable of accepting low-income black residents. Moreover, the suburbs did more than offer acceptance, they offered social capital. Coming from the inner city, Gautreaux mothers saw social capital in suburbs, which most people, including Coleman, could not perceive. They perceived normative constraints that were liberating and relationships in which neighbors would watch out for their children's safety and report observed behavior and activities to them.

In addition, perhaps most surprisingly, many respondents reported that they benefited from these norms. While one cannot conclude that social capital processes are inevitable, and indeed these analyses do not indicate how prevalent they are, we think it is important to note even the modest conclusion that sometimes low-income black families received what they considered to be important benefits from the social responsiveness and social capital of white middle-class suburbs. We found many examples where social norms were not directed against these low-income blacks but they were applied in ways that benefitted them.

Ironically, these normative constraints were liberating. The constraining norms meant that mothers did not have to spend all their time watching their children, and they allowed them to give their children more freedom. This is exactly the process that Coleman was describing. Normative constraints are a form of social capital — they allow mothers and children to take actions that they could not take otherwise. We do not believe that these are inevitable. Indeed, if the initial mistrust by neighbors and police had continued, Gautreaux mothers and children would not have benefited. However, the normative consensus, which initially regarded these families skeptically and excluded them, shifted to include them. What could have been an exclusionary process that reduced families' capabilities, instead became social capital that enhanced their capabilities.

Similarly, the mothers report social responsiveness that provided resources to them. They received the benefits of neighbor watchfulness, reciprocal relations for childcare, and neighbor concern and watchfulness promoting the safety of their children, their property, and themselves. Many of these examples resemble Coleman's discussions of reciprocity, where mothers received and gave in approximately an equal balance.

They also received favors in terms of transportation and some acts of charity. However, transportation and charity are more one-sided. Some low-income mothers could not give transportation as well as they could get, because they either had an old unreliable car, or none at all. Charity is also one-sided (although in some cases there may have been paybacks through bartering of services). But acts of charity may be influenced by social capital processes. At a time when national political discourse was disparaging low-income black single mothers and setting time limits for their receipt of federal benefits, charity toward welfare mothers cannot be taken for granted.

As we have stressed, these social capital processes and outcomes were not inevitable. Participants could have refused to comply with suburban norms, and even if they complied, suburban neighbors could have refused to accept and help participants. Indeed, some suburban neighbors did not accept participants, and a few even engaged in acts of harassment. However, many neighbors did accept the participants, and harassment actually prompted other neighbors to show their acceptance (Rubinowitz and Rosenbaum, 2000). Ironically, acts of harassment forced other neighbors to take a normative stand— in response, they reached out to participants, and they made it clear that they repudiated these acts. They would not allow such acts to represent norms in their community.

Coleman may be right about the productive power of norms. Participants' compliance with community norms probably enhanced the perception that they were members of the

community. The breaking of norms of decency by harassers may also have encouraged neighbor acceptance and help. It is possible that the families who were generous in giving gifts or assistance would not have done so if they had felt that the Gautreaux families were not members of their community, and some might have ignored their neighbors if harassment had not forced them to take a stand. In turn, community membership may prompt acceptance and generosity.

These results indicate previously unseen capabilities of people. What is perhaps most important here is that the social context is truly a form of capital that enhances people's capabilities. As Coleman points out, social norms and reciprocity obligations permitted Gautreaux mothers and children to have capabilities that they would not otherwise have had. Just as eyeglasses are a form of physical capital that permits people to see, the social capital in suburban neighborhoods enables mothers to feel that they do not have to spend every moment worrying about and watching over their children. Some mothers report that they can count on neighbors if a child misbehaves or seems at risk of getting in trouble, if a child is sick and cannot attend school, if there is some threat to their children, apartment, or themselves. This is not merely a social support; it is social capital that enables these mothers to take actions that otherwise would be difficult or risky.

At the outset, we raised questions about the affluence hypothesis and under what conditions affluence circumstances are an asset to low-income residents. One possibility raised by this paper is that the benefits of affluence depend upon social acceptance. Another possibility is that social capital provides an additional mechanism which confers benefits and even resources. Social normative support and reciprocal benefits of safety, transportation, childcare, and community child watchfulness may be related to community affluence, but it is possible that they could occur in communities that are not highly affluent. The relationship to affluence is not entirely clear at present. There is much we still must learn. Now that these processes have been identified, research can set about to examine quantitative issues of their incidence and preconditions.

These findings also raise questions about the issue of individual preferences. Before moving to the suburbs, most participants were reluctant to leave their city neighborhoods, and understandably so. They were moving to places very far away from their original neighborhoods and friends. They were moving to neighborhoods where people had radically different norms and preferences than the participants had. Indeed, even after moving, many participants initially felt serious doubts about what they were doing, many had difficulty adjusting to the new set of expectations, many considered moving back to their previous high-poverty neighborhoods, and some actually did. However, when we tracked down people an average of 17 years after they

originally were placed in the suburbs, we found that only 30 percent had moved back to the city after that very long period of time. Why is that?

Regardless of their initial preferences, participants came to accept the suburban norms. They decided to adopt these new norms, and they received substantial benefits from complying with them. These normative constraints, which they initially found restrictive, were later perceived as liberating. These participants might not have chosen to live in the suburbs if they had been offered good housing in another safe environment, and some reported that they expected to return to the city after their children got older. But the vast majority did not return to the city.

Participants became different people — they had different norms, different preferences, and different expectations. Just as Coleman suggested, they acquired capabilities from living in the suburbs and becoming suburbanites. These were capabilities that were not inside of themselves, and, if Coleman is correct, they would have lost those capabilities if they had returned to their old city neighborhoods.

The customary stereotypes about "housing project residents," may be correct, but they are statements about the behaviors that arise from housing-project conditions, not statements about the capabilities of the people themselves. When housing project residents are given the opportunity to live in radically different social environments, they reveal previously unseen capabilities.

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