Can Poor Black Families Escape Segregated Neighborhoods? Residential Mobility Patterns and Opportunity in Three Housing Voucher Programs

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Objectives

Residential segregation has become a persistent feature in cities across America. Some researchers suggest that structural barriers such as discrimination by landlords, realtors or lenders impede the movement of African-Americans into more racially mixed neighborhoods (cf. Massey and Denton 1993; Yinger 1995). Others (Clark 1991, 1992; Thernstrom and Thernstrom 1997) point to endogenous preferences, especially for neighborhoods where one's own racial group is the majority, as the driving force behind continued racial separation. Proponents of this in-group preference perspective suggest that policies designed to encourage integration or intervene in housing markets would have little effect, because they cannot overcome people's preferences (Clark 1992). These two perspectives can be difficult to tease apart when looking at the residential mobility of African-Americans; despite studies that have persistently demonstrated that black families do not move into less segregated, less poor neighborhoods as readily as white families with similar human capital (South and Crowder 1997, 1998), it is difficult to know the degree to which these patterns are the result of barriers or preferences. In short, previous research does not answer the question of whether low income black families would live in whiter, less poor neighborhoods if they could circumvent structural barriers, such as discrimination, or if they were counseled to make such a move with a targeted voucher and some search assistance. In addition, much previous research focuses on self-expressed *attitudes* about residential preference (cf. Farley et al, 1994; Emerson, Yauncey and Chai, 2002), not families' actual *behaviors*.

This study extends previous research by using data from three assisted mobility programs: the *Gautreaux* residential mobility program in Chicago, the five-city Moving To Opportunity experiment, and newly available data from the *Thompson* residential mobility program in Baltimore. While data from housing voucher programs cannot explicitly examine preferences, it does inform us as to whether families that might not otherwise have had the chance will move to more integrated areas and remain in less poor neighborhoods over the long run. Using these three unique data sets, we can ask:

1) Will public housing families use subsidies to move to more racially and economically integrated neighborhoods?

2) Will families that do move stay in such neighborhoods?

3) Does the racial composition of the new neighborhood have an effect on the later residential locations of these families?

4) How can we explain differences in short and long-term residential outcomes across these programs?

Background Literature

Prior research on the residential mobility patterns of African-Americans has shown that families tend to remain in poor and/or segregated neighborhoods despite a variety of potential intervening factors. For example, African-Americans are more likely than whites to move into poor neighborhoods and less likely to move out (South and Crowder 1997; Gramlich, Lauren and Sealand 1992). Even controlling for human capital traits such as education or income, black families are also less likely to move into white neighborhoods than are whites (South and Crowder 1998) or Hispanics (Massey and Mullan 1984). These results also hold for families receiving housing choice vouchers. Cronin and Rasmussen's (1981) study of the national voucher program shows that, when given a housing voucher which allowed them to move to a wide variety of locations, low income black families were more likely to move to places that closely resembled their previous disadvantaged, segregated neighborhoods. Middle class African-Americans also have more trouble than whites translating their income or wealth into more affluent, integrated communities (Alba, Logan and Stults 2000; Crowder, South and Chavez 2006). Given these trends, we can imagine that many of the families who participated in the residential mobility programs examined here would not have normally moved to the low poverty, majority Anglo neighborhoods they moved to.

One strand of literature concerning the residential preferences of African-Americans posits that this pattern of continued segregation is largely a function of the preferences of racial and ethnic groups to live with other members of similar background. This in-group preference hypothesis was begun by Thomas Schelling and has been empirically advocated by William Clark, who suggests that "patterns of separation are likely to be reinforced by preferences for living and socializing with neighbors of similar class and interests" (1991, 17). Clark's research leads him to conclude that segregation is mutually upheld. Despite blacks' higher expressed preference for integration (see also Farley et al 1994, Krysan and Farley 2002), he argues that white preferences for higher percent-white neighborhoods creates a gap that makes it unlikely that an integrated neighborhood equilibrium will be maintained (1991). Furthermore, he finds that blacks tend to move to higher percent black neighborhoods than would be expected by their preferences (1992). Thernstrom and Thernstrom (1997) suggest that blacks experience a certain amount of comfort in black neighborhoods, and that they would be reluctant to move due to a residential mobility program such as Moving to Opportunity (230-31). They suggest that "one of the characteristics that many find attractive is the presence of a "critical mass" of other people of the same race"(225), and that this, rather than discriminatory real estate practices such as steering, is responsible for the continued lack of integration. If Clark and the Thernstroms are correct, we would expect to see families that participated in the residential mobility programs move back to similar neighborhoods as those from which they came—neighborhoods with high numbers of other low-income blacks.

Examinations of black residential preferences by other scholars come to different conclusions. Bobo and Zubrinsky (1996) find evidence of in-group attachment among a variety of racial and

ethnic groups, but find that it does not correlate to residential preference. Other researchers find that it is less a desire to live with one's own group than racial stereotyping of others that is correlated with residential preferences (Charles 2003, Farley et al 1994). Studies that probe the expressed residential preferences of African-Americans find evidence that fear of white hostility, rather than in-group preference, influences the reluctance of African-Americans to move into more integrated neighborhoods (Krysan and Farley 2002; Farley et al 1994).

Reflecting on the mobility findings through the lens of preferences is difficult—while African-Americans express preferences for mixed-race neighborhoods (Clark 1992, Farley et al. 1993, Charles 2003), on the whole we do not see this preference actualized in national residential patterns. In addition, Crowder (2001) finds that African-Americans are less likely to actualize an expected move than are whites of similar SES. This suggests that structural barriers and place stratification play a role in limiting the mobility options of African-Americans. As mentioned above, discrimination in housing and lending markets is a widely acknowledged explanation of the continued patterns of residence in poor and segregated communities seen among blacks (Massey and Denton 1985, 1993; Massey and Mullan 1984, South and Crowder 1997, 1998). While it is impossible to completely control for individual preferences or eliminate all structural barriers, the current study aims to explore these two competing explanations for continued segregation by looking at mobility patterns as they actually play out among low-income black families who have "bucked the trend" and moved to low poverty and/or racially integrated neighborhoods via housing voucher assistance.

This study aims to explore whether low-income black families make later moves reverting back to their original types of neighborhoods (as an in-group preference theory might predict), or whether they end up in neighborhoods similar to those in which the program placed them (as contact theory or human capital theories might predict). Even after being assisted to move to new neighborhoods, families coming from mostly black urban neighborhoods may subsequently return to mostly black urban areas, and structural constraints will also contribute to such outcomes. However, it is also possible that once families are exposed to areas they would have previously avoided on the basis of fear or prejudice, they might change their preferences and thus change their residential choices.

Data Sources

We use three unique data sources across two cities (and three decades) to help answer questions about mobility and opportunity. Two important points should be made at the outset. First while we are trying to understand the mobility patterns of poor black families, we must acknowledge that the families who participated in these voucher programs are different from poor families in general by virtue of the fact that they were motivated enough to sign up for the program in the first place. However, these families are very similar to public housing families and families who would sign up for the national Housing Voucher program. They are extremely poor, female headed families, most with current or previous welfare receipt (see Keels et al, 2005; DeLuca and Rosenblatt, 2006; Orr et al, 2003 for details on the participants in all three programs). Therefore, while we cannot generalize to all low income minority families, we can begin to

understand how some former public housing residents respond and relocate when the given the opportunity.

The first dataset comes from a 1976 Supreme Court housing desegregation case in Chicago. Carried out in the late 1970's, the *Gautreaux* program helped poor African American families move to either majority white suburbs or other improving city neighborhoods. Administered by the nonprofit Leadership Council for Metropolitan Open Communities in Chicago, the program provided public housing residents (and families on the waiting list for public housing) with help in moving to private-sector apartments, either in mostly white suburbs or within revitalizing areas in the city of Chicago. Between 1976 and 1998, over 7,000 African-American families moved as part of the program, over half of them to suburban communities. We use a random sample of 1500 families to carry out the present analyses.

The second dataset comes from the Chicago and Baltimore sites of a federal housing experiment conducted by the Department of Housing and Urban Development in the 1990's. The Moving to Opportunity program (MTO) assigned families at random to one of three groups. The *experimental* group received a Section 8 voucher that would allow them to rent an apartment in the private market, but they could only lease up in census tracts with 1990 poverty rates of less than 10 percent (unlike the Gautreaux program, there were no racial restrictions on the destination neighborhoods). This group also received housing counseling to assist them in relocating. Another group received a Section 8 voucher with no geographical restrictions. Finally, the *control* group received no new housing assistance but could continue to live in public housing or apply for other housing assistance that became available to public housing residents in the interim (usually a Section 8 voucher). While the program was carried out in Los Angeles, Boston, New York, Chicago and Baltimore, we use data from only the latter two sites for comparison to our other data sets. The Chicago site had 460 experimental families and 232 controls; Baltimore had 252 experimental families and 197 controls.

The third dataset comes from a partial remedy to a currently pending housing desegregation case in Baltimore city. In 1995, with the assistance of the American Civil Liberties Union, public housing residents in Baltimore city filed suit against the public housing authority of Baltimore City and the Department of Housing and Urban Development, citing that both agencies failed to dismantle the city's racially segregated system of public housing which had been put in place as early at the 1930's. In 1996, a partial consent decree was issued, as the first part of a larger anticipated remedy. As a result of this decree, the *Thompson* program provides 2000 special housing vouchers to be given to plaintiff class members (former or current public housing families) to create housing opportunity in middle class, mostly white areas of Baltimore city and the adjacent counties. Families are allowed to relocate within census tracts that are less than 30% African American, less than 10% poor and have fewer than 5% of the residents receiving housing vouchers. As of April 2007, 962 families have moved with these targeted vouchers, and we use data from these families for the current study. A final remedy decision is still pending.

Each data source provides a unique opportunity to answer our research questions. The Gautreaux data can demonstrate whether low income black families will move to mostly white neighborhoods, and whether they will stay over fifteen years later. The Gautreaux program was implemented in such as way as to ensure that the families moving to the suburban areas leased

up in places that were more affluent and non-segregated. The consent decree required that the suburban neighborhood could not be more than 30% African American, and housing counselors worked with landlords to find units, and families were given access to units on the basis of their place in a wait list. They could refuse an offer, but risked not getting another voucher. Most took the offer. Therefore, over half of the Gautreaux families moved out to suburban neighborhoods that were an average of 25 miles away from their former housing projects. While Gautreaux has no control group, these suburban movers can be compared to the other half of the families who moved to "improving" neighborhoods in the city of Chicago, again as a function of the waitlist. Most of these neighborhoods were still majority black (see DeLuca and Rosenbaum, 2003; Keels et al, 2005). As a result, participants' preferences for placement neighborhoods had relatively little to do with where they ended up moving, providing a degree of exogenous variability in neighborhood placement that undergirds *Gautreaux* research.

Since Gautreaux was not an experiment, we turn to the MTO Chicago site and compare the experimental and control group movers for this program. The difference in the MTO program goes beyond the design, however. MTO vouchers had to be used in neighborhoods that had fewer than 10% poor residents. Therefore, the locational targeting was class based, not race based like Gautreaux. In addition, while similar to Gautreaux in that there was housing counseling, families chose their own units. We have the same data for the Baltimore site of MTO, to examine how the program worked in a different city.

The Baltimore Thompson data provides yet another opportunity to examine the mobility patterns of low income black families who are given an opportunity to relocate. Thompson is similar to both Gautreaux and MTO in that families were public housing residents (or on the wait list), and housing counseling was provided. However, Thompson uses three criteria to target where participants can lease up. Families must move to neighborhoods that are less than 30% African American, no more than 10% poor, and contain fewer than 5% housing voucher recipients. However, these families can also choose their units from "allowable" census tracts in the city.

Analysis Plan

By looking across these data sets, we can examine how poor families respond to the receipt of targeted housing vouchers. We can see whether these families will lease up in white neighborhoods, whether they stay and whether living in more opportunity rich areas is predictive of later residential locations. We can also see how these patterns vary depending on whether race or class is used as a targeting characteristic for the new neighborhoods. We can also examine these patterns with a variety of comparison groups. Unlike observational data, which usually has few very poor public housing families, we have quasi-experimental and experimental housing program data for thousands of families, which is better suited for an analysis of the mobility patterns of low income African American families. Our data also extends research on the revealed residential preferences of Black families by looking at observed behaviors of these families, under unique circumstances that allow them to circumvent some structural barriers.

As presented in maps 1-9, we have begun to explore these data using ArcGIS to combine census level data with the individual level locations of participants in the three programs. We plot all addresses against the racial composition of the census tract, as well as the poverty rate (the latter

not completed yet). First, we plot "origin" addresses of the families in the programs. Origin refers to the address where families were living when they signed up with the program. Next, we plot "placement" neighborhoods. These refer to the neighborhoods where families moved with their mobility vouchers. Finally, we plot "first move" or "current" addresses, to examine the neighborhoods where families move once they leave the units where they initially relocated with the program.

The next steps of the paper will include mapping of poverty rates and other socioeconomic characteristics of neighborhoods. We will also conduct regression analyses to examine whether the characteristics of placement neighborhoods are associated with later residential locations, net of individual characteristics such as family size, age of household head, employment status at baseline, previous welfare receipt, and education level.

Preliminary Results

Maps 1-3 show origin, placement and current neighborhoods for the families of Chicago's Gautreaux program[1]. Placement address refers to a suburban neighborhood with fewer than 30% African American residents *or* a city neighborhood in what was supposed to be a revitalized area. Current addresses refer to the locations of the families 15-22 years later. There are no data available for interim relocations with the Gautreaux program, since such data was not collected as part of the program administration between 1976-1989.
[NOTE: SEVERAL MAPS HAD TO BE LEFT OUT SO THAT DOCUMENT WOULD UPLOAD]

Map 1 (not shown here) gives a detailed look at the central city of Chicago, where most Gautreaux families lived when they signed up for the program. As the census data indicates, these areas were highly segregated—most census tracts had 90-100% African American residents (the average origin neighborhood had 83% African American residents). Map 2 shows the mobility among Gautreaux families as a result of their program moves. What is most striking is how far away the suburban movers relocated from their initial inner city neighborhoods (yellow dots). These neighborhoods are an average of 25 miles away from origin addresses. These neighborhoods are also considerably less segregated; suburban movers relocated to areas that were 10% African American on average, while the city movers relocated to areas that were 56% African American. Map 3 shows where the Gautreaux families lived an average of fifteen years later. Comparing Maps 2 and 3 yields a striking result: the majority of suburban movers (purple dots) remained in such areas over a decade after their initial move with the program. In fact, contrary to what most critics would have predicted, less than 30% of the families placed in the suburbs moved back to the city, over 57% remained in Chicago suburbs, and the rest moved out of the Chicago metropolitan area. Of the families placed in the city, over 78% stayed in the city (green dots), and 12% moved into suburbs on their own, and 9% moved out of the area. Excluding the small portion of families who could not be categorized as city or suburb (because they moved out of state [10%] or outside the six county area of the study [1.5%]), 66% of suburb movers remained in suburbs (N=438/663). Clearly, poor minority families in Chicago were willing to relocate to mostly white neighborhoods and many stayed for years. A closer look at

[1] Maps will also be generated using data from the 1980 and 1990 censuses to show how the areas differed at the time of initial Gautreaux lease-up.

Map 3 also reveals that while there is some evidence that post-placement, families moved to areas of slightly higher black composition, these areas are still far more integrated than their pre-move areas.

However, the Gautreaux program was not a randomized experiment, and therefore it is hard to know where such families might have ended up in the absence of the program. Turning to Maps 4 and 5 (not shown), we can see results from the Chicago site of the MTO program. For the MTO program, "placement" refers to the first address they were living at after random assignment. For the control group, this is likely to be their origin address, but for the experimental group, it is the low poverty neighborhood they moved to with their vouchers. Current address for the MTO families refers to their location at the date of last survey collection, which is 4-7 years after random assignment (maps not shown yet).

Map 4 (not shown) shows the origin neighborhood locations for the Chicago MTO "control" group families, as well as the relocations they made on their own. The light blue circles indicate that most of the Chicago MTO families started out in on the southeast side of the city in public housing project neighborhoods, characterized by high levels of racial segregation. The darker blue squares show that when these families move in the absence of an assisted voucher, they did move away from the projects, but most moved to other highly segregated city neighborhoods. Map 5 shows the MTO experimental movers' original neighborhood location, as well as the neighborhoods where they leased up with the low poverty voucher. It is striking how similar Maps 4 and 5 appear. Recall, however, that the MTO program had a poverty threshold, not a racial threshold. While families did move to lower poverty areas (map not shown), they did not move to neighborhoods that were appreciable less segregated[2]. The final draft will also include maps for the current addresses of the Chicago MTO families.

While the results for the Chicago MTO site show little relocation outside of the city, the families in the Baltimore MTO site demonstrate slightly more mobility after the receipt of the low poverty voucher. Map 6 shows the origin neighborhoods and placement neighborhoods for the experimental families in Baltimore. The light green circles indicate, that like Chicago, the Baltimore families originated from the inner city and lived in highly segregated cities when they volunteered for the program. The yellow squares show where the families relocated with the voucher. While there is considerable mobility outside of their origin communities (and the poverty rates were much lower), the Baltimore MTO families were still very likely to relocate to mostly African American census tracts. Map 7 (not shown) shows mobility among the control group families, who in theory provide a counterfactual for the experimental movers. Map 7 shows that in the absence of the program, families who relocate are less likely to move far from the inner city, and who are likely to relocate to highly segregated areas.

Map 2 demonstrated that the suburban Gautreaux families successfully relocated to non-segregated neighborhoods, while Maps 5 and 6 showed that MTO families in Chicago and Baltimore were more likely to move to other racially segregated neighborhoods. These differences were driven in large part by the restrictions on their vouchers. The Gautreaux program had a race criterion, and MTO had a poverty criterion that needed to be satisfied for a

[2] The final draft will also highlight the lease up problems experienced by the MTO families. As shown in the Interim Impacts Evaluation, the lease up rate across all five cities was less than 50%.

voucher to be used. The long term locations of the Gautreaux program make a striking point—if poor minority families relocate to non-segregated neighborhoods, they might stay. Because the MTO program used class instead of race, it was more difficult for families to find non-segregated areas. Very recent data from the current Thompson program in Baltimore further illustrates this point

Map 8 shows the origin and placement neighborhoods for the Baltimore Thompson families who moved from 2002-2007. For the Thompson program, placement refers to a neighborhood that has fewer than 30% African American residents, no more than 10% poor residents and no more than 5% voucher families. The placement neighborhoods in the Thompson program are much less segregated than original neighborhoods—the average percent African American in the Thompson origin neighborhoods was almost 80%, while the average for placement neighborhoods was 22%. Map 9 (not shown) shows the locations of families after they make their second move—that is, when they relocate from their initial placement neighborhood. While there is some regression back to more segregated city neighborhoods, many Thompson families also remain in less segregated communities. In fact, what the map does not show is that the vast majority of the Thompson families have not relocated from their placement locations. Over two-thirds of the Thompson families are currently living in the *same* units they initially leased with the program. However, it is also the case that the follow up for Thompson is still relatively short—around 2-4 years for most movers (as compared to 4-7 years for MTO and 15-20 years for Gautreaux).

Prelim Discussion

Our preliminary analyses of the mobility patterns of the families across these sites suggest a few patterns. First, low income black families from public housing projects will move to more integrated neighborhoods if given the chance and assistance. Second, many will stay in these neighborhoods for many years. Third, while over time, families move to neighborhoods that are less white, these areas are less poor than original communities (analyses to be shown). Fourth, program differences, such as the use of race or poverty thresholds or housing counseling seem to make a difference in helping these families escape ghetto neighborhoods.

However, the secondary moves made by many families often result in less advantaged communities, and this is troubling. Why are second moves so challenging? We see across programs that there is some regression back to areas with higher African American concentrations. Clark would make the assumption that the preferences of these residents are merely to be near old friends and families (pp. 4, 16, 20). He assumes this of low income inner city black families in general, as well as those families who moved with voucher programs. However, it is likely that there are many other factors contributing to residential preferences. In fact, the MTO interim report suggests that the subsequent moves made by the MTO families are not entirely voluntary, since the top two reasons families report for leaving their program move addresses are leasing problems (22%) and problems with landlords (20%) (HUD, 2003, p. 34)[3]. The Thompson movers report very similar issues as the driving forces behind their relocations. In addition, these are problems that could possibly be remedied with proper housing counseling. If these logistic considerations are a larger part of the reason why MTO families and low income black families

[3] The other reasons include: getting a bigger apartment, safety, higher rents and utilities (HUD, 2003, p. 34).

in general choose to live in areas of high racial and poverty concentration, then we could be mistaking racial preferences for technical difficulties. Future work with Thompson might shed light on this issue, as the follow up with counselors continues up to 18 months after first move.

Why might results differ across the programs and data sets? One possibility is that only in the case of *Gautreaux* did program officials locate units for the participants, and either the landlords of these units or the neighborhoods in which they were located may have facilitated permanent relocations. The placement of families into specific suburban *units*--pre-selected by the *Gautreaux* housing counselors and located in opportunity areas-- is an important component for ensuring that those families actually experience the aspects of neighborhoods rich in the kinds of resources likely to improve individual outcomes. Indeed, even though their vouchers enabled them to do so, virtually no MTO families found housing in mostly white or even integrated suburban communities. Perhaps it was the counseling and assignment to specific units and neighborhoods that helped *Gautreaux* families overcome landlord discrimination, lack of information about rental markets, or fears about more affluent white areas. Subsequently, these experiences might have helped families make successful second moves in the same or similar neighborhoods, thus contributing to residential stability and well being (cf. Briggs and Turner, 2006). We know from previous research on housing vouchers that families will often choose neighborhoods (even within program-designated census tracts) that look similar to the areas they came from (Cronin and Rasmussen, 1981). Therefore, the mix of housing counselor assistance and placement in high resource, less racially segregated communities seemed to yield the greatest long term benefits for families, and indicates the policy significance of both components for mobility programs.

There are also a number of caveats that need to be considered when interpreting the results from this work. In addition to program differences, we need to be mindful of cohort differences. For example, families moving in conjunction with the original *Gautreaux* program faced very different circumstances than families moving with the MTO program. Most of the original *Gautreaux* families were first- or second-generation residents of Chicago public housing; qualitative interviews document that many of them came from two-parent families that imparted high levels of motivation (Mendenhall, 2004). These backgrounds are considerably more favorable than those of families participating in MTO, many of whom had long family histories in public housing. MTO families moved in the late 1990s, while the bulk of *Gautreaux* moves occurred in the 1980s, in the midst of the decline of the urban manufacturing sector but generally before the crack cocaine epidemic devastated inner cities. Additional cohort and city differences will be discussed in later versions of the paper.

In addition, one needs to consider the larger policy context in which the families were relocating in each city. For example, between 1995 and 2000, Baltimore city used HOPE VI demolition grants to implode five of its public housing developments, including Lafayette Courts, Lexington Terrace and the George Murphy Homes, which were the largest in the city (there were similar implosions in Chicago at the same time). Many of the MTO families lived in these projects when they signed up for the program. This development has serious implications for how we distinguish the outcomes for the experimental versus control group families, since the demolitions caused many of the MTO control families to move to new neighborhoods as well, though many relocated to other high poverty areas in the city. We must also consider this as we

compare the outcomes for the Baltimore MTO families and the Baltimore Thompson families. While most MTO families relocated during the HOPE VI demolition period, Thompson families have been moving since 2002, after the majority of these buildings were torn down. While it is likely that the MTO and Thompson families lived in some of the same projects in the 1990s, their mobility occurred under different conditions.

Implications

The results above suggest that it is possible to assist families in making short and long term improvements in neighborhood conditions, in contrast to observational research, which demonstrates patterns of repeat mobility between poor neighborhoods. Said more technically, people can make choices that optimize their outcomes when they have better information and better resources. We know from research in other fields that some low income parents will advise their children against going to colleges away from home, or taking certain financial aid packages because their lack of information about the relative benefits of such schools and offers affects their preferences for such opportunities (e.g., McDonough, 2002). In much the same way, residential outcomes are driven not only by racial preferences, but also by the relative quality of information about the housing market and by the potential opportunities a given area might provide for one's family. For example, many *Gautreaux* and MTO families were pleasantly surprised by the opportunities white suburban neighborhoods provided and found that they had preconceived notions about whites that were wrong (see DeLuca, 2007; Rosenbaum, Reynolds, DeLuca, 2002; Rosenbaum, DeLuca, Tuck, 2005). There was a recognized trade-off between the familiar surroundings of their previous city neighborhoods and the unfamiliar, but newfound successes they enjoyed in the more affluent, white areas.

Given the disconnect between the promising results of Gautreaux, and the more disappointing MTO results, many have begun to dismiss the importance of housing and neighborhood. Common arguments include the notion that families who use the vouchers to move to better neighborhoods are more motivated, and could have done well even in the absence of such a program. While it might be true that there are individual differences between the families who lease up and those who are able to maintain residence in more affluent neighborhoods (the selection bias problem), this does not provide evidence that the successful movers would have been able to make moves to better areas had they not gotten a voucher. Motivation is a necessary but not always a sufficient condition in the achievement of improved life outcomes. Nor does it follow that one should deny people in public housing or distressed neighborhoods the choice and the voucher that allows them to do so simply because there are others who are not so motivated.

Perhaps the most appropriate implications of our work point are how they might help social scientists and policy makers better understand the processes of segregation, how low income black families make residential decisions and under what conditions. Often, research focuses on the role of white flight and white preferences. However, given the high levels of mobility among poor families and the increased moving due to the HOPE VI program, it is important to also have better research about the mobility decisions of poor minority families and how they can be improved. Critics suggest that co-ethnic preferences drive and support racial segregation, so

housing policy can do little to promote racial integration or affect the choices of poor families. However, most of this research uses observational data to infer the preferences of low income black families, which prevents us from understanding the structural correlates of these patterns. Also, the data used do not have large counts of very poor black families, so the conclusions that can be drawn are somewhat limited. The research presented and proposed here supports the idea that black families will choose to improve their neighborhood condition if given the opportunity.

[ALL MAPS WOULD NOT UPLOAD; ONLY A FEW ARE SHOWN AS EXAMPLES]

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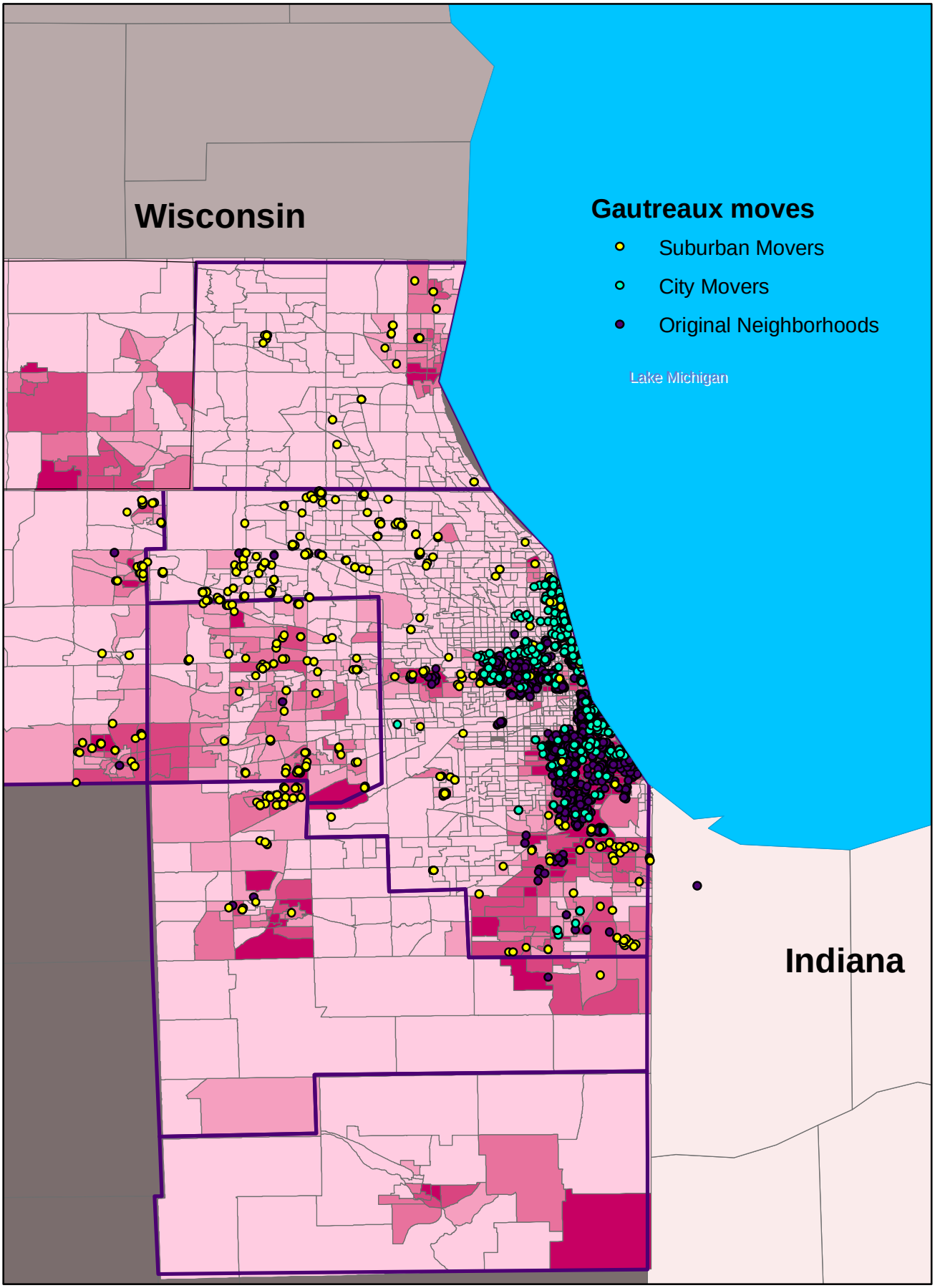
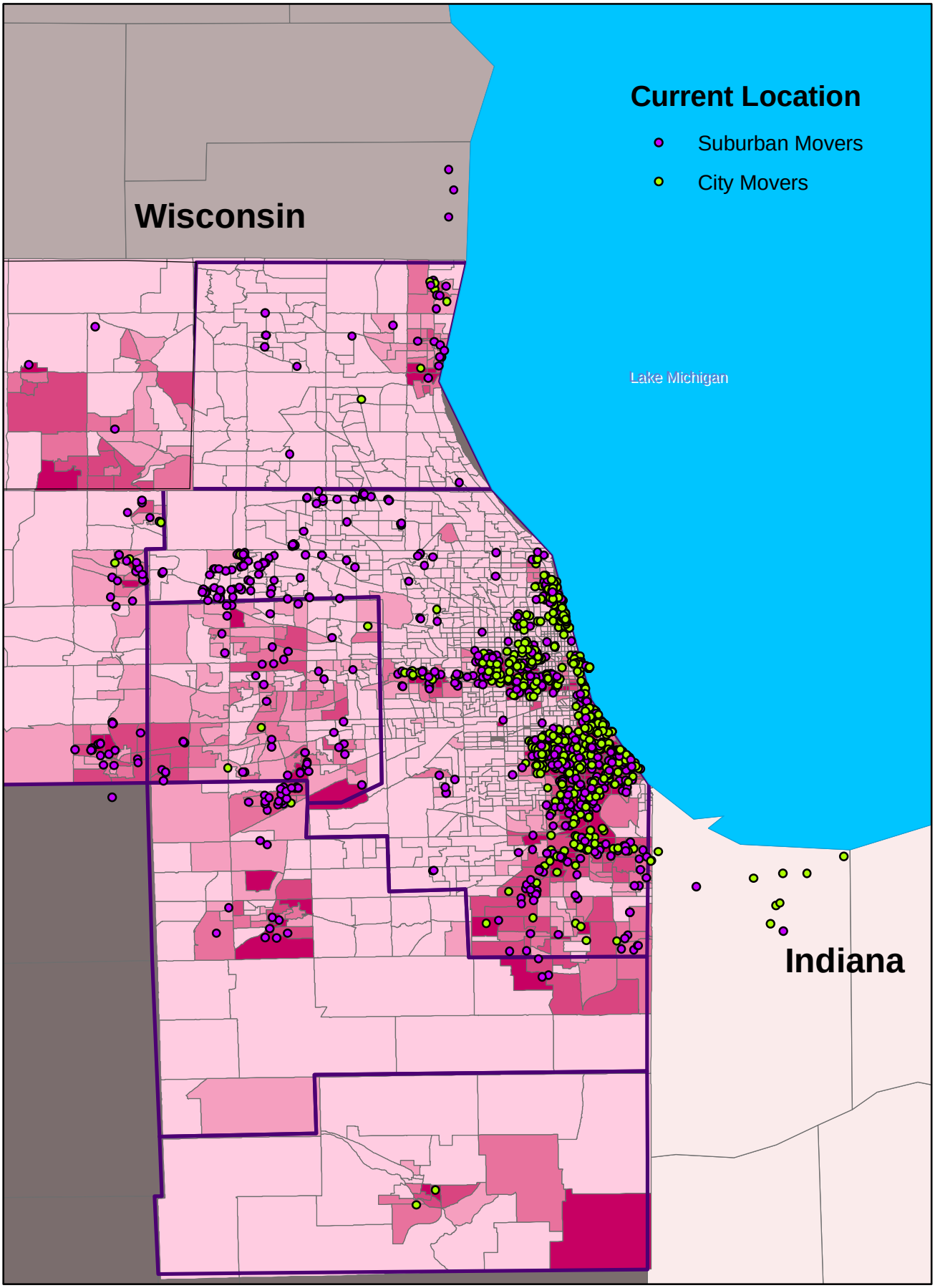
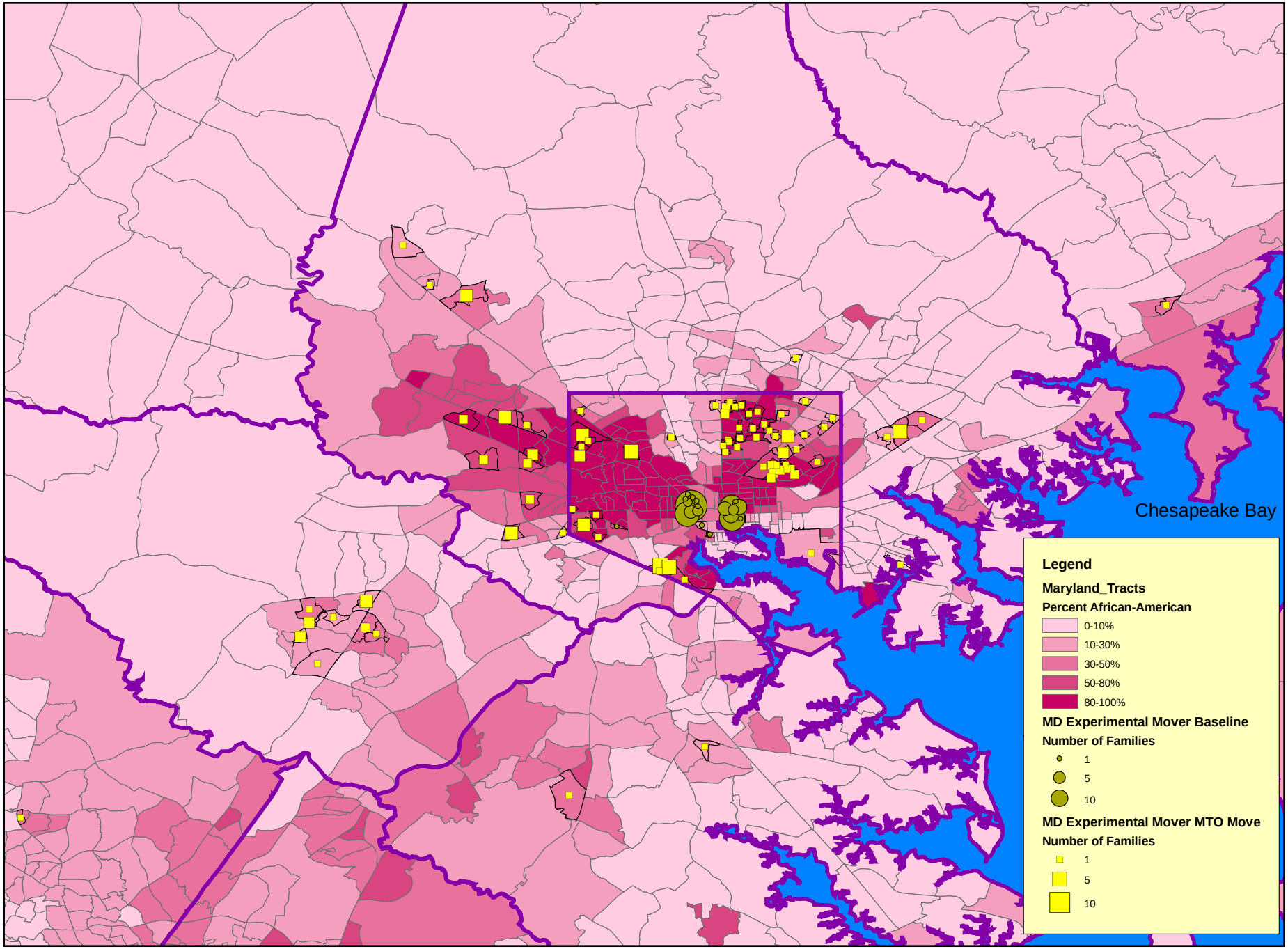
Chicago Gautreaux Placement Locations



Chicago Gautreaux Current Locations



Baltimore MTO Experimental Mover Baseline and Voucher Move



Thompson Origin and Voucher move