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“Mobility and Neighborhoods”

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Return of the Neighborhoods as Urban Strategy

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INTRODUCTION

Andrea Wilson, an African American woman in her twenties, lived with her mother in the same apartment building in Chicago where she, her mother, and her grandmother had all been raised (see Pattillo 2007). But now the neighborhood was changing. "The management, now, I don't particularly care for," she began. "They don't want the kids running around. They can't play in front. They don't want you standing in front of the building. You can't do this, you can't do that. It's like you a prisoner in your own home. Basically, they don't want you to do anything." Andrea commented on nearby buildings being converted to condos, new homes going up and old homes being remodeled. She appreciated that the vacant lots were being filled, that new businesses were opening, and that the schools had new administration, but as a result, she said, "it's getting more expensive to live around here." And along with the new housing and neighbors came the new rules. The landlord began hassling her family about standing in front of their building. Andrea tried to stand her ground. "We would just sit there and not pay any attention to him. And then finally he just drive off." She felt emboldened by her seniority in the neighborhood to defy the new, more rigid rules. Still, Andrea's stoop-sitting protest was short-lived. The landlord got the last word through the prerogatives of ownership. "He wanted to raise our security [deposit] from \$75 to \$900 dollars," she recalled. "He wanted to raise our rent to \$1,100. We were already paying \$875. So by the first of November we had to have \$900 [*sic*] rent and a \$900 security, which is no way. Got to move. So within a month we were packed up and moved in here."

Andrea was lucky enough to find an apartment in a federally subsidized building a few blocks away. Her move probably did not alter her own place-based social ties or the demographic character of the neighborhood in major ways. Still, the broader dynamics of

neighborhood change are constituted just as much by these small moves as they are by moves across counties, states, or countries. In Andrea's case, this was the incremental process by which disadvantaged people lose access to (or are excluded from) good neighborhoods.

People move for all kinds of reasons and neighborhoods are always changing. Because neighborhoods are created, transformed, nourished, depleted, rediscovered, or forgotten by the people (and institutions, businesses, and jobs) that move into and out of them, this chapter focuses on how moving behavior is integrally connected to the ability of neighborhoods to thrive as nurturing places for their residents. At the same time, however, residential mobility is deeply structured by inequalities by race, class, disability, citizenship status, and other characteristics that make some people's hold on their homes more tenuous than others'. The incidence of involuntary moves (or involuntary permanence) is not equally distributed. An equitable urban policy should work to weaken the cycle whereby the residential moves of affluent people (and whites) determine the resources, political clout, and livability of neighborhoods, and the options available to those with fewer advantages. Below, I discuss conceptually how mobility is related to neighborhoods and neighborhood change. I then review the literature on various kinds of mobility and degrees of voluntariness. I conclude by arguing that building strong and enriching neighborhoods will not result from tinkering with mobility, but instead requires the de-commodification of housing and the de-coupling of place and opportunity.

MOBILITY AND NEIGHBORHOODS

The U.S. Census Bureau reports that nearly 36 million people, or 11.7% of the population, moved between 2012 and 2013 (U.S. Census 2014a). Over five years, roughly 1 in 3 Americans move. While this is a lot of moving – particularly when compared to other advanced nations

(Caldera Sánchez and Andrews 2011) – residential mobility in the U.S. has been on the decline since the mid-1960s, when the one-year mover rate was roughly 20%, almost twice today's rate. Some moving is inevitable since it is tied to common changes in family status, job location, and individual whim. As Table 1 shows, 22% percent people moved to be closer to or because they changed jobs; 12% of people say they moved because they had a change in their family situation; and 40% moved for housing-related reasons, which includes things like starting an independent household, wanting a bigger or better home, or wanting lower housing costs. While only 3% of households report being displaced involuntarily – which includes a foreclosure, evictions, natural disaster, or government displacement – as the main reason for moving, 6% list it as one of the reasons for their move (data not shown). Hence, there is never just one reason for moving and the balance of push and pull factors are often hard to disentangle.

Table 1: Main Reason for Moving, American Housing Survey, 2011

	Total	Owner	Renter	Black	Hispanic	Poor	In City	In Suburb
Displaced	3%	2%	4%	4%	4%	4%	3%	4%
Job Related	22%	14%	25%	16%	19%	20%	24%	21%
Family Related	12%	13%	12%	10%	12%	12%	11%	12%
Housing Related	40%	52%	37%	44%	44%	40%	40%	41%
Other/No Report	18%	15%	18%	21%	15%	19%	18%	18%
All Factors Equal	5%	5%	5%	4%	7%	4%	5%	5%

Instead of creating single-reason categories, it makes more sense to posit a continuum of residential mobility from voluntary to involuntary. At the most voluntary end of the spectrum would be a person who is financially, logistically, and socially comfortable in their current housing unit, but decides he would be happier with an attached garage or a home office, or if she were closer to public transportation or a park. Completely voluntary moves are prompted more

by taste than necessity, by personal considerations rather than the demands of others, and by aspirational desires rather than hardships. Extreme involuntary moves, on the other hand, are compulsory, forced by an external party, and unwanted. The most appropriate grammar for such moves is: “She was moved involuntary” rather than “She made an involuntary move” since the first sentence better conveys the external exercise of power. Eviction, demolition, and physical violence are actions that force involuntary moves.

Most moves fall somewhere between these two extremes. A middle-aged woman who is happy in her current house and neighborhood nonetheless moves to take care of her ailing father. A family with a toddler wants to stay in their neighborhood but the schools are bad, so they move. A renter loves her neighbors and is close to all kinds of stores, but the fact that the landlord never fixes anything raises safety concerns, so she moves. A homeowner whose home is worth less than he owes the bank decides to stop paying the mortgage in protest; he is foreclosed on, sending him looking for a new place to live. Or Andrea, who might have taken on the additional rent burden and heeded her stern landlord, but moved instead.

In all of these kinds of moves, the neighborhood is both the starting point and the destination of residential mobility. Alongside individual circumstances, tastes, and the social context, the built environment also makes possible or constrains certain kinds of moves. If there is no public transportation in a neighborhood, it is not attractive for people without cars. If there are no homes built at grade level, no buildings with elevators, or no curb ramps, a neighborhood will be difficult to navigate for people with physical disabilities. If there are no jobs within a reasonable commute, only families who can afford extended-day child care or a stay-at-home parent will want to move there. If a neighborhood has only 6-bedroom McMansions, it will not attract single, older, or working-class people. And a neighborhood that replaces all of its playlots

with dog parks may push out families with children. Moreover, neighborhoods are more than the people who live there. Schools, churches, businesses, factories, organizations, and public space equally contribute to the feel and functioning of neighborhoods. To a greater or lesser extent, these entities are also mobile. More specifically, their users are mobile and the physical structures or open spaces can be demolished, repurposed, or replaced. While the mobility of institutions and jobs is of crucial importance to the health and sustainability of neighborhoods, I focus this essay on mobility of residents instead.

Finally, why and where people move and the neighborhoods they move to are structured by markets. Housing is a commodity (Pattillo 2013). The expansion of the market ever further into the spheres of land and housing is an emergent feature of modern capitalism and is neither natural nor given. Urban space is configured by the demands of capitalist production and accumulation, the commodification of space, and the resulting social conflicts between people and groups with unequal political, economic, and symbolic resources (Castells 1977; Harvey 1973). As a result of these processes, some groups have privileged and unbridled access to urban resources – effective sanitation, convenient shopping, clean air, reliable electricity, good schools – and others are completely left out, through price, law, violence, and other forms of exclusion. Moreover, the capitalist class needs people to move. “The drive to relocate to more advantageous places” (Harvey 1990, 106) incites a cycle of neighborhood ascent and decline that benefits developers, land speculators, real estate agents, construction firms, raw materials producers and the politicians who align with them.

When people buy, sell, or rent houses or apartments, the neighborhood necessarily comes along with it. Logan and Molotch (1987) argue that the desire to improve the profitability of land-use stands central to the ways in which coalitions of economic and political elites (or

“growth machines”) govern cities, which in turn shapes the neighborhood contexts within which families and households pursue their livelihoods. Within land and housing prices are capitalized the quality of schools, access to transportation, neighborhood amenities such as parks and natural landscapes, the race and income of neighbors, and crime rates. Housing prices and rents are also the result of political and legal decisions about taxation, zoning, desegregation, policing, labor, and infrastructure, among many other things. Thus, seeking to achieve the highest possible return on land investments, elites aim for increasing rents, which creates involuntary mobility for people with fewer resources. Hence, people are not moving freely across places, nor are places the natural results of the people who move in and out of them. A discussion of residential mobility and neighborhoods that does not recognize the dominant role of capitalist market-makers and state actors misidentifies the causes of urban inequalities as being the result of individual choices and preferences, rather than the structural context within which such choices and preferences are exercised.

The following sections discuss various kinds of mobility under the broad categories of “moving in,” “moving out,” and “forced moves,” with the variable of (in)voluntariness discussed throughout. Each section also discusses how various kinds of mobility are related to the health and stability of neighborhoods and their residents.

MOVING IN

What kinds of forces draw people into neighborhoods and what affects if their entry is met with delight, indifference, or disdain? There are myriad in-moving scenarios that could be explored, such as: population growth prompted by transit-oriented development; chain migration into immigrant enclaves; the attraction of high-performing schools; oil and other energy boomtowns in

North Dakota, Wyoming, Texas and elsewhere; or the construction of new retirement communities for baby boomers. Two major “moving in” trends include the suburbanization of poverty (which is also caused by the downward mobility of existing suburban residents) (Kneebone and Berube 2013) and the substantial population and job growth in the South and West (Kasarda 1988; Kochhar et al. 2005; Storper and Scott 2009; US Census 2014b). In this section, I focus more closely on two types of in-migration to neighborhoods that have received considerable popular and scholarly attention: public housing or other low-income families using Housing Choice Vouchers to move to nonpoor neighborhoods, and high income families moving into lower income neighborhoods, commonly called gentrification.

A 2008 article in the *Atlantic* magazine fingered displaced public housing residents and relocating Housing Choice Voucher residents as the cause of rising crime in the suburbs of Memphis (Rosin 2008). This unfriendly reception should not have been surprising given considerable research about the antipathy for affordable, subsidized, and public housing – and even just rental housing – especially in better-off neighborhoods (Basolo and Hastings 2003; Goetz 2008; Kirp et al. 1995; Pattillo 2007; Pendall 1999). Scores of opinion pieces and comments were written in response, illustrating the national chord that was struck by the topic. Federal housing policy has moved away from building and managing traditional public housing, and has instead demolished over 250,000 public and subsidized housing units across the country (Goetz 2013). Federal dollars now go to giving families vouchers that they can use to find and rent an apartment in the private market. In many cities, families – many of whom are black and Latino – are encouraged to make “opportunity moves;” that is, to use their vouchers to move into areas with low poverty rates and higher proportions of white families, often in the suburbs. Many

big cities like Chicago, Baltimore, Dallas, and Minneapolis offer “mobility counseling” to encourage families with vouchers to make these opportunity moves (Cunningham et al. 2010). While low-income families often express desires to move into safer and better neighborhoods, the incentive of counseling plus the bigger disincentive of losing out on a voucher make opportunity moves not fully voluntary.

Rigorous research followed the particular indictment that crime goes up when subsidized families move in. Lens (2014) uses data on 200 metro areas and found a small but not robust *negative* correlation – the opposite as posited by the *Atlantic* article – between the number of voucher holders in a neighborhood and crime rates in cities, while crime in suburban neighborhoods was unaffected by voucher holders. Using data on 10 cities, Ellen et al. (2012) found a positive correlation between an increase in voucher households and crime in a neighborhood, but (an important but) more detailed, time-sequenced analyses pointed to the fact that voucher householders were moving to areas where crime was already increasing, rather than being the cause of it. The authors argued that their findings “should provide some comfort to communities concerned about the entry of voucher holders” but “should be troubling to policymakers” (569) since vouchers are supposed to improve families’ residential options, not limit them to neighborhoods that may be in decline. Finally, Popkin et al. (2012) asked the same question in Chicago and Atlanta: Are neighborhoods that were the destinations for families relocated from demolished projects in Chicago and Atlanta experiencing increased crime? They found that crime went down in most of the destination neighborhoods of displaced public housing residents, but (another important but) crime would have gone down *even more* if those relocated public housing families had not moved in. In other words, relocation stunted the crime decline in neighborhoods that received large numbers of public housing residents. The greater

the proportion of relocated families within the neighborhood, the greater was the impact on crime. However, in both Chicago and Atlanta, only a few neighborhoods reached sufficient density of relocated families to really make an impact on crime rates. Overall, the authors came to a conclusion not too unlike that reached by Ellen et al.: “[O]ur story is not the popular version of previously stable communities spiraling into decline because public housing residents moved in, but rather a story of poor families moving into areas that were already struggling” (Popkin et al. 2012, 153).

Even prior to the *Atlantic* debate, many scholars had studied what happened to neighborhoods when low-income families moved in either with vouchers or to live in new subsidized housing (see Freeman and Botein 2002 for a detailed discussion). Galster et al. (1999) found that housing prices went up when a few families with housing vouchers moved into higher-cost, stable white communities in Baltimore, likely because the houses they move to had to pass a quality inspection to be eligible for the program. But they also found that the concentration of many voucher families in areas that already had low or declining property values had a further negative effect on neighborhood property values (also see Santiago et al. 2001 on Denver). Lee et al (1999) found that public housing units, Low Income Housing Tax Credit units, and housing choice voucher units had small to modest negative effects on nearby housing prices in Philadelphia, but public housing homeownership programs and new construction Section 8 housing had modest positive effects. Schwartz et al. (2006) and Ellen et al. (2007) found large and sustained positive effects of city- and federally-subsidized low-income housing, respectively, on property values in New York. Overall, then, the in-migration of low-income households does not have uniformly negative impacts, and the evidence actually suggests that the most negative impacts are not in advantaged communities – which likely have

substantial resources with which to absorb new low-income families (Massey et al. 2013) – but rather in places that are economically fragile or already have high concentrations of subsidized housing and low-income families.

As nonpoor neighborhoods absorb new poor in-migrants, some poor neighborhoods are the new destinations of the wealthy. “Gentrification” is a woefully imprecise and loaded word, but it seems to be the most recognizable description of the process whereby more affluent or upwardly mobile people (and the businesses that cater to them) move into poor and working class neighborhoods (Brown-Saracino 2010). Yet one should not fall into the trap of thinking that movement into disadvantaged neighborhoods simply reflects the new gritty fancies of gentrifiers. Smith (2002, 99) shows how gentrification is “lubricated by state donations” through the use of eminent domain, tax incentives and tax breaks, land giveaways, and direct subsidies to investors. At the same time that policymakers want to “deconcentrate poverty” by pressuring poor people to move into neighborhoods away from the urban core, they are hoping to replace those departing residents with middle- and upper-income newcomers.

The scope of gentrification in U.S. cities should not be overstated, however. For example, Ellen, O’Regan, et al. (2013) show that only about 29% of higher-income movers in the American Housing Survey moved to relatively low-income neighborhoods, with nonwhite households, renters, and those without a college degree – not the usual gentrifier profile – *more* likely to so. Owens (2012) shows that in the decades from 1970 to 2010, no more than about 20% of census tracts in metropolitan areas experienced “ascending” socioeconomic profiles. Moreover, census tracts in white suburbs – not the stereotypical targets of gentrification – made up the largest category of ascending neighborhoods, although minority neighborhoods were more likely to ascend in the more recent decades. In other words, gentrification is not a predominant

pattern of in-migration across the country. Nonetheless, the dramatic and generally voluntary influx of upper-income white (and nonwhite) households into working-class minority communities in New York, Denver, Boston, Washington D.C., Seattle, and other cities is a real phenomenon that has consequences for neighborhoods.

Whether they are artists or gays and lesbians or bankers or new college graduates or middle class black and Latino professionals on an uplift mission, when these new people move into a neighborhood to capitalize on cheap rents, a favorable location, a storied past, or architectural charm they mean business. Brett Williams (1989) studied the “upscaling” of a neighborhood in Washington D.C. in the 1980s where the commercial change lagged behind the influx of new residents. She described how newcomers reacted to the existing neighborhood and what they envisioned instead:

Most new homeowners find the stores uninteresting, inadequate, unpleasant, and sometimes frightening. They feel threatened by the groups of men who stand talking... One man, a realtor, vows that his agency is there “to clean the neighborhood up” and complains, “We need a florist. We need a bank. We need a *good* restaurant.” When I asked him about the Greek, Malian, Salvadoran, and Guatemalan restaurants there already, he replied, “We deserve better.” Michael laughingly pleads, “All I want is a place where I can buy twelve kinds of mustard” (1989, 99).

As this quote indicates, the interactions between newcomers and existing residents in gentrifying neighborhoods include contestations over control of neighborhoods resources, the use of public space, and appropriate public behaviors (Mele 2000; Hyra 2008; Taylor 2002; Pattillo 2007). When well-off people move into poor neighborhoods, they attract stores, banks and amenities that older residents appreciate (Freeman 2006), but the newcomers’ tolerance for loud music,

corner loitering, informal vending, and even legal ethnic businesses is often quite low. As a result, older residents – and especially young people – express feeling policed, excluded, and increasingly unable to find their way in what used to be familiar territory. As Andrea expressed in the opening vignette, “It’s like you a prisoner in your own home.”

Quantitative studies have focused more on the impact of gentrification on crime, schools, and displacement. The findings are not totally consistent on the question of crime, with results varying across city and by the type of crime (Covington and Taylor 1989; Lee 2010; Papachristos et al. 2010; Taylor and Covington 1988). Kraeger et al.’s study of Seattle (2011) argues that such variable and contrasting results across studies might be due to changes over time in the effects of gentrification. They posit “atipping-pointingentration,wherethepositiveassociationbetweenearlygentrationandcrimereversesonceneighborhoodsfullyturnoverandthegentrationprocess completes” (634). On schools, gentrifiers are often active in efforts to improve specific local public schools that their own children will attend (Cucchiara 2013; Pattillo 2007; Posey-Maddox 2014), and they may contribute to the growth of charter schools (Davis and Oakley 2013; Lipman 2011), but a study in Chicago suggests that there are no generalized benefits to the school system from their presence (Keels et al. 2013) and research in Boston suggests that they may contribute to overall racial segregation (Kimmelberg and Billingham 2013).

Finally, the question of if the in-migration of upper-income households displaces lower income households has garnered considerable attention. Although Atkinson (2000) found empirical support for displacement in London, recent quantitative analyses find that poor households are no more likely to move out of gentrifying neighborhoods than out of neighborhoods not experiencing such change (McKinnish et al 2010; Vigdor 2002), although

Ellen and O'Regan (2011) find some evidence that poor homeowners (not renters) are more likely to leave. Some studies find that poor households are actually more likely to stay put in such neighborhoods likely due to satisfaction with observed changes (Ellen and O'Regan 2011; Freeman and Braconi 2004). There is evidence, however, that when poor families do move, they are *replaced* by higher income households (Freeman 2005), thus decreasing the overall availability of affordable housing for low-income families (Marcuse 1985) and contributing to the upward socioeconomic profile of such neighborhoods (Ellen and O'Regan 2008). These findings underscore the relationship between moving in and moving out. The more space that advantaged residents claim by moving into the city, the less space that is available for low-income residents, resulting in their moving out. The next section discusses moving out and also adds some historical examples.

MOVING OUT

The old adage has it that people move “up and out.” The idea is that as people move up the socioeconomic ladder, they move out of their current neighborhoods to “better” ones. For many decades, “out” has had literal geographic connotations as people moved further out of the city core, and then into suburbs, and eventually into exurbs, although this centrifugal tendency has begun to weaken (Frey 2012). There are many manifestations and forms of “up and out” mobility. Here, I focus on three areas on which there is considerable research: white flight, black middle class outmigration, and spatial assimilation theory. I consider how each type mixes elements of voluntary and involuntary moves and how they create inequalities in neighborhoods.

White flight refers to the departure of whites from central city neighborhoods beginning around World War II. White flight had many causes. There were certainly pulls to peripheral

areas of cities and to new suburban areas, which were being heavily subsidized by the federal government and being made accessible by federally-built highways (Jackson 1985). Through its mortgage insurance guidelines the federal government basically restricted these new neighborhoods to whites (Freund 2010; Gotham 2002). Alongside these pull factors were many (perceived) push factors. The word “flight” refers to the threat that whites perceived from growing black populations, especially in northern cities, as the Great Migration of blacks from the south to the north was well underway. Boustan (2010) estimates that 2.7 whites left northern and western cities for every one black person that arrived. This means that 52,000 whites left the average northern and western city between 1940 and 1970 in response to black in-migration. In the 1950s and 1960s, whites fled southern cities as desegregation legislation opened up schools, public spaces, and neighborhoods to blacks (Kruse 2007).

It is too narrow, however, to conceive of white flight as simply a voluntary (and racist) reaction to the specter of black neighbors or as a voluntary preference for single-family detached homes in the urban periphery and suburbs. Even for whites who cherished their neighborhoods and wanted to stay in the central city (albeit usually not in racially integrated neighborhoods), the withholding of public and private financing to city neighborhoods made it impossible for them to maintain their aging homes or buy other ones nearby (Seligman 2005). As their neighborhoods deteriorated, downtown politicians declared them slums, which further stymied investments (Gans 1962). Many of these white families experienced their moves as a loss that was precipitated by external decisions, not their own. The racist antipathy of both families and the federal government has had enduring consequences for metropolitan regions and their neighborhoods. Together they established durable patterns of racial segregation, uneven

development across sectors of the metropolis, and metropolitan fragmentation that acts as a powerful mechanism of exclusion and resource hoarding (Briggs 2005).

Black middle class outmigration refers to the departure of middle-class blacks from the neighborhoods to which blacks had been confined in the era white flight (Wilson 1987). The Fair Housing Act of 1968, among other legal victories, allowed upwardly mobile African Americans new possibilities to move up and out. But the same patterns of gross inequalities in metropolitan investments that made white flight not completely voluntary pertain to the residential mobility decisions of middle class blacks as well. If property owners in white neighborhoods were denied bank loans and federal mortgage insurance because their homes were too old, black neighborhoods were completely excluded from conventional financing altogether. As a result they were easy targets for predatory hucksters peddling loans that carried all of the responsibilities and risks of ownership with none of the financial benefits or securities (Satter 2009). Moreover, the downward cycle of housing deterioration, deindustrialization, lower unionization, unemployment, crime, and drugs – all of which have been borne disproportionately by black neighborhoods – made the decision to move as much a necessity as a desire.

Empirically, there has been vigorous debate about the extent of black middle-class outmigration, especially if out-migration was meant to refer to moving to predominately white or suburban neighborhoods. Evidence of increasing class segregation among African Americans and increasing concentrations of black poverty supports the out-migration thesis (Jargowsky 1997; Jargowsky 2014; Reardon and Bischoff 2011). On the other hand, high levels of black/white segregation even for middle-class blacks challenges the idea that middle-class blacks have left black neighborhoods for white ones (Adelman 2004; Massey and Denton 1993; Massey and Fischer 1999). Also, blacks and Hispanics of all classes are much *less* likely than similar

whites to leave high poverty neighborhoods and much *more* likely than similar whites to move into them (South et al 2005; Sampson and Sharkey 2008). Reconciling these poles, Quillian (1999, 2012) shows that black middle-class households largely settled in white neighborhoods that were getting less white and more poor over time, or in black nonpoor neighborhoods that were often adjacent to areas of high poverty (Pattillo-McCoy 2000; Sharkey 2014).

Spatial assimilation theory picks up where black middle class out-migration leaves off by exploring the destinations, or “locational attainment,” of those who move up and out. The theory posits that upwardly mobile households “attempt to leave behind less successful members of their groups and to convert occupational mobility and economic assimilation into residential gain, by ‘purchasing’ residence in places with greater advantages and amenities” (Alba and Nee 1997, 837; also see Charles 2003; Massey and Mullan 1984). The operationalization of “greater advantages and amenities” most often includes the proportion of the population that is white (or of older white immigrant stock), the neighborhood income level, and suburban location. These assumptions are not without critique since construing “whiteness” as a proxy for advantage reinforces the privileges of whiteness (Wright et al 2005), and suburban location is an ever more unjustifiable signifier of advantage.

The empirical evidence generally supports spatial assimilation theory for white ethnics and for Asian immigrants and their children (Alba et al. 1997; Park and Iceland 2011). The story for Latinos is more complicated with Mexicans more able to translate their socioeconomic success into neighborhoods with a greater proportion of whites, whereas Puerto Ricans and Cubans – especially those with darker skin tones – are less able to do so (South et al. 2005). Moreover, stagnant trends in white-Hispanic segregation levels and the rise of hyper-segregation for Hispanics also suggest decreasing spatial assimilation (Rugh and Massey 2013; Pais et al.

2012; Tienda and Fuentes 2014; Wilkes and Iceland 2004). Blacks are the least likely to be able to translate their improving socioeconomic circumstances into neighborhoods with higher incomes and more whites (Pais et al. 2012). Indeed, there is considerable evidence that high income Blacks live in neighborhoods that have lower median incomes and fewer amenities than low-income whites (Sharkey 2014; Pais et al. 2012; see Pattillo 2005 for a review).

Hence, when blacks and Hispanics move up they do not move out to neighborhoods that are equal to the neighborhoods where whites and Asians live. These facts raise the importance of thinking not only of moves as voluntary or involuntary, but also of *destinations* as voluntary or involuntary. To be sure, no one uses brute force to determine where black, Hispanic, Asian, or white households move, but these outcomes are also far from random. Exclusionary zoning, informational asymmetries, local historical knowledge and experience, racial steering, discriminatory and affirmative preferences, prohibitive pricing, jurisdictional fragmentation, and plain old racism all shape the context within which people move, curtailing the voluntariness of any residential choices (Charles 2006; Krysan et al. 2014; Lewis et al. 2011; Rothwell and Massey 2009; Rugh and Massey 2013; Turner et al. 2012).

Moving up and out is both caused by and contributes to neighborhood inequalities. Upwardly mobile families move out of their old neighborhoods because the schools are under-resourced, the trash is not picked up, the potholes go unfilled, and the police cannot keep them safe. Where they go, they join up with people who make about the same money as them, went to college like they did, and work in similar kinds of jobs, so that together they – and only they – can benefit from the revenues generated from higher housing prices, business taxes, commercial receipts, and private investments. As Bischoff and Reardon (2014) show, affluent households are more segregated from everyone else than are poor households. These inclinations are supported

by the ultra-local control of a wide range of important social goods. In essence, the differential quality of neighborhoods drives the process of moving up and moving out, and thus more equal neighborhoods would make moving up and out less of an imperative.

FORCED MOVES

While it is clear that the types of moves discussed above are not all completely voluntary, foreclosures, evictions, and displacement by demolition constitute moves that are more clearly involuntary. Forced moves are disproportionately experienced by the most vulnerable populations.

The target-selling of disadvantageous mortgages to black and Latino communities has been uncovered through federal and state lawsuits against banks (see, e.g., US Department of Justice 2011, 2012). The result has been that black and Latino homeowners and communities, and low-income communities, have been especially devastated by the foreclosure crisis (Bocian et al. 2011; Rugh and Massey 2010). Obviously, families must involuntarily leave their homes when banks repossess them. Scholars have just begun to study the impact of foreclosures on families and neighborhoods. The evidence shows that children who live in families experiencing foreclosure are more likely to change schools than other children and they generally churn through predominately low-income and low-performing schools (Been et al. 2011; Comey and Grosz 2011; Allen 2013). People undergoing foreclosure are more likely to be hypertensive and have heart disease, less likely to have health insurance, and more likely to have visited the emergency room in the two years preceding foreclosure (Pollack et al. 2011, Pollack and Lynch 2009), and an increase in foreclosures at the zip-code level is correlated with increases in medical visits (Currie and Tekin forthcoming). These studies do not determine causation, and thus

it is not clear if poor health causes foreclosure – which would support the idea that the most vulnerable populations are at risk for forced moves – or that foreclosure causes poor health (Libman et al. 2012). The impact of foreclosures on crime is less clear. Some research finds that higher foreclosure rates lead to more crime (Ellen, Laco, et al. 2013; Stucky et al. 2012), others find no direct correlation (Jones and Pridemore 2012; Kirk and Hyra 2012), and some find mixed or time- or context-dependent results (Baumer et al. 2012; Wallace et al. 2012). Finally, foreclosure has a negative impact on nearby property values (Immergluck and Smith 2006; Lin et al. 2009). In other words, forced moves through foreclosures seem to have negative effects both at the family and neighborhoods levels.

The equivalent of foreclosures for renters is eviction. The study of eviction represents a nearly unexplored area of research (Dreier 1982). Hartman and Robinson (2003, 461) state: “Each year, an untold number of Americans are evicted or otherwise forced to leave their homes involuntarily. The number is likely in the many millions, but we have no way of gauging even a modestly precise figure for renters, because such data are simply not collected on a national basis or in any systematic way in most localities where evictions take place.” Desmond (2012) advances this research by showing how eviction is structurally patterned in the city of Milwaukee, Wisconsin, where it disproportionately impacts African Americans and, to a lesser extent, Hispanics. Black women experienced the highest incidence of eviction, whereas white women compared to white men show similar or perhaps lower rates of eviction. Desmond et al. (2013) add that families with children are more likely to be evicted and neighborhoods with higher proportions of children are particularly vulnerable for concentrated evictions. Geller and Curtis (2011). Other studies document the particular exposure to eviction of public housing residents, women leaving welfare and formerly incarcerated men (Geller and Curtis 2011;

Latimer and Woldoff 2010; Levy 2008). Of course, incarceration itself is a form of forced mobility that is unequally perpetrated across populations and has severe and concentrated negative consequences for neighborhoods (Clear 2007; Sampson and Loeffler 2010). Drawing the connection between eviction and neighborhood health, Desmond (2012, 120) concludes: “[T]his study has identified eviction as a key mechanism driving high levels of residential mobility in poor neighborhoods. With roughly one in 14 renter-occupied households evicted annually, eviction is frankly commonplace in Milwaukee’s black inner-city neighborhoods.”

Finally, the most extreme and violent form of mobility happens through demolition, clearance, and violence. Mid-twentieth century urban renewal in the U.S. uprooted thousands of people across the country leveling whole neighborhoods to make way for highways, luxury housing, public housing, civic centers, or office buildings (Hartmann 2002; Hunter 2013; Gans 1962; Fullilove 2009). Sometimes the plans fell through and the land just sat vacant with nothing to show for the dispossession of former residents. In the 21st century attention has turned to tearing down the public housing built in the previous century as a primary mode of forced displacement (Arena 2012; Bennett et al. 2006; Goetz 2013; Pattillo 2007; Vale 2013). There are also countless international examples of the same story, and of the resistance to it. Perry (2013) documents the activism of Afro-Brazilian women in Salvador against the slow destruction of their neighborhood over the course of at least forty years. Weinstein and Ren (2009) study activism against urban renewal in Shanghai and Mumbai. In one case in Mumbai, a coalition of movement organizations successfully halted state urban renewal activities, which had already demolished 90,000 homes, leaving 400,000 homeless. Finally, forced migrations due to civil and international war, drug trafficking, agriculture and extractive industries, and ecological destruction create humanitarian crises on a global scale (Hear and McDowell 2006). While these

examples may seem to dwarf the concerns of neighborhood vitality and sustainability, they highlight the common thread that someone more powerful and with more resources decided they wanted the land (the neighborhood) of a more vulnerable group, and that their demands are determinative of the overall “geography of opportunity” (Briggs 2005). Whether the outcome looks more like voluntary residential moving up and out, gentrification, displacement, or a forced move is mostly a matter of degree.

PATHS FORWARD

The voluntariness of mobility increases with household resources. Having more money obviously gives people more options, makes their choices more determinative of neighborhood trajectories, and protects them from displacement. Intangible resources like information, voice, social clout, and racial privilege are also important. The fact that housing and neighborhoods are decisions that entwine a plethora of crucial concerns – financial investments, education, safety, health, social status – is the biggest hurdle to convincing advantaged households to stay if and when less advantaged households move in, or, alternatively, to move into disadvantaged areas without speculative intentions. Hence, only policies that move toward the de-commodification of housing and the de-coupling of place and access to valued resources will move in the direction of greater neighborhood vitality and equality. Such interventions will also mitigate the unhealthy cycle of severe neighborhood deterioration and wild neighborhood enrichment and will increase low-income households’ ability to make voluntary moves or voluntarily stay in place. In essence, moving rich, middle-class, and poor people around is not the only route by which we arrive at strong neighborhoods if, instead, we commit to making extra investments in struggling neighborhoods while places that have significant private wherewithal are given basic public

support but no more. Right now we do the exact opposite. But as our investments even out, neighborhood quality will even out, and people's moves will be less impacted by fear, aversion, and force, and be more motivated by life stage, preference, and fancy. What do such strategies look like?

Public housing has been the largest effort to create housing outside of the capitalist market. It was motivated by a time when the 1949 Housing Act stated, "The Congress hereby declares that the general welfare and security of the Nation and the health and living standards of its people require...the realization as soon as feasible of the goal of a decent home and a suitable living environment for every American family" (US House Committee on Financial Services 2003). Yet, public policy is moving in the opposite direction (Smith 1998). Federal funds for the renovation and maintenance of existing public housing have declined from \$4 billion in 1999, to under \$2 billion in 2014. The woes of public housing are well-rehearsed, but New York City has a stock of nearly 350 developments housing over 400,000 people. It has not initiated efforts to demolish public housing as in other cities, and in the city's hot real estate market, public housing stands as the most durable and protected safeguard against the complete removal of poor families from new neighborhoods of choice.

Other kinds of "social ownership" – or housing that is not owned or operated for profit and thus renders no speculative gain for owners and offers protection against eviction for residents – include housing built, owned, and managed by nonprofit organizations, limited-equity cooperatives, and community land trusts (Stone 2006). Under social ownership, the elimination of profit and speculation moderates prices and puts housing and the neighborhoods where it is located within reach of more people. Community land trusts (CLTs) – which combine land ownership by a non-profit entity, long-term land leases for users (or even buyers), restrictions on

the profitability of resales in order to preserve affordability, and collective governance – are a particularly powerful and promising tool (Davis 2010; Meehan 2013). Writing in 2012, Moore and McKee report: “The last decade has been marked by a period of rapid growth with over half of the USA’s 230 CLTs formed since 2000. Although there is no dedicated fund for CLTs to access, their activities have been facilitated by a national lobbying body since 2006 and funded by combinations of public, private and charitable finance” (281). Efforts should be undertaken to expand this form of social ownership, especially in areas rich in resources and amenities or forecasted to move in that direction.

In addition to growing the stock of de-commodified housing and thus more accessible and stable neighborhoods, policies that de-couple where someone lives from important goods like schools, air quality, transportation, and access to doctors, open space, and good food would also minimize the ways in which cycles of moving in and moving out maintain a geography of (in)opportunity. Some current federal interventions – namely Choice Neighborhoods, Promise Neighborhoods, and Promise Zones (Ross and Stegman 2014) – aim to do this through targeted investments in poor neighborhoods. These are important models that will require wildly more resources than they are currently allocated.

Moreover, inequalities across places rest firmly on the fragmentation of metropolitan areas that allow some jurisdictions to hoard resources while others are left to languish. The jurisdiction of local government over matters pertaining to land use and resource management is part of a culturally entrenched idea in the U.S. that “local government, the government closest to the people, is the best government,” such that “local citizens oppose nearly anything that would threaten the existence, powers, services or autonomy of their local governments” (Norris 2001, 562). The U.S. model is quite different from the European model where appropriations for

things like education, child care, and health care are managed at the national level and thus create fewer inequalities across local places (Wacquant 2008). A large body of research indicates that the fragmented and diffuse US metropolitan landscape frustrates efforts at building vibrant, safe communities across the metropolis (Dreier et al 2014; Weir 2011). And as the research on such regional approaches illustrates, simple coordination is insufficient for radically altering the distribution of valued goods and resources (Orfield 2002, 2005; Goetz et al. 2005; Pendall et al. 2005). The efforts needed to truly decouple place from opportunity must come either from states, whose constitutions and legislations authorize the powers of local jurisdictions, or from the federal government, which obviously has its own revenue generating and redistributive capacities, as well as levers with which to influence the actions of states and localities.

Martin Luther King and other civil rights leaders called for a “Marshall Plan” to eradicate poverty (King 1968). Contemporary activists/scholars have called for a Marshall Plan focused specifically on Black urban communities (Daniels 2007; Robinson 2010; Tidwell 1991). Putting together the issues of poverty and racial disadvantage in a Marshall Plan for poor and predominately minority neighborhoods would target substantial resources to these areas and include mechanisms to de-commodify some housing in order to disrupt the relationship between resources and the ability to stay in place. When the kinds of things that people need to survive and thrive are more equally apportioned across all places, residential mobility will be less consequential. The question always is if we have the political will to do this work.

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