

Residential preferences and residential segregation: a research overview

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I. Introduction

Unequal patterns of residential development and persistent segregation by race and income reflect a continuing inequality in housing opportunity in America. As recently restated by the National Commission on Fair Housing and Equal Opportunity, residential segregation in America arises from a number of factors, including law, government policy, discrimination, market factors, and personal preferences for different types of neighborhoods.² This research overview is intended to explore some of what we know about residential preferences, particularly racial preferences, and how these preferences interact with other factors to influence racial segregation. It also assesses how these preferences relate to actual demand for integrated housing options, and reflects on the HOPE VI program's attempt to provide integrated housing choices and improve living conditions for distressed public housing residents.

II. Racial Preferences for Integrated Neighborhoods

Traditional racial preference theory states that residential segregation results from interracial disparities in racial tolerance levels and demand for integrated housing.³ As we will see later in this review, it is likely that racial preferences may also serve as a proxy for other residential choices that are unrelated to race – but we will begin with a summary of the basic literature on racial preferences.

There are substantial differences in both the meaning and preferred levels of racial integration across racial categories. These differences in interracial preferences can lead to unstable integration outcomes, as, for example, when whites as a group “prefer” a lower percentage of minority group members⁴ in their neighborhoods than other racial/ethnic groups do.⁵

¹ Additional citations added July 2015 by Professor Maria Krysan and Audrey Berdahl-Baldwin.

² *The Future of Fair Housing: Report of the National Commission on Fair Housing and Equal Opportunity* (December 2008) (www.prrac.org/projects/fair_housing_commission/The_Future_of_Fair_Housing.pdf)

³ Schelling, Thomas C, *Dynamic Models of Segregation*, 1 *Journal of Mathematical Sociology* 143, 143-186 (1971); Farley, Reynolds, Howard Schuman, S. Bianchi, Diane Colasanto, and S. Hatchett. *Chocolate City, Vanilla Suburbs: Will the Trend toward Racially Separate Communities Continue?* 7 *SOCIAL SCIENCE RESEARCH*, 319, 319-44(1978).

⁴ The term “minority” or “minority group member” will be used in this review in the traditional way it has been used in the literature we are describing, to describe Blacks, Latinos, Asians, and members of other non-white census categories. We realize that the term “minority” is outmoded (on a number of levels) and that in many of the contexts we are describing, whites may not be in the “majority”.

⁵ Nancy A. Denton & Douglas S. Massey, *American Apartheid: Segregation and the Making of the Underclass* (Harvard University Press 1993); Michael O. Emerson, Karen J. Chai, and George Yancey, “Does race matter in

In the 1978 study “Chocolate City, Vanilla Suburbs: Will the Trend toward Racially Separate Communities Continue?”, Reynolds Farley and his colleagues found that in the Detroit area, minimal levels of integration with blacks provoked extensive white resistance, while the majority of blacks surveyed preferred half-black, half-white neighborhoods, “stressing the importance of racial harmony.”⁶

However, preferences do not remain static over time, and more recent studies have been created not only to measure changing attitudes, but to include multiple racial groups and geographical areas of study. The 1992-1994 Multi-City Study of Urban Inequality (MCSUI) examined the changes in the neighborhood integration preferences of whites and blacks since the 1970s as well as providing benchmark information on Hispanic and Asian neighborhood racial composition preferences from all regions of the US, specifically Atlanta, Boston, Detroit, and Los Angeles.⁷

According to the 1992-94 MCSUI study, whites’ tolerance for integrated neighborhoods increased significantly since the 1970s.⁸ Between 60 to 85% of whites expressed comfort in living in a neighborhood that was 1/3 non-white; and their tolerance was partly conditioned on their potential neighbors’ race. Whites were most comfortable with Asian neighbors, then Hispanic, and least comfortable with black neighbors. Whites’ comfort level dropped as the number of minority residents increased, and dramatically decreased when presented with majority-minority neighborhoods, especially when their out-group neighbors were black. Whites’ willingness to enter integrated neighborhoods, however, was never as high as their comfort with neighborhood racial change. Sixty percent of whites in the study, for example, were comfortable with a neighborhood that was 1/3 black, but only 45 percent were willing to move to a 1/3 black neighborhood.

The MCSUI study also reveals that blacks prefer substantial racial integration as well as a significant co-ethnic presence in their neighborhoods.⁹ As with the 1978 study, blacks preferred 50-50 neighborhoods. When blacks were asked to compare an integrated neighborhood to an all-black one, blacks saw the all-black option the least attractive. The race of potential neighbors also mattered in this scenario, with blacks choosing to integrate with white neighbors, followed by Hispanics, and then Asians. However, less than 5 percent of blacks preferred a single-black-

residential segregation? Exploring the preferences of white Americans,” *American Sociological Review* 66, no. 6 (2001): 922-935; David R. Harris, “Why are whites and blacks adverse to black neighbors?” *Social Science Research* 30, no. 1 (2001): 100-116; David R. Harris, “‘Property values drop when blacks move in because...’: Racial and socioeconomic determinants of neighborhood desirability,” *American Sociological Review* 64, no. 3 (1999): 461-479; Maria Krysan and Michael D.M. Bader, “Perceiving the metropolis: Seeing the city through a prism of race,” *Social Forces* 86, no. 2 (2007): 699-733; Maria Krysan, “Does Race Matter in the Search for Housing? An exploratory study of search strategies, experiences, and locations,” *Social Science Research* 37, no. 2 (2008): 581-603; Maria Krysan, Mick P. Couper, Reynolds Farley, and Tyrone Forman, “Does race matter in neighborhood preferences? Results from a video experiment,” *American Journal of Sociology* 115, no. 2 (2009): 527-559; Maria Krysan, Reynolds Farley, and Mick P. Couper, “In the eye of the beholder: Racial beliefs and residential segregation,” *The DuBois Review* 5, no. 1 (2008): 5-26; Valeria A. Lewis, Michael O. Emerson, and Stephen Klineberg, “Residential segregation and neighborhood racial composition preferences of whites, blacks, and Latinos,” *Social Forces* 89, no. 4 (2011): 1386-1407.

⁶ Farley supra note 1.

⁷ Lawrence Bobo et al., *Multi-City Study of Urban Inequality, 1992-1994 [Atlanta, Boston, Detroit, Los Angeles]*, (Inter-University Consortium for Political and Social Research, Ann Arbor, MI), 2000.

⁸ Bobo et. al, supra note 5; Camille Zubrinsky Charles, *Can We Live Together? Racial Preferences and Neighborhood Outcomes*, in *THE GEOGRAPHY OF OPPORTUNITY: RACE AND HOUSING CHOICE IN METROPOLITAN AMERICA* at 45-80 (Xavier de Souza Briggs ed., 2005).

⁹ *Id.*

on-the-block scenario, regardless of their neighbors' race. Similarly, about 60% of blacks were unwilling to move into neighborhoods without other blacks, and though their tolerance differential for other races was not as definite as that of whites, blacks in the study were most comfortable in neighborhoods where their potential neighbors were white.

As with blacks, Hispanics in the MCSUI study preferred racial integration as well as a co-ethnic presence in their neighborhoods.¹⁰ The race of their potential neighbors was also especially influential in gauging neighborhood attractiveness. Hispanics prefer a 50:50 ratio when their potential neighbors are white and a little less integrated neighborhood when their potential neighbors are Asian, but when the potential neighbors are black, integration was five times less likely to be found attractive. Sixty percent of Hispanics preferred a same-race neighborhood over integrating with blacks, while for Asians and whites, the percentage decreased to 40% and 20%, respectively. Similar to blacks, Hispanics also demonstrated a disinclination to be the only Hispanic family in the neighborhood or to move into a neighborhood with a declining number of co-ethnics. Hispanics, however, were more likely to rank a same-race neighborhood more attractive than blacks.

Asians shared the same desire for integration and a co-ethnic presence as blacks and Hispanics.¹¹ As with all other races, integration preferences were influenced by a ranking of out-groups by race, with Asians preferring integration with whites over an entirely co-ethnic neighborhood (as did blacks and Hispanics). Asians preferred a nearly 2/3 Asian neighborhood when their neighbors were nonwhite, while it was a 50:50 ratio when their neighbors were white. As with whites and Hispanics, Asians preferred living in an entirely same-race neighborhood than integrating with blacks. Seventy-five percent of Asians choose a same-race neighborhood over one integrated with blacks, compared with 55% in the Asian-Hispanic scenario and only 17% in the Asian-White scenario.

While all four groups were open to integration, their openness to potential neighbors was conditioned by a racial hierarchy of preferences. The consensus across the groups is that whites are the most "preferred" neighbors and blacks the least, with Asians and Latinos—usually in that order—located in the middle.¹² Survey research also shows that white preferences play the largest role in shaping neighborhood racial patterns, since whites care more about neighborhood racial composition than blacks.¹³ Additionally, neighborhoods are more likely to be integrated when members of minority groups move into majority white neighborhoods rather than when whites move into majority-minority neighborhoods.¹⁴ These racial hierarchies and preferences reflect current residential segregation by race.¹⁵

¹⁰ *Id.*

¹¹ *Id.*

¹² Charles, *supra* note 6.

¹³ Ingrid Gould Ellen, *Continuing Isolation: Segregation in America Today*, in *SEGREGATION: THE RISING COSTS FOR AMERICA* at 268 (James H. Carr & Nandinee K. Kutty eds., 2008); Lawrence Bobo & Camille Zubrinsky, *Attitudes on Residential Integration: Perceived Status Differences, Mere In-Group Preference, or Racial Prejudice?*, 74 *SOC. FORCES*, 883-909 (1996), <http://www.wjh.harvard.edu/soc/faculty/bobo/pdf%20documents/AttRes.pdf>.

¹⁴ Ellen, *supra* note 11, at 268.

¹⁵ Bobo & Zubrinsky *supra* note 11; Charles, *supra* note 6.

III. Forces Driving Neighborhood Racial Composition Preferences and Preferences' Relation to Behavior

Given the impact preferences have on residential patterns, it is important to understand what drives these preferences, how malleable they are, and how they influence one's behavior. Many hypotheses have been put forth to explain these preferences and patterns of residential racial segregation. These hypotheses can be grouped into the following categories: class as a proxy for race; the spatial assimilation model; self-segregation and ethnocentricity; perpetuation theory; active out-group avoidance or domination (under a place stratification model); tipping points; gentrification; and racial blind spots.

Class as a proxy for race: Class attitudes can shape racial residential preferences when individuals perceive differences in socioeconomic status—indicated by income, occupation, and resulting lifestyle differences—and correlate these differences with other racial groups.¹⁶ The undesirable traits associated in this way with a minority group and the neighborhoods where they are concentrated attaches an undesirable stigma to members of that minority group and decreases out-groups' preferences to live with the stigmatized minority groups. Ingrid Ellen contends that racial class differences, especially, play a part in shaping white preferences. She finds that whites are more comfortable living with wealthier Asians than poorer ones, but these types of class differences seem to have little effect on whites' comfort levels with blacks or Hispanics.¹⁷ The classism hypothesis, however, is undercut by the MCSUI study, as well as studies by Keith Ihlandfeldt and Benjamin Scafidi, and Camille Charles, which find little or no evidence that negative stereotypes of minority groups shape neighborhood racial composition preferences.¹⁸

The spatial assimilation model argues that white neighborhoods have more capital (economic, human, and cultural), and thus neighborhoods and schools become more desirable as they become more white.¹⁹ Associating white neighborhoods with higher capital explains racial minority group members' greater inclination to integrate than that of whites. Other wealth-related neighborhood factors that are associated with predominantly white suburbs include better access to employment, health outcomes, social networks, higher quality municipal services, and decreased exposure to crime and environmental hazards.

Ethnocentrism and self-segregation theories hold that racial groups choose to live with those of their same race because of positive feelings they have about their own group. It is posited that this in-group attachment, in combination with racial and socioeconomic differences—rather than out-group hostility—drives today's patterns of residential segregation. The theory suggests that many Hispanics and Asians especially prefer living in same race neighborhoods because of their immigrant status, the language barriers they face, and greater reliance on ethnic cultural institutions.²⁰ Analysis of the MCSUI study indicates that ethnocentrism has little effect on shaping neighborhood racial composition preferences. Even same-race preferences, which were

¹⁶ Ellen *supra* note 11; W.A. Clark, Residential Segregation in American Cities: A Review and Interpretation, 5 Population Research & Policy Review, 95, 95-127 (1986); David Harris, "Property Values Drop When Blacks Move in, Because...": Racial and Socioeconomic Determinants of Neighborhood Desirability 64 AMERICAN SOCIOLOGICAL REVIEW 461, 461-479 (1999).

¹⁷ Ellen, *supra* note 11 at 272.

¹⁸ Bobo et al., *supra* note 6; Charles, *supra* note 6; Keith Ihlandfeldt & Benjamin Scafidi, Whites' Neighborhood Racial Preferences and Neighborhood Racial Composition in the United States: Evidence from the Multi-City Study of Inequality, 19 HOUSING STUDIES 325, 325-359 (2004).

¹⁹ Pat Rubio Goldsmith, *Learning Apart, Living Apart: How the Racial and Ethnic Segregation of Schools and Colleges Perpetuates Residential Segregation*, 112 TCHRS. C. REC. 1605-1606 (2010).

²⁰ Charles, *supra* note 6, at 61.

most common among whites, were better explained through whites having negative stereotypes of minority group members rather than through ethnocentric preferences. Blacks were least likely to prefer entirely own-race neighborhoods (3%), followed by Hispanics and Asians (both 7%) and whites (11%).²¹

Perpetuation theory states that individuals tend to generally recreate and perpetuate the same racial compositions in their neighborhoods, schools, and other institutions over time.²² Therefore, people tend to move to neighborhoods mirroring the racial composition of the neighborhood they left. According to this model, whites move from neighborhoods with higher concentrations of whites than blacks do, and as a result, move to neighborhoods with higher proportions of white residents than blacks do. Additionally, whites that grow up in an all-white neighborhood or attend an all-white school develop a white habitus, “a mental lens that leads whites to avoid and exclude blacks from their social networks and institutions.”²³ Growing up in isolation from other racial minority group members allows whites to view their “isolation and exclusionary practices as natural and hence unproblematic, rather than as a highly discriminatory process that they actively perform.”²⁴ Increasing experiences with out-groups, according to perpetuation theory, will decrease white resistance to integration. Similarly, minority group members who have experienced integration in institutions (such as schools, workplaces, etc) are more able to navigate the exclusionary barriers created by whites.

The place stratification model explains racial segregation as a result of anti-out-group animus, or racial prejudice, driving whites to maintain spatial distance from members of other racial minority groups.²⁵ Either the negative racial stereotypes one group holds toward another or the extent of differentiation with which one group views itself from another—“with differentiation understood to be an indicator of a preferred superior group position” can influence one’s racial residential preferences against integration. In this model, a fear of white hostility decreases minority groups’—particularly black—willingness to move into white neighborhoods.²⁶ Non-white perceptions of racial discrimination can socialize minority group members to limit their housing searches to more segregated areas, isolating blacks both geographically and psychologically.

A study on the effect of racial stereotypes on neighborhood racial preferences found that racial stereotypes were very powerful in predicting white, but not members of minority groups, preferences.²⁷ Whites that hold negative racial stereotypes have substantially lower preferences for integration; their preference for white neighbors increases. Negative racial stereotypes also cause members of minority groups’ same-race preferences to increase, but not at the same rate. Multiple analyses confirm these findings, emphasizing the importance of racial stereotyping, especially among whites, as most influential on neighborhood racial composition preferences.²⁸

²¹ *Id*

²² Goldsmith, *supra* note 17, at 1606-1607; Annette Laureau and Kimberly Goyette, eds, *Choosing Homes, Choosing Schools*, New York, NY: Russell Sage Foundation, 2014.

²³ Goldsmith, *supra* note 17, at 1607.

²⁴ *Id.*

²⁵ Goldsmith, *supra* note 17, at 1606.

²⁶ Maria Krysan & Reynolds Farley, *The Residential Preferences of Blacks: Do They Explain Persistent Segregation?*, 80 SOC. FORCES, 937-80 (2002).

²⁷ Charles, *supra* note 6, at 70.

²⁸ Bobo & Zubrinsky, *supra* note 12; Farley et al., *supra* note 1; Jeffrey Timberlake, *Still Life in Black and White: Effects of Racial and Class Attitudes on Prospects for Residential Integration in Atlanta*, 70 SOCIOLOGICAL INQUIRY 420 (2000).

Residential tipping: Increased resistance against out-groups as potential neighbors can create “tipping points.” In the classic paper, *Dynamic Models of Segregation*, Thomas Schelling explains how social interaction in preferences can cause highly segregated neighborhoods: as out-groups integrate into communities, their increased population can reach a tipping point that causes whites to move out of the neighborhood.²⁹ Members of minority groups seek higher levels of integration than whites, but as they leave their neighborhoods for more integrated ones, white prejudice can render this search futile (Card 2006).³⁰ John Yinger reports that in the “most prejudiced” neighborhoods, tipping begins once the first black moves in, but in the least prejudiced neighborhoods, integration levels of 50% black or more can be sustainable.³¹ Stable integration therefore depends on both white and minority-group preferences working in tandem: “integration cannot be maintained at any given percentage white unless enough whites are willing to live there to maintain that percentage.”³² For example, Yinger explains that a neighborhood can only remain at 90% white if enough whites are willing to live there and constitute 90% of the neighborhood population. If not enough whites are willing to live there, the neighborhood has hit the tipping point, causing it to “tip” from virtually all-white to predominantly black.³³

Gentrification, on the other hand, creates a dynamic in which low-income minority neighborhoods experience reinvestment that brings white and middle-class households to the neighborhood with the potential to displace lower-income residents. Contrary to the rapid out-migration of neighborhood residents caused by tipping, gentrification may be “a more gradual process that, although displacing some, leaves its imprint mainly by changing who moves into a neighborhood.”³⁴ According to Lance Freeman, the quality of life improvement that accompanies gentrification causes low-income residents of gentrifying neighborhoods to be more likely to stay in their homes than residents of non-gentrifying neighborhoods.³⁵ Although gentrification often means that households of lower socioeconomic status can no longer move into the gentrified neighborhood, Freeman asserts that affordable housing decreases at a rate much more slowly than most realize. Policymakers need to build on this knowledge to ensure affordable housing is preserved in gentrifying neighborhoods so that existing residents and their children can share in the benefits of revitalization, without fear of displacement.

Racial Blind Spots: Maria Krysan and her colleagues at the University of Illinois at Chicago and the University of Michigan have developed a new concept of “racial blind spots” to further our understanding of residential racial preferences.³⁶ These preferences are normally evaluated by asking people about hypothetical neighborhoods with made-up racial compositions, such as in the MCSUI study. The real world doesn’t mirror these imaginary situations, and, Krysan

²⁹ Schelling, *supra* note 1.

³⁰ David Card et al., *Tipping and the Dynamics of Segregation in Neighborhoods and Schools* (2006), http://www.gsb.stanford.edu/facseminars/pdfs/2006_09-22_Rothstein.pdf.

³¹ John Yinger, *Closed Doors, Opportunities Lost: The Continuing Costs of Housing Discrimination* 119-120 (Russell Sage Foundation 1995).

³² Yinger, *supra* note 28, at 117.

³³ *Id.*

³⁴ Lance Freeman, *Displacement or Succession?: Residential Mobility in Gentrifying Neighborhoods* 40 URBAN AFFAIRS REVIEW 463, 489 (2005).

³⁵ Bob Van Meter, *CDCs in Gentrifying Neighborhoods*, 133 SHELTERFORCE ONLINE (2004), <http://www.nhi.org/online/issues/133/gentrify.html>.

³⁶ Maria Krysan and Michael D.M. Bader, “Racial blind spots: Black-white-Latino differences in community knowledge,” *Social Problems* 56, no. 4 (2009): 677-701; Maria Krysan, *Confronting Racial “Blind Spots”* POVERTY & RACE (2008),

http://www.prrac.org/full_text.php?text_id=1193&item_id=11275&newsletter_id=101&header=Housing&kc=1.

explains, many people have a racialized knowledge of their metropolitan area and the neighborhoods they might live in. Thus, “if residents of different racial/ethnic backgrounds know about different communities in the metropolitan area in which they live—and if that knowledge is shaped by the racial/ethnic composition of the community, then these patterns of knowledge—or the lack of knowledge—may constitute an important barrier to integrated living, since it is difficult to move into a neighborhood if you don’t know anything about it.” Krysan conducted surveys in Chicago and Detroit, and found that whites, blacks, and Hispanics know more about communities in which their coethnics reside than other communities. Blacks and Hispanics are more likely than whites to know about both integrated and segregated communities. Their blind spots are neighborhoods that are predominantly white and geographically far from the inner-city, which poses a impediment for minority group members who might otherwise want to integrate into such communities. Whites are least likely to know about substantially-minority communities, but their blind spots also include racially mixed communities, even those in which whites are majorities. Stable integration depends on housing demand from all racial groups, and as long as these neighborhoods remain blind spots, barriers to integration will continue.

IV. Demand for Assisted Housing in Low Poverty, Integrated Areas

While racial housing preference studies show that members of various minority groups prefer integrated neighborhoods to segregated ones, there is a dearth of studies addressing the actual demand for low poverty, racially integrated public and assisted housing among low income families of color. Some assume that the low-income families who remain in an urban neighborhood when higher-income families leave do so by personal choice, but our experience has shown that significant numbers of low-income families may also be interested in moving, when choices in less segregated areas are offered to them. Examining the number of low-income families that have participated in housing mobility programs—programs that allow poor families to relocate to less segregated neighborhoods of higher opportunity—can inform attempts to quantify this demand for integrated housing.

Chicago’s Gautreaux program, the first official housing mobility program, was instituted as the result of a housing desegregation case originally filed in 1966. After the mobility program’s start in 1976, over 7000 low-income African American families living in public housing (and families on public housing wait lists) moved to neighborhoods that were less than 30% African American.³⁷ Until its end in 1998, there was a high demand for the Gautreaux program: by the early 1990s, over ten thousand people called in on registration day, and the program supplied over 400 new vouchers to recipients every year.³⁸

The mobility program in Memphis also required a waiting list, and a few years after its inception, its 400 participating families had moved to census tracts with a 19% minority composition (Roisman 1993).³⁹ A recent study on housing mobility in Baltimore finds “that low income black families from public housing projects *will* move to more integrated neighborhoods if given

³⁷ Margery Turner, *Moving Out of Poverty: Expanded Mobility and Choice through Tenant-Based Housing Assistance*, 9 HOUS. POL’Y DEBATE 373, 386 (1998).

³⁸ Leonard Rubinowitz & James Rosenbaum, *Crossing the Class and Color Lines: From Public Housing to White Suburbia*, 54 (University of Chicago Press 2000); Jason DeParle, *An Underground Railroad From Projects to Suburbs*, N.Y. TIMES, Dec. 1, 1993, <http://partners.nytimes.com/library/national/120193projectflight-housing.html>.

³⁹ Florence Roisman & Hilary Botein, *Housing Mobility and Life Opportunities*, 27 CLEARINGHOUSE REVIEW 335, 341-343 1993.

the chance and assistance, and many will stay in these neighborhoods for years.”⁴⁰ Research both on both Baltimore and Gautreaux participants indicates that the majority of families who move out of their initial placements move into neighborhoods with similar racial and wealth compositions, suggesting continuing demand over time for integrated, low poverty neighborhoods among these poor families.⁴¹

Other mobility studies, however, show a significant variation in demand by location. In the wake of Gautreaux’s success, the federal government created the Moving to Opportunity (MTO) program. MTO was designed to assess if moving low-income public housing residents to high opportunity neighborhoods could significantly impact their lives in a positive manner. Demand for MTO appears to be lower than in Gautreaux: only about 25% of eligible families from Baltimore, Boston, Chicago, Los Angeles, and New York applied to the program (which was nonetheless a huge number of applicants in those cities and far more than the MTO could possibly accommodate).⁴² Demand for the Minneapolis Public Housing Authority’s (MPHA) program was especially low—with only 6% of eligible families contacting the mobility counseling agencies to begin the process from 1996 to 2001.⁴³ These variations in demand can be attributed to the local program’s reputation, the quality of origin neighborhoods and the strength of community ties, the level of marketing, whether the program offers counseling assistance, the difficulty of the local rental market and finding landlords, inadequate payment standards, and other structural barriers.⁴⁴

While unable to quantify the exact demand for integrated housing among low income families of color, it is clear that the demand for such housing significantly exceeds the limited supply. Structural barriers to mobility also create a large discrepancy between the number of people who might want to move and those who actually can.⁴⁵ Until there is a large enough supply of low-cost housing in neighborhoods of opportunity and counseling and other services to assist in the moving process, we will not be able to pinpoint the true demand for government assisted housing in low poverty, racially integrated communities.

V. The Right to Return and Residential Preferences in Public Housing Redevelopment

The HOPE VI program was created by Congress in 1992. By redeveloping severely distressed public housing, revitalizing the surrounding neighborhood, and providing opportunities to low-income families to move out, the HOPE VI program sought to deconcentrate poverty while relieving the burden poor families’ faced by living in deteriorating and unsafe public housing.

One of the most controversial issues in the implementation of the HOPE VI program has been the extent to which redeveloped public housing units are built back on the original site, and

⁴⁰ Stefanie DeLuca & Peter Rosenblatt, *Walking Away from “The Wire”: Residential Mobility and Opportunity in Baltimore* 1 (Johns Hopkins University, Working Paper, 2010).

⁴¹ *Id.* at 27-28; Stefanie DeLuca & James Rosenbaum, *If low-income blacks are given a chance to live in white neighborhoods, will they stay? Examining mobility patterns in a quasi-experimental program with administrative data* 14 Hous. Pol’y. Debate 305 (2003).

⁴² *Choosing a Better Life? Evaluating the Moving to Opportunity Demonstration* (John Goering & Judith Feins eds., Urban Institute, 2003).

⁴³ Edward Goetz, *Clearing the Way: Deconcentrating the Poor in Urban America* 180 (Urban Institute, 2003).

⁴⁴ Margery Turner & Stephen Ross, *How Racial Discrimination Affects the Search for Housing*, in *THE GEOGRAPHY OF OPPORTUNITY* at 81-100 (Xavier de Souza Briggs ed., 2005)

⁴⁵ See, for example, Susan Popkin and Mary Cunningham, *CHAC Section 8 Program: Barriers to Successfully Leasing Up*, (The Urban Institute, Washington, DC), 1999.

whether former residents are allowed to reoccupy these units.⁴⁶ Research indicates that public housing residents' desire to return to a reconstructed HOPE VI development varies at each specific public housing project. Overall, more than half of surveyed residents of housing targeted by HOPE VI wanted to return to their public housing communities.⁴⁷ Those that preferred to return tended to be older, receiving disability benefits, or had lived in the housing development the longest.⁴⁸ However, for a variety of reasons, only a small percentage of these displaced residents actually returned to their original communities.⁴⁹

In his testimony to the House Committee on Financial Services, Edward Goetz explains, "For many residents, the favored solution to the conditions in which they lived was to improve the community, not tear it down and force their own relocation."⁵⁰ Similarly, Goetz testifies that residents of certain public housing projects felt that their communities were well-functioning, and instead of being demolished and redeveloped, should have been "preserved with a more thoughtful and moderate plan of rehabilitation."⁵¹

Many displaced HOPE VI families ended up in neighborhoods not much better than their previous public housing project. Instead of relocating to "other neighborhoods of choice," as the HOPE VI program had optimistically predicted, most displaced families moved to similarly disadvantaged or segregated communities, often in nearby neighborhoods.⁵² Some even moved to other public housing projects.⁵³ Residents that relocated of their own volition received the greatest benefit from the HOPE VI program.⁵⁴ Those who had affirmatively wanted to leave cited improved housing quality or safer neighborhoods as their main reasons.⁵⁵

Residents who wished to return to the redeveloped public housing site faced many barriers, including the amount of time elapsed between their initial displacement and the redevelopment completion, reductions in the amount of public housing units in the new development, or new resident screening criteria introduced by private sector property managers that work at most

⁴⁶ National Housing Law Project, Sherwood Research Associates, Poverty & Race Research Action Council, Everywhere and Now Public Housing Residents Organizing Nationally Together (ENPHRONT), *False HOPE: A Critical Assessment of the HOPE VI Public Housing Redevelopment Program*, June 2002, http://www.novoco.com/low_income_housing/resource_files/research_center/FalseHOPEExecSumm.pdf.

⁴⁷ Susan Popkin, Diane Levy, Laura Harris, Jennifer Comey, Mary Cunningham, & Larry Buron, *HOPE VI Panel Study: Baseline Report*, (The Urban Institute, Washington, DC), Sept. 2002, at vii, http://www.urban.org/UploadedPDF/410590_HOPEVI_PanelStudy.pdf.

⁴⁸ *Id.*

⁴⁹ Susan Popkin, Bruce Katz, Mary K. Cunningham, Karen D. Brown, Jeremy Gustafson, & Margery Austin Turner, *A Decade of HOPE VI: Research Findings and Policy Challenges*, (The Urban Institute, Washington, DC), May 18, 2004, at 28, http://www.urban.org/UploadedPDF/411002_HOPEVI.pdf.

⁵⁰ *The Administration's Proposal to Revitalize Severely Distressed Public and Assisted Housing: The Choice Neighborhoods Initiative: Hearing Before the Subcomm. on Hous. & Cmty. Opportunity of the H. Comm. on Fin. Servs.* (2010) (statement of Edward Goetz, Director, Center for Urban and Regional Affairs, University of Minnesota), https://financialservices.house.gov/media/file/hearings/111/goetz_march_2010_testimony.pdf.

⁵¹ *Id.* at 6.

⁵² *Id.* at 5.

⁵³ Popkin, *supra* note 46, at 28.

⁵⁴ *Academic Perspectives on the Future of Public Housing: Hearing Before the Subcomm. on Hous. & Cmty. Opportunity of the H. Comm. on Fin. Servs.*, 111th Cong. 17-18 (2009) (statement of Edward Goetz, Director, Center for Urban and Regional Affairs, University of Minnesota), <http://financialservices.house.gov/media/file/hearings/111/goetz.pdf>; Goetz, *supra* note 47, at 12.

⁵⁵ Popkin, *supra* note 44, at vii.

redeveloped sites.⁵⁶ The HOPE VI Panel Study: Baseline Report found that confusion, suspicion, and general mistrust of housing authorities seemed cause significant relocation challenges at all sites.⁵⁷ Additionally, at some of the sites, residents were considerably uninformed of their housing project's development plans.⁵⁸ In addition to not providing opportunity or improving neighborhood conditions, forced displacement caused significant disruption, upsetting "supportive ties" while not helping to increase "leveraging ties."⁵⁹

VI. Conclusion

Neighborhood racial composition preferences play an important supporting role in the persistence of racial segregation today. While African Americans, Latinos, and Asian Americans prefer higher levels of integration than whites, all racial groups have a hierarchy of preference regarding so-called "out-groups," with whites being the most preferred out-group, followed by Asians, Hispanics, and African Americans. Whites also have the dominant role in shaping neighborhood composition. Factors that drive these preferences include: class stereotypes, spatial assimilation, ethnocentrism/self-segregation, perpetuation theory, place stratification, gentrification, and racial blind spots. As a result of these interacting factors, one's preference does not necessarily translate to his behavior. In addition to these factors, there are other barriers that can prohibit an individual from acting out on his preferences. For example, even though there is a high demand among many low-income minority families for integrated neighborhoods, not all of these families are willing to assume the burden of moving to high opportunity communities without services to assist in relocation and a large enough supply of low-cost housing.

Finally, when addressing the problem of residential segregation in a policy context, one must remember that even though residential preferences differ by race, racial groups are not monolithic and individual preferences can vary. Similarly, the causes of racial preferences are multidimensional within communities. For these reasons, providing multiple policy options to address these differences in racial preferences can be more successful than seeking an overarching solution for an entire community.

⁵⁶ Goetz, *supra* note 47, at 5; Popkin, *supra* note 46, at 28-29; Robin Smith, *Housing Choice for HOPE VI Relocates. Final Report*, (The Urban Institute, Prepared for the U.S. Dep't of Hous. & Urban Dev., Washington, DC), April 2002, at 14-15, http://www.urban.org/uploadedPDF/410592_HOPEVI_Relocates.pdf.

⁵⁷ Popkin, *supra* note 44, at vii.

⁵⁸ Popkin, *supra* note 44, at vii.

⁵⁹ Goetz, *supra* note 47, at 8.