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Broken Bonds: The Role of Place-Based Social Bonds in Shaping Public Housing Relocation Outcomes

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ABSTRACT

In the last two decades, the Housing Opportunity for Everyone program (HOPE VI), has displaced hundreds of thousands of public housing residents into either mixed income developments or the private rental market. As part of the Urban Health Initiative project, this dissertation examines the impact of housing mobility policy implementation on Atlanta’s former public housing residents, focusing specifically on the disruption of place-based social ties and post-relocation well-being. Results indicate that overall relocation has little to no effect on financial stability for the sample. Social disintegration appears be the biggest factor in mental health outcomes, and there are differences in outcomes and perspectives between those from family and senior housing.
INDEX WORDS: HOPE VI, Anomie, Neighborhood Effects, Housing Mobility Programs, Social Capital, Poverty Deconcentration
BROKEN BONDS: THE ROLE OF PLACE-BASED SOCIAL BONDS IN SHAPING PUBLIC HOUSING RELOCATION OUTCOMES

by

CHANDRA WARD

A Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of

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Georgia State University

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BROKEN BONDS: THE ROLE OF PLACE-BASED SOCIAL BONDS IN SHAPING PUBLIC HOUSING RELOCATION OUTCOMES

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DEDICATION

I dedicate this study to the current and former residents of public housing in Atlanta.
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Thanks to Erin Ruel, Dierdre Oakley, and Katherine Hankins for their guidance during this process, and thanks to Amber Dean, Jennifer Simon, and Megan Tesene for their unfailing support. For their companionship and support, I thank Elisabeth and Chiquito Stefanik. Sister Elaine, thank you for your time and effort on behalf of the study and your neighbors.
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1 INTRODUCTION

“I was in the projects 32 years...Well, I mean, don’t get me wrong, I’m thankful ‘cause it’s a nice place and it’s peaceful, it’s just that I get lonely cause the people aren’t friendly and you know, I be here by myself a lot, and I sit outside when it’s nice and stuff like that, but I just feel kinda depressed sometimes. That’s all.” Ms. Janice

“We don’t care what ever [the] need...: SS [social security], food stamps, paper work, I will do it for them. They don’t have that now. Not just me but a lot of people did other things like some cook for each other, and they don’t got that no more.” Ms. Davis

The two women quoted above, like many other poor women, men, and children nationwide, have been forced to relocate from their homes in the last two decades by housing mobility program mandates. This mandate came in the form of the Housing Opportunity for People Everywhere program, known as HOPE VI. Under HOPE VI, public housing residents were relocated from public housing to other private market housing in the Atlanta area. What was supposed to be an opportunity to move away from the socio-economic deprivation of public housing has, for some, turned out to be an involuntary move away from much of what and who they know and the community they have built.

The HOPE VI program, one of the largest and most recent poverty dispersal programs to date (Goetz 2010), has made unprecedented and sweeping changes to U.S public housing policy. Under the guidance of HOPE VI, over 100,000 public housing units have been demolished, with only a small fraction rebuilt for replacement housing (Goetz and Chapple 2010; Oakley et al. 2013). Developed and funded by the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) in
1992, HOPE VI is a housing mobility program whose initial goal was to identify severely distressed public housing units and transform them into quality, mixed-income housing (Popkin et al 2004). Informed by the framework of poverty deconcentration, HOPE VI aimed to transform public housing into mixed-income housing. Later, the program evolved to include public housing demolition and relocation of residents into the private market under Section 8. Some HOPE VI residents were able to return to their public housing unit once redeveloped, though on average only 20 percent of units have been set aside for returning residents who qualified under new Section 8 restrictions to return to public housing (Clampet-Lundquist 2004; Goetz 2010; Kleit & Manzo 2006; Oakley et al 2011). Other public housing communities under HOPE VI were demolished without any option of returning. With the underlying goal to deconcentrate poverty, and public sentiment on its side, city officials used HOPE VI and the Housing and Urban Development’s (HUD) deconcentration imperative as a rationale to demolish public housing projects and spatially disperse former residents by relocating them to other neighborhoods.

In the past 25 years, poverty deconcentration policies have ushered in dramatic changes to public housing in the United States. Beginning with the demolition of the infamous Pruitt-Igoe housing projects in 1972, to the proliferation of the “welfare queen” trope that came to symbolize the undeserving poor in the 1980’s, the failures of social welfare as a national policy and its recipients came to symbolize social dysfunction and inner-city decay. By the 1990’s, both scholars and politicians indicted public housing as an antiquated, failed social project destructive to both the neighborhoods where they reside and the people who reside in them (Oakley and Burchfield 2009; Popkin et al 2004b). Policy and scholarship identified and located the problem in the high levels of concentrated poverty endemic to public housing, with the locus of the
problem lying not only with the physical infrastructure of public housing communities, but with
the subculture of dysfunction and dependence it both conceives and sustains. This dysfunction
referred to an ‘underclass’ subculture where socially pathological behaviors are normalized, due
to the spatial isolation of public housing residents. The isolation was thought to reproduce and
exacerbate the extant social problems associated with inner city poverty. Thus, if concentrated
poverty was the problem, then poverty deconcentration was a solution, birthing a housing policy
of demolition and dispersal embraced in the anti-welfare, anti-Keynesian political climate of the
1990’s. By replacing public housing with mixed-income developments and dispersing its
residents, cornerstones of the HOPE VI program, proponents believed the reproduction of
concentrated poverty suffocating the life out of inner-city neighborhoods and its residents would
finally be disrupted.

HOPE program designers intended their dispersal to benefit former residents in a number
of ways (Goetz 2010). Most important to this project, relocation was supposed to improve former
residents’ lives through their proximity to neighbors of different socio-economic class.
Relocation would expose them to “good social capital” which is considered to be positively
associated with social class potentially found among their new neighbors, but considered bereft
among those in public housing (Greenbaum 2002). The main premise behind poverty
deconcentration policies like HOPE VI is that spatially dispersing public housing residents from
“bad” neighborhoods to better neighborhoods will have the causal effect of improving their lives,
if nothing else, because they are out of the “problem” neighborhood surrounded by fewer
“problem” people. Ideally, removal from such isolating and deteriorating conditions would
expose those displaced to a more mainstream opportunity structure and, over the long term,
produce self-sufficiency, economic advancement, and a host of other individual outcomes
Replacing public housing with mixed-income developments would trigger a series of benefits at both the neighborhood and individual levels by disrupting the isolating conditions that continually reproduce what Wilson (1987) labelled an “urban underclass.” In essence, HOPE VI sought to change the neighborhood effects thought to influence individual life chances and access to opportunity for public housing residents.

Despite the proposed benefits for former public housing residents, relocation has yielded mixed results thus far (Popkin et al 2004). First, most residents displaced through HOPE VI have relocated to neighborhoods with high levels of poverty, though still not as concentrated as their previous neighborhoods (Crump 2002; Oakley and Burchfield 2009; Oakley et al 2013). Second, residents’ conditions (such as finances, employment, and health) that scholars initially assumed to be caused by their neighborhood and were thus predicted to change once relocated have not actually changed for the better (Clampit-Lundquist, 2010, Popkin et al. 2004). In some cases, residents’ conditions have inexplicably gotten worse (Popkin et al. 2004). This phenomenon is not unique to HOPE VI. Long-term findings from Moving to Opportunity (MTO), an experimental poverty deconcentration program preceding HOPE VI, indicate mixed results for former public housing residents (Orr et al 2003). While residents’ neighborhoods are safer and housing conditions have improved, there is little evidence improvement in employment or income for residents who make up the experimental or moved group (Basolo 2013; Popkin, Levy, and Buron 2009). So far, the movement to greater opportunity through relocation has only been a geographic one in nature. In other words, research suggests that while HOPE VI participants have moved to somewhat better neighborhoods and housing, their overall measures of well-being have not improved much at all (Popkin et al. 2004).
Literature on the topic stresses the importance of place and the impact displacement has on people and their relationship to place. Informal support networks are important for everyone, but for poor people they are a vital resource that provide friends, products and services (Logan and Molotch 1987). These services include bartering for essentials the poor may not otherwise be able to afford. Poor populations tend to rely on their community networks more (Fischer 1982; Foley 1950; Fried 1963; Logan and Molotch 1987; Oliver 1984) and live closer to their relatives (Logan and Molotch 1987; Komarovsky 1962; Rainwater, Coleman, and Handel 1959; Rubin 1976) than those with higher socio-economic statuses. In addition, one’s neighborhood can be a significant source of identity for lower-income people, which has greater symbolic meaning than a physical amenity could have (Logan and Molotch 1987).

Considering that the general population of public housing residents is financially very poor, the one thing they did have was the social network built within their public housing community (Greenbaum et al 2008). In lieu of financial resources, place-based social ties residents were able to create within public housing communities provided both tangible and intangible resources to members of the community (Greenbaum et al 2008). The place-based relationships found in public housing have been described as a form of “mutual aid available due collective interests that helped them to get by, cope, and giving them a sense of control over their lives” and “a means by which a population living with serious obstacles that aid in their marginalization, could rely on” (Saegert et al. 2001:1). Because these relationships functioned as a safety net, without the social ties developed in public housing communities, the everyday challenges of these residents could be exacerbated (Greenbaum et al. 2008). This is especially true for senior residents who are less likely to want to leave their home because of greater place attachment and place-based social networks (Rowles 1983, 1993; Smith and Ferryman 2006).
The importance of the role of social ties in public housing “was never considered an important asset to sustain” by policy makers and politicians (Warren et al. in Saegert et al 2001: 3). In fact, former neighbors’ proximity was viewed as a liability, not an asset. In devaluing the special role place-based relationships in public housing communities, relocation may undermine all of the assumed individual benefits of leaving public housing – improving one’s quality of life and well-being (Saegert and Winkle 1998; Greenbaum 2002; Popkin et al. 2004b; Clampet-Lundquist 2004; Curley 2005).

**Research Questions**

Could the loss of these place-based social ties possibly explain why displaced former public housing residents have not experienced a substantive improvement in their overall outcomes? This research seeks to answer that question by examining how the disruption of place-based social ties influences the well-being of former public housing residents after relocation. My research questions are: 1) Do the breakdown of placed-based social ties for persons relocated create a sense of powerlessness or alienation among the relocatees?; 2) Do the breakdown of placed-based social ties have an effect on the financial security of the relocatees?; 3) Do the breakdown of placed-based social ties have an effect on levels of self-reported anxiety? Finally, do the disruption of place-based social ties affect family and senior residents differently in each of these areas, especially considering how important aging in place is to seniors (Keene and Ruel 2012) and the suspicion and scrutiny residents from family housing face once relocating (Kurwa 2015)?

**Contributions**

My research builds on Clampet-Lundquist’s (2010) qualitative examination of social support in the lives of public housing residents by analyzing the quantitative relationship
between disruption of place-based social support and individual resident outcomes. Much of the literature on housing mobility programs like HOPE VI has only examined voluntary housing relocation in which residents left their public housing communities with the expectation that they would have a chance to return once the newly constructed mixed income housing had been constructed. This research contributes to housing literature by examining the impact of housing dispersal programs on the lives of those directly affected by these policies. It adds to the existing literature by including the unique experiences of residents forced to relocate permanently into the private market, without any option of returning to public housing. By including senior residents from the sample, the project addresses gaps in public housing literature on how this group is affected by the disruption caused by relocation. This project contributes to the literature on the role of social support as social capital for low-income communities and how its disruption may work to mitigate the intended program benefits HOPE VI has on individual outcomes. Exploring the importance of place-based social networks of low-income communities, and how it operates in the lives of folks in those communities will add to the ongoing discussion of how social capital should be conceptualized in literature on neighborhoods effects, especially among the poor. Disaggregating the sample by those moving from family housing and those moving from senior housing will help bring clarity about how seniors respond to relocation from place-based social support compared to the rest of the sample. Finally, by testing Durkheim’s (1897) classical theory of anomie and applying it to relationships among former public housing residents, I refresh the classical theory and demonstrate how anomie helps explain why these disruptions can have negative outcomes for residents.

My research uses data from a longitudinal research project on public housing relocations in Atlanta. This sample is unique in that public housing residents were not given a choice about
whether to return to public housing or not, because the last remaining projects were demolished.

Much of the extant research on HOPE VI has been limited to sites that offered residents a choice between “vouchering out” of public housing, relocating to a different public housing development or returning to their original public housing site after revitalization. There have been documented differences between those residents who decide to enter the private housing market with vouchers and those who decide to remain in public housing (Buron et al. 2007). For instance, research suggests that for residents involuntarily displaced by HOPE VI, neighborhood satisfaction and safety may be even more dependent on social support networks (Goetz 2010).

Ultimately, it is my goal that any findings from this study will help better inform future policies that address issues facing low-income housing and communities and offer program recommendations that could improve them in the future.

In this dissertation, I first discuss the background of the HOPE VI program and then review of the literature on neighborhood effects, concentration effects, and social capital. Next, I discuss my theoretical framework and provide a theoretical model. Then, I discuss my research methodology, univariate descriptions of my variables, bivariate analyses, and multivariate analyses. Finally, I discuss my findings, provide analysis, and concluding remarks about this study.

1 LITERATURE REVIEW

Background

In 1992 Congress created HOPE VI, one of the most far-reaching urban redevelopment initiatives (Popkin, Katz, Cunningham et al 2004), to address the problems associated with severely distressed public housing (Buron, Popkin, Levy et al 2000). A 5 billion dollar program,
HOPE VI was created from the findings of the National Commission on Severely Distressed Public Housing (Popkin, Katz, Cunningham et al 2004). Produced from the HUD Reform Act of 1989, the Commission identified 86,000 housing units as ‘severely distressed (National Commission on Severely Distressed Housing 1992; Popkin, Katz, Cunningham et al 2004). Unlike its predecessors, such as the Gautreaux Program and Moving to Opportunity (MTO), HOPE VI was characterized by involuntary relocation of public housing residents either to other housing projects or to the private market (National Commission 1992; Popkin, Levy and Buron 2009). Initially, public housing projects identified as severely distressed were replaced with mixed-income developments that residents could elect to return to after completion. However, as time went on HOPE VI eventually shifted its focus from project revitalization to project demolition. Atlanta, Georgia, was one of the first cities to initially embrace both of the HOPE VI dispersal strategies, and went a step further by demolishing all of its public housing without replacement in what is now referred to as the “Atlanta Model” (Boston 2005; Husock 2010; Oakley et al 2011).

Neighborhood Effects

The national public housing policy producing HOPE VI has been informed by scholarly research on neighborhood effects. Also referred to as ‘area effects,’ neighborhood effects is considered to be “the net change in the contribution to life chances made by living in one area rather than another” (Atkinson and Kintrea 2001: 2278). Popularized by William Julius Wilson (1987), neighborhood effects attempt to explain the persistence and severity of urban poverty, as well as how neighborhood conditions influence individual well-being. More specifically, living in one neighborhood can affect the behavioral, health, and economic outcomes of individuals. Research demonstrates that the presence or absence of certain variables such as poverty rate,
employment rates, family structure, education levels, and levels of government assistance found in a neighborhood or census block have “important outcomes in children and families” (Ellen and Turner 1997: 848). Subsequent contributions to neighborhood effects literature extend our understanding beyond whether or not neighborhoods matter in predicting individual outcomes to include the ways in which neighborhoods may impact individuals throughout the life course at economic and social dimensions (Ellen and Turner 1997).

**Concentration and Isolation Effects**

An important aspect of neighborhood effects is concentration or isolation effects. These phenomena are a direct result of the racial and class exclusion characteristic of urban poverty (Wacquant and Wilson 1989). Denton and Massey (1993) attribute urban poverty to the structural domino effect of racially segregated housing markets, which enabled massive white flight, followed by the exodus of the black middle class and jobs into suburban areas. As a result, the urban core became spatially isolated from mainstream middle-class people and resources. Furthermore, institutions left these neighborhoods with little to no resources and people who could not leave, resulting in neighborhoods are characterized by high levels of concentrated poverty and spatial isolation. This spatial isolation of very poor people is thought to produce an urban subculture termed the “underclass” (Wilson 1987). Also known as the undeserving poor, this population is plagued by a litany of social pathologies that heighten and perpetuate the social problems characteristic of inner city neighborhoods such as high dropout rates, high rates of violent crime, high levels of unemployment, poor health, teen pregnancy and behaviors outside of middle class cultural norms (Goetz 2003).

Policymakers hope that living in low-poverty or mixed-income communities will offer low-income households access to better employment networks and thereby greater access to
higher-paying jobs (Popkin et al. 2002:110). The high concentration of poverty endemic to public housing led to the spatial isolation of urban ghettos and the people living there. Referred to as the underclass, these were the undeserving poor who exhibit socially pathological behavior. With greater concentration and isolation, a subculture is produced by learning and sharing maladaptive norms that are in opposition to “mainstream” America (Crump 2002). The spatial isolation and concentration work in tandem to reinforce and reproduce these oppositional norms, even generationally. The result is putting flame to gas, a magnification of the problems associated with inner city poverty; high rates of unemployment, crime, addiction and general lawlessness. Members of this underclass were not only spatially constrained from escaping poverty, but cultural norms of this class are not likely to garner members anything more than low-level employment.

Scholars hypothesize that impoverished neighborhoods perpetuate poverty through the spatial isolation of individuals from useful social capital engendered by useful social networks (Briggs 1997; Putnam 2007; Tigges, Browne, & Green 1998; Wacquant 1998; Greenbaum et al 2008). Because of the isolation characterized by neighborhoods with concentrated poverty, such as public housing, residents are cut off from social means that could engender economic opportunities via education or employment (Wilson 1986, 1987; Greenbaum et al. 2008). The social ties in these neighborhoods are more likely to be dense lending itself to “more redundant, less extensive” social networks because they are comprised of people less likely to be employed or have good employment (Wacquant and Wilson 1989; Goetz 2003: 27). Additionally, research indicates that black middle-class flight from inner cities has left the remaining underclass “bereft of social capital, a situation leading to its extremely high levels of unemployment and welfare dependency” (Portes 1998:14; Wacquant and Wilson 1989; Wilson 1987, 1996). Thus, scholars
have come to believe that relocation improves social and economic individual outcomes for those relocated. One of the mechanisms said to influence the relationship between neighborhood quality and individual outcomes is social capital.

**Social Capital**

The literature on housing mobility programs frequently employs the terms social capital, social ties, and social networks interchangeably. Although the concepts should not be conflated, they are also not mutually exclusive. Social capital is a concept whose meaning is highly contested, because its broad application across a variety of social science disciplines. In his popular book, *Bowling Alone*, Robert Putnam (2000) suggests a conception of social capital that is embedded within communities and nations. He refers to social capital as “the norms and networks of civil society that lubricate among both citizens and their and their institutions” (Putnam 2000). Putnam’s conception of social capital equates it with civic participation, which he argues, is on the decline. As critics (DeFilipis 2001) have pointed out, Putnam’s conception of social capital is sufficiently disconnected from capital to distort its meaning and render it useless in a discussion rooted in socio-economic inequality.

Pierre Bourdieu, credited for bringing the term social capital into prominence among social theorists, described social capital as the combination of either possible or actualized resources connected to a stable network of social relations (Bordieu 1986). Bourdieu’s conception establishes social capital as instrumental to economic capital. Though Bourdieu could be considered the harbinger in the development of a theoretical framework for social capital, it is Coleman’s (1988) and Putnam’s (1995) more recent conceptions of social capital that have enjoyed greater popularity in the social sciences.
James Coleman introduced a concept of social capital derived from and existing “in relations among persons” (Coleman 1988: S100-101). It is this embodiment within social relations that distinguishes this form of capital from human capital and financial capital. Coleman argued that social capital is defined by its function. It is a resource available to an actor which functions to achieve certain ends, some of which would not be possible without the presence of this resource or capital (Coleman 1988). Coleman (1988) identified three forms of social capital: obligations and expectations, information flow, and norms all of which are obtain through one’s social relations (S119). Social capital depends on trustworthiness, as it acts as a sort of credit where an assumption of reciprocity is embedded in its meaning.

While the conceptual contributions differ, they each contain common characteristics: resources transmitted through social interaction. Social interactions make up social relations. These relationships, in the forms of social networks and the ties embedded in them, are a structural component of and a proxy for social capital. In order to better understand how social capital operates, we have to turn our attention to social networks.

**Social Ties**

In housing literature, scholars consider social capital to be a resource embedded in personal relationships (Briggs 1997). Similar to the social capital literature, conceptions of social ties and networks tend to be multidimensional and multifunctional. Social networks refer to “the structural and core element of social capital” (Ferland 2007: 117). In his work on social mobility, Granovetter (1973) argued that social ties can be characterized as either being strong or weak. Strong ties tend to be more localized and assist in getting by, whereas weak ties are more casual in nature, providing more diverse sources of information that the former cannot provide. As a result, the social channel by which people found jobs as through these ‘weak’ ties. It is here
that scholars argue that there is “strength in weak ties.” People living in concentrated poverty are not exposed to these weak ties that could help them get ahead. Instead, their social relationships are described as strong, insular ties, which limit their access to outside information that gain social, political, or economic advantages (Briggs 1998).

Informed by Granovetter’s (1973) work, Briggs (1997) emphasized the importance of the “type and content of the social tie” as predictors of social capital (188). Briggs (1997) conceptualized social capital as a two-dimensional construct consisting of social ties differing in type and content: social support and leveraged social capital. The former, social support, functions to help people “get by,” whereas, the latter functions to help people get ahead (Briggs 1997). While the social ties found within communities with concentrated poverty may aid in social support, functioning to help people get by and meet basic needs, Briggs (1997) argued that leveraged social capital is instrumental in “accessing employment” and “occupational mobility.” Leveraged social capital, then, is a neighborhood effect of living in economically diverse neighborhoods. Relocating public housing residents away from poor neighborhoods is seen as a way to expose them to an opportunity structure in which they can leverage resources to get ahead, instead of just continuing to get by. However, for those movers relocating to low(er) poverty neighborhoods, the stigma projected on the voucher holders prevents the social integration necessary to produce leveraging ties (Kurwa 2015).

Consistent with neighborhood effects literature this binary construct of social capital outlined above devalues relationships in low-income communities, leading them to be characterized as being “poor” in social capital. In doing so, the content of social relations begins to take on a reductionist binary quality of “either/or,” “good/bad.” The implications of this narrative is that public housing residents who relocate will be exposed to social relationships
consisting of more diverse “weak ties” resulting in better individual outcomes through increased labor market participation, economic mobility and self-sufficiency. In neighborhood effects literature, this binary conception of social capital always situates low-income residents as having the “lesser” form of this resource compared to residents of other neighborhoods. Greenbaum (2008) explains this further by arguing, ‘Deconcentration’ is an abstract notion that fails to account for the instrumental importance of social networks and utterly devalues emotional ties, especially among people who are poor and black” (51).

Expanding the work of Briggs (1998), Curley (2009) constructed a framework that transcends the boundaries of ‘weak’ or ‘bridging’ to which previous conceptions had been confined. Reflecting the complexities of the social networks found in her study of African-American women in a HOPE VI site in Boston, Curley’s (2009) construct consists of what she termed as supportive, draining or leveraging ties. Supportive ties provided “emotional” and “instrumental” support; draining ties were those that drained people of physical or emotional resources without reciprocation; and leveraging ties were those that assisted in upward mobility (Curley 2009). Using this framework, Curley (2009) discovered a much more fluid and complex structure operating in the women’s social networks. The social ties making up the construct were not distinct or mutually exclusive, but rather they were found to overlap or work in conjunction with the others to meet residents’ needs and goals. Strong ties and weak ties were found to both serve as channels to accessing “leveraging” information. Contrary to the deconcentration thesis, Curley (2009) found that not only were “leveraging” social ties present in her sample’s social network prior to relocation, but after relocation those “leveraging” ties were lost and never replaced with new ones in the two years post relocation.
Curley’s (2009) findings are not unique to her study, but are echoed in others. Preceding Curley’s work, Dominguez and Watkins (2003) conducted a longitudinal ethnographic study of low-income African-American and Latina mothers’ social networks. They found that closer ties associated with social support sometimes worked in conjunction with leveraging ties to help women advance, meaning the previous theoretical modeling of bonding versus leveraging ties being mutually exclusive were not found here. The complexity of these networks led the authors to conceptualize the production and deployment of social capital as a series of strategic processes that change over time (Dominguez and Watkins 2003). One of the conclusions of the study is that location in and of itself does not determine the development of leveraging networks. Rather, Dominguez and Watkins’ (2003) found that the heterogeneity of social ties and “the women’s abilities to build the kinds of relationships that will result in shared information” are what contribute to social leverage (131).

Both Dominguez and Watkins (2003), and Curley (2010) presented a more complex conception of social capital that challenges assumptions about its relationship to neighborhood effects and how it is utilized within the networks of low-income persons in order to achieve their desired means. In both these studies, social capital takes on a more nuanced form that departs from earlier configurations of Briggs (1997) and that of Putnam’s (2000). Their conception of social capital is one that is a resource possessed by people, in varying qualities, depending on the neighborhood structure in which they exist. It is both characterized by and bound by the neighborhood existing within and used among the actors of those neighborhoods. The more active conception describes social capital containing leveraging and supportive ties that can be used exclusively or in tandem with each other by the actor as a resource in order to produce a desired outcome by an actor. Curley (2009) suggested that future research expand its focus
beyond the ‘weak’ ties/ ‘bridging’ ties concept and account for any (author’s emphasis) form of ‘leveraging’ ties.

Many studies on housing mobility and social capital focus on its presence or absence before and after relocation, and the structure of the social networks that make up social capital and the kind of social capital present. However, I argue that place-based social ties have a function in the lives of public housing residents, regardless of their perceived utility within a neoliberal capitalist context of production.

While the theories of social capital manifest in the neighborhood effects literature vary in complexity and scope, and contribute to our understanding of the many forms they take, none of them have provided clear answers as to why relocation has not resulted in improved well-being among HOPE VI participants. Extant research has emphasized the importance of the neighborhood, its relationship to social capital, and ultimately its effect on individual outcomes, however, housing mobility research has overlooked or underestimated the social capital present within public housing communities. It is assumed that communities with high levels of concentrated poverty are bereft of any social capital. Housing mobility programs like HOPE VI also assume “that a move to almost any other neighborhood would be an improvement for residents” (Goetz 2010:146). However, research suggests that “forced displacement interrupts social support networks that are important to very low-income families, and actually impedes their ability to experience benefits of relocation” (Goetz 2010:152). For public housing residents, the role of place-based resources is especially salient. Mindy Fullilove (2004) found that place-based social capital provides a lot of tangible and intangible resources for otherwise resource-poor communities. Public housing residents, in particular, rely on others in their neighborhood for both financial and emotional support more than other low-income households (Keene and
Geronimus 2011). The placed-based relationships found in public housing are “a means by which a population living with serious obstacles that aid in their marginalization, could rely on the mutual aid available due to collective interests that helped them to get by, cope, and giving them a sense of control over their lives” (Saegert et al. 2001). Single-parent-headed families and those with little economic resources, like that of most public housing residents, are more likely to rely on neighbors compared to two-parent households and those with greater economic standing (Ellen and Turner 1997). It is these place-based resources embedded in low-income communities that public housing residents rely upon in lieu of individual material resources. These resources include anything from help with childcare to help with transportation. A disruption in extant social ties can even contribute to negative changes in mental health resulting from a lack of social support (Ferlander 2007).

Relocation severed the strong social ties previously available in public housing, which had helped residents to navigate everyday life and provided supportive environments (Manzo, Kleit and Couch 2008; Ruel et al 2012). Place-based social support networks provide a form of social capital because they work to meet the everyday survival needs of poor populations, and as these studies demonstrate, particularly poor African-American women. African-American women, a group accounting for most of public housing residents, are more likely to rely on social support from kin, community based networks and church networks compared to their white female counterparts (Gilbert 1998). In her qualitative case study of HOPE VI residents, Clampit-Lundquist (2010) found that the former residents’ loss of social capital mediated through social ties they had developed in public housing translated into increased feelings of vulnerability and a lack of protection in their new neighborhoods. The disruption of social ties and support from relocation affects seniors even more profoundly (Gardner 2011; Keene and Ruel 2013;
Klinenberg 2001). Removal from these ties has shown to be detrimental to the overall health and well-being of elderly African-Americans (Keene and Ruel 2013). These studies emphasize not only the importance of place-based social ties, but also its role in the overall well-being for former public housing residents. These ties are so strong that, in lieu of any new ties, some former public housing residents travel an hour away back to their old neighborhood for social support (Kurwa 2015).

Poverty deconcentration programs like HOPE VI are relocating such a vulnerable part of our population into new communities that they may actually exacerbate these problems, which potentially mitigates the benefits that relocation is presumed to bring residents. While moving may not be a big deal to most Americans, the most vulnerable and marginalized communities have repeatedly been forced to move from their homes with absolutely no choice in the matter. Dislocation only increases these feelings of vulnerability and powerlessness, because strangers have the power to decide, due to no fault of residents own, that they must live somewhere else. Studies have documented the difficulty and distress poor communities experience when they are displaced, whether as a result of urban renewal or poverty deconcentration policies (Fullilove 2005; Tester et al 2011). A reason for this could be that “…The poor, the elderly, some women, and most certainly segregated minorities have closer ties to their immediate neighbors. These groups rely more on community and the local territory of friendship relations” (Saegert, Thompson, and Warren 2002:195). Consequently, these populations are more likely to be both physically and emotionally tied to their neighborhood. Seniors are especially vulnerable to the effects of relocation because of physical and mental health issues and longer tenure in their public housing community (Popkin et al. 2002).
Aging in Place

The importance of place is especially acute for seniors. Research has found that seniors overwhelmingly prefer to ‘age in place’ (Ewen et al. 2014). In a study conducted with senior participants, respondents described aging in place as “a feeling of belongingness and familiarity with people and places—a sense of security, warmth, and friendships” (Wiles et al. 2012; McFadden and Lucio 2014: 272). Keene and Ruel (2013) found this sentiment to be especially salient among senior public housing residents. Seniors relocated from public housing describe their former public housing community as “a family” Keene and Ruel (2013: 361). Seniors could rely on this ‘family’ for support and as members of this ‘family’ they were a part of a network of reciprocity, which is also been reported to be instrumental in their well-being (Cahill et al. 2009; Keene and Ruel 2013). This is perhaps because the close-knit community that seniors use describe their former public housing community are ones that can provide a sense of belonging and purpose.

Tenure in Public Housing

Keene and Ruel’s (2013) qualitative study found that those who aged in place in public housing had “a sense of kinship” with their community members, having raised generations of family members in the same community (361). The length of residence in public housing is critical to a person’s sense of place and community attachment (Tester, Ruel, Anderson et al 2011). HUD reports public housing residents in fact move less often than voucher holders, as public housing presents a more stable housing option. In addition, residents in public housing who are more likely to be unemployed and be without personal transportation are, as a result, more likely to spend more time in their neighborhood. This is especially true for seniors regardless of residence. The amount of time residents have lived in a public housing community
contributes to feelings of kinship and rootedness within the community. Cultivated over time, this rootedness has been found be a buffer mitigating some of the negative effects of the concentrated poverty within which they exist (Geronomous 2000; Keene and Ruel 2013; Mullings and Wali 2001; Stack 1974).

Neighborhood Satisfaction

Several studies (Goetz 2010; Kleit and Manzo 2006) suggest that community attachment to one’s public housing community negatively affects one’s neighborhood satisfaction with the new community. Those residents with low levels of place-based social capital may experience increased neighborhood satisfaction in their new neighbor. Also, those residents with moderate to high levels of place-based social capital both prior and after relocation may experience increased levels of overall well-being once relocated. Thus, it appears that the presence of community attachment to one’s public housing neighborhood could influence levels of neighborhood satisfaction both before and after relocation.

Social Capital and Mental Health

Poverty has been linked to increased stress, low self-esteem and feelings of powerlessness (Cattell 2001; Cohen et al 1992; Faith 1985). This then results in overall negative health outcomes (Brown & Harris 1978; Cattell 2001; North et al., 1993; Wheaton 1980). In addition to living in extreme poverty, most public housing adult residents are in worse physical health and report more mental health issues than the general population. Compounding these physical health problems, studies cite the prevalence of mental health issues liked substance abuse among HOPE VI participants, with as much as one-third of respondents reporting poor mental health (Popkin et al. 2004). In their study on an experimental group of residential mobility movers and a control group on non-movers, Fauth et al. (2004; 2008) found that while
the experimental group who moved to low poverty areas showed improvements in health, there was no significant change to this group in their mental health compared to the control group that did not move. The experimental group reported fewer social ties compared to the non-movers (Fauth et al. 2004; 2008). Bonding ties involving emotional support is considered to have a positive influence on mental health, particularly in “personal control and stress reduction” (Ferlander 2007:123). These ties are found to be prevalent among public housing residents.

Disability Status

In addition to living in extreme poverty, public housing residents tend to be in extremely poor health. Most adult residents are in worse physical health and report more mental health issues than the general population (Manjarrez, Popkin, Guernsey 2007; Digenis-Bury et al 2008; Ruel et al 2010). The situation for senior public housing residents is even worse. Compared to the larger population in general, adults living in public housing have very high levels of morbidity and early rates of mortality. Overall, they are in much worse health than average for their age group. Mental health issues, including substance abuse, among HOPE VI participants are quite high, with as much as one-third of respondents reporting poor mental health (Popkin et al. 2004). Chronic health problems are an impediment to employment, and many of those who are in the labor force experience unstable employment and are strained due to the delicate balance of employment and childcare, or other familial caregiving responsibilities. This results in inconsistent workforce participation, at best, leaving many residents having to rely on fixed incomes such as Social Security Disability or Temporary Assistance to Needy Families as their only source of earnings.
Financial Strain

Taking all of this into account, successfully transitioning and becoming self-sufficient in the private rental market can pose many more challenges for former public-housing residents than for those who are simply low-income. Multiple studies report no change in employment or income after relocation (Clampet-Lundquist 2004; Popkin 2010). Complicating this is the fact that many who have relocated into the private rental market have reported an increase in financial strain (Popkin et al. 2004; Popkin 2010). Relocation into the private market presents many additional expenses (i.e. utilities), in addition to a loss of food assistance available within their public housing communities. Findings suggest that increase in utilities have presented a real struggle for relocatees in the private market (Buron et al., 2002; Popkin et al., 2004b; Popkin, Levy, Buron 2009). Both the increase in personal expenses and the loss of onsite support could contribute to increasing financial strain post relocation.

Urban Renewal and HOPE VI – a legacy of displacement

There are clear comparisons between urban renewal in the 1950s and the displacement of entire communities caused by HOPE VI’s poverty deconcentration mandate in the 1990s and 2000s (Keene and Geronimus 2011; Wallace and Fullilove 2008). During the urban renewal era of the 1950’s thousands of people were displaced in order to raze low-income ‘blighted communities’ (mostly) of color for the expansion of central cities. More recently, HOPE VI has displaced thousands of people, mostly people of color, by demolishing their homes under the auspices of removing ‘severely distressed’ public housing. HOPE VI departs from urban renewal, however, in the assumption that there are inherent benefits embedded in relocation away from both public housing and other public housing residents for the displaced (Goetz 2010). Among HOPE VI proponents, public housing was viewed as an impediment to the self-
sufficiency and overall well-being of its residents. In other words, “the only ‘community’ that the public housing complexes present consists of a gauntlet of obstacles to be overcome” … “without even the possibility of redemption” (Bennett 2000: 271). Furthermore, “policy makers and urban planners” …“looked at [these] communities, saw none, and bulldozed over them” (Bennett 2000: 263). Lost in this bulldozing were the overlooked networks of rich social connections based in shared public-housing space.

The advantages relocatees were supposed to find in the new neighborhoods that they reportedly lacked in their public housing communities was a kind of social capital recognized and legitimized by the mainstream. These neighborhoods would contain employed individuals through whom newly-relocated residents could find jobs and perhaps emulate other behaviors that conform to mainstream values such as “economic self-sufficiency” (Clampet-Lundquist 2004:418). However, research on HOPE VI relocations has found that those relocated are having trouble making new ties in their new communities (Briggs 1998; Clampet-Lundquist 2004a, 2004b; Greenbaum et al 2008; Keene and Ruel 2013). Half of the argument in favor of relocating public housing residents rested on extensive neighborhood effects and social capital literature that made it clear that “good” social ties, those that could lead to upward mobility was found in economically diverse neighborhoods. Well, what if the relocatees, for whatever reason, are not positioned to take advantage of this capital? It may have some longing for the so-called bad social ties, the thick and dense ones that “only” help people get by. Leveraging, bonding and bridging social capital can only manifest through social relations. If relocation destroys intact social relations, whatever their form, and little to no new ones are formed once relocated, then a deficit arises that may leave people worse off than before.
Regardless of whether the social ties of public housing residents were bonding or bridging, weak or dense, or draining or gaining, one thing is clear: these ties were one of the primary resources this population had to help compensate for a lack of material resources. This critical resource has been removed in the relocation. For former residents of public housing, place-based social support was instrumental in achieving everyday tasks and helping one another in the “common project of living” (Manzo, Kleit, and Couch 2008:1861). Unfortunately, policymakers and government officials are blind to the “collective assets” or “social capital created by a long-standing community” they destroy in the process of displacing communities (Fullilove 2004:79). Preeminent social capital scholarship often times “do[es] not sufficiently recognize the value of social ties among low-income people or the problems associated with deliberately fracturing these relations” (Greenbaum 2008:43). In addition to the tangible, material needs social support served in providing, public housing residents may be experiencing the kind of root shock themselves which could help explain why relocation has not translated into a discernable improvement in life outcomes (Tester et al. 2011). The body of literature on the topic “contradicts expectations that dispersal itself could undo the negative results of concentrated poverty” (Kurwa 2015: 366). While this may not be experienced by everyone, it is this assertion that forms the basis of my theoretical framework that I discuss next.

2 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Place-based Relationships and Anomie

The theoretical framework used in my research is from classical social theorist Emile Durkheim’s theory of anomie. The term anomie was first introduced by Durkheim in his book *Division of Labor* (1893) and then later in *Suicide* (1897). Using Durkheim’s conceptualization
as a starting point, I first disentangle two important themes derived from Durkheim’s work on anomie: social disruption and norm breakdown. Secondly, I discuss the evolution in the development of the concept of anomie. Finally, I integrate insights from Durkheim and contemporary Durkheimian scholars into an innovative framework to analyze anomie in the context of housing relocation.

Throughout the discussion of anomie across his work, the fundamental social facts Durkheim concerns himself with is the breakdown in social structure and norms. These two elements of anomie are interrelated (Poblete 1960) and result from disruptions in the existing social order. For example, in *Suicide* (1897) Durkheim sees suicide occurring as a result of upheaval or change as a result of some sort of external mechanism that breaks down or disintegrates the social fabric. He observes that across societies, suicide rates are not correlated with the level of industrialization or poverty within a society, but from “disturbances of the collective order” (1897/1951:246). These ‘disturbances’ are said to occur “whenever serious readjustments take place in the social order, whether or not due to a sudden growth or to an unexpected catastrophe” (Durkheim 1897/1951:246). In other words, Durkheim sees anomie as being precipitated by events of social change and social disruptions that place people in situations where previous norms no longer apply (Ritzer and Goodman 2004). As a result of this social disintegration or breakdown, agreed upon norms are no longer clear. The uncertainty of norms in this case is what has been commonly referred to as normlessness. Social changes at the macro level and the consequent normlessness it gives way to represent what could be characterized as the social break down that precipitates anomie.

Scholars have expanded the breadth of anomie giving it more nuance since Durkheim. They have been extended and interpreted anomie in two primary ways – as a state of society and
as a state of mind. While the breakdown in social structure Durkheim was referring to was society writ large, social structure can refer to smaller social structures – societies within societies. Other influential functionalists such as Merton (1938) and Parsons (1951) also focused on anomic states of societies. However, while articulated as a condition of society at the macro level, anomie is also simultaneously articulated as occurring on a micro level which can been observed in individual behavior. Merton (1938) goes on to describe anomie as a state of being resulting from social structure creating a disconnect between aspirations and goals within the individual. Srole (1956) used the Greek term “anomia,” meaning a lack of integration to any given social system, to ascertain how anomie should be conceptualized. This interpretation shifts from a focus on the state of society to the state of social relations, which, in turn, affects one’s state of mind. Given this, anomie can be considered a multi-level and multi-dimensional concept. Aspects of it can be observed at the macro level and at the micro level. For example, in their study of religious sects among Puerto Ricans in New York (O’Dea 1960) conceptualizes anomie as consisting of a breakdown in social structures where the individual found psychological support and nurturing necessary for security and loss of norms which provided meaning in one’s life. This micro-macro connection does not attempt to isolate either of the primary meanings into mutually exclusive categories, but rather interdependent categories in the same way that interactionism and constructionism are two parts of the same whole.

Anomie’s conceptual ambiguity has allowed scholars the room to extrapolate its meaning, through informed interpretation, building upon extending the application and utility of Durkheim’s ideas past the classical era into the modern and postmodern eras. While anomie’s popularity seems to have been confined to studies of deviance throughout much of the 20th century, public health scholars have revisited Durkheim’s classical theory anomie (Berkman et
Turner (2003) attributes Durkheim’s anomie in illuminating the important relationship between “social involvement and connections (social capital) and individual well-being” (8). Social bonds are a result of social integration. Loss of social bonds then could be said to be a result of social disintegration. It is this disintegration of social fabric that, according to Durkheim, that precipitates anomie.

Anomie is the result of a breakdown in norms that can leave people with a sense of uncertainty because of the stability shared norms and expectations provide in any given society. Previous norms no longer apply due to the shifts of social change. Other contemporary uses of anomie include Huschka and Mau’s (2005) application of the concept in their study on social change in South Africa. In underscoring the importance of social bonds in relationship to anomie they argue that anomie is less likely to take place during social shift if “the interdependent social groups are sufficiently in contact” and are aware of “the need which they have of one-another, and, consequently they have an active and permanent feeling of mutual dependence” and upon one another. Conversely, the authors describe “anomic forms as situations in which integrative modes are disruptive” (Hauschka and Mau 2005:8). Hauschka and Mau (2005) further argue that it is not so much the social change in and of itself, but rather “cultural and social patterns of interpretation of that reality” that can cause insecurity and disorientation, as well invalidation of previous norms, while an absence of norms “that can guide people’s actions” (10). Involuntary relocation, or displacement, especially for “families who lack social and economic resources than for those who can replace what is missing in their immediate surroundings” can be just the kind of massive social upheaval that characterizes anomie (Ellen and Turner 1997:857).
For the purposes of this study, I argue that anomie is both a multidimensional and multilevel concept that can be useful in explaining the potential unintended consequence of relocation for former public housing residents. For the purpose of this study, I propose that there are two dimensions of anomie. The first dimension is a loss of social integration at the macro level or social disintegration. The second is the level of support individuals receive at the micro level or social dissolution. Relocation dismantled the place-based relationships and hence the social fabric that help structure people’s lives, as a result negatively affecting individual outcomes. The lives of poor people are generally unstable, and while public housing is not perfect, it provided stability for this population (Manzo, Kleit, and Couch 2008). The effects of relocation resulting in the severance of important social bonds produces rootlessness and normlessness, which are both features of anomie. Seniors are expected to fare worse because of the particularly strong bonds they had in public housing. Indeed, McFadden & Lucio (2014) suggest aging in place for seniors is ideal. This weakening of bonds contributing to anomie could mitigate or cancel out the anticipated benefits of relocation. Displacement cut residents off from the people and places or bonds that provide meaning, order, and stability. Considered a benefit to housing-mobility proponents, relocation could actually cause more harm for particularly vulnerable populations of public housing residents, making outcomes the same if not worse than before. Examining the breakdown of norms experienced by those relocated and its relationship to individual outcomes of well-being comprises my anomic theoretical framework. I offer a more in-depth discussion of the conceptualization and operationalization of anomie in the methods section.

This research contributes to housing and poverty deconcentration literature in several ways. The theoretical framework offered here contributes to the conversation on poverty
deconcentration by looking at a public housing community as a social system, which, if disrupted, could have unintended consequences for those forcibly relocated. Looking at public housing from a functionalist perspective allows us to view public housing as a social system that has some functional utility in the lives of its residents. This allows us to think about public housing, or any place where human relations exist, as a functioning unit whose disruption would invariably have a negative effect on the individuals whose social relations comprise of that system. Situating public housing as a social system that may serve some utility for the individuals within that system, regardless of how society outside of this system views it, invites us to consider whether the destruction of the system or its preservation with improvements best serves the whole. My research continues the discussion and conceptualization of the classical theory of anomie and is perhaps the only research using an explicitly ‘neo-Durkheimian’ analysis in housing and poverty deconcentration scholarship. In addition, this research will allow us to compare the experiences of seniors and family relocatees within the same study in order to capture how these groups experience relocation differentially. Below I detail the hypotheses that structure this work.

**Hypotheses**

H\(_1\) Social disintegration is associated with increased alienation.

H\(_2\) Social dissolution is associated with increased alienation.

H\(_3\) Social disintegration is associated with increased financial strain.

H\(_4\) Social dissolution is associated with increased financial strain.

H\(_5\) Social disintegration is associated with increased anxiety.

H\(_6\) Social dissolution is associated with increased anxiety.
H7 The association between social disintegration and financial strain will be stronger for seniors compared to families in the sample.

H8 The association between social dissolution and financial strain will be stronger for seniors compared to families in the sample.

H9 The association between increased social disintegration and alienation will be stronger for seniors compared to families in the sample.

H10 The association between increased social dissolution and alienation will be stronger for seniors compared to families in the sample.

H11 The association between social disintegration and increased anxiety will be stronger for seniors compared to families in the sample.

H12 The association between social dissolution and increased anxiety will be stronger for seniors compared to families in the sample. In the next section I explore the data I use in this dissertation, and the methods by which I analyze the data.

3 DATA AND METHODS

Data

Home of the first public housing development in the nation, decades later Atlanta also became the first city to demolish all of its public housing. Beginning in the early 1990’s, Atlanta was one of the first cities to receive the HOPE VI grant. Between 1996 and 2004 the Atlanta Housing Authority (AHA) demolished thirteen public housing projects replacing them with ten mixed income housing communities (Oakley et al. 2011). This resulted in the relocation of 25,000 residents. However, unlike the initial demolitions, AHA planned to demolish the remaining public housing without building replacement housing. AHA’s newest deconcentration
policy was not a part of HOPE VI, the initial housing mobility project that began reshaping public housing in Atlanta. Instead, these final demolitions were completed under Section 18 of the 1937 Housing Act, which does not require replacement units (AHA 2009; Ruel et al 2012). Representing a departure from HOPE VI policy, the new model, known as the Atlanta Model, went a step further by demolishing all remaining public housing without the option of returning to redevelopments or other public housing (Oakley et al. 2013; Ruel et al. 2012). This change in policy resulted in the relocation of remaining public housing residents into the private rental market. Here, the goal was not to demolish and rebuild, but to do away with public housing altogether.

In 2007 the AHA unveiled plans to demolish its ten remaining family public housing projects in addition to two projects for seniors and the disabled. By 2011, faculty at Georgia State University were invited by the Public Housing Resident Advisory Board six months after AHA’s announcement to discuss creating a survey to conduct with residents about relocation. The GSU Urban Health Initiative (UHI) was created to carry out this study. The data used here are secondary data from the Urban Health Initiative.

The UHI began developing the survey in 2008. At this time, five of the 12 public housing developments were virtually empty and one was inaccessible because of the relocation of resident board president. Thus the data were collected from residents of the last six remaining public housing communities (four for families and two for seniors and persons with disabilities) in Atlanta that would not begin relocation of residents until September 2008, in addition to a senior high-rise not slated for relocation.

A baseline pre-relocation survey was conducted during the summer of 2008. The goal was to achieve a disproportionate random sample of 426 participants with an equal number
selected from each housing community (N=71). However, only 49 percent of the goal was achieved primarily due to interference by the AHA (Oakley, Ruel, and Reid 2013). As a result, the researchers opened the study up to volunteers in order to increase the sample size. The final sample size for the baseline data, is 311, 73 percent of the goal for the sample. This represents a major limitation of the data and thus the study.

Random and non-random portions of the sample were tested on every variable in the study and no significant differences were found between the two categories. Post survey sampling weights were applied in order to make the data representative of the six public housing communities (Oakley et al. 2013). Making generalized inferences from this data is cautioned.

The data were collected in three waves – pre-relocation, 6 to 8 months post relocation and 24 months post relocation. The retention rate between the first wave and the third wave was 91 percent (Oakley et al. 2013). For the purposes of this study, I compare the first wave of data collected during the pre-relocation phase (pre-move) with the last wave of data collected 24 months after relocation. I am interested in comparing the first and last wave of data (which I refer to as T₁ and T₂) in order to understand whether relocation creates anomic conditions in the lives of public housing residents and its strength of association with measures of well-being.

The data for this study use a quantitative survey instrument (CAPI) consisting of over 400 open- and closed-ended questions. The study participants are from the last six remaining public housing complexes, both senior/disabled and family, in Atlanta. My unit of analysis is public housing residents in Atlanta. The study participants consist primarily of low-income African-American women-- 96% of the sample self-identified as black and 86% as female. Participants lived an average of six years in public housing.
I chose to study and analyze this data because of its contribution to housing relocation and poverty dispersal literature. Public housing residents are a difficult population to track. The data used here consist of the experiences of relocated public housing residents over a two-year period. Another distinctive aspect of the data is that it provides information relevant to both senior and family housing, thus allowing for the observation of variation in relocation experiences and outcome by housing type. Finally, the dataset is the only one to capture the experiences of residents who are not given the option to return to a redeveloped community or to move to a different public housing community – the data are of people with no other choice except to enter into the private market. The findings from the analysis of the data are of great importance not only because of the uniqueness of the data, but also because other housing authorities are looking to adopt the Atlanta Model in their cities.

My explanatory model shows the process of the breakdown in social structure (anomic conditions at the micro and macro level) and its effect on individual outcomes of well-being among former public housing residents who have been forced to relocate. In order to investigate how the social breakdown due to relocation and the disruption of place-based relationships among displaced residents affects their overall outcomes, I analyze three dependent variables—powerlessness, financial strain, and anxiety—as a function of the independent variable, social breakdown, over two time periods. I do this by converting both dependent and independent variables, along with one control variable, neighborhood satisfaction, into change variables. This is done by subtracting the variable at time 1 from the variable at time 2, creating a new change variable. This technique allows me to assess change over time, specifically from baseline ($T_1$) to 24 ($T_2$) months after relocation. These variables are indicated by using the letters CHG at the beginning of each change variable. The change in the independent variables will also be denoted
using a different variable name. I offer a clear explanation of relocatee outcomes by a) selecting the independent variables as distinct operationalizations of theoretical concepts, and b) offering a time series model with the intention of showing causation.

**Construct measurement**

*Dependent variables*

I conceptualize powerlessness as a form of alienation. Alienation has been theorized as encompassing multiple key dimensions, one of which is powerlessness (Middleton 1963). Seeman (1959) argued that “the idea of alienation as powerlessness” is the most commonly used in the literature (784). Seeman (1959) further posits that this particular interpretation of alienation is the expectation one has in the likelihood that their behavior is unable to determine a particular desired outcome. In this sense, powerlessness is a form of alienation.

Powerlessness is measured by Pearlin’s (1978) mastery scale, a construct consisting of the following seven items, (1) ‘There is really no way I can solve some of the problems I have’ (2) ‘Sometimes I feel that I am being pushed around in life’ (3) ‘I have little control over the bad things that happen to me’ (4) ‘I often feel helpless in dealing with the problems of life’ (5) ‘What happens to me in the future mostly depends on me’ (6) ‘There is little I can do to change many of the important things in my life’ (7) ‘I can do just about anything I set my mind to.’ These are ordinal variables operationalized using Likert Scale responses ranging from 1- ‘Strongly disagree,’ 2- ‘Disagree,’ 3- ‘No opinion,’ 4- ‘Agree,’ and 5 ‘Strongly disagree.’ Each item in the scale where the response was “don’t know” (-1) was recoded into the “no opinion” (3) category. Two of the items in each wave were reverse coded so that the responses in the scale would be unidirectional. The seven items were then summed together to create a summative scale. A value of seven means a high level of mastery and a value of 35 means a low level of mastery.
After the scales were created, they were reverse summed so that lower values would represent low levels of mastery or high powerlessness and higher values would represent high levels of mastery or low powerlessness. The Likert scale responses are summed together creating a summative scale ranging from 7 to 35. The scale has a Cronbach’s alpha is 0.75 which indicates a high level of construct reliability. The Pearlin’s Mastery scale is used and measured at both wave one and three with the variable names MASTERYR1 and MASTERYW3R2 respectively. The difference between the scale at wave one and wave three are taken producing a change variable CHGALIENATION.

I measure financial strain with a single item found in the UHI survey that asks the following questions ‘During the past 12 months, at the end of most months, what was your household's financial situation?’ The item is operationalized using Likert scale responses 1 – ‘We had more than enough money left over,’ 2- ‘We had some money left over,’ 3- ‘We had just enough to make ends meet,’ 4- ‘We did not have enough to make ends meet.’ Responses ‘Don’t know,’ ‘Refuse to answer,’ and ‘Not applicable’ will be coded as missing. This variable is measured at both wave one and three labeled as Q22W1 and Q58W3R respectively. The difference between the two waves is taken by subtracting the first wave from the last wave producing a change score and change variable, CHGSTRAIN.

Anxiety is conceptualized using a single item – ‘During the past 4 weeks, how often would you say you have felt worried, tense or anxious?’ An ordinal level variable, anxiety is operationalized using Likert scale responses which include 1-Very Often, 2- Often, 3-Somewhat Often , 4-Not Very Often, 5 - Not At All. Responses ‘Don’t know’ and ‘Refuse to answer’ will be coded as missing. The remaining responses are reverse coded. Having a single item to measure anxiety can be considered a weakness of the construct used. However, single items
have been used before by scholars, particularly in multidimensional constructs like the one used here (Tester et al 2011). This variable is also measured at both wave one and three labeled as Q51W1 and Q82W3. The difference between the two waves are taken for this variable, as well creating the change variable CHGANXIETY.

**Independent variables**

The explanatory or independent variable for this study is the breakdown of social structure or anomie. Using Durkheim’s work on anomie, breakdown in the existing social structure is caused by larger social shifts or disruptions. In the context of this research, social shift or disruption is housing relocation resulting in the subsequent breakdown in the existing social structure. Berkman et al (2000:852) argue that relocation due to “housing policy” … “represent[s] environmental challenges that tear at the fabric of social networks” resulting in deteriorating outcomes. This social shift can be observed from the data by measuring the change, specifically a decrease in social structure from pre-relocation ($T_1$) to 24 months post-relocation ($T_2$). Social structure in this context is conceptualized as social integration and social capital.

Drawing from Bourdieu’s (1986: 248) work, social capital can be conceptualized as “the aggregate of actual or potential resources linked to possession of a durable network...” … “that can be drawn upon by group members to for pursuing action in the absence of, or in conjunction with, their own economic capital” (Carpiano 2007:640). Social support received and social support given are used to conceptualize social capital in the data. Specifically, social support received and given are asked in the survey instrument as “In the past month, have you given help to/received help from neighbors with” (1) housework, yard work, and repairs; (2) transportation, errands or shopping; (3) and advice, encouragement and emotional support; (4) baby sitting and
child care. These measures are nominal level variables operationalized using dichotomous responses. The responses are 0 – ‘No’ and 1 – ‘Yes.’ Responses of ‘Don’t know,’ and ‘Refuse to answer,’ were coded as missing, and ‘Not applicable’ was recoded as 0=”No.” For the purpose of this study, I conceptualize social support by looking at only the help received items. Self-reported help received was constructed by summing four items, which are dichotomous together for each response. The scales range from 0 to 4 where 0 represents low levels of help and 4 represents high levels of help. This scale has a Cronbach’s alpha of .754. The new variables are labeled HELPREC and HELPREC3 for the first and last waves respectively. HELPREC was then transformed into HELPREC1R after rounding the values to whole numbers.

The second item used in the conceptualization of anomie is social integration. Social integration is a central aspect of Durkheim’s anomie, as anomie is a result of the social disintegration inherent within a larger social breakdown. Here, I use the conceptual model from Gibson et al (2002). In their research they argue that the concepts of social integration and collective efficacy actually exist along the same continuum, by which social integration is a prerequisite for collective efficacy (Gibson et al. 2002). In other words, social integration must exist in order to have collective efficacy. Here, collective efficacy will act as a proxy for social integration. In order to capture social integration in my predictive model, I employ the collective efficacy construct developed by Sampson et. al (1997) as the second part of this study’s social breakdown construct. In the UHI survey instrument, the collective efficacy items identified by Sampson et. al (1997) are used in the survey questionnaire as two scale items – social cohesion subscale and informal social control. For the purposes of the social breakdown construct, I will only use the social cohesion subscale as a proxy of social integration. Social cohesion subscale is an ordinal scale variable operationalized using Likert scale responses. The subscale is a
summative scale consisting of five items. Values of the scale range from five to twenty-five with five meaning a low level of social cohesion and twenty-five meaning a high level of social cohesion. The variables consist of five items: (1) “This is a good place to raise kids,” (2) “people in this neighborhood are willing to help neighbors,” (3) “People in this neighborhood generally don’t get along with each other,” (4) “People in this neighborhood can be trusted,” (5) “People in this neighborhood do not share the same values.” Each variable in the scale where the response was “don’t know” (-1) was recoded into the “no opinion” (3) category. Two items in each wave (Q1CW1, Q1EW1, Q7CW3, Q7EW3) were reverse coded in order to make the variables on the scale unidirectional. This scale has a Cronbach’s alpha of .639.

The process of social breakdown is shown by converting the social integration scale and the social capital scale into change variables. This is done by subtracting the scale variable at $T_1$ from the scale variable at $T_2$ creating a change variable. The change variables for the independent variables represent the decline in social integration, which is social disintegration and decline in social capital, which is social dissolution.

Confounding variables that could be correlated to both the dependent and independent variables include neighborhood satisfaction, tenure in public housing, age, employment status, and disability status, and thus will be controlled for in the analyses.

Neighborhood satisfaction is measured by the question ‘Which of the following statements best describes how satisfied you are with your neighborhood? Would you say you are...’ The construct is operationalized using a ordinal level variable where 1- ‘Very satisfied,’ 2- ‘Somewhat satisfied,’ 3- ‘In the Middle,’ 4- ‘Somewhat dissatisfied,’ 5- ‘Dissatisfied.’ The final variables were recoded as Q3W1R AND Q9W3R, recoded to round numbers to the next decimal
Neighborhood satisfaction at wave one was subtracted from wave three creating a change variable, CHGSAT.

Tenure in public housing, or the amount of time respondents have lived in the public housing community they were being relocated from, is conceptualized as ‘Tenure in public housing in years.’ The variable is open-ended and will be recoded into an interval variable where 1= ‘0 to 1 years,’ 2= ‘2-5 years,’ 3= ‘6-10,’ and 4=11+ years.’ The variable is labeled TENURE.

Age is an interval variable that is recoded into an interval variable where 1= ‘19 to 29 years old,’ 2= ‘30 to 49 years old,’ and 3 = ‘50+ years old.’ The variable is labeled AGECAT_W1, and then AGECAT_W1R after rounding the values to whole numbers.

Employment status is an ordinal variable asked as “Are you currently working?” The variable is a nominal variable operationalized as 1= ‘Yes, working full-time,’ 2 = ‘Yes, working part-time,’ and 3= ‘No, not working.’ I collapse this variable into a dichotomous variable, where answering yes to any kind of employment is operationalized as yes = 1 and unemployed is no = 0. The response categories ‘Don’t know,’ ‘Refuse to answer,’ and ‘Not applicable’ will be recoded as missing. The variable is labeled as WORK and WORKW3.

Disability status will be operationalized using the question “If you are not currently working, are you...,” which is ordinal variable where responses are 1= “A homemaker,” 2= ‘Retired,’ 3= ‘Student,’ 4= ‘Unable to work (Disabled)’ 5= ‘Unemployed and looking for work,’ 6= ‘Unemployed and not looking for work,’ and 7= ‘Something else, please specify.’ I change the variable from ordinal to dichotomous variable by recoding the response item into dichotomous categories labeled as non-disabled = 0 and the remaining item, disabled = 1. The
responses ‘Don’t know,’ ‘Refuse to answer,’ and ‘Not applicable’ is coded as missing. The final variables are labeled DISABLED and DISABLED3.

**Analysis**

For the analysis section of this project, I begin with a univariate analysis of each of the variables used in this study. Then, I conduct bivariate analyses to assess whether there are changes in the mean in the dependent variables I test. Finally, I use OLS regression using the fixed effects regression model in order to observe change in the independent and dependent variables.

A Pearson correlation is conducted to assess the strength and direction of the relationship between the variables used in this study. This allows me to do an initial assessment of whether or not the variables I chose for the research are correlated and is in the direction hypothesized.

An independent – samples t-test is conducted to test whether there is a significant difference between those from senior communities and those from family public housing communities. Because two of the three dependent variables are continuous scales and I compare two groups represented by a dichotomous variable, FAMILY1, making the use of this analytical technique ideal. Here, I compare the mean scores of the outcome variables of those from family communities and those from senior communities for each wave. This allows me to assess whether there is a significant difference between the outcomes of these two groups at both wave one and wave two.

I analyze the three dependent variables using a linear fixed effects regression model. A fixed effects method is when the OLS equation at time one is subtracted from an OLS equation at time two giving us a change score. This results in a first difference equation is, $\Delta \gamma t = \Delta \mu + \beta_2 \Delta x_i + \Delta \gamma z_i + \Delta \varepsilon_i$. The fixed effects method used here is the difference score method for the
two-period case. This particular fixed-effects method allows for the “effects of x and z to vary over time” (Allison 2009:10). It is this change that shows the process of social breakdown in my bivariate and multivariate models.

Table 1.1 Dependent Variables

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Response items</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Powerlessness</td>
<td>1) ‘There is really no way I can solve some of the problems I have’</td>
<td>1=Strongly disagree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2) ‘Sometimes I feel that I am being pushed around in life’</td>
<td>2= Disagree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3) ‘I have little control over the bad things that happen to me’</td>
<td>3=No Opinion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4) ‘I often feel helpless in dealing with the problems of life’</td>
<td>4=Agree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>5) ‘What happens to me in the future mostly depends on me’</td>
<td>5=Strongly agree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>6) ‘There is little I can do to change many of the important things in my life</td>
<td>-1=Don’t Know</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>7) I Have Little Control Over the Bad Things that Happen to Me.</td>
<td>-2=Refuse to answer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pearlin’s Mastery</td>
<td></td>
<td>-3=Not applicable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scale</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Responses range from 1=Strongly disagree to 5=Strongly agree, with -1=Don’t Know, -2=Refuse to answer, and -3=Not applicable.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Response items</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Anxiety</td>
<td>During the past 4 weeks, how often would you say you have felt worried,</td>
<td>1=Not At All&lt;br&gt;2=Not Very Often&lt;br&gt;3=Somewhat Often&lt;br&gt;4=Often&lt;br&gt;5=Very Often&lt;br&gt;-1=Don’t know&lt;br&gt;-2=Refuse to answer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>tense or anxious?’</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Financial Strain</td>
<td>During the Last 12 Months, at the End of Most Months, What Was Your Household's Financial Situation?</td>
<td>1=We Had More Than Enough Money Left Over&lt;br&gt;2=We Had Some Money Left Over&lt;br&gt;3=We Had Just Enough to Make Ends Meet&lt;br&gt;4=We Did Not Have Enough to Make Ends Meet&lt;br&gt;-1=Don't Know&lt;br&gt;-2=Refuse to Answer&lt;br&gt;-3=Not Applicable</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Table 1.2. Social Dissolution Independent Variables

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Response items</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| **Social Support** | “In the past month have you given help to/received help from neighbors with work around the house.  
1) housework, yard work, and repairs or other work around the house.  
2) transportation, errands or shopping;  
3) advice encouragement and emotional support;  
4) baby sitting and child care” | 0=‘No’  
1=‘Yes.’  
-1=‘Don’t know’  
-2=‘Refuse to answer’  
-3=Not applicable |

### Table 1.3. Social Disintegration Independent Variables

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Response item</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Social Cohesion</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Subscale</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Social Integration</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| **Social Integration** | 1) This Neighborhood is a Good Place to Raise Kids. Do You…  
2) People in this Neighborhood Generally Don’t Get Along with Each Other. Do You…  
3) People in this Neighborhood Can be Trusted. Do You…  
4) People in this Neighborhood Do Not Share the Same Values. Do You… | 1=Strongly Disagree  
2=Disagree  
3=No Opinion  
4=Agree  
5=Strongly Agree  
-1=Don’t Know  
-2=Refuse to Answer  
-3=Not Applicable |
Table 1.4 Control Variables

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Response item</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Neighborhood Satisfaction</strong></td>
<td>Which of the Following Statements Best Describes How Satisfied You are with Your Neighborhood? Would you say you are...</td>
<td>1=Very Satisfied, 2=Somewhat Satisfied, 3=In the Middle, 4=Somewhat Dissatisfied, 5=Very Dissatisfied, -1=Don’t Know, -2=Refuse to Answer, -3=Not Applicable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Tenure in Public Housing</strong></td>
<td>Tenure in Public Housing in Years</td>
<td>1= 0 to 1 years, 2= 2-5 years, 3= 6-10 years, 4= 11+ years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Age</strong></td>
<td>What year were you born?</td>
<td>1= 19-29, 2= 30-49, 3+ =50+, -1=Don’t Know, -2=Refuse to answer, -3=Not applicable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Variable</td>
<td>Question</td>
<td>Response item</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------------</td>
<td>---------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>-------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Employment Status</strong></td>
<td>Are You Currently Working Full Or Part Time? (Choose One)</td>
<td>1 = Yes, Working Full Time (35 Hours/Week Or More) 2 = Yes, Working Part Time 3 = No, Not Working -1 = Don’t Know -2 = Refuse To Answer -3 = Not Applicable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Disability Status</strong></td>
<td>If you are not currently working, are you…</td>
<td>1 = A Homemaker 2 = Retired 3 = Student 4 = Unable To Work (Disabled) 5 = Unemployed And Looking For Work 6 = Unemployed And Not Looking For Work 7 = Something Else. Please Specify -1 = Don’t Know -2 = Refuse To Answer -3 = Not Applicable</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Data manipulation and descriptive analysis

There were 68 cases of item non-response and first I analyzed whether or not there were patterns to the missingness by creating a missing indicator coding missing as 1 and 0 if there were no missing cases. I ran a logistic regression to predict missingness. Using three dependent variables in addition to income, age, tenure in public housing in the regression, I concluded that cases missing in the data were random. There was not enough variation in sex and race to justify including it in the analysis. Because there were so few missing cases and missing was ignorable, I used a single imputation where missing values are replaced with the mean value of cases in the data. The final sample size is 248.

Dependent variables

The distribution of scores in the first wave are slightly positively skewed with a skewness of .025 and a kurtosis value of -.826, indicating that the distribution is flat as opposed to peaked. The last wave of values has a skewness of .469 indicating a positive distribution, but with kurtosis value of -.406 again indicating that the distribution is flat. Thus, neither the first wave nor last wave of values in the Mastery variable is normally distributed.

The mean score on the Pearlin’s Mastery Scale in the first wave was 13.73 and the mean score on the last wave was 13.07 on a 7 – 35 point scale. The mean in the first wave is higher than the mean in the second wave. This means that mastery was higher in the first wave compared to the second wave. In other words, self-perceived powerlessness was lower during baseline compared to 24 months post-relocation where perceived powerlessness increased.

The mean value for financial strain in the first wave was 2.75 and 2.73 in the last wave. This indicates that respondents in the sample reported slight decrease in financial strain at 24 months post relocation compared to during baseline while still in public housing.
Feelings of anxiety appeared to increase slightly from baseline to 24 months post relocation, with a mean of 2.75 in the first wave and 2.73 in the last wave.

**Independent variables**

The distribution of scores for social cohesion in the first wave has a distribution of scores that are negatively skewed with a skewness of -.199 and with a kurtosis value of -.607, indicating a rather flat distribution. The distribution of scores in the last wave is negatively skewed with a skewness of -.526 and a kurtosis value of .184, indicating a light-tailed distribution. The spread of scores in the first wave ranges from 3 to 22. The range of scores in the second wave ranges from 5 to 25. The mean score pre-relocation on the social cohesion scale was 14, while the mean score on the scale post relocation was 16.63. Thus, respondents felt greater levels of social cohesion (social integration) in their neighborhood at 24 months post relocation compared to their public housing community during baseline.

The distribution of scores for help received in the first wave was slightly skewed to the left with a skewness of .114. The distribution is also relatively flat with a kurtosis of -1.15. The distribution of scores for help received in the last wave was skewed to the left with a skewness of .374. The distribution here is also relatively flat with a Kurtosis of -1.004. The mean score for the first wave was 1.73 and 1.45 for the second wave indicating a decrease in help received from baseline to relocation.

**Control variables**

A little over twenty percent of the sample was between the ages of 19 and 29 years old at baseline. Thirty-two percent of the sample was between the ages of 30 and 49 years old. Finally, almost half of the sample, forty-seven percent, was 50 or older. Sixty-five percent of the sample lived in family public housing communities and 35 percent lived in senior housing
communities. Seventy-one percent of the sample was not working at the time the baseline survey was given. This percentage increased to 75.8 percent in the last wave of data collection, post relocation. Forty percent of those not working cited a disability as the reason prior to relocation, while only 38 percent cited disability as the reason for not working in the final wave, post relocation. The mean neighborhood satisfaction pre-relocation was 2.85, while post-relocation mean neighborhood satisfaction was 1.43. This indicates greater satisfaction post-relocation than at the original public housing community.

In summary, preliminary analyses indicate that the majority of the sample, by a narrow margin, was under 50 years of age at the time of baseline interviews. Most of the sample lived in family housing communities at baseline. Most respondents had also lived in public housing for four or more years. Almost half, 46%, had lived in public housing less than four years. A significant majority of former public housing residents was not working either at baseline or post relocation. Surprisingly, this number rose after relocation, especially considering that there was a work requirement for residents moving into Section 8. This is also surprising considering that less financial strain was reported after relocation compared to before. Respondents were more satisfied with their new neighborhood compared to their old public housing neighborhood. They also reported greater levels of social cohesion in their new neighborhood compared to their old public housing neighborhood. However, respondents reported receiving less help after relocation than before. In addition, former residents reported lower levels of anxiety, but high levels of powerlessness post relocation. In the next section, we will look at the relationships between the variables discussed and described in this section.
Table 4.1: Sample Demographics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Percentage (Baseline)</th>
<th></th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Percentage (24 months)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lived in Family Housing</td>
<td>161</td>
<td>65%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lived in Senior Housing</td>
<td>87</td>
<td>35%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19-29</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>20.6%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30-49</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>32.3%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50 &amp; up</td>
<td>117</td>
<td>47.2%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employed</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>29%</td>
<td></td>
<td>60</td>
<td>24.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unemployed</td>
<td>176</td>
<td>71%</td>
<td></td>
<td>188</td>
<td>75.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disabled</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>40.3%</td>
<td></td>
<td>95</td>
<td>38.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tenure in Public Housing</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&lt; 2 YEARS</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>23.4%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 - &lt; 4 YEARS</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>23%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 - &lt; 8 YEARS</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>30.2%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8 YEARS +</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>23.4%</td>
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</table>

N=248
Table 4.2: Descriptives of Research Variables

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variables</th>
<th>WAVE 1</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th>WAVE 2</th>
<th></th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mean</td>
<td>Std</td>
<td>Range</td>
<td>Mean</td>
<td>Std</td>
<td>Range</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Dependent variables</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-reported Mastery (7-35)</td>
<td>13.73</td>
<td>4.20</td>
<td>7-24</td>
<td>13.07</td>
<td>4.57</td>
<td>7-26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Pearlin’s Mastery Scale)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-reported Anxiety</td>
<td>3.03</td>
<td>1.47</td>
<td>1-5</td>
<td>3.16</td>
<td>1.39</td>
<td>1-5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-reported Financial Strain</td>
<td>2.75</td>
<td>.782</td>
<td>1-4</td>
<td>2.73</td>
<td>.831</td>
<td>1-4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Independent Variables</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Help Received (0-4)</td>
<td>1.73</td>
<td>1.25</td>
<td>0-4</td>
<td>1.45</td>
<td>1.26</td>
<td>0-4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Cohesion Scale (5-25)</td>
<td>14.04</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5-22</td>
<td>16.63</td>
<td>3.9</td>
<td>5-25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Control Variables</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age (1-3)</td>
<td>2.26</td>
<td>.780</td>
<td>1-3</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neighborhood Satisfaction (1-5)</td>
<td>2.35</td>
<td>1.38</td>
<td>1-5</td>
<td>2.04</td>
<td>1.25</td>
<td>1-5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tenure in Public housing (1-4)</td>
<td>2.54</td>
<td>1.09</td>
<td>1-4</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employment Status (0,1)</td>
<td>.29</td>
<td>.455</td>
<td>0-1</td>
<td>.24</td>
<td>.429</td>
<td>0-1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disability Status (0,1)</td>
<td>.40</td>
<td>.492</td>
<td>0-1</td>
<td>.38</td>
<td>.487</td>
<td>0-1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family or Senior Housing (0,1)</td>
<td>.65</td>
<td>.478</td>
<td>0-1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

N=248
4 FINDINGS

4.1 Bivariate analyses

The bivariate analyses in this study consist of Pearson correlations and an independent samples t-test. These tests are used to ascertain whether there is a relationship between self-reported anxiety, alienation, financial strain and the anomie construct. Then, I examine whether or not there is any significant variation in these relationships based on type of public housing community. Both analyses test my earlier stated hypotheses that both dimensions of the anomie construct will be positively associated with alienation, anxiety, and financial strain and that there will be difference.

**Anxiety**

Pearson correlations show that only one dimension of anomie, social disintegration, was significantly related to change in anxiety from T₁ to T₂. Social disintegration was positively associated anxiety meaning that as social disintegration increased, so did anxiety. This supports one of my hypotheses that social disintegration is associated with increased anxiety post relocation. On the other hand, social disintegration was not associated with anxiety. While not significant, the direction of the relationship is consistent with that of my hypothesis that as social dissolution increased so would anxiety.

**Alienation**

Social disintegration also had a significant positive relationship with alienation. This means that there is a strong association between social disintegration and increased self-reported feelings of powerlessness or alienation. This finding is also consistent with my hypothesis that social disintegration would be associated with increased alienation. While there was a positive relationship between social dissolution and alienation, the relationship was not significant.
**Financial strain**

Correlation tests revealed that there was no significant relationship between financial strain and social disintegration or social dissolution. Both relationships were positive, but again, neither was significant. This is not consistent with my hypothesis that social disintegration and social dissolution would be associated with in change in financial strain.

**Summary**

Change in all three of the outcome variables was positively associated with the two predictor variables, social disintegration and social dissolution. However, out of the two predictor variables, only social disintegration had a significant positive relationship to any of the outcome variables. Specifically, social disintegration was found to be associated with increasing change in alienation and anxiety, from baseline to post relocation. Neither dimension of anomie was associated with a change in financial strain. Social dissolution was not found to be strongly associated with any of the outcome variables.

**Table 5.1 Pearson Correlation of Independent and Dependent Variables**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Social Disintegration</th>
<th>Social Dissolution</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Alienation</td>
<td>.163*</td>
<td>.021</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anxiety</td>
<td>-.167**</td>
<td>-.004</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Financial Strain</td>
<td>.018</td>
<td>.046</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*P<0.05  **P<0.01

N=248
Table 5.2 Pearson Correlation of Independent Variables

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Social Disintegration</th>
<th>Social Dissolution</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Social Disintegration</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.156*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Dissolution</td>
<td>.156*</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*P<0.05  **P<0.01

N=248

Table 5.3 Pearson Correlation of Dependent Change Variables

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>ALINENATION</th>
<th>ANXIETY</th>
<th>STRAIN</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Alienation</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>-.217**</td>
<td>-.010</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anxiety</td>
<td>-.217**</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.120</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strain</td>
<td>-.010</td>
<td>.120</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*P<0.05  **P<0.01

N=248

Family versus senior residents

In table 5.4 an independent samples t-test was conducted to examine the differences between family residents and senior residents. There were significant differences between family and senior communities. While there was not a significant difference between the two groups in reported social integration in their new neighborhoods at 24 months post-relocation, there was a significant difference in perceived social integration in family and senior communities in public housing. Those respondents living in senior public housing communities reported much higher levels of social integration in their neighborhoods compared to respondents
from family public housing communities at baseline. The difference in social integration post relocation between the two groups was small and not significant. However, it is important to know that perceived social integration dramatically increased from baseline to 24 months post-relocation for those from family housing while perceived social integration slightly decreased for those from senior housing over the same time.

There was a significant difference in social capital between the two groups in both waves. While both groups reported low levels of social capital in both the first and last wave, respondents from family housing reported higher levels of social capital in both waves compared to those from senior housing. However, both groups reported a decline in social capital 24 months post-relocation.

Only in the last wave was financial strain significantly different between those from senior and family housing communities. At twenty-four months post-relocation, those from family housing reported higher levels of financial strain compared to those from senior housing. There was also a significant difference between self-reported anxiety between the two groups, but only in the first wave.

Those from family housing communities reported higher levels of anxiety at baseline compared to seniors. Anxiety declined slightly for family post relocation while it virtually remained stable for seniors. Anxiety had the strongest mean difference between family and senior residents. This means that the variation in anxiety was large enough between family and seniors to be significant. This is largely driven by the fact that those from family housing experienced such great differences in their self-reported anxiety between the two waves.

Independent samples t-tests revealed no significant difference in levels of alienation between the two groups, though both groups did see an increase in alienation. This increase was
greater for seniors compared to those from family housing. Finally, the two groups differed significantly in the level of satisfaction with their neighborhood during baseline. Respondents in the senior communities reported higher levels of satisfaction with their neighborhood at baseline compared to those in family communities. Both groups reported an increase in neighborhood satisfaction post-relocation, with the largest increase coming from former residents of family public housing.

In summary, those from senior communities had a greater level of social integration in their original public housing communities, than those living in family communities. Relocating was found to improve social integration for those coming from family public housing. The two groups also differed in their level of neighborhood satisfaction – those from senior communities were much more likely to express satisfaction with their public housing community compared to those from family housing. This differences between the two groups and how they experienced their original public housing communities are key factors in predicting post-relocation outcomes. Public housing tenure is another related factor. Those from senior housing on average have had a longer tenure in public housing. This ‘rootedness’ in public housing would presumably affect seniors’ attitude towards their new neighborhoods, as well as their well-being. The difference in perceived neighborhood quality between the two groups, revealed by the independent samples t-test, could account for the differences in outcomes between the groups such as a dramatic increase in alienation from baseline to 24 months for seniors. The multivariate analyses in the next section can attest to whether or not change in predictor variables from baseline to 24 months will predict change in the outcome variables during the same time.
**Table 5.4 Independent Samples T-Test**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>FAMILY W1</th>
<th>W2</th>
<th>SENIOR W1</th>
<th>W2</th>
<th>T-Value</th>
<th>Mean Difference</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Social integration</td>
<td>12.75</td>
<td>16.85</td>
<td>16.44</td>
<td>16.22</td>
<td>8.346**</td>
<td>-1.244</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3.691</td>
<td>-.633</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Capital (help received)</td>
<td>1.84</td>
<td>1.58</td>
<td>1.52</td>
<td>1.21</td>
<td>-.2151**</td>
<td>-2.445**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>-.3274</td>
<td>-.377</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strain</td>
<td>2.76</td>
<td>2.82</td>
<td>2.72</td>
<td>2.56</td>
<td>-.323</td>
<td>-2.310*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>-.034</td>
<td>-.257</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anxiety</td>
<td>3.17</td>
<td>3.0</td>
<td>2.6</td>
<td>2.61</td>
<td>2.30*</td>
<td>1.92</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>-.21*</td>
<td>.354</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alienation</td>
<td>13.50</td>
<td>13.25</td>
<td>14.14</td>
<td>12.75</td>
<td>1.167</td>
<td>-.825</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>.653</td>
<td>-.501</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neighborhood Satisfaction</td>
<td>3.25</td>
<td>2.09</td>
<td>2.15</td>
<td>1.95</td>
<td>-6.468**</td>
<td>-.838</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>-.1099</td>
<td>-.139</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*p<0.05  **p<0.01

N=248

**Table 5.5 Independent Samples T-test**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>FAMILY</th>
<th>SENIOR</th>
<th>T-Value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tenure in Public Housing</td>
<td>2.42*</td>
<td>2.76*</td>
<td>2.383</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

N=248 *p<0.05
4.2 Multivariate analyses

In this section, I test my theoretical models using OLS regression. The models will correspond with each of the three dependent variables. The multivariate models will indicate if both dimensions, one dimension, or neither dimension of anomie predict change in financial strain, anxiety, and feelings of powerlessness over time, specifically from baseline to 24 months post-relocation. I present both a reduced and a full model. The reduced model represents the independent variables’ influence on the dependent variable without the control variables. The full model incorporates the control variables into the original analysis to see how these variables influence the relationship between the original variables. The models shown in the tables at the end of this section will include OLS regressions for the first wave, the last wave, and a fixed effects method. This section is concerned with the question of whether the anomic or social breakdown construct is a predictor of outcomes of well-being for those relocated.

Predictors of alienation

The models in table 5.3, test the hypothesis that the two variables conceptualized as anomie will be a predictor of alienation. The models indicate that only one dimension of the anomie construct was a predictor of alienation and that was social disintegration. In the partial models, there is a strong and positive relationship between social disintegration and alienation. This relationship remains significant after adding housing type and tenure. However, it loses significance after adding employment at wave three and never regains significance after adding disability status and change in neighborhood satisfaction.

For the second dimension, social dissolution was not able to predict alienation in any of the models. Despite this, the direction of the relationship is interesting and worth noting. In both the second and third model in table 5.3, social dissolution is associated with a decrease in
alienation post-relocation. This is the opposite of my hypothesis that the dissolution of place-based relationships associated with relocation would contribute to alienation.

### Table 5.3 OLS Estimates of Predictors of Alienation for Relocated Residents Over Time (Partial Models)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Wave 1 Coefficient</th>
<th>Wave 2 Coefficient</th>
<th>Difference Score Coefficient</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Std. Error</td>
<td>Std. Error</td>
<td>Std. Error</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social (cohesion) Disintegration</td>
<td>.066</td>
<td>.067</td>
<td>.215*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social (capital) Dissolution</td>
<td>.032</td>
<td>.214</td>
<td>-.065</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R²</td>
<td>.004</td>
<td>.033</td>
<td>.027</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*p<0.05

N=248
Table 5.4  OLS Estimates of Predictors of Alienation for Relocated Residents Over Time (Full Models)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Wave 1 Coefficient</td>
<td>Std.Error</td>
<td>Wave 2 Coefficient</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Disintegration</td>
<td>-.002</td>
<td>.080</td>
<td>.227</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Dissolution</td>
<td>.033</td>
<td>.213</td>
<td>-.153</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Housing Community</td>
<td>-.801</td>
<td>.653</td>
<td>-.177</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tenure in Public Housing</td>
<td>-.375</td>
<td>.247</td>
<td>.143</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employed</td>
<td>----</td>
<td>----</td>
<td>1.763*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disabled</td>
<td>-1.278*</td>
<td>.562</td>
<td>----</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neighborhood Satisfaction</td>
<td>-.580</td>
<td>.382</td>
<td>.107</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R2</td>
<td>.046</td>
<td>------</td>
<td>.057</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*p<0.05

N=248

Predicting anxiety

Similar to the models predicting alienation, only one dimension of anomie was found to be a significant predictor of decreased anxiety. In the change model (model 3) for every increase in social disintegration, anxiety decreased by .053. The direction of the relationship is counter to my hypothesis that social disintegration would be a predictor of increased anxiety. The relationship between social disintegration and anxiety remain significant after adding type of public housing community, public housing tenure, employment at wave three, and disability status. However, the model is no longer significant once change in neighborhood satisfaction is added.
In the 3rd model, the relationship between social dissolution and change in anxiety is not significant, however the direction of the relationship is positive. Though social dissolution was not strong enough to predict anxiety, its relationship to anxiety is a positive one, which is the same direction as my hypothesis. Interestingly, in the full fixed effects model, neither social disintegration nor social dissolution is significant (model 3 in Table 5.7).

Table 5.6 OLS Estimates of Predictors of Self-Reported Anxiety for Relocated Residents Over Time (Partial Models)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Wave 1 Coefficient</th>
<th>Std. Error</th>
<th>Wave 2 Coefficient</th>
<th>Std. Error</th>
<th>Difference Score Coefficient</th>
<th>Std. Error</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Social (integration) Disintegration</td>
<td>-.082**</td>
<td>.010</td>
<td>-.112**</td>
<td>.010</td>
<td>.053*</td>
<td>.020</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social (capital) Dissolution</td>
<td>.047</td>
<td>.032</td>
<td>.141**</td>
<td>.030</td>
<td>-.024</td>
<td>.066</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R²</td>
<td>.052</td>
<td></td>
<td>.106</td>
<td></td>
<td>.029</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*p<0.05   **p<0.01

N=248
Table 5.7 OLS Estimates of Predictors of Self-Reported Anxiety for Relocated Residents Over Time (Full Models)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Wave 1 Coefficient Std. Error</th>
<th>Wave 2 Coefficient Std. Error</th>
<th>Difference Score Coefficient Std. Error</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Social (integration) Disintegration</td>
<td>-.035 .027</td>
<td>-.103** .029</td>
<td>-.037 .025</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social (capital) Dissolution</td>
<td>.057 .072</td>
<td>.123 .068</td>
<td>.021 .066</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Housing Community</td>
<td>.316 .219</td>
<td>.420* .193</td>
<td>-.006 .248</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tenure in Public Housing</td>
<td>-.052 .083</td>
<td>-.084 .079</td>
<td>.027 .096</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employed</td>
<td></td>
<td>-.238 .217</td>
<td>.047 .293</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disabled</td>
<td>.490* .189</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>.111 .236</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neighborhood Satisfaction</td>
<td>.377** .128</td>
<td>.055 .089</td>
<td>.096 .072</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R²</td>
<td>.120</td>
<td>.134</td>
<td>.037</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*p<0.05   **p<0.01

N=248

Predictors of financial strain

In the fixed effect models, neither dimension of anomie was significant. In the partial and full models, social dissolution is not a significant predictor of financial strain. With the change score model lacking in statistical significance, this means that the construct was not able to predict financial strain.
### Table 5.8 OLS Estimates of Predictors of Financial Strain for Relocated Residents Over Time (Partial Models)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Wave 1 Coefficient</th>
<th>Std. Error</th>
<th>Wave 2 Coefficient</th>
<th>Std. Error</th>
<th>Difference Score Coefficient</th>
<th>Std. Error</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Social Disintegration</td>
<td>-.007</td>
<td>.012</td>
<td>-.037**</td>
<td>.013</td>
<td>.002</td>
<td>.012</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Dissolution</td>
<td>-.070</td>
<td>.040</td>
<td>.007</td>
<td>.041</td>
<td>.027</td>
<td>.040</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

R² 1: .014  2: .031  3: .002

*p<0.05  **p<0.01

N=248

### Table 5.9 OLS Estimates of Predictors of Financial Strain for Relocated Residents Over Time (Full Models)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Wave 1 Coefficient</th>
<th>Std. Error</th>
<th>Wave 2 Coefficient</th>
<th>Std. Error</th>
<th>Difference Score Coefficient</th>
<th>Std. Error</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Social Disintegration</td>
<td>.003</td>
<td>.015</td>
<td>-.013</td>
<td>.017</td>
<td>-.009</td>
<td>.015</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Dissolution</td>
<td>-.066</td>
<td>.040</td>
<td>-.023</td>
<td>.042</td>
<td>.031</td>
<td>.039</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Housing Community</td>
<td>.071</td>
<td>.121</td>
<td>.241*</td>
<td>.117</td>
<td>-.167</td>
<td>.147</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tenure in Public Housing</td>
<td>.002</td>
<td>.046</td>
<td>.012</td>
<td>.048</td>
<td>-.006</td>
<td>.057</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employed</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>.053</td>
<td>.132</td>
<td>-.106</td>
<td>.173</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disabled</td>
<td>.260*</td>
<td>.104</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>.238</td>
<td>.140</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neighborhood Satisfaction</td>
<td>.111</td>
<td>.071</td>
<td>.128*</td>
<td>.054</td>
<td>.010</td>
<td>.043</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

R² 1: .049  2: .079  3: .036

*p<0.05  **p<0.01

N=248
Summary

The analyses here seek to answer the question of whether the disruption of place-based relationships negatively affects outcomes of well-being after relocation. Disruption or social breakdown was conceptualized as a multi-dimensional construct of anomie consisting of social disintegration and social dissolution. Social disintegration proved to be the strongest variable in the construct, predicting change in two out of the three measures of well-being in the study. The micro-level dimension of the construct, social dissolution was not able to predict change in any of the measures of well-being. In this case, my hypotheses were only partially supported. Social disintegration was a predictor of increased alienation. This supports one of my hypotheses that as social disintegration increased, so would alienation. Social disintegration also predicted change in anxiety, however, the direction is opposite of my hypothesis. Social disintegration was a predictor of decreased anxiety. This is the opposite of my hypothesis that social disintegration would be a predictor of increased anxiety. Social disintegration was not able to predict change in financial strain, thus this hypothesis is rejected. Social dissolution was not able to predict change of any of the outcome variables. This is somewhat of a surprising result that is counter to my hypotheses, which predicted that social dissolution would be associated with change in alienation, anxiety, and financial strain. Here, I have to reject my hypothesis that social dissolution would have an effect on resident’s well-being after relocating. In addition, while there were differences between those from senior public housing and family, the differences were not strong enough to support the hypotheses that social disruption or dissolution would be a stronger predictor of alienation and financial strain for seniors compared to family public-housing members. The only significant difference found that came even close to supporting my difference-between-populations hypotheses was the difference in anxiety. Disruption of place-
based relationships was associated with an increase in anxiety for seniors, but it was negligible. The story here is that the disruption made a much bigger difference for family residents and that difference was positive. All of the observed relationships between the analyses outlined in this chapter will be disentangled and explored further in the discussion section.

5 DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

This study continues the ongoing discussion among scholars and policymakers on housing mobility programs and their effect on target population outcomes. The stated premise of housing mobility programs such as HOPE VI is based on neighborhood effects theory. This theory posits that where a person lives determine her life chances. Concentration effects, an extension of neighborhood effects, posits that high levels of concentrated poverty is both detrimental to the health of a neighborhood, as well as the health and well-being of its residents, thereby reducing their life chances. By relocating low-income residents into mixed income neighborhoods, the expectation is that they will, among other things, experience improved health and access to leveraging social capital that could expose them to opportunities to employment achieving upward mobility. This kind of poverty deconcentration is done by temporarily or permanently relocating residents of these communities into mixed income neighborhoods or by redeveloping their old communities and recreating them into mixed income developments whereby some former residents are allowed to return. Several government programs have been implemented over the past forty years with the intent to help accomplish this.

The research presented here sought to examine the effects of one housing mobility program in particular, referred to as the Atlanta Way, in which traditional public housing was not rebuilt with a replacement, but rather an eventual complete divestment in public housing. The sample in this study includes former public housing residents whose public housing communities
were demolished and where the housing authority forced them to relocate into the privatized housing market. Where traditional HOPE VI policy requires residents to relocate to neighborhoods that do not exceed a certain level of poverty, the Atlanta Way had no such requirements – residents could move wherever they wished or where they could find housing. The goal of this research is to examine the impact of disrupted place-based relationships, as a result of relocation, on predicting outcomes of well-being for former public housing residents.

**Social Disintegration**

Social disintegration was both associated with and a predictor of increased anxiety and alienation post relocation. However, social disintegration was neither correlated with or a predictor of financial strain. Despite the fact that former public housing residents overall felt their neighborhoods were good places to live and their new neighborhoods would be proactive in deterring signs of neighborhood disorder, access to these apparent benefits did nothing to improve feelings of alienation or financial strain. Social disintegration is a macro level variable, a neighborhood variable. In essence, while relocation improved perception of one’s neighborhood environment, this neighborhood level improvement itself had no effect on one’s finances and actually increased feelings of alienation. Social disintegration did, however, predict a decrease in anxiety. In order for scholars to truly understand the ways in which social opportunity, mental health, and housing interact, they must further explore the link between social disintegration and anxiety.

How can one both overall feel one’s neighborhood is more responsive to problems, while still feeling alienated? It could be that respondents are not making meaningful connections at the micro level in their new neighborhoods, in addition to other challenges that have not been explored here that are increasing their feelings of alienation. There is evidence that for families,
the stigma of coming from public housing and being recipients of Section 8 affect their ability to thrive in their new neighborhoods (Clampet-Lundquist 2004). In addition, studies suggest that it can take years to psychologically recover from being displaced (Clampet-Lundquist 2004; Fried 1963). For seniors, there is literature that indicates with that relocation for this group comes a loss of the status of being acknowledged as an elder in the community, being known and knowing others in the community (Keene and Ruel 2013). Public housing residents also share a common plight that could be considered a stabilizing force (Manzo, Kleit, Couch 2008). While we know that while public housing was not perfect, it served as a safety net for some of the most vulnerable in our society. The stability it offered was removed under this displacement policy. Section 8, while an opportunity, can be rescinded for a number of reasons that may leave relocates feeling even more powerless, despite having positive feelings regarding their new neighborhood.

On the other hand, social disintegration was a predictor of decreased anxiety post relocation. The t-tests examining differences between residents from family and seniors and how they perceive of their old housing community and their new housing community shows a great increase in social integration for those from family housing. This positive change arguably affected the change variable predicting decreased anxiety. Studies indicate that social cohesion (used as measure of social integration here) is linked to improved mental and physical health conditions for community members (Putnam 2000; Cattell 2001; Kawachi and Berkman 2001; Kristotakis and Gamarnikow 2004; Abramson et al 2008; Green et al., 2011). Knowing that one’s neighbors will be responsive to neighborhood disorder can alleviate anxiety. While one may not know one’s neighbors very well and perhaps feel a bit alienated, one at least feels safer, perhaps, because of the level of social cohesion in the new neighborhood. In addition, studies on
HOPE VI have largely found that residents’ new neighborhoods are safer, and they feel safer (Popkin 2010). Thus, it could be interpreted that change in neighborhood environment serves as a mechanism for decreased anxiety.

**Social Dissolution**

Dissolution of place-based relationships at the micro level had no effect on alienation, anxiety or financial strain. Looking at the t-tests, it appears that there was such little change in social capital from the first wave to the last that a social dissolution construct would not be strong enough to affect anything. The fact that social dissolution was so weak due to weak social capital in either wave was unexpected. A study of residents at Pruitt-Igoe found that social capital was weak and residents reported a desire to isolate themselves due a distrust of their neighbors (Clampet-Lundquist 2004; Rainwater 1970), a situation that did not appear to improve after relocation. These findings are consistent with other studies that have found that relocates are not making relationships with their new neighbors for various reasons from lack of common interaction space (Curley 2010) to a fear of new neighbors’ inquiries as threatening to their housing security (Kurwa 2015).

Again, neither dimension of the anomie construct had any effect on financial strain. However, looking back at the mean values of financial strain, they virtually remain constant. There is little change in financial strain from baseline to relocation. This is consistent with other studies that have found little change in the economic conditions of relocatees (Goering 2003; Katz et al 2001; Kling et al 2007; Kurwa 2015; Ludwig et al 2008).

Neighborhood effects literature emphasizes the role of neighborhood level relations as a mechanism by resources are transmitted, affecting individual level outcomes (Clampet-Lundquist 2004 Ellen and Turner 1997). Considering this, I would expect that the presence of
neighborhood-level relationships, measured by the social capital construct, would play a role in
individual level outcomes before and after relocation. One of the benefits of relocation
according to housing mobility advocates, is that moving to a neighborhood with less
concentrated poverty would provide the opportunity to make connections with groups with
greater access to more conventionally-valued resources that would improve individual outcomes
for those relocating. In the cross-sectional analyses of social capital, it appears that this micro-
level resource declined post-relocation. Social capital after baseline had significant power in
predicting increased anxiety. As a change variable, social disintegration was never significant in
the fixed-effect models, indicating that the variation over time was too small to effect any change
in the dependent change variables. Social capital declined at 24 months relocation, but the
reason there was very little variation observed over time is because it appears there were low
levels of social capital at baseline. Nonetheless, what little social capital existed before baseline
decreased at 24 months post relocation. This observation challenges the theories about social
capital and housing mobility programs – that moving out of concentrated poverty to more mixed
income neighborhoods improves social capital for relocatees. Perhaps better outcomes occur
depending on the compositing of the “mixed” income community. Studies from both Chicago
and Atlanta have found that people being relocated from public housing using HOPE VI or in
Atlanta, the Atlanta Model, have found that most of the relocated residents move into
neighborhoods that are less concentrated in poverty than their public housing neighborhood, but
not that are still not “low poverty” neighborhoods (Oakley and Burchfield 2009; Oakley, Ruel,
Reid 2013). Perhaps relocating into a neighborhood that is a low to no poverty neighborhood
would result in gaining social capital after relocating (Ellen and Turner 1997).
Consistent with some of the housing mobility literature (Popkin et al. 2009) for the overall sample, relocating improved only one measure used in this study. However, as one disaggregates the data, a somewhat different picture is painted. As predicted, a difference was observed in social integration between those from senior housing and those from family housing. This may have something to do with tenure in public housing. Those in senior housing were much more likely to have lived in public housing longer than those from family. Thus, it is understandable why those from senior housing would report greater levels of social integration in their original public housing community. When comparing the two, it appears that those from senior communities were more satisfied with their original neighborhoods and had a greater sense of social integration in their original community compared to families. This is likely because seniors lived in public housing longer and public longer public housing tenure is related to greater dissatisfaction with one’s new neighborhood compared to one’s old neighborhood (Oakley, Ruel, Reid 2013). In addition, senior public housing was located in much more ‘desirable’ areas of the city, compared to family public housing communities. Family public housing possessed the stigmatizing characteristics associated with traditional public housing, while senior public housing did not as much. Families received a dramatic increase in social integration, while social integration declined some for those from senior housing after relocating. Both groups also experienced a decline in social capital; however, the social capital for family in both waves was greater than that for seniors. Coming from family housing appeared to predict increasing anxiety post relocation as well as financial strain. Families may be experiencing an undue financial burden leaving public housing compared to seniors. This could perhaps be due to a loss of formal support found in public housing such as onsite daycare, food bank drop offs and the like. Family residents in our sample were more likely to live in houses, as opposed to
apartments, which can be more costly to inhabit. Houses, especially old ones, can have very high electric and/or gas costs because of poor insulation. The city of Atlanta has had serious issues with the extremely high cost of water in single-family homes, which can reach over $1,000 per month (CNN 2011). In addition, as Ellen and Turner (1997) suggest, single-parent families may depend more on support from neighbors and neighborhoods institutions. Families were more likely to report financial strain post relocation despite reporting high levels of social integrated in their new neighborhood. Since there were low levels of social support to begin with at baseline with very little change post relocation, perhaps formalized support as opposed to informal support in public housing played a larger role for residents and should be explored further.

Family residents were also less likely to experience anxiety post relocation. Family residents reported an increase in neighborhood satisfaction while seniors experienced a decline in neighborhood satisfaction after relocating into their new neighborhood. Neighborhood satisfaction appears to be a significant factor in shaping mental health outcomes for these two groups. As a result, it appears that residents of family housing saw overall greater gains than their senior community counterparts when it comes to relocation.

**Limitations**

Most of the hypotheses for this study did not hold up. While the social disintegration construct had predictive power in some cases, the social dissolution construct was not found to be able to predict anything. This could be due to a flaw in the construct. The social dissolution construct only measures what Curley (2009) refers to as “instrumental support” and did not include what she refers to as “emotional support.” In addition, the construct only measured one aspect of social support – what Curley (2009) refers to as “gaining ties.” The items in the
construct only measured whether or not the respondent *received* help from neighbors, not whether they themselves were the ones giving the support. Perhaps adding these items to the construct would have increased its predictive power. Perhaps my sample did not receive support, but were the source of support this could have told us something about “draining ties” (Curley 2009). Either way, adding this other dimension to the construct may have made my anomie theoretical construct more robust. Another limitation is the fact that the sample is small and not random and therefore, is not generalizable. The findings from this study only tell us about this specific sample, though insights can certainly be gained from the sample, encouraging us to ask questions about housing mobility programs at large.

**Conclusion**

Most of the research on housing mobility programs has produced mixed results on the degree to which neighborhood mechanisms effect individual outcomes. There is evidence to suggest that dispersing poverty in and of itself does not contribute to the kind of positive change in economic opportunity that would engender economic mobility. For instance, studies of the MTO program, which relocated families into predominately white neighborhoods using Section 8 Housing Choice Vouchers, as well as HOPE VI studies, have not found much change in the individual outcomes (Popkin et al. 2004).

This study sought to examine the role of place-based mechanisms in predicting individual outcomes for relocated former public housing residents. Using a predictive model based on the disruptive process of relocation, analyses reveal that social disintegration was the most important in predicting individual outcomes both before and after relocation. Social dissolution had very little influence on individual outcomes, both before and after relocation. Social dissolution is change in social capital, which there was little to begin with and slightly less after relocation.
The lack of power social capital had in bivariate and change score models challenges many assumptions on the importance of place-based relationships acting as a mechanism by which opportunities are transmitted to improve an individual’s life chances.

There are many factors at work in neighborhoods, in the social location of the relocate that may interact working to affect individual level outcomes. One of those found here is whether one comes from senior housing or family public housing. Those from senior housing appeared to be happier with their previous public housing neighborhood compared to families. Since all measurements of well-being worsened for seniors, except for financial strain, perhaps efforts could be made to preserve public housing for seniors especially given the importance of aging in place (Keene and Ruel 2013).

Perhaps there are other nuanced aspects to the quality and structure of a neighborhood that shapes individual outcomes. Perhaps it is less important for adults as opposed to children as studies have suggested in the past with the Gautreaux program (Briggs 1997; Rosenbaum 1991, 1995; Rosenbaum and Popkin 1991). More qualitative data and analysis is needed to better understand and disentangle how neighborhood mechanisms work to effect individual outcomes in housing mobility programs and in general in order to answer this and many other questions about housing policy in the twenty-first century American city.
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