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Mixed Methods Research on Economic Conditions, Public Policy, and Family and Child Well-Being

Moving At-Risk Kids to Better Neighborhoods: Why Girls Fare Better Than Boys

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Abstract

The Moving to Opportunity (MTO) program offered public housing residents in five cities the opportunity to move to very low poverty neighborhoods. Results from surveys conducted five years later show that while the families in the experimental group are still in less poor neighborhoods than the controls, the effects of MTO have been mixed for the adolescents in these families. Specifically, male youth in the experimental group fared no better on most measures of delinquency and risk behavior, and worse on some measures of risk behavior than their control counterparts. However, female experimental youth demonstrated a beneficial pattern of better mental health and lower risk behavior relative to the control group.

We combine qualitative and quantitative data from one of the five MTO cities -- Baltimore -- in order to understand why MTO had such different effects on boys and girls. The survey, conducted four to seven years after random assignment into the MTO program, provides the quantitative data for the analysis. Approximately two years after the survey, we conducted in-depth qualitative interviews with a random subsample of 83 Baltimore MTO youth aged 14 – 19 years old. Our analysis uses survey and qualitative data gleaned from male and female youth to generate various hypotheses about why boys and girls fared so differently.

Policy Background

Young people who grow up in high-poverty urban neighborhoods deal with crime and violence, resource-poor schools, restricted labor markets, and other forms of deprivation at a much higher level than youth who grow up in mixed income or affluent neighborhoods. These contextual factors, in addition to the difficulties presented by their own family environments, can take a toll on youth, and neighborhood socio-economic status has been associated with an increased risk of key adolescent outcomes such as non-marital childbearing (Crane, 1991; Billy and Moore, 1992; Ku, Sonenstein, and Pleck, 1993) and dropping out of high school (Crane, 1991; Brooks-Gunn, Duncan, Klebanov, and Sealand, 1993) Policies to improve outcomes for low-income children and youth can take several forms, including improvements to their schools or anti-violence programs. In this paper, we examine the effects of a large-scale housing mobility policy which, while not specifically targeting youth outcomes as a goal, moved children and their families out of high-poverty neighborhoods into less poor neighborhoods.

The federal government provides housing assistance for low-income households in several ways. One of the most visible manifestations of this assistance in cities is conventional-site public housing, where many units are clustered together, often architecturally isolated from the surrounding neighborhood. Towering high-rises with caged balconies, and three-story walkups with their uniform back walls facing the sidewalk are two of the classic styles of public housing in large U.S. cities. Because of housing regulations and the increasing shortage of affordable housing, these public housing developments are populated by extremely poor households. In the last decade, the federal government has emphasized dispersal and poverty de-concentration in its low-income housing policies, moving away from the traditional public housing model (Hartung and Henig, 1997). The main instrument that the federal government has at its disposal for this kind of de-concentrated housing assistance is the Housing Choice Voucher (HCV), formerly known as the tenant-based Section 8 voucher or certificate.[1]

[1] Though the name of the program has changed, we will be using the "Section 8" terminology throughout this paper, since this was the name of the program throughout the MTO intervention, and the study participants use this terminology.

People use this subsidy to rent from landlords in the private housing market, and they can, in theory, use it in the neighborhood of their choice, if there is a willing landlord and a rent that falls into the range covered by the voucher and their income. Section 8 units are much more likely to be located in neighborhoods with lower poverty and lower unemployment than public housing units (Newman and Schnare, 1997).

The current focus on geographical dispersion stems from past experience with the Gautreaux Assisted Housing Program. Gautreaux was a major housing mobility program which grew out of a lawsuit against HUD and the Chicago Housing Authority (CHA). In 1976, the Gautreaux program began to offer Chicago public housing residents the opportunity to live in predominantly white areas, through the Section 8 housing assistance program. When residents signed up for the program, they were assigned to move either to a predominantly-white suburb or a Chicago neighborhood, based on the housing openings at the time of application. The Gautreaux Program was in operation until 1998. In the end, suburban movers relocated to suburbs that were an average of 96% white and predominantly middle class. Those movers who relocated within the city ended up in neighborhoods that were 99% African-American. In a follow-up survey in 1989, researchers found that, compared to the city movers, fewer suburban youth had dropped out of high school (5% vs. 20%), and more suburban movers were enrolled in college (54% vs. 21%). Additionally, more young suburban movers were working than city movers (75% vs. 41%) (Rubinowitz and Rosenbaum 2000). The adult suburban movers, however, saw only modest job gains (Popkin, Rosenbaum, and Meaden 1993; Welfeld 1998).

By the late 1990s, more than fifty housing mobility programs were operating in the U.S., most of them patterned after the Gautreaux program. The most well-known of these programs is Moving to Opportunity (MTO), a HUD housing mobility experiment in five cities – Baltimore, New York, Chicago, Los Angeles, and Boston. Begun in 1994, MTO incorporates many of the Gautreaux elements but also has new components. Like many of the Gautreaux households, low-income residents in public housing located in extremely poor neighborhoods voluntarily applied to MTO. While the Gautreaux research findings suffered from the lack of a control group, MTO was specifically designed as an experiment. Congress allocated funding for a ten-year research project on

MTO, and the design of the program is such that the findings have larger generalizeability than Gautreaux and neighborhood effects can be better evaluated.

Residents in public housing or Section 8 project-based housing located in extremely poor neighborhoods in the five cities were eligible to apply to the MTO program.[2] They were then randomly assigned into one of three groups. One group, the MTO experimental group, received a Section 8 voucher that would allow them to rent an apartment on the private market, but only in census tracts with 1990 poverty rates of less than 10 percent (unlike Gautreaux, there were no racial restrictions on the receiving neighborhoods). This group also received housing counseling to assist them in relocating. Another group received a Section 8 voucher with no geographical restrictions. Finally, the control group received no new housing assistance but could continue to live in public housing or apply for other housing assistance that became available to public housing residents in the interim (usually a Section 8 voucher).

After the households in the experimental and Section 8 group received a voucher, they needed to find a unit that would accept a voucher, that passed inspection by the housing authority, and – for experimental families – that was in a low-poverty census tract. Moreover, they had to find this unit within 90 days (with the possibility of an extension). Across all five cities, 47% of the experimental group used their program vouchers, and 62% of the Section 8 group used their vouchers. These rates ranged across the cities, based on both the local housing market and the housing counseling organizations' services (Orr et al., 2003). In this paper, we refer to people who made a "program" move, that is moving with the Section 8 voucher as a result of the MTO intervention, as "compliers" and those who did not make this program move as "non-compliers."

In the last half of the 1990s, other federal and local initiatives were changing public housing in ways that affected the families in the MTO program outside of the intervention. One policy that has dramatically changed the public housing landscape in cities is HOPE VI. Starting in 1992, local housing authorities across the country have used HOPE VI funding to demolish distressed public housing developments in order to

[2] Thus, self-selection is a problem with MTO results, similar to Gautreaux. Nevertheless, the households who applied to participate and were eligible were actually a more economically-disadvantaged population than the remaining public housing families in the five cities (Goering, Feins, & Richardson, 2002).

deconcentrate poverty and design new communities. This affects some of the MTO cities more than others. For example, the developments where the majority of the Baltimore sample lived at baseline have since been destroyed and revitalized through HOPE VI. As a result of policies like HOPE VI and regular mobility, families who originally signed up for MTO were quite mobile in the years following random assignment, regardless of their program group. Nearly 70% of the control group had moved from their baseline addresses by 2002. Similarly, 35% of the experimental families and 22.7% of the Section 8 families who had not made a program move had moved by 2002. The experimental families were only required to stay at their program move address (in the low-poverty tract) for one year, and they could then use their voucher wherever they wanted, within the bounds of the regular Section 8 program. After this initial move, 66% of the experimental households made one or more moves by 2002 (Orr et al., 2003).

Researchers have followed all three groups of MTO families over the years since random assignment to find out what affect this intervention had on adult employment, mental and physical health, children's education, and youths' risk behavior. The most recent study, the Interim Evaluation Survey, interviewed adults, children, and teenagers from the full MTO sample in all five cities, four to seven years after random assignment. Since this paper focuses on youth, we will only discuss findings for the youth from the survey.

The families in the experimental group were still living in less poor neighborhoods, on average, than families in the Section 8-only group or families in the control group (Orr et al. 2003). However, this treatment difference in neighborhood poverty was not reflected in a clear and consistent way across youth outcomes. Experimental teen girls (12 – 19 years old) scored significantly lower than control girls on psychological distress and generalized anxiety scores, but there were no differences on these measures for boys. Experimental teen girls (15 – 19 years old) were less likely to have smoked marijuana in the past month than control girls. There was no difference between experimental and control males in terms of smoking marijuana, but experimental males were more likely to have smoked cigarettes or drank alcohol in the past month than control males (Kling and Liebman, 2004). Furthermore, experimental teen males (15 – 25 years old) were more likely to be arrested for property crime and self-report behavior

problems (15 –20 years old) than their control counterparts (Kling, Ludwig, and Katz, 2005). In terms of educational outcomes, children (5 – 19 years old) in the experimental and Section 8-only groups were attending slightly less poor schools than children in control families at the time of the survey. Three-quarters of the families in the experimental group were still in the same school district as they had been at baseline, which accounts for the lack of a dramatic change in the composition of their children's schools (Orr et al., 2003). For the five cities pooled together, there were no significant differences in reading or math achievement scores for youth 15 – 20 years old (Kling and Liebman, 2004).

The analyses of the Interim youth survey data point consistently toward a different treatment effect for boys and girls. Whether it is arrests, behavioral problems, mental health, or substance use, girls in the experimental group are more likely to do better than their control counterparts, and boys in the experimental group do worse or no different than control boys. In the next section, we review several processes through which neighborhoods may affect young people, including processes that might produce a differential effect by gender.

Conceptual Framework

Although the MTO intervention was primarily designed to move families from high-poverty public housing neighborhoods into less poor neighborhoods, researchers had predicted, given the results from the Gautreaux program, that adults and children who moved into low-poverty neighborhoods would experience measurable benefits from the move. Therefore, the lack of significant differences for several of the risk behavior outcomes, and the differential treatment effects by gender for the youth is puzzling. In order to understand why differences may not exist in some domains, and exist in other domains for boys and not girls and vice versa, we can look at the processes through which neighborhoods may affect young people. Kling and Liebman (2004) consider several hypotheses concerning neighborhood mechanisms to explain their differential

findings by treatment effect and gender for MTO youth. We will discuss most of these briefly here.

The MTO intervention fits solidly within a neighborhood effects framework, which argues that neighborhoods affect their residents above and beyond their individual or family characteristics. Urban neighborhoods are sorted in an unequal manner, with some neighborhoods characterized by social isolation, concentrated poverty, and racial segregation. In their comprehensive review of neighborhood effects research, Sampson, Morenoff, and Gannon-Rowley (2002) suggest that social problems – such as infant mortality, child maltreatment, social and physical disorder, adolescent childbearing, and dropping out of high school – at the neighborhood level often are "bundled" together. High-poverty neighborhoods have been associated with this cluster of social problems, though it is still not clear, after over a decade of research, exactly which factors are the most critical in this relationship between neighborhoods and individuals. To complicate matters further, two neighborhoods with similar poverty rates can have very different social contexts. The MTO experimental treatment was solely targeted toward moving families to neighborhoods where fewer than 10% of the residents were poor. However, some of these neighborhoods were located in suburbs far from the center of city, while others were urban neighborhoods on a declining trajectory.

Researchers have hypothesized that, through a variety of mechanisms, adult neighbors may play a critical role in transmitting neighborhood effects. It is through the social ties of adults that norms and trust are established which affect the social context of the community. Social cohesion, shared expectations, and "a willingness to intervene for the public good" affect the environment in which children and youth live. This is referred to as collective efficacy, a measure of informal social control and social cohesion that Sampson, Raudenbush, and Earls (1997) focus on as an important conduit of neighborhood effects (Sampson et al., 2002, p.457). Low-income children can also benefit from more affluent neighborhoods through their ties with working adults, as role models, and as sources of information about jobs and schooling. At the time of the Interim survey, experimental households lived in neighborhoods where the fraction of adults who were employed and had college degrees was significantly higher than the neighborhoods of control households. Nevertheless, it is unclear why the presence of

employed adults would play a positive role for girls but not boys. Youths' role models can also include parents, and since most of the MTO households are single-mother families, girls are more likely than boys to have a same-gendered adult in their house that they can talk to.

Another way that neighborhood effects can be transmitted to young people is through their peers. Peers are an important source of influence on a teenager's activities and if a young person is surrounded in his/her neighborhood by peers who are engaged in delinquent or risk behavior, then they may slide into these activities as well. Of course both affluent and poor teens can smoke marijuana, sell drugs, and steal, but in poor neighborhoods, teens typically have more unstructured time than teens in wealthy neighborhoods, which may provide more opportunities to become involved in these activities. Thus, if a young person moves to a low-poverty neighborhood, they may be exposed to less peers who are engaged in delinquent or risk behavior. However, Kling and Liebman (2004) suggest that MTO youth who move into low-poverty neighborhoods may, as a result of inferior education in their old elementary schools, fall into the bottom of the achievement distribution at their new schools, and thus associate with peers who might provide more negative influences. If this shifting is worse for boys than girls, then the benefits of the move may be diminished for them. Indeed, at the time of the Interim survey, experimental boys were more likely to have friends who used drugs than the control boys, indicating a more at-risk peer group. There was no difference for experimental girls and control girls on this mediating factor (Orr et al., 2003). Yet it is impossible to tease apart whether the boys were influenced by their friends, or whether it was their own drug involvement that attracted them to these friends in the first place.

Friends from outside the neighborhood can be influential as well. If experimental boys are more likely to visit their baseline neighborhoods than girls, then they may be retaining ties with friends who are still in high-poverty neighborhoods. At the time of the Interim survey, experimental boys reported making more visits to their old neighborhoods than girls, but this difference was not statistically significant.

Both the adult ties and the peer models hypothesize benefits for poor children and youth living in affluent neighborhoods as opposed to their counterparts in high-poverty neighborhoods. But the relative deprivation model proposes the opposite. Living

amongst more affluent neighbors may cause low-income kids to resent their neighbors to such an extent that they fall into a deviant subculture. They may be more likely, then, to drop out of high school or engage in illegal activities than they would have had they lived in a poorer neighborhood.

Related to this relative deprivation model are two other ideas considered by Kling and Liebman (2004). When children and youth moved from public housing to low-poverty neighborhoods, they may have encountered cultural conflict and stereotyped expectations – both of which may have been worse for boys than girls. Four to seven years after the move, experimental households were still living in predominantly minority neighborhoods, though the fraction was slightly (but statistically significant) lower than for the controls. Yet there was a class difference between the MTO experimental households and their new neighbors. Cultural capital – knowledge or taste in the arts, dress, and language – differs not only by race and ethnicity but also by class. In her interviews with forty-four low-income African-American youth living in Yonkers, Carter (2003) explores the concept of "non-dominant" cultural capital. The youth she talked to consciously used certain language styles, dress, and music tastes to not only differentiate themselves from white youth, but also to re-assert their own group membership. Stereotyped expectations, which are more negative for African-American males than females, may intersect with how non-dominant cultural capital is deployed. Dance (2002) spent four years with a group of low-income African-American young males in Cambridge and Boston examining how their marginalized position in society affected the image that they presented to those around them. While only a minority of males in her study were actually involved in serious criminal activity, most subscribed to "tough" or "gangsta" like postures. Dance claims that for the "street savvy" males in her study "gangsterlike posturing is a comportment that is temporary, strategic, and survivalist" (p. 7). How this image-making is affected by a move to a low-poverty neighborhood may be very different for boys and girls.

Anderson (1990) addresses this presentation of self in his ethnography of a gentrifying urban neighborhood located adjacent to a high-poverty neighborhood. He described how young African-American men from the high-poverty neighborhood had learned a street posture like Dance describes – whether they are law-abiding or not.

Many of these young men had adopted a skill set of body language and facial expressions (part of non-dominant cultural capital) that they used as they walked down the street. Their posture was designed to give the impression to others that they were not to be messed with. How would this skill set, if learned by the boys in the MTO study, fit in their new low-poverty environments? Anderson's findings give us an idea about the clash between this deployment of non-dominant cultural capital and mainstream stereotypes. Young African-American males from the poor side of the tracks would often have interactions with the (usually) white professionals who had recently moved in. The whites' actions as they encountered these young men on sidewalks often revealed their fears about whether these young men would inflict harm upon them. One young African-American man told Anderson about an incident where he and his friends were walking down the street at the same time as a white woman. She saw them, and walked up to the porch of a house which was clearly not hers. This man playfully confronted her and told her that she didn't need to be afraid of them, and showed her money in his pockets to make it clear that he earned money from a job rather than from mugging people. If the MTO boys moved into their new neighborhoods having learned the posture for their old neighborhood, this may not serve them well with their new neighbors.

In the discussion of the qualitative findings, we consider the evidence for these hypotheses in order to understand the processes that lead to benefits to girls but not boys from a low-poverty move. These hypotheses are reflected in the domains that we have chosen for our qualitative analysis – neighborhood and school context, free time, friends, and parental/teacher expectations. We include all the spaces that the teens spend time in, so our analysis is not strictly limited to the current neighborhood that they are living in, since their daily routines take them beyond these boundaries.

Methods

Quantitative Data and Models

When public housing tenants were enrolled in the MTO program between 1994 and 1997, the head of the household completed a baseline survey. Ninety-six percent of

the Baltimore households were African-American, and, at baseline, Baltimore households had a median number of three children. These families had high rates of unemployment and low educational attainment. Forty-two percent of the Baltimore heads of household had neither a high school diploma nor a GED. Finally, 76% of the Baltimore heads of household were not working at baseline.

The MTO Interim Evaluation survey took place seven years after the first families were randomly assigned. In the previous section, we described the findings of the Interim Evaluation data, pooling together all five MTO sites. We use these same data and models in our quantitative analysis, but we only analyze the data for Baltimore. These data were collected from January – September 2002 and the sample included all families randomly assigned up through December 31, 1997. In Baltimore, 636 households were included in the sample, which encompassed the entire MTO population in that site (see Orr, et al. 2003 for a detailed description of the data collection and analysis of the survey data).[3]

Fieldworkers conducted in-person surveys with adults and children (8 – 19 years old), and they administered educational achievement tests to children ages 5 – 19 years old. Up to two children from each household were interviewed. On average, the sample included 2.6 members per family, including 1.6 children. The interviews primarily took place in the respondents' homes, using Computer-Assisted Personal Interviewing (CAPI) on laptop computers.

The experimental design of MTO allows us to draw conclusions about the effect of a low-poverty housing mobility policy on individuals, beyond individual and family characteristics. We look at this effect by comparing average outcomes of youth assigned to the experimental and control groups. This intent-to-treat (ITT) estimate identifies the causal effect of offering families the services made available through the experimental treatment. These services not only include the actual voucher, but also housing and budget counseling. Therefore, even the families who did not use the voucher successfully, still received some form of treatment if they attended the counseling sessions.

[3] While educational testing, medical testing, and administrative data were also included in the Interim Impacts Evaluation, we will only be using data from the survey.

We only included youth 15 – 19 years old at the time of the Interim Evaluation in the models in this paper. These youth were 8 – 15 years old when their families enrolled in the MTO program, and four to seven years had passed since random assignment. We have also omitted youth in the Section 8 comparison group from the models, keeping our focus on the experimental treatment effect. This subsample leaves us with 186 respondents, and an effective response rate of 85%.[4]

We calculated the ITT effect using ordinary least squares regression, with a set of covariates (X) representing pre-random assignment baseline characteristics.[5] Standard errors were adjusted for the presence of youth from the same family by using robust standard errors. All the estimates were computed using sample weights.[6]

Since we were interested in differential treatment effects by gender, we included interaction terms for gender and treatment group in the models. Let Y be the outcome of interest, G be female, and Z be membership in the experimental group. Equation (1) shows a simple regression model used to estimate the control means (β_0 and β_2) and the ITT differences between the experimental and control groups (β_1 and β_3) for girls and boys, respectively.

$$(1)\ Y_i=G_i\beta_{10} + G_iZ_i\beta_{11} + (1-G_i)\beta_{12} + (1-G_i)Z_i\beta_{13} + \varepsilon_{1i}$$

Estimating the ITT effect for both genders simultaneously allows a simple correction of standard errors for correlation in outcomes between siblings.[7]

[4] During fieldwork, a 3-in-10 subsample of hard-to-locate families was taken in order to focus resources on difficult to find cases. Observations from the subsample receive greater weight in the analyses. Accounting for the fact that subsample observations are used to represent observations that were not in the subsample, we calculate an effective response rate response (ERR) rate based on the phase one response rate (R1) and the subsample response rate (R2). ERR = R1 + (1-R1)*R2.

[5] A list of these covariates can be found in Appendix A.

[6] These weights have three components, and they are described in detail in Orr et al. (2003), Appendix B. 3-in-10 sub-sample members receive greater weight since they represent individuals who were not contacted during this sub-sampling phase. Youth from larger families receive greater weight, since two children were randomly sampled from each household, they represent a larger fraction of the population. Finally, weights are used to take into account a change in the ratio of individuals randomly assigned to treatment groups.

[7] The cluster option in Stata was used to account for within household heteroscedasticity.

In order to increase precision of the estimates and control for any small sample differences in baseline covariates (X), the primary quantitative analysis in this paper uses regression-adjusted ITT effects, as estimated using equation (2).

(2) $Y_i=G_i\beta_{20} + G_iZ_i\beta_{21} + (1-G_i)\beta_{22} + (1-G_i)Z_i\beta_{23} + X_i\beta_{24} + \varepsilon_{2i}$

The difference in treatment effects between males and females is $\beta_{23} - \beta_{21}$.[8]

Qualitative data and analysis

As stated earlier, not all of the experimental households actually used the MTO voucher to make a move. In Baltimore, 58% of the experimental group used their voucher to make a move to a low poverty neighborhood, though almost all have since moved on to other neighborhoods. Those who used the MTO voucher may have been different than those who did not. The advantage of an experimental design is that we can control for these differences in our quantitative analysis. In the qualitative analysis, we use the control group data to explore gender differences in behavior in the absence of the MTO intervention.[9] We then focus on gender differences among the youth from the experimental complier households – those who moved to a low-poverty neighborhood through MTO. We do not consider experimental non-compliers or families who were offered a regular Section 8 voucher at random assignment, though both groups are included in the qualitative study.

Our qualitative sample is a stratified random subsample of 149 families across the three program groups in Baltimore. We sampled evenly among three household types: (1) households with child(ren) 8 – 13 years old only, (2) households with child(ren) 8 – 13 and 14 – 19, and (3) households with child(ren) 14 – 19 years old only. Heads of household participated in an in-depth qualitative interview between July 2003 and June 2004. With households containing at least one teenager between 14 and 19 years old we attempted to interview the teen as well. For households with more than one teen, we

[8] This difference and its standard error were calculated using Stata's lincom function.
[9] Since 81% of this control group in the qualitative sample have actually moved, we are not comparing the experimental group to a similar group who stayed in their baseline neighborhoods.

randomly selected a "focal youth." Seventy-four percent of those teens sampled participated, for a total of 83 youth respondents.[10] The reasons for non-response include death of the adult respondent with no valid contact information for the youth's current caregiver, death of the youth, foster care placement, and inability to locate the family at all (and thus no adult interview either).

Table 2. Youth respondents in Baltimore

	Households with children 8 – 13 and 14 – 19	Households with children 14 – 19 only	Totals
Experimental (Compliers)	20 (12)	10 (6)	30 (18)
Section 8	7	10	17
Control	23	13	36
Totals	50	33	83

Note: Experimental "compliers" moved under the conditions of the program

The qualitative analysis in this paper is based on data from our in-depth interviews with these youth. Since we are focusing this analysis on the experimental compliers and the controls, our sample size is 54 (18 experimental compliers and 36 controls). We designed an in-depth interview guide organized around six modules: neighborhood, social status, school, daily routines, networks, and health. Interviews were taped and usually took one and a half to two hours to complete. Each youth was paid $35 for participating in the study. To protect confidentiality, each youth was asked to choose a pseudonym.

After the tapes were transcribed, interviews were coded by topic and entered into an electronic database (Microsoft Access). The initial coding was primarily descriptive rather than analytic. Interview material from these topical "fields" was then imported into NVivo for more detailed analytical coding.

[10] Out of the 149 families, only 112 had a focal youth.

Findings

View from the Numbers

Understanding the variation in trajectories for teenagers, and the way gender interacts with a housing mobility program to shape these trajectories, requires an analysis on several levels. We start by considering the neighborhood poverty for the sample, since this allows us to look at the differences in the opportunity and resource contexts where the teens are living. Next, we analyze the effect of the MTO intervention and gender on several risk behaviors for a larger survey sample of Baltimore youth. Finally, we use the qualitative interview data to explore the processes through which differential outcomes may be produced.

Neighborhood poverty for the sample

The survey-based analysis of impacts four to seven years after baseline across the five cities found that experimental households were still in significantly less poor neighborhoods than control households (Orr, et al. 2003). Thus, not only did the MTO intervention "work" in terms of moving families to low-poverty neighborhoods initially, but its effect extended four to seven years later as experimental families were still in lower poverty neighborhoods, on average, compared to control families.

We looked at neighborhood poverty in four different ways for our sample of qualitative youth respondents in Baltimore. In the tables below, we only include the experimental (complier and non-complier) and control households, since they are the focus of this paper. We also include a separate column for the experimental compliers, since we focus on this group in the qualitative analysis.

In the MTO program, the low-poverty voucher became a standard Section 8 voucher with no geographic restrictions after one year, allowing the experimental households to use them wherever they wanted in their next move. Over time, many MTO families made subsequent moves to poorer neighborhoods. However, their average poverty rate across all the neighborhoods since random assignment is still significantly lower compared to the control households (Table 2).

Table 2. Average poverty rate for addresses from random assignment through Dec 2001, Baltimore qualitative respondents.

	Experimental	Experimental compliers	Control
Female (N=35)	29.6%**	18.7%	41.8%
Male (N=31)	30.7%**	19.6%	43%

**p<.05

Note: All significance tests are between the full experimental group and the control group.

In Table 3, we look at the neighborhood poverty rates at three addresses: the family's address at random assignment, their address at the time of the survey, conducted four to seven years after random assignment (the time of the Interim survey), and their address during the qualitative study, six to nine years after random assignment. At the time that they signed up for the MTO program, all groups lived in high-poverty neighborhoods where at least four out of every ten people were poor. Four to seven years later, improvements in neighborhood poverty rates can be seen for all of the groups, as control households also moved out of public housing through HOPE VI revitalization, as discussed earlier. In the roughly two years between the Interim survey and the qualitative study, some of the experimental females made moves to less poor neighborhoods, while their control counterparts stayed in similar neighborhoods. However, the trend for experimental males was toward poorer neighborhoods while some

in the control group moved to less poor neighborhoods. Because of these different trajectories, the control and experimental male households are living in neighborhoods that are equally poor in statistical terms. Limiting our focus to the experimental compliers reveals, though, that their poverty rates are far lower than the experimental group as a whole.

Table 3. Poverty rate for each address from random assignment through the conclusion of the qualitative study in June 2004.

	Experimental	Experimental Complier	Control
At random assignment			
Females (N=35)	46.6%	46.7%	43.2%
Males (N=31)	41.2%	39.5%	48.3%
4 – 7 years after random assignment			
Females (N=33)	28.4%	17.0%	38.1%
Males (N=29)	30.9%	19.6%	34.1%
6 – 9 years after random assignment			
Females (N=34)	22.9%***	15.2%	38.6%
Males (N=31)	32.0%	23%	28.3%

***p<.01

Note: All significance tests are between the full experimental group and the control group. The variation in the numbers included in the percentages is due to missing address data.

Risk behavior models from Interim Survey

For this mixed-methods analysis, we are using the quantitative data to look at the impact of the MTO intervention on risk outcomes for youth, and we are using the qualitative data to explore the processes that create these outcomes. We chose an array of seven measures of risk behavior that the youth reported in the Interim Survey: marijuana use, alcohol use, cigarette use, a substance use index, arrest history, a delinquent behavior index[11], and a problem behavior index.[12]

For each of these dependent variables, we constructed a model with covariates for adult and child characteristics at baseline. These covariates include characteristics that may account for differences in the take-up of the experimental voucher, such as previous victimization in the baseline neighborhood. (A list of the covariates can be found in Appendix A.) These models were run with the full survey sample of youth 15 – 19 years old (at the time of the Interim Survey) for experimental (including compliers and non-compliers) and control groups in Baltimore only. Table 4 displays the results.

[11] Fraction of nine delinquent behaviors that youth reported ever being engaged in: carrying a handgun; belonging to a gang; purposefully damaging or destroying property; stealing something worth less than $50; stealing something worth $50 or more; other property crimes; attacking someone with intention to hurt; selling drugs; and getting arrested.

[12] Fraction of eleven problem behaviors reported by youth: Difficulty concentrating; cheating or lying; teasing others; disobedient at home; difficulty in getting along with other children; trouble sitting still; hot temper; would rather be alone than with others; hanging around with kids who get into trouble; disobedient at school; and trouble getting along with teachers.

Table 4. OLS regression models for risk behavior dependent variables, Baltimore youth 15 – 19 years old, experimental and control groups, (robust standard errors)						
	Females			Males		Male - Female difference
	Control Mean	E-C (ITT)		Control Mean	E-C (ITT)	E-C
Ever used marijuana (N=185)	.375	-.142 (.107)		.355	.158 (.133)	.300* (.158)
Ever drank alcohol (N=185)	.415	.114 (.121)		.507	.022 (.122)	-.092 (.165)
Ever smoked cigarettes (N=185)	.395	-.199* (.106)		.233	.140 (.119)	.339** (.154)
Substance use index (ever used any of above) (N=185)	.395	-.076 (.084)		.365	.107 (.095)	.183 (.116)
Ever been arrested (N=185)	.303	.042 (.110)		.335	.036 (.136)	-.006 (.157)
Problem behavior index[13] (N=184)	.382	.028 (.059)		.352	.058 (.072)	.030 (.087)
Delinquent behavior index	.114	.036 (.039)		.143	.042 (.048)	.007 (.054)

[13] The survey includes a measure of problem behaviors as reported by the parents and the youth. There is a significant interaction effect between the experimental group and gender using the parental-report problem behavior index in the model. This indicates that, taking into account the already-existing gender difference (the control means), parents of experimental males report more behavioral problems than parents of experimental females.

(N=185)							

**p<.05

*p<.10

Table 4 reveals that the effect of the MTO intervention on teen behavioral outcomes is limited to substance use. There is only one within gender difference: experimental females are significantly less likely to report smoking cigarettes than control females. The models for ever using marijuana and ever smoking cigarettes show that the MTO intervention had a different effect by gender. Taking into account the control means (the gender difference in the absence of the intervention), the experimental males are significantly more likely than the experimental females to have ever smoked marijuana and cigarettes.

With other types of delinquent or risk behavior, we do not find statistically significant differences. As we described earlier, when the five cities were analyzed together in the Interim study, Orr et al. (2003) also found no significant difference using self-reported arrest history, but using administrative data, they found that experimental males were significantly more likely to be arrested for property crime. While no significant difference was found in the five-city data for the delinquency index, experimental males were more likely to report more problem behaviors than controls. This is somewhat different that the results for Baltimore alone, shown in the model above, though not different from the model using the parental report (see footnote).

In the qualitative analysis, we look across four contextual domains that exert some level of influence on youth behavior above and beyond their individual characteristics,: their neighborhood and school environments, their use of free time, the activities their friends are engaged in, and their sense of parental and teacher expectations.

Learning the Pathways in Baltimore

The fact that adolescent girls engage in less delinquent and risk behavior than boys is one of the most well established findings in the social science literature. Usually, scholars point to physiological differences between boys and girls to explain the gender gap in delinquent and risky behaviors. Less attention has been paid to gender-specific social influences. We begin this analysis with a consideration of the social influences that might be behind the gender differences that occur among urban youth absent an intervention such as MTO. We do this by comparing the experiences of the control females to that of the control males. This analysis lays the groundwork for the next part of the analysis, where we compare the experiences of experimental males who moved through MTO to those of their female counterparts, and contrast their experiences to those of the controls. Using the data from the in-depth qualitative interviews, we seek to generate hypotheses from the qualitative data about the set of social process that might underlie the fact that boys in the experimental group do no better in terms of delinquency and risk behavior, and on some measures, do even worse, than control boys, while experimental girls show significant gains in these domains relative to control girls. In this paper, we limit our qualitative analysis to the experimental compliers -- those youth in the experimental group whose families made a move to a low-poverty neighborhood. We are focusing on this sub-sample in order to obtain a grasp on the movers' experiences of the MTO intervention on their neighborhoods, schools, and friends.

Demographics of qualitative respondents in Baltimore

Throughout the qualitative analysis, we will be looking at patterns for four groups of youth: control boys and girls, and experimental boys and girls. When we compare the demographic characteristics of this qualitative subsample of youth from Baltimore (N=54), we find no significant differences by gender or program group in median age (16 years) and median length of time at current residence (2 – 3 years), or the proportion who have been pregnant or had a child. The control boys are more likely to be living in public

housing than the other three groups. The experimental mover girls are the most likely to be currently employed (46%) and the least likely to have an arrest history (18%) among all four groups. The experimental mover boys are the most likely to report an arrest history at 43%, but only slightly higher than the control boys at 37%.

Neighborhood and school contexts for the Controls

As alluded to above, because of the large-scale demolition of public housing in Baltimore, fully 92% of our qualitative respondents overall moved at some point since random assignment. The control girls and boys moved, just like the experimentals, but none moved with a geographically-restricted voucher, such as the special MTO voucher. Consequently, they moved to, and continue to live in, neighborhoods that, while less impoverished than the housing project they resided in at baseline, are still quite poor. Currently, the neighborhoods where the girls in the control group live have an average poverty rate of nearly 40%. Control boys' neighborhoods are somewhat better, as shown in Table 3, but not statistically different from those of control girls.

We asked youth in depth about their round of activities and social connections in their current neighborhood. Half of the control girls claim they do not know or hang out with anyone in their neighborhoods, but the other half say they have at least a few friends or "associates" that live in the neighborhood. Similarly, nearly half of the control males claim they have no close neighborhood friends. But boys, more often than girls, say they deliberately employ a strategy of staying to themselves to avoid neighborhood trouble. Sixteen-year-old Scott has lived in the same public housing development his whole life and, encouraged by his strict mother, tries hard to stay away from the drug corners in his development. This is how he describes the boys his age in his neighborhood: "I know them but they ain't my friends. They [are into] drugs and loitering and stuff like I don't really [do]. I mind my business." When we asked the control males to describe the boys their age in their neighborhood, nearly half said that many of the boys their age are on the corner selling drugs. Neither boys nor girls in the control group say neighborhood girls

they know are engaged in the drug trade.[14] Thus, even in similar neighborhoods, forging same-sex neighborhood friendships presents far more risks to boys than to girls.

In addition to talking about peers in their neighborhoods, we asked the teens about what adult neighbors would do if kids got in a fight in the neighborhood. This question addresses a measure of collective efficacy – adults intervening for the public good. There were no differences between the control girls and boys – around three-quarters of each group reported that adults would intervene by calling the police or breaking up the fight themselves. Girls were more likely to say that adults would break up the fight than boys, but this may be related to the fact that both groups believed that adults would be more likely to call the police if boys were fighting but break it up if girls were fighting.

We also asked youth to describe their school environments. For both the control girls and boys, schools were often described as chaotic places, fraught with truancy, fighting, and other more serious forms of violence. Students who did not go to schools with a lot of fighting attributed this to the heavy presence of security guards or school police. One control female provides an interesting exception to this rule. She attends one of the best magnet schools in Baltimore and says there is little fighting in her school because no one wants to get kicked out and be forced to attend their neighborhood school. Two of the female teens attended such a school, though none of the male controls did. Conversely, control boys were more likely than girls to attend a "special" type of school (disciplinary schools and GED programs) than the female teens.

Despite these similarities in youths' descriptions of their school environment, control boys and girls appear to be integrated into their school environments to a different degree. While some of the girls do not like students at their schools, most of them told us that at least one of their closest friendships was made in school. The boys, however, typically took pride in keeping to themselves at school. James, recently returned from several years in a residential treatment facility, says, "I don't really deal with a lot of people up in school. It's like I mainly kind of like [stay] by myself at my school. I don't

[14] There is one exception to this rule. Reggie, a 16 year old living in an East Baltimore neighborhood, discussed a neighbor girl who sold drugs as well as her body.

try to get in them type of cliques and the gangs." Like James, only a few control males had a close friend who attended the same school.

Neighborhood and school contexts for Experimental Compliers

The experimental male movers live, on average, in neighborhoods with a slightly lower poverty rate than the control males (23 percent versus 28 percent respectively), while the average neighborhood poverty rate for the experimental female compliers is only 15%. According to experimental movers of either gender, drug trafficking and violence (usually fighting) is still present in their current neighborhood, though the experimental youth focused on it to a lesser extent in interviews than the controls did. Fifteen year-old Clarice still lives in her MTO placement neighborhood, designated as a low poverty area because the census tract boundaries include portions of two neighborhoods, one largely white and affluent and one that is overwhelmingly African American and working class. "Most teenagers around here, they don't really do anything around here. They just like to hang out I guess. They're not like a bad crowd and like start trouble or anything like that. They just come outside like I do. They do the things I do." She perceives her placement neighborhood to be considerably better than the much higher poverty tract just to the south, which is a known drug corridor: "This part of the environment around here is fine but on the other side like further up, it could be a little dangerous."

Most of the experimental male movers had friends who lived in the neighborhood, a higher rate than among the control males. Conversely, only two experimental mover girls admitted to have any neighborhood friends, a much lower rate than for the control girls. Rebecca, a recent high school graduate with a three year-old child, said, "I don't really know nobody around here. Like I know of people around here but it's like I don't have no time to like see nobody outside 'cause I'm busy."

Some of the experimental mover youth now live in neighborhoods with both black and white families, as opposed to their baseline neighborhoods which were virtually all African American. Tiah, a 15 year-old female mover, has adjusted well to

her new mixed-race neighborhood, and gets along with white and African-American kids. Her transition has not been problem free, but she feels the parents, not the kids, have been the source of her difficulties. "Some parents are like, 'Don't play with her because she's black. Don't do that 'cause she's black….' It's mainly the parents. It's not the kids, trust me, it's not the kids. It's the parents." Two of the experimental mover males currently live in a racially-mixed neighborhood – one in the suburbs, and one in the city. Ron, an 18 year-old living in the suburbs, claims that his neighbors call the police when he and his friends, all African American, choose to congregate publicly. This harassment makes it difficult to engage in the kind of hanging-out routines he had become accustomed to in the city. No experimental mover female spoke of this kind of harassment. Sixteen year-old Sean lives in a similar neighborhood to Ron's, but in the city. Like Ron, his friends from the neighborhood are all African-American. When we asked him why, he said, "The white boys around here, they keep to their self…we see them walk around, they don't never say nothing to us." Experimental mover girls were better able to forge friendships across racial lines.

Similar to the controls, there was no gender difference in how girls and boys talked about neighbors intervening with fighting – about three-quarters of each group reported that adults would call the police or break up a fight. Taye, a 16 year-old girl who now lives in a neighborhood where one out of every four people are poor, describes how adults in her neighborhood react to a fight: "[I: What do you think the neighbors would do [in the event of a fight]? Go outside and watch…For their entertainment…they wouldn't stop it….[I: If it was boys fighting?] They'll call the police."

One striking difference between the experimental males and females was the way that they discussed the low-poverty neighborhood they originally moved to as part of the MTO intervention. The boys were more likely to describe the neighborhoods negatively--as boring or as unsafe, or, interestingly, as drug-ridden as their origin neighborhoods. Nineteen year-old Ross learned about the drug scene from hanging out with older boys in his public housing development, but he didn't start selling drugs until they moved with the MTO voucher. He described the placement neighborhood as "no shit different" than his project neighborhood. Ralph, a 14 year-old who had made a low-poverty move to a declining neighborhood just north of East Baltimore, still goes back to visit even though

they have made subsequent moves. His mother cautions him when he returns because Ralph said that, "People been getting shot and robbed and stuff like that [up there]. And my mother friend that come here from Georgia, her boyfriend got killed by drive-by on a dirt bike [in that neighborhood]."

In contrast, most of the girls made positive comments about their placement neighborhoods, usually about how quiet it was (a quality the boys typically saw as a deficit.) Eighteen year-old Naomi lives within the edge of the city boundaries, but still within the city. She explained that it took a little while to get used to the change: "See, at first I couldn't get used to the quietness because I was used to like noise because we was like on the street side [in her origin neighborhood] but now that I've gotten used to it now and I know that it's always quiet." This variation in how the girls and boys viewed their placement neighborhoods may speak to a larger way in which they were able to fit in to or were accepted in these neighborhoods.

Whereas the control males and females were in similar school contexts to one another, there are differences in the school contexts of the experimental males and females. Experimental mover females were more likely to be enrolled in, or have graduated from, a suburban high school or selective city magnet school—55% for the experimental female movers, 29% for the experimental male movers, and 11% for the controls. In addition, two of the experimental mover girls are enrolled in college, though none of the experimental males are. One of the experimental males who had just graduated from his suburban high school was actually in a disciplinary high school in that suburban district, having been expelled from his previous school for cursing at the principal.

Keeping this distinction in mind, it is not surprising that the experimental females were less likely to report fighting at their schools than the males. There were only five experimental males still in school at the time of the interview, and three of the five described the frequent fighting and acts of vandalism at their schools. Six months before we talked with him, Bart had dropped out of a high school he had been transferred to in the wake of being expelled for a large fight at his former East Baltimore high school. Ralph says some of the students at his current school kick out the bus windows and jump

through them, play hooky, and use the hallways and stairwells as toilets. "And I don't like touching like the railings because what I be seeing in school and stuff… Like they'll be peeing and pooping on the stairwell. I don't like touching the rails cause I'm afraid, like I'll probably touch something, I don't like to have it on my hands." Tony is in 10th grade, and there are frequent fights in his cafeteria. Kids used to set fires in classrooms, he says, but this decreased after more security guards were added to the school. By contrast, in Sean's suburban, racially-mixed high school, he sees about one fight a month, and this is nearly always with girls.[15] The experimental girls' descriptions of their schools are usually quite similar to that offered by Sean rather than Bart, Ralph, or Tony.

Both the experimental boy and girl movers report having made friends in their current school. Experimental mover girls' friendships with schoolmates involve far more interaction outside of the school day than their male counterparts, who usually only see or talk to their friends at school. They are also more likely to talk on the phone with their school friends than the boys.

Neighborhood and School Contexts, Controls and Experimentals Compared

When we compare these results for the experimental movers to those of the controls, three themes emerge, all related to differences in social ties and the context in which these ties are formed and maintained.

First, the control boys are more likely to report deploying a strategy of staying to themselves in their neighborhoods and/or schools than the experimental boys. Recall that the experimental mover boys were removed from their housing projects and placed in neighborhoods that were less than 10% poor when they were between the ages of 8 and 15. Though subsequent moves have placed them in neighborhoods that more closely resemble that of the controls, they have usually spent several years in neighborhood environments with considerable social, as well as geographic, distance from what they were used to. Control boys have moved too, but the moves have been far more

[15] Sean was the only experimental male who talked about drugs as a problem in school. Among his friends, he says, the drug of choice is marijuana. He claimed that "mostly the white people" are the students doing the harder stuff like ecstasy.

proximate, both geographically and socially. The homogeneous nature of their residential experiences may have induced more of the control boys to formulate a set of navigation skills that allow them to avoid the worst elements of the neighborhood. Experimental mover boys, by contrast, seem less likely to have formulated such strategies. They have moved across neighborhoods which are more varied from each other than the controls' neighborhoods, and which require a different set of navigation skills. Therefore, they might be less able to protect themselves from trouble. We revisit this theme when we examine their friends more closely in the section below.

Second, the control girls report more social connections with neighborhood peers than the experimental girls do—the opposite pattern from the boys. The move to a low-poverty neighborhood appears to have taken the experimental girls out of high-poverty environment with plentiful neighborhood ties and put them in a low-poverty context with few neighborhood ties. They adapted by making friends through their schools, and spend more time with them hanging out in their homes or on the phone, than the experimental mover boys.

Presumably, this aids in their ability to take advantage of better educational opportunities available in their schools, as experimental girls are much more likely to have graduated from or be enrolled in a suburban school, or to be attending a selective city magnet school, than any other group, including the experimental boys. Fighting and other problems simply occur much less often in these schools, and, given the distressed nature of the Baltimore city school district, it is highly likely that the lack of fighting also allows these girls to profit from the better education their schools offer.

Free time for Controls

We asked control girls and boys how they spent their time after school, on the weekends, and during the summer. We were not only interested in what they were doing but also where they were hanging out or playing ball or doing other activities.

The majority of both control males and females discussed spending leisure time hanging out in their current neighborhoods. Furthermore, control girls and boys were just

as likely to talk about spending free time in their own neighborhood as they were to talk about spending time hanging out in neighborhoods that were not their own. Usually, these other neighborhoods were where their friends, grandmothers, and other family members currently live and, through years of visiting, these youth have created networks of friends in these neighborhoods. As we indicated previously, nearly all of the control youth had moved from their baseline neighborhood by the time we interviewed them. However, the control boys were more likely than the girls to still be returning to hang out in their former neighborhoods.[16]

Twenty percent of control boys, however, and about the same proportion of girls, claimed they do not hang out in their current neighborhoods at all. Reggie said that he does not hang out at all in his current neighborhood because "it's too much trouble – want to stay out of trouble, stay out of the neighborhood." Scott, a 16 year-old living in public housing, discussed the many places that he went to avoid getting "caught up" in the drug-dealing in his neighborhood, including other neighborhoods, the library, and the mall. John is 16 years old, and he has lived in the same public housing development his entire life. He has stopped hanging around his neighborhood and mainly hangs out in his grandmother's neighborhood: "I used to hang out around here a lot but then that's when I like started going, like I started fighting a lot, like when people just start be fighting, sort of got in a fight a lot, and I started going around another neighborhood." Even those among the control boys who continue to hang out in their current neighborhoods recognize the danger that they can face. Ray, a 16-year-old who lives in a public housing development, said he wants to move "just to be away from [here], 'cause I mean, I don't really do nothing outside…. Like you know you live right there and you around, right around the corner and you chilling and anything could happen, somebody come right to your house. If you move, ain't nobody know where you live at, you ain't gotta worry about nobody doing nothing to you, for real."

However, the key difference between the control males and females is not where they hang out but how they hang out. In the current neighborhoods, former neighborhoods, and other neighborhoods, control boys hang out by playing football or

[16] This is in spite of the fact that the control boys were slightly more likely than girls to still be residing in their baseline neighborhoods.

basketball at a local park, an alley, inner courtyard, or vacant lot, or loiter on street corners, in front of bars and convenience stores, or on outdoor basketball courts. Control girls are more likely to hang out inside the house or on their stoop or their friends' stoops, usually talking and playing cards. Likewise, when girls visit their friends or family in other neighborhoods, they usually spend their time inside or on their friends' stoops or porches, while control boys report attending parties or playing football and basketball in these other neighborhoods. This is not to say that girls do not play ball, hang on the courts, or go to parties. They are, however, less likely than boys to discuss these as their main venues for spending leisure time, and many more control girls than boys emphasize that they typically spend their free time close to the home if not inside the home.

Control girls are also more likely to make a point of getting out of their neighborhood altogether and visiting public places such as Baltimore's Inner Harbor, the city's main tourist attraction. In addition, more of the control girls than the boys spend time with friends at the movies, in malls, and downtown. Fourteen year old Bella, a control youth who now lives in the suburbs, emphasizes, "I don't go outside a lot. I like to go *places*."

As indicated previously, sports were not nearly as central in the lives of control girls as they were for boys. Nearly every control male spent at least some time each week playing basketball, football, and to a lesser degree, baseball. However, only one boy, Leo, was currently involved in an organized sports league. Control boys usually played basketball out of doors, and only rarely inside a supervised recreation center. The outdoor venues were often places where other youth were engaged in buying and selling drugs. Jay, a 16 year-old who lives in a Northwest Baltimore neighborhood, likes to play basketball at a local outdoor court and in a nearby alley where someone has mounted a hoop. He says he has also witnessed a man stashing his drugs in a house off that alley: "'Cause there's another place right here, we play basketball in this alley…and a man, when people pass by and he'll go -- right where we play basketball, there's a big house -- he go right in there to get it and all that stuff." Sixteen year-old Clifton said that there were drugs being bought and sold at the court where he played in Northwest Baltimore. His response was to go to a neighborhood across to play football instead, explaining that "[this] ain't my type of neighborhood."

Though basketball was a central activity for most of the control males, a few females mentioned playing basketball as well. Interestingly, though, control girls frequently play ball in a court attached to or inside of a recreation center. Control girls also report other sports-related activities as well, including participating in the marching band or going to a roller skating rink with friends. What is notable here is that girls' sports activities typically occur in a setting where there is adult supervision. On the other hand, boys often share sports venues with drug dealers.

A handful of control boys and girls spend time at their local libraries on a frequent basis as a haven from neighborhood strife. Scott, for example, went to the library often to avoid hanging out at the nearby the corner in his public housing development where drugs were sold: "I be wanting to go around there with them [the dealers] but I don't want to get caught up in nothing I don't got nothing to do with. And I just stay in the house and I be wanting to go around there but I don't. It be pressure on me. [I: Is there any place that you can go to try and get away from that pressure?]…. I go to the library sometimes, get on the computer or read a book or something."

Another way that free time for the control girls was more structured and limited than the boys was due to employment. Nearly a quarter of the girls were working full- or part-time jobs at the time we interviewed them, compared to only one boy (5%). Several of the boys had worked summer jobs in the past, often arranged through a youth summer employment program or a local recreation center. In contrast, the girls were able to juggle a job and school. Working at their job after school or on the weekends cut into the free time that they would have had otherwise.

Free time for the Experimental Compliers

In the experimental mover families, the boys were much more likely to spend their free time in their current neighborhoods than the girls, whereas the girls were more likely to spend time in the neighborhoods of friends or family than the boys. Rebecca, a 17year-old MTO mover who now lives in the suburbs, did not spend much of her free time in her current neighborhood because of restrictions placed by the owner of her apartment complex. "There is nowhere to go… You're not allowed to hang on the front

[of the apartment building] or nothing like that, like they'll tell you, like you gotta go inside. They'll give you a warning or something like that, but like they don't want no loitering, no soliciting, no nothing. [I: So who all is the ones that would tell you to get inside?] Like I think probably, like they have security around, they're not police but they're like security guards and they'll be like, oh, you're not supposed to sit on the front or whatever, like that. I guess the steps is for you to like come in the building, not for you to lounge on or whatever."

Ron lived in the suburbs as well, and he echoed Rebecca's complaint, saying, "ain't nothing to do in [my town]." However, Ron believed that there was a racial dynamic at work: "You can't really [hang out in the neighborhood] because it's like mixed out here with like white and black…. So if you see a group of black people and then like white people look out the window and call the police and they just say you gotta leave, and there's nowhere to go. Like they don't want us to be together, like if we're together they say you gotta go, like if you don't live around here you have to leave. But nobody lives in the same neighborhood so it's like it's either, it's gonna be just you by yourself on your steps."

Hanging out in their current neighborhoods puts the experimental male teens in a different risk context than the female teens. The experimental mover boys are playing ball out of doors, hanging on street corners (when allowed by the neighbors), and "chilling" in neighborhoods where nearly one out of every four people are poor. The experimental females generally stay inside or (when possible) stick to their front stoops. But when they do spend their free time outside, they are doing so in neighborhoods where less than one in six people live in poverty. These neighborhoods are not only less poor, they often have more resources. Seventeen year-old Precious can thus play dodgeball in her suburban cul-de-sac, and doesn't have to resort to an alley that doubles as a drug stash, and 14-year-old Brittany can go play on the playground in her suburban community, not only on the sidewalk in front of her home.

As was true with the control girls, the experimental mover females are also more likely than the males to talk about hanging out by leaving the neighborhood all together, either to a relative's house or to a public place like the Inner Harbor, the mall, or movie theatre. Naomi lives just inside the Northwestern Baltimore city limits. She told us, "I

don't really hang out around here. If I do, if I go somewhere, I go out with my friends, I'll go out with them like to the movies, to the mall or, you know, other stuff, or just sit in the house, watch movies, watch TV." Although Ron, an experimental male mover, sometimes goes to the mall out in the suburbs where he lives, he and his friends have been harassed by security there. "Even in the mall you can't be there too long either…. 'Cause they [say], "you gotta go. You've been here too long." They just do that. [I: Is this the police officers or the security guards?] Security guards …. And then when the police get there, they'll get smart with you, like "What are you looking at? It's time for you to leave. This isn't a chill spot, homie," and stuff, like messing with you." Ron continues, "They worried about the way the city is gonna look if we [black boys are] all together. They're not worried about what we gonna do. They're just worried about how the city is supposed to look for people that's not from around here."

Similar to the control males, most of the experimental mover males spend a large part of their free time playing football and basketball, and again, only one of them is involved in an organized league. Like the control boys, most experimental mover boys play in outside courts in parks and schoolyards, though one plays in a recreation center. Fourteen year-old William is the only experimental mover boy who does not play ball, and his mother, a very religious woman with a history of drug addiction, rarely allows him to leave the house.

Half of the experimental females who moved also mention engaging in some kind of sporting activity, such as playing basketball, riding their bikes, or swimming, but sports are not usually their main activity. None of the three who play basketball is involved in an organized league, but none play at courts that also serve as open-air drug markets. Four of the experimental mover males use a recreation center or library, as opposed to only one of the girls who moved through MTO. These facilities are utilized primarily because of their computers, which teens use to complete homework and access the internet.

The experimental girls were more likely to be employed at the time of the interview than the boys, though the level of employment for both groups was higher than that of the controls. Twenty-nine percent (2) of the experimental mover boys were employed, compared to 46% (5) of the girls. One of the young men, Ron, has been

working a full-time job of stocking overnight at a discount store for the last month. Ron lives in the suburbs and he told the interviewer that he thought it would be easier to get a job if he lived in Baltimore than out in the suburbs: "There are no opportunities out here…Like especially if you're black…like you still can get a good job out there [in Baltimore], but out here they look at your appearance and everything." At this point in the interview, Ron and the interviewer discussed his hair, which he has grown out into an afro, though he frequently has it cornrowed. He relates his hair style to what makes potential employers cautious: "They think it [appearance] reflect on your attitude, like even though when I go [to the interview], [I] wear a suit and everything but they still like [think] I'll look like a tough guy or something or a bad person." The other young man who works is working two – three hours each morning cleaning the sidewalks in front of a recreation center in his East Baltimore neighborhood.

Employment affects the experimental girls' free time in a larger way than the boys. Like the control girls, several are working in the afternoons after school, and a couple negotiate babysitting for their children at the same time. Donna graduated high school a year early from a high school in the suburban county where she lived with her grandparents. During her senior year, she attended her regular schedule of classes, went to night school, worked a few days a week, and took care of her two year-old son. Rebecca works part-time doing laundry at a nursing home while she is attending community college. She summed up her life by saying, "I come home, go to work, go to school, take care of my daughter, that's about it."

Free Time for Experimentals and Controls Compared

The evidence from the analysis of the control boys and girls' interviews indicates that teens in low-income neighborhoods in Baltimore engage in patterns of hanging out that are highly shaped by gender. These differences are apparent for the experimental movers as well. However, the girls' pattern of free time use may "fit" better with what is expected in the low-poverty neighborhoods. It certainly seems to draw less attention from the police. Rebecca and Ron's remarks about restrictions on hanging out in their

suburban developments point to differing neighborhood norms regarding what is viewed as an acceptable way for teens to spend their free time. Since girls were less likely to venture beyond their living rooms and stoops, and more likely to leave the neighborhood altogether for the mall, the Inner Harbor, or the movies, they may have had to make fewer adjustments to the norms and restrictions in their new environment. On the other hand, Ron's account is filled with stories about getting in trouble with the police merely by hanging out with friends on the corner, in the parking lot of the school, or just walking down the street in a group. In addition to differences in hanging out, girls also have less leisure time in both the control and experimental groups due to their higher rates of employment.

We remind the reader again that more of the experimental mover boys have now moved back to somewhat higher poverty neighborhoods than the girls have. Thus the gender differences already so evident between the experimental girls and boys are perhaps exacerbated by differences in their current neighborhood contexts. The girls are still living in relatively low-poverty neighborhoods, while the boys are living in more similar neighborhoods to the controls. Thus, the pattern of leisure activities that are already more likely to expose boys to more risk than girls are occurring in somewhat higher poverty neighborhoods.

Friends for controls

Up until this point, the friends of these adolescent respondents have been in the background of our analysis. They are present in the neighborhood and school context, and when the teens play basketball or hang out, but in this section, we will explore these friends in more detail, regardless of whether they are neighborhood friends, school friends, or friends made in other contexts, including a former neighborhood or school. We analyzed the frequency of substance use among these friends, and what kind of trouble these youths' friends get into – both at school and with police.

Nearly half of the control males and the control females spoke of friends who smoked marijuana or cigarettes, or drank alcohol. Smoking cigarettes was rare among these youths' friends, probably reflecting the fact that African-American teens smoke

tobacco less often than white teens on average. Smoking weed, and drinking alcohol – usually hard liquor such as Hennessy, rather than beer – was much more common among these youths' friends than cigarette smoking. Some teens reported that their friends only drank on special occasions, like New Year's Eve. Others said that their friends' drinking or drug use was frequent. Nikki, a 17-year-old mother of a three-year-old son, said that her friends drank "every day," though she only drank on the weekends. She described how her friends pooled their money each day to purchase the alcohol (bought for them by an older friend). Scott and his friend provided the only example of youth who preferred beer to hard liquor, and this was just on the weekends. Scott told us that he and his friend used to smoke weed too, but they stopped because they were having a hard time breathing when they played football.

Being around friends who use drugs or drink hard liquor presumably makes it easier to become involved in this activity, though some of the teens said they actively resisted their friends' negative influence. Fifteen-year-old Jasmine simply stopped going over to her friend Kesha's house because Kesha smoked weed, and Kesha's mother and her friends would use drugs when she visited. James, who was drinking hard liquor and smoking cigarettes by the time he was 10, had a difficult time resisting resuming these habits after he was released from a residential treatment facility. He related his experiences at a party he recently attended where his friends were drinking and smoking pot. He said, "I ain't really want to feel left out so I went on and just had did it for that day, but I ain't knew that day was gonna turn to like the next day I would want another one."

Control females were slightly more likely than males (67% vs. 56%) to have friends who were involved in illegal activities (ranging from bringing a weapon to school to being incarcerated) or who had been killed, though the difference is not large.[17] Control boys, however, were more likely to report that their friends were involved in selling drugs than the females. Some of the control girls had friends who sold drugs (these were usually male friends), but their female friends' activities consisted of shoplifting, or, on a few occasions, an assault charge that occurred in the course of a

[17] This does not include smoking marijuana or drinking alcohol. Fights were only included if they resulted in an arrest.

fight.

We asked control boys and girls whether they had friends who had recently got in a fight or got suspended from school. Fully 80 percent of the control males and females had at least one friend who had done so. These teens' friends were usually suspended from school for cutting classes, fighting, and "talking loud." Sherika, a 14 year-old control female, has had female and male friends suspended for talking or being disrespectful to the teacher, but noted a gender difference that points to higher standards for girls: "But mostly the boys get suspended for fighting, not the girls. Girls get suspended for talking." Chris, a 14 year-old control male, also suggested a gender difference in the types of weapons used in fights. We asked, "And when kids fight, do you guys use weapons at all, or anything like that?" Chris responded, "I don't know, it depend what happening. It be hand fights, it be fights where people get smacked with poles or something, bricks. Cause my homegirls, that's how they get down, they hit people with poles and bricks and knives and they don't be playing, they be fighting. [I: Do the boys do that stuff, too?] Boys, they more [the] hand type…. But…if it was one of my homeboys…and he was being banked, [I'll] grab something, cause ain't got no shame, if I gotta grab something, I'm gonna grab something."[18]

Friends of the Experimental Compliers

A much broader gender difference was apparent between the friends of the experimental males and females who moved, than between the friends of the controls. The large majority of the experimental mover males – 60% -- had friends who smoked or drank, while only two of the experimental mover females – 22% -- talked about their friends using these substances. Only one of the MTO mover boys said that a friend smoked cigarettes – marijuana and hard liquor were usually the substances of choice.

Control females and males were equally as likely to have friends involved in illegal activities. This is strikingly different than the pattern for experimental movers, where the males were four times as likely as females (86% vs. 22%) to have friends involved in illegal activities or friends that had gotten killed, almost always in the course

[18] "Banked" means one individual being attacked by several individuals.

of engaging in illegal activities. This may indicate that with a move to a low-poverty neighborhood it is easier to get girls away from a "bad" crowd, whereas boys may respond to the move by migrating towards friends who represent the worst element of those neighborhoods.

Ron, whom we have mentioned before, is 18 and still lives in his suburban placement neighborhood. Currently on probation, Ron and his friends have, in the past, stolen cars and set a dumpster on fire. Sean, another experimental mover male, lives in a quiet, low-poverty neighborhood in the city, but even so, one friend of his carries a box cutter to school because "anything could happen." Ross also made a move to a low-poverty neighborhood but his current residence is prison. He is serving time for attempted murder, and he told the interviewers that all of his close friends are either locked up or dead.

The only experimental female mover who had friends in trouble with the law is Taye. Most of Taye's close friends hang out at informal transgender clubs where illegal substance use is common. In addition, she told the interviewer that a lot of her friends sold drugs, and told a story about one friend who attacked a police officer after the officer grabbed Taye around her neck.

Certainly it is possible to avoid friends who are involved in illegal activities. Tony is a 15-year-old experimental boy, who currently lives in a new HOPE VI development in West Baltimore, though his family had previously made a move through MTO. While he rides his bike outside sometimes, he spends most of his time inside the house, working on his computer, and he doesn't have any friends involved in illegal activities.

The experimental females were the least likely of all four groups to report a friend who had gotten into this kind of trouble (60%). In sharp contrast, nearly all of the experimental males had at least one friend who had been suspended from school, or who fought while in the neighborhood. After initially moving to a low-poverty suburban neighborhood, Bart now lives in impoverished East Baltimore. At the time of the interview, he had not been in school for several months, after being expelled for a large fight in the school cafeteria. Some of Bart's friends had been suspended for bringing weapons to school. "Sometimes they know something about this person that they don't

like them. And they know too much stuff about the person, plus they get scared if the person would bring a gun or knife to school. So they just trying to protect themselves just in case but they don't wanna use it on a person, it's just in case a person is going to pull out something on them."

Though some of the experimental mover females reported that they had a friend suspended for fighting, none of them talked about their friends fighting in the neighborhood, which is different from the other three groups of teens. This is perhaps because many of their friends were school friends, not neighborhood friends. What was apparent in the stories of the boys was that when their friends get into fights, it is easy, and perhaps expected, for them to join in as well in defense of their friends. Ralph (an experimental male) recounted a story about a fight that he got into after school because he stood up for a friend: "My friend Maurice, he had said something to one of the boys inside the school, and the boy was about to fight him…. When I got halfway on the bus, they started pulling my shirt. They started beating me in my leg and stuff like that. That's when my shoe had came off. I'm like, oh, man, if I come home with one shoe, I'm gonna get in trouble, so I had to walk back out there fighting them off and stuff."

Friends, Controls and Experimentals Compared

The key finding from our analysis of the Interim survey is that experimental girls are less likely use drugs, while experimental boys derive no such benefit, and are actually more likely to smoke weed or cigarettes than girls, above and beyond what we might expect from pure gender differences. Thus, we seek to understand not only why the boys did not benefit from the intervention, we also want to understand why the girls did. The stories drawn from experimental youths' narratives about friends point to a consistent theme: girls who made a low-poverty move are less likely to have friends who use drugs, commit crimes, and get into trouble at school or in the neighborhood than any other program group. This difference is notable, as there is no significant difference in the activities of friends between control girls and boys.

Girls who moved through MTO created new friendships in schools, and their schools were significantly less chaotic and dangerous than the schools teens in the other

program groups were enrolled in. These friends engaged in risky or delinquent behaviors much less often. But the story for the male MTO movers is the opposite. Though it is true that their current neighborhoods are poorer than those of the experimental mover girls, this does not explain why they are faring somewhat worse than boys in the control group who live in even slightly poorer neighborhoods. Boys with a highly heterogeneous residential history may have struggled to form new skills to navigate different neighborhoods. Their unfamiliarity with the routines of adolescent male behavior in these new neighborhoods may have created a special need to construct a tough image, and thus have allied themselves with a more risky element than the girls who moved through MTO.

Parental and teacher expectations for controls

Youths' behavior at home, around the neighborhood, and in school are shaped, in part, by the expectations of people close to them. We looked to the qualitative interview data to see what kind of differences male and female control teens reported in parental and teacher expectations. Control females were more likely to report having a curfew (63%), and more likely to report restrictions on where they could go (31%) than their male counterparts (for boys, the rates were 47% and 16% respectively). Control males and females were equally as likely to say that their mothers frequently issued warnings to stay away from the "wrong crowd." However, the parents of the control girls were more likely to punish them – mainly for trouble at school – than the boys, and the parents of control girls also expressed higher standards for grades. One-quarter of the girls reported being punished by parents for "hooking" school or getting suspended. Sharona told an interviewer that she did not dare get in trouble at school because, "I'll be scared my mother gonna beat me or something."

On the other hand, only one boy reported getting punished when he was suspended. Reggie explained why he played hooky from school and his mother's reaction: "Sometimes I stay home because I miss so much work or I might got something coming up that I was supposed to been did but I didn't do it so I gotta stay home, go sometimes to the library, sometimes I just be chilling. I just stay home and sleep cause I

be tired. [I: And your mom she don't have a problem with that?] No. When she come home she be like why you didn't go to school today? And she give me the lecture and all that. And but she don't do it anymore cause I'm older now. So it's on me."

One-quarter of the control girls discussed how their mothers pushed them to do better with their grades. After her mother was dissatisfied with her grades, Bella was not allowed to talk on the phone during the week until her next report card came out. Tasha attends a magnet high school, and she and her mother decided that it was best that she stopped watching television so that she could concentrate on her homework more: "'Cause my mother, she explained to me how I'm supposed to do that [concentrate on work], 'cause if I don't pass these classes then I won't be able to stay in this school. And I really want to… do better so I could stay in [the magnet school]." In contrast, only one control male teen mentioned that his mother told him he could "do better." His grades on his last report card ranged from 69 – 85. More typical was Kevin's grandmother (and caregiver) who told him: "[As] long as you just pass, is all she worry about. She don't want us to fail, and be dummies and stuff."

There were no differences among control males and females in terms of teacher expectations. About half of the boys and the girls talked about at least one teacher who encouraged or helped them in their work, or who held high standards for their work.

Expectations for the Experimental Compliers

There were fewer differences in parental expectations between the males who moved through MTO and females as there were with the control group. They were equally as likely to report having a curfew and being restricted from people or places. Ralph's mother was firm with him when she heard about a neighborhood drug dealer trying to involve him in the trade: "One time I had told my mother that the boy Dominic, the hustler over there, he hollered out, "Yo, you should do something and hold something for me and stuff like that, cause I know you be wanting then new Jordans and stuff," talking about like that. And my mother got mad at me because when I told her, she hollered, "So what you want to go out and do stuff like that, cause I know you can hold

out," and started fussing. I said, "No, I wouldn't do nothing like that," stuff like that.

Where differences were most apparent was with parents' expectations of grades and with doling out general advice on life. Though the same proportion of experimental mover males and females were in middle or high school at present, none of the males talked about their parents' comments on their grades, but half of the females talked about it. Over half of the females said that their parents gave them advice about avoiding drugs or other types of trouble, compared to only a third of the males. Rebecca, now 17 years old, became pregnant when she was 14 while living in her low-poverty placement neighborhood. She talked about how she had let her mother down, and that her well-being had been her mother's motivation to move to a better neighborhood several years earlier: "She just ain't want me to grow up getting in trouble, so that's why she moved out here."

Rebecca graduated from high school, and she told the interviewer that her mother was a main reason for why she never got in trouble at school: "I never had a suspension, detention, referral, I never got sent to the office because I knew when I came home then it would be another story because my mom would flip out. I never had no failing grades because I didn't wanna come home and get in trouble. My main goal was to finish school, that way I wouldn't have to hear my mother fuss."

As with the control group, there was no gender difference in how the experimental boys and girls perceived their teachers' expectations. Tony, a 15 year-old experimental male, said that his math teacher took him and others out to eat when they made the honor roll. He explained how he thinks she stands out from other teachers: "Cause she the one that got patience. The way you get into a problem she's know how to settle it or talk it out. Like say if you gotta do something today like fight somebody, she'll talk it out with you."

Rebecca, an experimental female mover, is a recent high school graduate, and she described how the teacher's expectations of a student interacted with how the student presented her/himself: "Like then you got the [teachers] who you don't really get along with but you gotta like not let them know that you don't really like them. Because if you do that, then I think like if you, if a teacher, if you get smart with a teacher then I feel as if like they'll treat you different than another kid. Or like if you don't show them that

you wanna learn, then they're not gonna give you as much attention or they're not gonna fully explain something. But if you show them that you're interested, then they'll go the full length of giving you the information."

Parental and Teacher Expectations, Experimentals and Controls Compared

The experimental males and females were similar in the amount of parental restrictions that they reported. Control males reported more restrictions, particularly with their parents telling them to not hang with the "wrong crowd," than the experimental males. In general, it seems that the parents of the control females were the most likely of the four groups to restrict where they went, and to punish them for trouble at school, even for poor grades. It may be that the parents of the experimental females feel less need to restrict where they go, since they are living in safer neighborhoods. Furthermore, since the experimental females are less likely to have friends that get into trouble at school, they may give their parents less reason to punish them for getting into trouble at school. The academic expectations of the parents for both groups of males were not as high as for parents of girls.

Discussion and Conclusion

Research studies on neighborhood effects indicate that young people who live in low-poverty neighborhoods have a lower risk of adverse outcomes that those who live in high-poverty neighborhoods. Therefore, it is surprising that moving families from high-poverty neighborhoods into low-poverty neighborhoods would not result in benefits for both male and female teens. Similar to the results from the five-city MTO study, we find that the MTO intervention had a differential impact on substance use for males and females in Baltimore. Controlling for gender differences, the MTO intervention was associated with a higher risk of smoking weed and cigarettes for males than females. In the five-city study, experimental males were also more likely to have ever been arrested than control males. Though we did not have access to administrative arrest data, self-

reports from the qualitative sample indicate that the experimental males whose families made a low-poverty move were more likely to have ever been arrested than control males or females, or experimental mover females. These indicators all point to a similar pattern: low-income girls were able to take advantage of a move to a low-poverty area in a way that low-income boys were not.

To develop a set of hypotheses about what might lie underneath this interaction effect, we analyzed in-depth interviews with MTO youth from experimental families who moved, and control families. We needed to examine gender differences and differences that may have been associated with or exacerbated by a low-poverty move. We observed a number of differences in the lives of control males and females that may take them on different pathways of risk behavior irrespective of participation in the MTO experiment.

Across all four domains, the daily routines of experimental boys and the friends that they have made put them at greater risk for delinquent behavior, such as substance use, than those of the experimental girls. Both the control girls and experimental girls appear to be on a shorter "leash," shaped by the gender-specific norms present in their old and new neighborhoods, or by parental norms that place special restrictions on girls routines. One primary difference between boys and girls is not where they spend their leisure time but how. In both their own neighborhood and in other neighborhoods they visit, they stay close to home, or sit and chat on the front stoop. Boys, however, congregate on street corners and empty basketball courts, play ball in parks, alleys, and vacant lots, places without adult supervision but often surrounded by the goings-on of the drug trade. This closer proximity to home may serve as a protective factor for the girls.

What makes male youth more vulnerable to risk with a housing mobility intervention and what makes females more able to take advantage of the same intervention? The MTO program was designed with the assumption that moving to a low-poverty neighborhood could benefit individuals above and beyond what their individual or family characteristics might predict. That is, moving to a neighborhood with a low level of poverty or a high level of employment can have a positive effect on youth's outcomes.

In the beginning of this paper, we set forth a conceptual framework of several hypotheses that might explain the differential effect of the MTO intervention. We did not

find any evidence for an effect of adult neighbors or non-kin role models on the four groups of youth. These youth did not report relating to adults in their neighborhoods in any meaningful way, nor did they differ in how they described adult intervention in neighborhood fights. While we did find evidence of differential peer behavior, strictly looking at peer effects cannot explain the interaction between program group and gender that we found in the survey analysis.

Instead, the themes from the teens' narratives suggest two related processes that may have occurred to make the boys more vulnerable to the MTO intervention, and the girls more able to benefit from it. The first process is a twist on the theme of relative deprivation. Both Anderson (1990) and Dance (2002) have suggested that some low-income African-American males create "tough fronts" in the face of their marginalization in society. The MTO girls who made a low-poverty move may have had a very different reception in their receiving neighborhoods because their more affluent neighbors hold a less threatening stereotype of them. The sense of being a social threat, while present in their old neighborhoods too, might well have been heightened by a move to a more affluent neighborhood for boys. And, in an effort to cling to a sense of group identity, deploying the non-dominant cultural capital that the boys were the most familiar with may have served to isolate them from the mainstream in the low-poverty context and associate with a more at-risk peer group.

An economic analysis provides further evidence for this interaction of race, gender, and group norms. Fryer and Torelli (2005) analyzed data on popularity and grades for students in the Addhealth database in order to look at this phenomenon of "acting white" which has been proposed as contributing to the racial academic achievement gap. Fordham and Ogbu 1986) found an oppositional culture among African-American youth wherein young people who participated in class and did well in school were criticized by their same-race peers for "acting white." In their analysis, Fryer and Torelli found that popularity increased for white students (grades 7 – 12) as their grades increased, but the same was not true for African-American or Hispanic students. For African-American students, their popularity increased along with their grades until they reached a grade point average around 3.5, at which point the slope became negative. Particularly relevant to our study are two other findings from their

study which are consistent with the interaction effect in the MTO findings. In schools where less than 20% of the students were African-American, this "acting white" effect (depressing popularity in a non-monotonic manner) is twice as large for high-achieving black males as it is for black females. Moreover, this effect for black males is seven times as large in these low-segregated schools as it is in the full sample.

Fryer and Torelli (2005) and Austen-Smith and Fryer (2005) find that these findings are consistent with an economic model that predicts that youth may face a two-audience signaling quandary – where an educational investment is a signal to potential employers about their productivity but it is also a signal to peers about the youth's social compatibility. Youth must weigh the opportunity costs of rejection by their peer group versus their investment in education. This effect may be exacerbated for African-American males in a mixed-race environment because there are fewer same-race peers to have relationships with, so the opportunity costs for rejection may be higher. In addition, due to racial residential segregation, African-Americans are more likely to live near low-income black neighborhoods, even if they themselves currently reside in a lower-poverty neighborhood. Therefore, the peer norms that they identify with are more likely to be from youth in lower-income neighborhoods compared to peer norms of whites in low-poverty neighborhoods. This may be especially true for males who have moved from a high-poverty neighborhood. If "acting white" is more salient in environments where there are fewer African-Americans and if this effect is stronger for males than females, then the males who moved with MTO may have felt more of a need to present a tougher "front" to show their peers that they were still legitimate in their group identity (Anderson, 1990, 1999; Dance, 2002). This economic model also addresses what may be happening on the control side of the MTO study as well. Austen-Smith and Fryer argue that if the costs of group membership (violence, incarceration, etc.) increase, then an individual may be less likely to adhere to peer group norms and more likely to invest their time in other pursuits such as education. Our findings about control males being more likely to discuss staying to themselves point in this direction. Remaining in their high-poverty neighborhood for a longer period of time than the experimental males may have given them the basis for perceiving higher costs of peer group membership.

It is difficult to uncover this largely unconscious mechanism of youth responding

to a low-poverty environment in different ways, based on their own group identity and others' perception of them. The experimental boys and girls appear to have related differently to their placement neighborhoods, with the boys expressing how boring these places were, or how they felt like they stuck out in some way, and the girls generally speaking positively about their new neighborhoods and ability to fit in. Our best indication of this process comes from the handful of males from the control and experimental groups who currently live in low-poverty neighborhoods. Throughout the qualitative analysis, we heard from Ron about his frustration at the reaction of police, mall security, and neighbors to black kids hanging out in groups. Carl, an 18 year-old high school dropout, lives in a racially-mixed suburb, but feels bitter toward his peers, claiming that "They only like want to deal with you if you have money."

The Kid, a 15 year-old young man, has nothing but disdain for the youth in his suburban neighborhood, and retains strong ties with friends and family in a higher-poverty Baltimore neighborhood. The Kid has a background of selling drugs and being incarcerated, and feels like the kids in his suburb simultaneously aspire to "be thugs", yet look down on him for coming from an urban neighborhood: "They just be like, they be trying to be thugs. They not, so they act like they're thugs…. They're from the county[19] but they wanna be city boys.… They hate on dudes that come from the city, like me, they hate them because, you know, I don't know…. They treat us like, you know what I'm saying, we bad, like we ain't used to stuff like this, which we're not. But, you know, we don't let em know that, we ain't used to stuff like this…. Like if we walking down the street, like if my cousins [from the city] come out here, we'll be…walking, say like if somebody, you know how people warm their cars up in the morning, like one day me and my cousins and them, we was going to a football game and it was in the morning time, we was walking up there and the lady, she was like, she had got out of her car, she started her car up, got out and was walking toward her house, right, but when she seen us she turned around, like boop, boop, hit her little car alarm on."

A second hypothesis we derive from these data is that boys may be less able than girls to pick up a skill set for the new neighborhoods, particularly the low-poverty environments which have different norms than their origin neighborhoods. In his

[19] This is a term to describe the Baltimore suburbs.

ethnographic analysis of twenty-six young African-American men in poor neighborhoods in Chicago, Young (1999) found that they used their cultural capital to gain security and predictability in their daily encounters with people and situations (p.224). This capital was necessary for their basic survival in the neighborhood as these men used their knowledge to be "careful about how they engaged with others in the community" (p.210). Although rules and practices vary within families and by individuals, they are also community-specific. Simply put, there are different rules for different neighborhoods. The practice of hanging out on corners, for example, is not as prevalent in low-poverty neighborhoods as it was in the neighborhoods the experimental youth moved from. Girls may have been able to fit in much more easily into the new low-poverty neighborhood and school environments. As the experimental males move back to higher poverty neighborhoods, they may not have as refined a skill set to negotiate these neighborhoods and avoid trouble as their control counterparts, who have an average neighborhood poverty rate over the past four to seven years that is much higher.

These findings do not point to a failure in the mobility experience for the MTO experimental families. Instead, they indicate a complexity in how this intervention interacts with the networks, daily routines, and expectations for boys and girls. The gender-specific norms and expectations of teens appears, in general, to protect girls and put boys at risk. When carried into a dramatically different neighborhood environment, girls can adapt more easily because of two related reasons. First, their routine behavior and their ease at making friends (particularly at school) allows them to take advantage of their new environments and learn a new skill set, which seems to be harder for boys. Second, the racist marginalization of African-American males in U.S. society shapes how the people in the new environment (both at school and in the neighborhood) perceive the boys, and how they feel the need to adhere to a group identity that gives them a "tough" self-presentation.

It is difficult to tease apart the factors that shape the trajectories of behavior for youth. We realize that we have a small qualitative sample from which to base our findings. The value of these rich data lies in generating hypotheses, which we have done here. Further analyses of the MTO qualitative data will incorporate the narratives of Chicago youth.

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