

***Changing the Geography of
Opportunity by Helping Poor
Households Move out of
Concentrated Poverty:
An Overview of the Landscape***

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Key Research Questions

Holding Important Policy Implications

- Does moving out of a concentrated-poverty neighborhood substantially improve outcomes for the poor?
 - If so:
 - What mechanism(s) of neighborhood effect are at work?
 - How long does the neighborhood effect take?
 - Which “neighborhood” matters?
 - Which poor/which outcomes are affected?

Does moving out of a concentrated-poverty neighborhood substantially improve outcomes for the poor?

- Concentrated poverty neighborhoods DO create negative impacts on the poor
BUT
- How much better off poor will be depends on multi-dimensional **CONTEXT** associated with low-poverty neighborhood destination

What mechanism(s) of neighborhood effect are at work?

- Social processes: role modeling & social control
- Exposure to crime & violence
- Spatial mismatch between jobs & residences & transport links
- Inferior institutional resources

How long does the neighborhood effect take to work?

- Exposure duration is mechanism-dependent
- Exposure duration appears to matter in general

Which “neighborhood” matters?

- Various geographic scales of neighborhood may matter
- Rarely have potential mechanisms of neighborhood effect been measured directly at any geographic scale; thus unsure which characteristics matter most

Which poor / which outcomes are affected?

- For most key outcomes, size of neighborhood effect differs by:
 - developmental stage
 - gender
 - race-ethnicity

Policy Implication I: How can we help the poor move into opportunity-rich neighborhoods?

- Operationalize “opportunity-rich” holistically & at correct neigh’d. scale
- Increase options for poor to live in opportunity-rich neighborhoods
- Assist poor in locating and moving to opportunity-rich neighborhoods

Policy Implication II: How can we help the poor remain in and get the most out of opportunity-rich neighborhoods?

- Given duration effects and history of great mobility of poor out of low-poverty areas, must intervene with supportive services & institutions

Policy Implication III: How can we help opportunity-rich neighborhoods remain so as the poor move in?

- Avoid tipping points of max. 15-20% neighborhood poverty rates in destination neighborhoods for poor in-movers

Conclusion

What we know about neighborhood effects
→ must reform current system for
delivering affordable housing, otherwise...

“Equal Opportunity” will remain a

HOLLOW PROMISE

Instead of a

HALLOWED PREMISE