Where have all the people gone? A policy review and geospatial analysis of Hope VI in Atlanta

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ABSTRACT

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WHERE HAVE ALL THE PEOPLE GONE?  
A POLICY REVIEW AND GEOSPATIAL ANALYSIS OF HOPE VI IN ATLANTA

Committee Chair: William H. Boone, Ph.D.

Dissertation dated May 2015

This study examines the federally-funded HOPE VI initiative as it relates to affordable housing in Atlanta. It examines spatial and social outcomes experienced by residents of the now-demolished public housing units. Findings indicate, inter alia, that the voices of residents were either ignored or excluded in the policymaking decisions of the Atlanta Housing Authority.

A case study analysis approach was used to analyze data gathered from three sources: primary data collected from an original online survey, primary data gathered from personal interviews with community stakeholders, and secondary survey and focus group data from two evaluation studies of Capitol Homes revitalization.
The researcher found that, while there are still barriers to sustainability and self-sufficiency, most of the residents who were displaced are generally satisfied with their living environment post relocation.

The conclusions drawn from the findings suggest that more evaluations are necessary to determine long-term outcomes of relocated residents. Furthermore, residents – as beneficiaries and stakeholders of housing policy – should have an equal voice in housing development decisions of the Atlanta Housing Authority and its partners.
WHERE HAVE ALL THE PEOPLE GONE?
A POLICY REVIEW AND GEOSPATIAL ANALYSIS OF HOPE VI IN ATLANTA

A DISSERTATION
PRESENTED TO THE FACULTY OF CLARK ATLANTA UNIVERSITY
IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR
THE DEGREE OF DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

BY
VALERIE J. ALEXANDER

DEPARTMENT OF POLITICAL SCIENCE

ATLANTA, GEORGIA
MAY 2015
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CHAPTER I
INTRODUCTION

Susan J. Popkin et al. argue that one of the biggest misfortunes in social welfare policy is the failure of public housing in most American cities.¹ The public housing debate is one that has caught the attention of policymakers nationwide. What was once considered an effective solution to slum clearance and affordable housing during the Depression in the U.S., is now considered by some to be an obsolete, ineffective, and failed system of low-income housing management. In the 1930’s, public housing seemed a viable social policy solution to low-income housing. By the 1980’s, however, public housing, by most accounts, was considered a social policy failure.²

The city of Atlanta has been at the forefront of major U.S. cities that have sought to redefine and alleviate perceptions of obsolescence and deplorableness in public housing. Although these perceptions did not originate in Atlanta, the capital of Georgia now holds the dual distinction of being the first major U.S. city to build public housing (i.e., Techwood Homes in 1935), as well as the first major U.S. city to completely demolish its public housing stock by the year 2010.³⁴⁵ Through innovative policies and housing development, Atlanta is now considered a national leader in public housing revitalization strategies.

One such innovation in housing policy is the initiative called Housing Opportunity for People Everywhere (now, HOPE VI). HOPE VI is a federally-funded
program that allows local policymakers, business leaders, and housing authorities to collaborate in their efforts to build affordable housing for residents who need it. HOPE VI, now recognized as an award-winning innovation in housing policy, was developed from the belief that public housing in America is commonly “distressed” housing. Although there is some obscurity in the literature as to how policymakers define “distressed” housing, the National Commission on Severely Distressed Public Housing identifies families that live in “physical conditions that have deteriorated to a degree that renders the housing dangerous to the health and safety of residents.”

Through demonstration grants, HOPE VI allows local housing authorities opportunities to repair, renovate, or demolish distressed public housing units. In so doing, supporters of HOPE VI believe that the concentration of poverty endemic in public housing communities – along with the resulting social ills – will be alleviated. This research offers a case study examination of policy decisions made by the Atlanta Housing Authority (AHA) using HOPE VI federal funds.

**Scope of the Problem**

Key debates in urban housing policy have to do with issues of poverty and racial segregation. Social theorists have documented extensively the effects of poverty and racial segregation on the overall stability of low-income residents.

In his seminal work, *The Truly Disadvantaged*, William Julius Wilson discusses the effects of concentrated poverty and “social dislocation” on family outcomes. Social dislocation, says Wilson, is characterized by incidents of “crime, joblessness, out-of-
wedlock birth, female-headed families, and welfare dependency.” Wilson argues that the social problems of the ghetto underclass are more complex than just a “crystallization of (an) underclass culture.” Rather, says Wilson, there are “some very important structural and institutional changes in the inner city that have accompanied the [B]lack middle- and working-class exodus . . . .” As Wilson explains, without a “social buffer” – that is, the presence of middle- and working-class families in the inner-city – the social problems of the underclass increase. Wilson argues that

... in such neighborhoods the chances are overwhelming that children will seldom interact on a sustained basis with people who are employed or with families that have a steady breadwinner. The net effect is that joblessness, as a way of life, takes on a different social meaning; the relationship between schooling and postschool employment takes on a different meaning. The development of cognitive, linguistic, and other educational and job-related skills necessary for the world of work in the mainstream economy is thereby adversely affected.

He goes on to write:

In short, the communities of the underclass are plagued by massive joblessness, flagrant and open lawlessness, and low-achieving schools, and therefore tend to be avoided by outsiders. Consequently, the residents of these areas, whether women and children of welfare families or aggressive street criminals, have become increasingly socially isolated from mainstream patterns of behavior.

And so, it is this concept of “concentration effects” that has been used to undergird theories in public housing policy. “Concentration effects,” says Wilson is a term used to describe differences in experiences between low-income residents of the inner-city and other residents in non-poverty areas of the city. Alexandra Curley (2005) explains Wilson’s contribution to housing policy:
Recently, theorists and policymakers have taken Wilson’s poverty concentration thesis and argued that if concentrated poverty contributes to unwanted behavior and social ills, then deconcentrating poverty should reverse this effect. This rationale has led to recent housing dispersal programs and mixed-income housing initiatives that intend to deconcentrate poverty, and consequently, reduce the social problems attributed to poverty concentration in urban public housing developments.12

Similarly, Douglas S. Massey and Nancy A. Denson, in *American Apartheid*, discuss “hypersegregation” as a leading cause of social disenfranchisement among low-income, urban, and especially African-American residents.13 Hypersegregation is a term used to represent an extreme level of segregation that intersects across multiple dimensions.14 They explain:

> [S]egregation – or the general tendency for [B]lacks and whites to live apart – may be conceptualized in terms of five distinct dimensions of geographic variation . . . [B]lacks may be distributed so that they are overrepresented in some areas and underrepresented in others, leading to different degrees of unevenness; they may also be distributed so that their racial isolation is ensured by virtue of rarely sharing a neighborhood with whites. In addition, however, [B]lack neighborhoods may be tightly clustered to form one large contiguous enclave or scattered about in checkerboard fashion; they may be concentrated within a very small area or settled sparsely throughout the urban environment. Finally, they may be spatially centralized around the urban core or spread out along the periphery.15 (italics in original text)

“Massey and Denton point out that [B]lacks living in hypersegregated areas are especially socially isolated because they are unlikely to have contact with others unless they work outside of the ghetto.”16 Theorists advancing the notion of “neighborhood effects” (e.g., Brown and Richman, 1997; and Leventhal et al., 1997) claim that neighborhood poverty – rather than family poverty – is a stronger and more valid indicator of social outcomes for the individual resident. It is the neighborhood that
matters most, says Curley, not the individual or family unit. But linking causality to social outcomes is challenging, according to Small and Newman. They state, “It is extremely difficult to test the hypothesis that, everything else being equal, an individual living under any particular neighborhood condition is worse off than in the absence of that condition.” They go on to say that “most neighborhood studies are unable to make causal links and can only point to strong associations.”

Furthermore, research supports the theory that neighborhood poverty does not result only in negative outcomes. Other characteristics found within poor neighborhoods can also lead to positive social outcomes. For example, “studies have found that rich social networks . . . exist in low-income communities and that these kin networks provide an important safety net for the poor (Edin & Lein, 1997; Stack, 1974; Vale, 2002). These studies point to tight functioning social networks as one of the greatest assets in poor communities and challenge the notion that the social networks of the poor are inferior.”

However, what Curley points out is that while low-income householders have strong “social support,” they are lacking in “social leverage.” Citing Mark Granovetter’s work on the “strength of weak ties,” Curley re-emphasizes that the failure to leverage “weak” social ties is a contributing factor to the lack of social mobility found in poor communities. She writes,

people most often find jobs through weak rather than close ties. Thus, there is “strength in weak ties” because weak ties provide individuals with information they do not already have, such as job opportunities. Therefore, having relations, albeit informal or weak, with different types of people who have access to different resources and information is critical to learning about new opportunities and becoming upwardly mobile.
Theories that blame the victim for their impoverishment also abound. For example, the “culture of poverty” paradigm is one that has relegated poverty status to a “culture” of the underclass. That is to say, a “culture of poverty” suggests that generations of poor residents hold values that run counter to mainstream. It “connotes a set of behaviors and attitudes that are transmitted intergenerationally and run counter to national values. It is believed that this subculture impedes progress by preventing individuals from adopting the mores of the larger culture that leads to integration and social mobility (Coward et al. 1974).” The “culture of poverty” has been used to explain countercultural values of poor Black Americans, and therefore, “implies that basic values and attitudes of the ghetto subculture have been internalized.”

The decisions of the Atlanta Housing Authority to raze traditional public housing units in favor of mixed-income models are ostensibly rooted in this “culture of poverty” paradigm. Wealthier African Americans are often complicit in the dominant view that poor Blacks are, somehow, responsible for their own oppression. Furthermore, there is an underlying paternalism in dominant prescriptions that mandate Blacks’ responsibility for their own social mobility. This “racial uplift ideology,” as expressed by Shayla C. Nunnally and Niambi M. Carter, lies at the heart of decisions made by the Atlanta Housing Authority to revitalize public housing. They write, “the degree to which one believes personal behavior leads to poverty greatly influences one’s policy prescriptions.” For those promoting “racial uplift ideology” – e.g., Atlanta policymakers and AHA leadership – “it is necessary to emphasize the role of [B]lacks in creating their own negative circumstances, as opposed to dwelling on the societal factors
that shape the conditions and multiple-structures of [B]lack families (Billingsley 1992).\textsuperscript{27}

If the Atlanta Housing Authority and its partners believe that the poor are counterculture to the mainstream, then the development of mixed-income housing and the integration of income and race will ostensibly alleviate poor residents from poverty-induced cultural traits. Public housing – characterized by a concentration of race and poverty – contributes to a “ghetto subculture” by breeding opportunities for crime, drugs, and a lifestyle of hopelessness.\textsuperscript{28,29,30} According to Nunnally and Carter, those living within the culture of poverty must be “given a new set of values” in order to be fully integrated into the social mainstream.\textsuperscript{31}

One of the expectations of HOPE VI is that post-relocation residents will form tight social networks with their new neighbors, and therefore, leverage those networks to secure better jobs and upward mobility.\textsuperscript{32} But, does involuntary displacement of the poor necessarily generate the will or personal agency to reach out to new neighbors? If the Atlanta Housing Authority maintains that poor public housing residents are counterculture to the mainstream, then will moving them in close proximity to upper-income residents (through mixed-income housing) dissolve the countercultural values that the poor have internalized?

Given such varying perspectives in the literature on how low-income householders leverage social networks, this research suggests that the social outcomes of HOPE VI need further evaluation. Further study is needed to determine whether or not AHA’s expectation of resident uplift has, in fact, occurred.
While HOPE VI has proven beneficial to some, others would argue that not all families have fared so well.\textsuperscript{33} A HUD report states, “Although the physical improvements have often been dramatic, the HOPE VI program should ultimately be judged on its effectiveness in helping low-income families improve the quality of their lives and move toward self-sufficiency as well as its accomplishments in bricks and mortar.”\textsuperscript{34} This study, therefore, is intended to augment extant literature on HOPE VI in Atlanta. While neither national nor longitudinal in its scope, it does seek to supplement the discourse by examining survey and focus group responses of local Atlanta public housing residents. It further seeks to buttress survey and focus group data with interviews from local community stakeholders. Particularly, those stakeholders (e.g., church or civic leaders) who are intimately familiar with the neighborhood as well as with residential families pre- and post-demolition will be targeted for their unique perspective.

The significance of the study lies in the evaluation of policy. This study is concerned with how changes in policy have affected the lives of those already living in precarious housing situations. Decisions made by local government leaders and policymakers disproportionately impact the lives of those who are marginalized. Public policy invariably privileges some while disenfranchising others. Granted, politicians, policymakers, and government leaders make decisions that affect the lives of us all. But these decisions can often have a detrimental impact on those with weak socio-political leverage. Even in collaborative processes – of which there were many in Atlanta’s public housing revitalization efforts – the views and opinions of public housing residents, by some accounts, were reportedly excluded or ignored altogether.\textsuperscript{35}
The lack of agency on the part of public housing residents contributes to the need to center their voices in this case study. If decisions were made for the benefit of public housing residents, then how much did the voices of the residents lend themselves to the decision-making process? To what extent were residents able to determine, or at least contribute to, their own fate?

This research offers a review of why decisions were made to demolish Atlanta’s public housing, who made those decisions, what alternative voice (if any) was incorporated, and what benefits and consequences occurred as a result of those decisions.

The History of Affordable Housing in the United States

"Nearly eleven million families and individuals in the United States depend on some form of government-subsidized housing."36 However, the federal government has not always provided for the housing needs of its low-income citizens.

Betsey Martens, Senior Vice President of the National Association for Housing and Redevelopment Officials (NAHRO), offers a brief, but thought-provoking, historical look at how public housing policy in the United States evolved. While many harken back to the U.S. Housing Act of 1937 as the genesis of affordable housing in this country, Martens points out that the U.S. government’s effort to provide housing for its poorest citizens is actually attributable to industrialization in the 1800s. During industrialization, workers began migrating from rural areas to urban cities in order to secure work. With this influx of workers, housing was in short supply. Interestingly, it was not the government that took responsibility for housing migrant workers. Rather, housing during
the late 1800s fell to the hands of the private sector. Developers sought to turn a profit by transforming large, single-family tenements into multi-family dwellings. Multiple families began occupying homes that were once occupied by single families. Such crowded conditions were less than optimal, "characterized by a lack of fresh air, ventilation, fire protection and indoor plumbing...."37

The New York Housing Act of 1879 was the initial governmental response to these early and deplorable housing conditions. As is true today, political leaders of that time believed that poor housing would lead to "the three great scourges of mankind – disease, poverty and crime...."38 Subsequently, thought leaders of the early 20th century also debated whether deplorable housing was an issue of declining character, moral turpitude, or neighborhood and community health.39

According to Madeline Howard, "one of the principle (sic) goals of the federal subsidized housing program has been to promote morality in families. The primary goal of the first public housing developments was to provide a safe haven from the slums that developed during the Depression, when the supply of affordable housing failed to keep pace with the influx of workers into cities."40 The goal, says Howard, was not to provide for "deeply impoverished" families whose sustained impoverishment extended across generations. Rather, "[t]he stated goal of this policy was to ensure that only ‘poor but honest workers’ would occupy the units."41

World War I was a key factor leading to the U.S. government’s involvement in housing workers. Since workers on both coasts were needed to build ships for the war, housing became a necessary concern. President Woodrow Wilson, therefore,
appropriated $100 million towards housing through the U.S. Shipping Act of 1917.\textsuperscript{42} Although the establishment of public housing authorities came 20 years later in 1937, it was not until the 1949 Housing Act that the federal government took responsibility for providing decent housing for all of its citizens.\textsuperscript{43} In fact, the basic concept of "housing policy" is found in the federal government's attempt to provide decent and affordable housing to U.S. citizens.\textsuperscript{44}

In 1969, Congress enacted the Brooke Amendment, named for then-Senator Edward Brooke, a leading advocate for fair and anti-discriminatory housing. The Brooke Amendment instituted limitations on housing rent in relation to one's income. At the onset, the Brooke Amendment limited rental expenditure to 25% of overall household income. Today, the standard rental expenditure for poor families is capped at 30%. That is, poor families are expected to pay no more than 30% of their income for housing (although it is documented that, in some cases, families pay up to 40% of their income on housing).\textsuperscript{45} Reiss acknowledges that any cost beyond 30% of a household's incomes constitutes "unaffordable" housing -- "a consensus," he says "that serves as the basis for federal housing policy."\textsuperscript{46}

Rental expenditure over and above 30% of one's income is considered a financial hardship, especially for families already living in precarious financial and social situations. Other data reflect this financial hardship. In 2007, the American Housing Survey indicated that "nearly 16 million out of a total of 35 million renters in 2007 paid 35% or more of their income for rent and utilities, and more than 9 million paid more than 50%."\textsuperscript{47} Moreover, the U.S. Census Bureau indicates that "in 2009, 5.6 million
households with incomes below the poverty line – or about 60 percent of all poor renter households – paid at least half of their income toward rent and basic utilities.\textsuperscript{48}

Furthermore, data from the 2009 American Community Survey (ACS) estimate that approximately 3.4 million households are inadequately housed. Betsey Martens states, “Of these 3.4 million inadequately-housed households:

- 750,000 are homeless
- 1.9 million are paying more than 50\% of their income in rent
- 765,000 are living in substandard housing, doubling up and/or are constantly moving.”\textsuperscript{49}

These statistics reveal that federal rental housing assistance is grossly inadequate to meet the prevailing need nationwide.\textsuperscript{50}

The National Commission on Severely Distressed Public Housing (Public Law 101-235) (herein referred to as the “Commission”) was established in 1989 for the purpose of addressing “severely distressed” public housing. Public housing, it was believed, offered deplorable conditions for those already living with multiple disadvantages. The Commission defines “severely distressed” public housing in terms of both its physical and social characteristics.\textsuperscript{51} Public housing communities, in many cases, had become spatial pockets of concentrated race and poverty, breeding grounds for criminal activity, and havens for hopeless living. The goal of the Commission, then, was to examine the lives and well-being of families living in distressed communities, and to develop more effective policies in public housing administration.

In 1992, the Commission submitted its Final Report of the National Commission on Severely Distressed Public Housing to members of Congress, out of which the HOPE
VI legislation was written. "HOPE VI was created by the Departments of Veterans Affairs and Housing and Urban Development (HUD), and Independent Agencies Appropriations Act, 1993 (Pub.L. 102-389), (and) approved on October 6, 1992."52 The HOPE VI Program set as its goal the elimination of severely distressed housing by year 2000. The objectives of HOPE VI were:

- To improve the living environment for residents of severely distressed public housing through the demolition, rehabilitation, reconfiguration, or replacement of obsolete projects (or portions thereof);
- To revitalize sites on which such public housing projects are located and contribute to the improvement of the surrounding neighborhood;
- To provide housing that will avoid or decrease the concentration of very-low income families; and
- To build sustainable communities.53

Initially, HUD stipulated that any public housing unit that is demolished due to severe distress must be replaced with HOPE VI funds. However, the early years of HOPE VI also allowed for wide discretion on the part of HUD to determine if a housing unit should be preserved or demolished. In 1992, HUD awarded the first of HOPE VI demonstration grants for preservation and revitalization of public housing stock. But by 1994, the focus of HOPE VI grants shifted from the revitalization of public housing units to demolishing them.54

The HOPE VI Program provides funds to serve the dual purpose of improving the physical structures of public housing, as well as improving the social well-being of its residents. Proponents of HOPE VI believe that by demolishing severely distressed public
housing units, the distressed lives of its tenants will also be alleviated. In response, many of the major metropolitan cities have developed mixed-income, mixed-use communities for the purpose of improving the lives of families living in poverty. By moving families from distressed communities, proponents of urban renewal believe that the overall quality of life for these families will also improve. Furthermore, offering families a myriad of support services will ostensibly relieve them of the social ills that seem to plague low-income communities. As the Commission reminds us in its Final Report, the intended beneficiaries of this goal are the residents themselves, and therefore, social outcomes should be the criteria by which the effectiveness of HOPE VI is measured. The report states, “The failure to meet the needs of the people living in severely distressed public housing will eventually result in the failure of any physical rehabilitation and housing management improvement program.”

One of the most critical reports of the HOPE VI program is the 2002 report of the National Housing Law Project et al. According to the report, there has been inadequate administrative oversight of family relocation, particularly as it affects marginalized, racial population groups. Furthermore, the report states, the very problems that HOPE VI was designed to solve have actually been exacerbated by HOPE VI. For example, HOPE VI was intended to address affordable housing needs of the very poor. However, due to demolition goals of HOPE VI programs, affordable public housing has become less available for the poorest of the poor.

Without administrative oversight as to the relocation of former public housing residents, critics cite the need for further evaluation of HOPE VI.
Affordable Housing in Atlanta

Contrary to its original goal of providing quality housing in a livable environment, public housing – in many cities, including Atlanta – came to represent spatial pockets of concentrated poverty. The concept of public housing as a viable housing option for the poor and elderly is now believed to be outdated by Atlanta’s policymakers. In Atlanta, decisions were made towards innovative housing policy that would alleviate the concentration of poverty.

But questions remain as to how those decisions were made, and which stakeholders were allowed input into those decisions. Existing reports indicate that Atlanta public housing residents were not effectively seated at the decision-making table. Some reports indicate that residents were not asked what they wanted. Yet, decisions around how to expend HOPE VI funds disproportionately impacted the lives of those residents.

The problems with public housing in Atlanta were not unique to the city. Rather, public housing across the U.S. were (and are still) fraught with a myriad of concerns and deficiencies. Not only has the concept of public housing come to represent a failed housing model across the U.S., it has marred public perceptions towards those who dwell in them. Structurally, most public housing within the U.S. has become obsolete and distressed housing. But perhaps even more importantly, the lives of public housing residents are also viewed as “distressed” in the eyes of the policymakers.

When the Commission examined public housing inventory prior to making its report and recommendations, it found that only 6% of public housing nationwide (or
about 86,000 units) met the requirements for “severely distressed” conditions. The remaining 94% of units were not considered “severely distressed,” although the report indicated that they would need attention soon.\textsuperscript{58} What, then, prompted the Atlanta Housing Authority to demolish all of its public housing units?

According to AHA’s 15-year progress report, Atlanta’s public housing communities were plagued with a multitude of social problems. In addition to the dilapidated conditions of the housing structure, the crime rate in and around housing projects was 35% percent higher than the rate of crime within the entire city.\textsuperscript{59} Education was substandard. “The elementary schools embedded in housing projects ranked at the very bottom of all Georgia schools.”\textsuperscript{60} Retailers and quality grocers were not available or accessible to public housing residents. And health problems proliferated in public housing due to the effects of concentrated poverty. “Had change not come, says AHA board member Eva Davis and a former resident of the East Lake Meadows housing project, the losses would have been greater. ‘We would have had so many more high school dropouts, so many drug addicts, so many prostitutes, so many babies having babies, they would have been lost,’ she says.”\textsuperscript{61}

With an initial grant of $42.5 million in HOPE VI funds,\textsuperscript{62} the Atlanta Housing Authority and key leaders within the city of Atlanta set out in 1994 to revitalize, renovate, and ultimately demolish severely distressed public housing. The impetus for this vast undertaking was the widely-anticipated 1996 Olympic Games. Atlanta business leaders recognized that the world would witness Atlanta’s blight during its hosting of the
games. With Atlanta now on the international stage, city and housing leaders sought to remedy the situation.

When defining Atlanta’s blight, one can point to a multitude of bleak conditions that characterized Atlanta’s public housing complexes. These conditions may have been key determinants in AHA’s policymaking decisions. Thomas Boston, a Georgia Tech economist and researcher, describes it thus:

Eighty eight percent (88%) of inspected units did not meet minimum safety and sanitary standards, and 7,100 maintenance work orders were backlogged. Many units were simply boarded up, and others had missing or defective windows and doors, electrical hazards, leaking and backed up toilets, rodent infestations, and lead-based paint exposures.63

Other social dimensions also paint a grim picture. Crime was rampant in public housing. Drug traffickers operated with relative impunity within the housing communities. Children (age 16 and under) accounted for nearly 49% of the public housing population, and were often used as “lookouts” by drug traffickers. Women accounted for about 86% of single heads of households, and only 13% of the non-elderly, able-bodied adults were actually employed.64

The federal HOPE VI program provided a much-needed resource in which to formulate a viable solution to Atlanta’s public housing woes. Initially, the goal of HOPE VI funding was to remodel or revitalize the housing units. In fact, during the 1980’s and early 1990’s, the Atlanta Housing Authority spent $18 million in renovations to Techwood/Clark Howell Homes. But the renovations were short-lived. “By 1994,” says Boston, “none of these improvements were visible.”65
The year 1994 was also pivotal in that it brought new leadership to the Atlanta Housing Authority. Renee Lewis Glover was hired as AHA’s new President and Chief Executive Officer. Glover set out to establish a new plan for meeting the housing needs of Atlanta’s poor. No longer willing to simply “warehouse the poor,” Glover envisioned a sustainable community where low-income and marginalized families would be integrated into the “economic and social mainstream” of society. According to Glover, “AHA’s tenants were effectively locked out of the mainstream; they were economically marginalized, politically disenfranchised, and systematically being destroyed.” Glover sought to rethink public housing, and to offer public housing in a manner that would allow low-income residents to thrive economically and socially through what was to become a mixed-income model.

Under Glover’s leadership, the main goals of HOPE VI in Atlanta were “to de-concentrate poverty, create more livable communities for public housing assisted families and build sustainable neighborhoods.” While these are indeed worthy goals, limitations in the literature point to a lack of strong data to support such sustainability.

According to a report prepared by the National Housing Law Project (NHLP), HOPE VI has fallen short of its original goals. It reads:

While the first purpose set forth under the HOPE VI statute is to “improve the living environment” of families in severely distressed public housing, HOPE VI is doing little to improve the lives of most of the families it affects. Contrary to impressions conveyed by HUD, only 11.4 percent of former residents overall have returned or are expected to return to HOPE VI sites; only about 30 percent of displaced residents are relocated with portable Housing Choice Vouchers. The bulk of residents, 49 percent, are simply transferred to other public housing developments. And, a disturbing number of the residents who are officially relocated are
“lost” along the way, meaning that they no longer receive housing assistance.\textsuperscript{71}

Where did the people go as a result of public housing demolition and forced eviction? What lasting social effects has HOPE VI in Atlanta provided?

**Theoretical Framework**

The myth undergirding public policy is that those on the margins of society do not have the wherewithal to determine their own outcomes. Politicians speak for the underserved. Scholars draw conclusions about them. But what say the people themselves?

As HOPE VI resulted in the forced displacement of the poor, the theoretical assumption is that those facing forced eviction may have had little political voice prior to the policymaking decisions of the Atlanta Housing Authority and their HOPE VI partners. When community leaders make decisions that impact the lives of those with the least leverage, who ultimately benefits? How do families who already live at the social and economic margins of society negotiate their continued existence when policy leaders determine their fate for them? Often silenced, ignored, or disenfranchised, this study seeks to bring the voices of former residents closer to the center of policy discourse.

Landis and McClure suggest, “[s]ome policies are created using the rational model: An important problem is identified, its dimensions described, and responses are formulated and put forth. Other policies come about when constituencies mobilize around a particular issue, ideology is brought to bear, programmatic responses are negotiated among stakeholders, and money is appropriated.”\textsuperscript{72}
HOPE VI, as implemented by the Atlanta Housing Authority, is representative of such a rational model. A problem was identified (i.e., Atlanta’s public housing units were distressed and dilapidated); the dimensions or scope of the problem defined (i.e., all of Atlanta’s public housing stock fell under this definition, with the exception of a few senior high-rises); and a response or solution was formulated (i.e., demolishing the units). But how much input was sought from the residents who occupied the units? According to some tenant association leaders, not very much.

Depending on whom you ask, public housing tenants had little or no involvement into the actual decision-making of HOPE VI implementation in Atlanta. Glover writes that the Atlanta housing board began meeting with tenant leaders in the summer of 1994 to gain their support of the HOPE VI vision. By August 1994, the Techwood-Clark Howell Resident Association signed an agreement with the AHA that allowed plans to move forward in developing a mixed-income community on the site of Techwood-Clark Howell Homes. However, public housing tenants have criticized efforts to gain their support in AHA’s plans. Tenants have claimed that decisions were already made when they met with the AHA. The meetings, say tenants, were merely informational meetings to report to tenants the plans already decided upon by AHA and developers.

HOPE VI policy is based on the assumption that public housing produces spatial pockets of race and poverty. According to the National Housing Law Project, about 95% of residents displaced by HOPE VI are families of color. Seventy-nine (79%) of them are African-American. Therefore, it is significant to point out that the policies of HOPE VI in Atlanta effectually removes and displaces communities of color. A primary
goal of HOPE VI in Atlanta is to reduce poverty and deconcentrate race. Like urban renewal efforts of decades past, the underlying assumption to achieving these goals is to racially integrate communities, and disperse families of color to other outlying communities.

With federal funding, the goal of HOPE VI is to disperse concentrations of poverty in favor of mixed-income, mixed-race rental communities. Although HOPE VI has gained national attention as well as positive reviews for its provision of mixed-income housing models, it has not been without its critics. For example, Thomas Boston points out:

In recent years, several studies have used resident surveys to longitudinally track the effect of HOPE VI mixed-income revitalization on original residents of public housing projects (Brooks, Wolk and Adams, 2003; Holmes, Moody et al., 2003; Buron, Popkin et al., 2002). Because these studies are designed to track residents longitudinal (sic) over a long period of time, they are not yet able to provide definitive answers to how HOPE VI has affected public housing assisted families.

Boston further states,

In a recent report by the National Housing Law Project, the authors criticize the HOPE VI program. Among other things, they point out that, "HOPE VI plays upon the public housing program's unfairly negative reputation and an exaggerated sense of crisis about the state of public housing in general to justify a drastic model of large scale family displacement and housing redevelopment that increasingly appears to do more harm than good." (National Housing Law Project, 2000: pp. ii). The report asserts that empirical data to support the claims of HOPE VI is lacking.

According to Boston, one must consider important policy questions surrounding any program of revitalization. In the case of HOPE VI, he maintains that one question is whether revitalization causes a loss of housing assistance for families affected by it. Nationally, very little information is known
about this process. In fact, HUD did not track residents affected by HOPE VI revitalization until 1998 and did not require grantees to report the location of residents until 2000. (U.S. GOA, 2003:8) Therefore, this issue continues to create concern and controversy (Schwartz and Tajbakhsh; 1997: 89).^77

Research Questions

One of the overarching questions in assessing the outcomes of HOPE VI in Atlanta is to ask, “Where did the people go?” When addressing the question of residential mobility, studies contradict reports of the Atlanta Housing Authority (AHA). According to AHA, 80% of former public housing families stayed in the city of Atlanta following demolition. The remaining families, says AHA, moved to outlying areas.^78 At least one source offers a different perspective. The Christian Science Monitor maintains that “[o]nly about 17 percent of the residents relocated in Atlanta during the 1990s were able to come back to the new complexes; another 40 percent remain in voucher-subsidized housing. No one can say what happened to the rest.”^79

A second research question addresses the deconcentration of poverty. An analysis of HOPE VI policy will seek to define what is meant by “deconcentration.” How has the Atlanta Housing Authority sought to measure decreasing concentrations of poverty? Has poverty been dispersed across the Atlanta metropolitan area, or have pockets of poverty simply moved from one locality to another? The literature reveals that poverty has been reduced where public housing once stood. But where did those people go? One underlying theory is that former public housing residents relocated to other low-income communities, thereby, contributing to new pockets of poverty in outlying areas. A study
by Georgia State University’s (GSU) Urban Health Initiative supports this theory. GSU researchers state that “most residents are moving to neighborhoods where the poverty rate ranges from almost 20 percent to almost 76 percent.” Furthermore, they write, “there is a visible geographic clustering pattern implying reconcentration or resegregation.” (Italics in original text). Was this a policy goal of HOPE VI – i.e., to relocate the poor to neighboring counties – or merely an unintended outcome?

And finally, a third research question engages whether or not residents of pre-demolition public housing have experienced better outcomes following demolition. Again, who defines what constitutes “better?” Is this defined by policymakers and analysts, or by the residents themselves? In other words, what “voices” have contributed to the assessment of relocation outcomes?

**Overview**

This paper offers an exploratory account of how HOPE VI was implemented in the city of Atlanta. What follows is an historical account of HOPE VI from conception to implementation. Chapter 2 discusses the evolution of HOPE VI as an innovative housing policy. It discusses political players on the national scene as well as in Atlanta. It chronicles who made decisions around affordable housing, and seeks to address why those decisions were made at a given time in history.

Chapter 3 is a review of the literature on HOPE VI. While much has been written on HOPE VI as an innovative policy, the literature is still emerging. There is yet no general consensus as to the overall success or failure of HOPE VI. While most scholars
agree that HOPE VI is the most ambitious and innovative policy changer in recent history, not everyone is able to tout its success with unequivocal fervor. There are indeed some critics of HOPE VI. Chapter 3, therefore, seeks to offer a balanced overview of HOPE VI – its triumphs, its challenges, and areas for further evaluation and growth.

Chapter 4 discusses methodology. It outlines the research design, data collection, and data coding processes. It describes the challenges and limitations in gathering primary data, and describes contemporary methods for locating potential respondents. For example, an original resident survey was developed and placed on Survey Monkey in August 2011. Early efforts were made to solicit potential respondents through local homeless shelters and the Atlanta Housing Authority. Although personnel from shelters were supportive of the project, no residents were identified. Neither did the Atlanta Housing Authority provide access to public housing residents. By December 2012, no surveys had been completed.

In early 2013, efforts to locate potential respondents were extended to social media. A Twitter account was set up to publicize the study to the general public. In addition, a static webpage offered details about the study, as well as provided a direct link to the survey. In all of these efforts, respondents for the primary survey were not forthcoming.

Secondary survey and focus group data were gathered in lieu of, and in addition to primary survey data. Baseline and evaluation studies provided secondary responses from former Capitol Homes residents. Chapter 4 describes in detail the coding process
for a text analysis of these data. It lays out the argument for conducting a case study analysis of HOPE VI in Atlanta.

Chapter 5 presents findings in this study, and includes numerous graphs, maps, and figures as visual representation of findings. Most interesting are the maps, which visually show the shifting of poverty concentration by census tracts. By the same token, the bar graphs also tell a story of how race and poverty concentration have fluctuated in a 10-year span.

And finally, Chapter 6 is the policy review and evaluation. In this chapter, the findings are summarized and discussed within the context of findings within the literature. Efforts are made to address each of HUD’s goals for HOPE VI, and to establish whether or not those goals were met. An overall critique of HOPE VI is provided.

A brief discussion of housing policy that works is incorporated into Chapter 6. The New York Housing Authority, although fraught with its own challenges, is one that has survived and prevailed. Nicholas Dagen Bloom provides the content of this discussion in his book, Public Housing that Worked.

Finally, Chapter 6 sets forth recommendations for HOPE VI in the future. What is next for HOPE VI? More importantly, what is next for the residents of our nation who are most in need of affordable housing? Hopefully, this study will contribute to the ever-evolving literature on public housing policy in Atlanta and the U.S.
Chapter 1


3. Ibid., 3.


9. Wilson, Kindle e-reader, Location 1105.

10. Wilson, Kindle e-reader, Location 1141.

11. Wilson, Kindle e-reader, Location 1153.


15. Ibid., 74.


17. Ibid., 101.


19. Ibid.

20. Curley, 104.

21. Ibid.

22. Ibid.


24. Wilson, Kindle e-reader, Location 1212.


26. Ibid., 430.

27. Ibid.


38. Ibid.

39. Ibid.


41. Ibid., 100.

42. Martens, 8.


46. Reiss, 807.

47. Landis and McClure, 334.


50. Landis and McClure, 335.


53. Rich et al., 5-6.


57. Rich et al., 2.


59. AHA, HOPE, 3.

60. Ibid.
61. Ibid.


64. Ibid.

65. Ibid., 14.

66. AHA, HOPE, 6.


68. Ibid.


71. Ibid., iii.

72. Landis and McClure, 320.


74. Ibid.


76. Ibid., 5.

77. Ibid., 4-5.


81. Ibid., 5-6.
CHAPTER 2
THE EVOLUTION OF HOPE VI

Hope VI is a federal demonstration grant that was developed out of various attempts to rethink and restructure how public housing administration is implemented in the United States. The National Commission on Severely Distressed Public Housing was created by Congress in 1989 in an effort to devise a National Action Plan by which to eradicate, eliminate, or renovate "severely distressed" public housing. By some accounts, public housing had become "second-class housing and the people living there felt that the government treated them as second-class citizens."¹ Not only was public housing viewed as "severely distressed" structural units, but the lives of its residents were also considered to be in a state of "unimaginable distress."² Public housing had become "unfit, unsafe, (and) unlivable" in the opinion of Congress members, and they set as their goal the elimination of this "national disgrace" for the benefit of public housing residents.³

This chapter, therefore, unfolds the evolution of HOPE VI, and illustrates how innovative-thinking policymakers transformed the way we think of public housing and its residents.

According to Madeline Howard, "Nearly eleven million families and individuals in the United States depend on some form of government-subsidized housing."⁴ Since 1937, the federal government has provided subsidized housing for low-income people.⁵
While government housing was originally intended for traditional families – that is, husbands and wives – the structure of families in public housing has shifted. According to Howard, by the 1950s, the face of public housing had become largely African-American, elderly, and female. This is an important concept since public policy is invariably shaped by the constituents it serves:

For the millions of people who live in government-subsidized housing or attempt to access it, the government’s concepts of family rights and responsibilities may determine very fundamental aspects of their lives, such as whom they can marry and live with, whether certain family members must be excluded from the home, and how to cope with violence within the family. In addition to interfering with family structure, subsidized housing programs often perpetuate racial and economic segregation by isolating residents from the larger community.

Racial segregation and economic isolation were two primary challenges that had come to plague public housing communities. The issue of poverty and the challenges therein became a focus of national policy in the 1980s. Some scholars credit the 1987 publication of William Julius Wilson’s *The Truly Disadvantaged* with the revival of national discourse on poverty. In this seminal work, Wilson discusses “concentration effects” of poverty. Concentration effects are the “experiences of low-income families who live in inner-city areas [that differ] from the experiences of those who live in other areas in the central city.” Wilson states,

In short, the communities of the underclass are plagued by massive joblessness, flagrant and open lawlessness, and low-achieving schools, and therefore tend to be avoided by outsiders. Consequently, the residents of these areas, whether women and children of welfare families or aggressive street criminals, have become increasingly socially isolated from mainstream patterns of behavior.
Once designed to offer a temporary solution to affordable housing for low-income families, public housing in modern times has come to represent poverty entrapment and isolation from mainstream society. The very system that was originally intended to lift families out of poverty had become a system that, in essence, simply “warehoused” the poor.

As a remedy to the concentration effects of conventional public housing communities, the federal government also began providing housing assistance through the issuance of housing vouchers. In 1970, what is now commonly known as “Section 8” housing assistance was created. Although initially developed as the Housing Allowance Experiment, this new policy became law with the Housing and Community Development Act of 1987. Section 8 allows low-income families to rent market-rate housing using government funded housing vouchers. Vouchers are typically paid directly to landlords as rental subsidies, with the remaining balance (not to exceed 30% of renters’ income) paid by the renter. Under the voucher program, all parties hold responsibility for their part in the rental contract. That is to say, the tenant, landlord, and the housing authority all have HUD-mandated obligations to ensure that suitable and affordable housing is provided to the tenant.11

In 1998, however, changes were made, including the program name from Section 8 to Housing Choice Voucher program. Also, according to Landis and McClure, the new program allows vouchers to be issued to residents who can then wield their rights as renters to withhold the voucher from the landlord if an unresolved maintenance issue
were to occur. The vouchers, furthermore, became portable in 1999, thereby allowing renters to take the voucher to other units if they should decide to vacate the property.12

The mid 1980s saw a greater shift towards devolution in housing policy implementation. "For example, Congress enacted the Low-Income Housing Tax Credit Program in 1986 and the HOME program in 1990. Both programs gave state and local housing officials greater authority and responsibility for designing housing strategies tailored to their respective housing markets."13

One of the key initiators of housing policy change is former HUD Secretary, Jack Kemp. As a cabinet member of the George H.W. Bush Administration (1989-1993), Kemp, made several attempts to revamp public housing. One idea for which he strongly advocated was resident ownership of public housing and improved housing management. Although it was widely believed that public housing no longer provided a viable solution to low-income housing, the idea of public housing demolition was anathema to Secretary Kemp. Kemp was the first to initiate a series of housing programs called Homeownership and Opportunity for People Everywhere (HOPE). These programs, first implemented in 1990, eventually fell under new legislation passed by Congress in 1992 called the Urban Revitalization Demonstration (URD). "The Urban Revitalization Demonstration . . . was sponsored by Senators Barbara Mikulski and Christopher Bond, and incorporated into the FY 1993 appropriations law."14 URD eventually came to be known as HOPE VI, which authorized funds to be used for the revitalization, renovation, and demolition of blighted and "distressed" public housing units.15
By 1989, concerned members of Congress made a commitment to address the growing issue of "severely distressed" public housing. The National Commission on Severely Distressed Public Housing was created to develop solutions to eradicate blighted and distressed housing. According to Bruce Katz,

Over eighteen months, the commission and its staff visited public housing developments in twenty-five cities, held twenty public hearings, and talked extensively with a broad range of individuals and constituencies. The commission's final report to Congress, presented in August 1992, portrayed public housing residents as fearful and languishing in unhealthy, unsafe communities without access to jobs or programs designed to enable self-sufficiency.  

Through a National Action Plan, the Commission made recommendations in three vital areas: "physical improvements, management improvements, and social and community services to address resident needs." By the time the Commission submitted its report to Congress in 1992, it had determined that 86,000 of all public housing units (about 1.2 million units nationwide) were "severely distressed." Although scholars disagree as to whether a definition of "severely distressed" was formally established, Katz maintains that "severely distressed" referred to the existence of concentrated poverty, "the incidence of crime, the nature and extent of management challenges, and the physical condition of the housing."

There were several influences and drives that sparked changes in housing policy. While Secretary Kemp pushed for his public housing homeownership plan, other policy thinkers were advocating for mixed-income models and housing mobility. The mixed-income model was advanced by developers and housing authorities across various cities who were "using federal waivers and other tools to redevelop public housing sites and
other subsidized housing . . . ,"19 establishing the assumption that economic integration would lead to sustainability. By the same token, the success of the Gautreaux project in Chicago (discussed in Chapter 3) influenced policy in housing mobility through the use of vouchers. Proponents of housing vouchers were encouraged by the fact that house-holders who moved to the Chicago suburbs following Gautreaux v. HUD achieved better outcomes in employment and childhood education than those who did not move.20

Along with poverty deconcentration and economic integration, the Commission’s National Action Plan also called for the coordination of social services for public-assisted housing residents, as well as encouraging housing authorities to pursue public-private partnerships in order to facilitate better management of housing properties. Popkin et al. state:

The HOPE VI program was intended to fundamentally transform public housing by combining the physical revitalization of distressed public housing properties with community building and supportive services. HOPE VI funds covered capital costs to reconstruct replacement units, fund Section 8 vouchers, and improve management practices. Reflecting the commission’s focus on community building and resident empowerment, the law also set aside 20 percent of the initial $300 million appropriation for community service programs and for supportive services, including literacy training, job training, day care, and youth activities.21

In 1992, legislators were in agreement that public housing revitalization needed to be addressed without delay. The “distressed” lives of public housing residents demanded no less. In October 1992, appropriations for a new program – HOPE VI – was authorized, even before the enactment of legislation authorizing the new law.22
"The enactment of HOPE VI in 1992 coincided with the election of President Bill Clinton and the appointment of Henry Cisneros, the former mayor of San Antonio, as Secretary of Housing and Urban Development."23 24 Although Kemp and others had set out various initiatives leading to the enactment of HOPE VI, it is Secretary Cisneros that is most credited with breathing life into HOPE VI. Cisneros has been described as Clinton's "passionate crusader against racial and economic segregation."25

One of Cisnero's primary goals in HOPE VI and public housing revitalization is the deconcentration of poverty. In 1992, another demonstration initiative, Moving to Opportunity (MTO), was authorized. Based on the Gautreaux initiative in Chicago, the MTO demonstration project was established with the goal of moving low-income residents to low-poverty communities. The idea was to give low-income families the chance to move to better opportunities by moving to better-income neighborhoods. And so, with this demonstration project coinciding with the enactment of HOPE VI, the deconcentration of poverty became a patent goal of HOPE VI.

But the deconcentration of poverty is achieved not only with the demolition of distressed housing. Along with public housing revitalization and reconstruction, another method for deconcentrating poverty is residential mobility through the use of Section 8 housing vouchers. Section 8 vouchers allow displaced residents the opportunity to move into market-rate rental housing with the hope that the new location is in a low-poverty area. However, reports are mixed as to whether or not the use of vouchers has led to poverty dispersement or to new enclaves of concentrated poverty. Critics have pointed to HUD and to public housing authorities for failure to keep track of residents' relocation.
“[H]ousing authorities generally have not assembled data on the characteristics of the neighborhoods to which their Section 8 families moved....” Where did displaced public housing residents go? Reports have been inconsistent. But, Alexander Polikoff maintains that voucher relocation “has been one of HOPE VI’s weak spots.”

In 1993, Secretary Cisneros made a visit to Atlanta to discuss the revitalization of Atlanta’s public housing stock with city leaders. At that time, Cisneros met with public housing residents to gain their input into what public housing could become. Following the tour of Atlanta (as well as other city tours), Cisneros began to understand the severity of the public housing crisis. He resolved not only to revitalize distressed housing, but to overhaul the entire public housing system.

Several political and business leaders were at the forefront of this overhaul: Senators Alfonse D’Amato (R-New York), Christopher Bond (R-Missouri), Barbara Mikulski (D-Maryland), Donald Riegle (D-Michigan), and Paul Sarbanes (D-Maryland); Representatives Henry B. Gonzalez (D-San Antonio, TX), Rick Lazio (R-Long Island, NY), Jerry Lewis (R-Southern California), Louis Stokes (D-Cleveland, OH), and Maxine Waters (D-Los Angeles, CA). From the business community, Richard Baron (McCormack Baron Salazar) was instrumental in proposing how public housing communities could be effective. Finally, leading housing authority executives rounded out this cadre of leadership. They included: Richard Gentry from Richmond, VA; Sally Hernandez-Pinero from New York, NY; and Renee Glover from Atlanta, GA.

In the case of Atlanta, the overhaul of public housing could not come soon enough. According to Glover, “Atlanta had more public housing per capita than any
Approximately 13% of Atlanta’s population (or 50,000 people) were residents of Atlanta Public Housing. “Atlanta had the nation’s second-highest poverty rate, with more than 27 percent of the population living below the federal poverty line. It had the country’s highest rate of violent crime and one of the highest unemployment rates for African Americans. The public schools were failing, and middle-class residents – [B]lack and white – had been fleeing the city in droves for at least three decades.” Finally, says Glover, AHA was not providing the “safe and decent” housing that it was intended to provide.

HOPE VI provided the much needed financial and legislative resources to revamp Atlanta’s public housing. Furthermore, the appointment of Renee Lewis Glover as AHA’s new President and Chief Executive Officer was also necessary in “getting things done,” as Glover herself explains. Under Glover’s leadership, “AHA has had to overhaul its policies, operations, business processes and systems, and personnel with the new model in mind.” Under this new model, the Atlanta Housing Authority envisioned itself as a facilitator of the public housing system. Having established partnerships with investors and developers, the Atlanta Housing Authority is now a real estate venture. AHA owns the land on which new development sites are located; however, managing partners (or “owner entities”) develop the communities and finance them.

AHA boasted of its success of implementing a public housing system utilizing a model of mixed-income, mixed-use developments. As Glover states, no other city was utilizing the mixed-income, mixed-use model prior to the conceptualization by AHA. Not only was this new territory for AHA, but also for HUD. Glover maintains that many
HUD officials “were flying blind because HUD had never granted permission for an entity other than a local housing authority to own public housing units.”

According to Cisneros, HOPE VI not only helped to revitalize the physical structure of public housing, it also led to public policy change. There emerged “working principles” from the evolution of HOPE VI that led to a renewed concept in public housing – New Urbanism. New Urbanism is an architectural concept that extends from urban design to encourage shared space, social interaction, and a sense of ownership by the residents. It became “a guiding set of principles in the field of community design,” says Popkin. New urbanism is characterized by “houses facing the streets, with . . . a mix of housing types, prices, and sizes to attract a mix of people; shopping and parks accessible via footpaths and sidewalks; a grid of streets.”

According to Peter Calthorpe, four key principles of New Urbanism were at the core of HOPE VI: diversity, human scale, restoration, and continuity. Diversity is achieved with the implementation of mixed-income, mixed-use developments. The goal in New Urbanism is to bring back to city neighborhoods what public housing and urban sprawl took away. No longer warehousing homogenous populations in city high-rises, New Urbanism encourages a mix of people, housing types, and social interaction. Thus, diversity brings vibrancy back to city life.

Human scale refers to the concept of providing “walkability” and pedestrian space in urban design. It promotes Jane Jacobs’ concept of “eyes on the street” – that is, safety and security because residents are closer to the street. It also clearly delineates public versus private spaces.
Restoration refers to the preservation of historic buildings and public space, and restoring the basic infrastructure of the community.

Likewise, continuity links public housing with the vibrancy of city life, which includes access to transportation, safety and security, and architectural design that relates to the history of the city.\(^{42}\)

Despite the positive concepts of social interaction generated by New Urbanism, one drawback to this urban design was the repeal of the “one-for-one” replacement rule in 1995. In 1981, Congress enacted a law prohibiting the demolition of housing units without one-for-one replacement. Eventually, because New Urbanism under HOPE VI encouraged smaller-scale communities, and construction other than high-rises, the number of units demolished could not be replaced feasibly at a rate of 100%, on the same community site. New construction design favored green space, “defensible space,” and “eyes on the street.” – i.e., contemporary concepts advanced by urbanist, Jane Jacobs.\(^ {43}\)

In response, advocates for the one-for-one replacement rule insisted that HUD authorize alternatives to conventional public housing. Low-income residents who do not or cannot return to the original housing site should be allowed other types of housing assistance. For Cisneros, providing housing to every resident displaced by demolition was a must. He stated, “I personally insisted that without exception a housing authority had to be able to show that every resident who was in public housing before would be provided some form of housing, either a unit or a voucher.”\(^ {44}\) Evaluations of HOPE VI to date, have shown that this has not been the case.
In 1997, the Secretary of HUD position was filled by Andrew Cuomo. According to Cisneros, “Cuomo gave prominence to HOPE VI.”\textsuperscript{45} Cuomo reinvented HUD and improved management processes. According to HUD’s website, the Management Reform Plan that Cuomo designed “cracks down on waste, fraud and abuse, and addresses decades-old management problems at the Department.”\textsuperscript{46} In essence, the Management Reform Plan has been hailed by analysts as “one of the most ambitious, fundamental and exciting reinvention plans in the recent history of the federal government.”\textsuperscript{47}

Under Secretary Cuomo, major HUD accomplishments include: bringing integrity to HUD processes; cracking down on landlords who abuse Department policies; the launching of housing inspections nationwide for public-assisted housing that are privately-owned, and subsidized or insured by HUD (e.g., Section 8 housing); opening up “storefront” HUD offices to serve residents better; reforming public housing and rental assistance; increasing homeownership; reducing housing discrimination; and developing the “Continuum of Care” program – a program that helps homeless Americans become self-sufficient.\textsuperscript{48}

The largest public-assisted housing program in the U.S. is the Housing Choice Voucher Program. Serving “[a]proximately 2 million households,”\textsuperscript{49} the Housing Choice Voucher Program serves the same population as does conventional public housing. However, the Housing Choice Voucher Program allows for greater flexibility in securing suitable housing:
In 1998, reflecting the new emphasis on mobility and location choice, the Section 8 program was renamed the Housing Choice Voucher program. By the end of the decade, the voucher program had surpassed the public housing program to become the largest housing assistance program in the United States, and was increasingly recognized as an essential tool for helping low-income households obtain affordable housing without reinforcing the concentration of poverty.50

Vouchers can come in two forms: project-based vouchers and tenant-based vouchers. Project-based vouchers are “attached” to a particular housing unit, and can only be used with that unit. In other words, the funding assistance stays with a particular unit. Tenant-based vouchers, on the other hand, are flexible and transferable. In other words, the assistance goes with the resident. If the resident should vacate a property, she could potentially retain her voucher assistance when moving to another property. Contrary to project-based housing, the tenant would not necessarily lose her assistance when she vacates the rental property.51

In 2001, the Atlanta Housing Authority was awarded $35 million for the demolition and revitalization of Capitol Homes. A total of 694 original units were demolished with an expected 1,140 units to be built as replacement units, now called Capitol Gateway. Of the 1,140 units, 639 units were expected to be rental units and 501 units were expected to be for-sale units. Of the rental units, 138 units were expected to be HUD-subsidized units, 308 non-subsidized units, and 193 market rate units. So, although the total number of units exceeds the original number of units demolished, only a small percent of replacement units were expected to be subsidized units for the poorest of the poor. In essence, the plan for Capitol Gateway was that only 22% of the original capacity
will be used for subsidized public housing. What happened, then, to the remaining original residents?

Now that HOPE VI has demolished, revitalized, and redeveloped public housing around the U.S. over the last 20 years, what will the future of housing policy bring to U.S. citizens? What is the next phase in affordable housing? Will HUD continue to provide funding in the name of HOPE VI for the upkeep of revitalized housing? Will HOPE VI continue to be reappropriated for the continued issuance of housing vouchers? Will HOPE VI increase its efforts to provide support services to low-income residents? Will HOPE VI funding help to revamp how we address homelessness and the unhoused? Will greater efforts move towards homeownership assistance rather than revitalized public housing?

In Appendix A of From Despair to HOPE, G. Thomas Kingsley offers a look at the future of HOPE VI nationwide. He writes,

the developments associated with the 240 grants awarded through the end of 2007 will have entailed the demolition of 96,226 original, on-site public housing units but ultimately will yield a total of 111,059 new and rehabilitated units for occupancy, for an average yield of 463 units per grant. More than half (54 percent) of the post-revitalization units will be public housing units .... Of (these) units, 89 percent will be rental units and 11 percent will be homeownership units. Of the remaining post-revitalization units that will not be public housing units (46 percent), 62 percent will be rentals (rented either through other, shallower forms of public subside or at market rates), and 38 percent will be homeownerships units. 52

HOPE VI funds continue to be administered through appropriations and announced in Notice of Funds Availability (NOFAs), the latest of which was published on August 25, 2010. Currently, applicants for HOPE VI funding must have “severely
distressed housing in their inventory, as mandated by NOFA. Only public housing authorities can apply for funding. Housing authorities that only administer Housing Choice or Section 8 vouchers are not eligible to apply.⁵³
Chapter 2


3. Ibid., 2.


5. Ibid.

6. Ibid., 97.

7. Ibid., 100.

8. Ibid., 98.


10. Ibid., Location 1160.


20. Ibid.


23. Popkin et al., A Decade of HOPE VI, 14.


27. Ibid.


29. Ibid., 7.

31. Ibid.
32. Ibid.
33. Ibid.
34. Ibid., 147.
35. Ibid., 152.
36. Ibid.
37. Ibid., 150.
38. Cisneros, 8.
39. Popkin et al., *A Decade of HOPE VI*, 16.


42. Calthorpe, 52-53.
43. Calthorpe, 52.
44. Cisneros, 8.
45. Cisneros, 10.


48. Ibid.


50. Popkin et al., A Decade of HOPE VI, 15.


CHAPTER 3
REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Literature on HOPE VI and its outcomes is ever-growing. While most public reports on HOPE VI laud the revitalization efforts of city housing authorities, others reveal skepticism as to the overall effects of public housing demolition. The most pressing concern is what happened to the families who were displaced? Were these families able to successfully achieve housing stability? Are there negative outcomes as a result of HOPE VI displacement? In addition to gains won by exiting public housing, what social costs were borne by residents who were displaced?

The overall effectiveness of HOPE VI is the focus of many housing policy studies. Researchers have looked at comparable housing policies and their outcomes to gauge HOPE VI effectiveness. For example, case studies in Chicago’s Gautreaux program; Louisville, Kentucky’s Park DuValle Revitalization Project; and various MTO (Moving to Opportunity) programs nationwide have all been examined as possible benchmarks by which to compare HOPE VI relocation outcomes. These case study analyses examine how city housing authorities were able to implement innovative housing policy and whether or not the overall objectives of HUD were ultimately met.

Chicago’s famous Gautreaux program was an experiment in residential mobility and its effects on social behavior. A result of a 1966 class-action law suit, the Gautreaux
program was named for Dorothy Gautreaux, a tenant whose attorneys filed suit on behalf of all public housing residents against the discriminatory practices of the Chicago Housing Authority (CHA). Although not fully resolved until 1981, the case resulted in an agreement by the CHA to remedy acts of racial discrimination within its office:

As part of a court-ordered legal settlement to redress past racial discrimination, from 1976 to 1998 the Chicago Housing Authority (CHA) provided a limited number of low-income African-American families the means to relocate, with an emphasis on moving to predominantly white suburbs. Each year, thousands of people vied to apply by telephone for a few hundred vouchers handed out on a first-come, first-served basis. These vouchers could be used in the private rental market, with the federal government making up the difference between a unit’s rent and the individual’s contribution (based on income). Over the program’s 22-year history, some 7,100 families relocated into private housing in Chicago and its suburbs.

The Gautreaux program, furthermore, was an effort to assist public housing tenants in moving to neighborhoods that had low minority populations (i.e., less than 30%). The intent was to increase tenants’ chances for upward mobility by assisting them in moving to less minority segregated communities.

Many HOPE VI programs of today have their antecedence in the Gautreaux program. What both Gautreaux and HOPE VI programs have in common is the primary goal of desegregating public housing communities. The programs differ, however, in the selectivity of residents. Whereas HOPE VI involves forced eviction and relocation of residents, families relocating in the Gautreaux program chose to do so, voluntarily.

The Park DuValle Revitalization Project (Louisville, KY) is another revitalization effort that is useful in assessing the overall effectiveness of HOPE VI. In contrast to the Gautreaux program (which sought to disperse race and poverty), the Park DuValle
Revitalization Project utilized HOPE VI funds to resegregate African Americans. Brazley and Gilderbloom state that this program “chose to build a new housing community for African Americans on an isolated site previously utilized for public housing.”6 Although much of public housing across the country has been criticized for its entrenched model of racial segregation, developers of Park DuValle chose to maintain racial segregation.7 Despite current trends in mixed-income models, Park DuValle, with its emphasis on racial resegregation, has been noted for its success in reshaping public housing.8

Also spurred by the success of the Gautreaux project is the Moving to Opportunity (MTO) program. This program was designed by HUD under Presidents George W. Bush and Bill Clinton, and includes as its goals the following:

- Reduce cost and achieve greater costs effectiveness in Federal expenditures;
- Give incentives to families with children where the head of household is working, is seeking work, or is preparing for work by participating in job training, educational programs, or programs that assist people to obtain employment and become economically self-sufficient; and
- Increase housing choices for low-income families.9

But MTO programs do not tell the whole story in assessing HOPE VI relocation outcomes, say Jens Ludwig et al. “MTO estimates are informative only about the effects of mobility programs like MTO on the types of low-income families who would choose to participate in such programs. MTO is silent on the effects of involuntary mobility programs, which is an important point, given ongoing HOPE VI activities across the country to demolish some of our highest-poverty housing projects.”10
But what is informative about the MTO program is the emphasis on economic class, not race. "Under the criteria established by MTO . . . Gautreaux’s explicit emphasis on race was lost and the focus shifted to class."

Economic integration is a key goal in contemporary housing policy, says Thomas C. Kost. Moving out of public housing will lead to “greatly improved socio-economic outcomes,” agrees Boston. HOPE VI in Atlanta allows mixed-income housing options where low-income residents are placed in residential units alongside middle-income residents.

Kost also upholds the benefits of racial integration. He writes: “Racial integration would further ‘provide opportunities for exposure and interaction between whites and minorities [that] appear to contribute to greater tolerance, fair-mindedness, and openness to diverse networks and settings.’ In other words, residential integration is beneficial for members of all races.”

Kost advances the concept of “vertical equity” in achieving housing parity. According to Kost, those residents with the greatest need (i.e., the poorest of the poor) should benefit the most from new housing policy. Unlike the housing vouchers where residents may still encounter barriers and restrictions in securing suitable housing, vertical equity in housing policy would ensure that all displaced residents actually find suitable and sustained housing. Not only would neighborhoods achieve greater racial integration, but poor residents with the greatest economic and social need would more likely find upward mobility.
But linking residential space to social outcomes of its residents can be methodologically problematic, say Susan Clampet-Lundquist and Douglas S. Massey. For example, when using survey data, how does one extract causality in neighborhood effects? In other words, do poor neighborhoods create poor families, or do poor neighborhoods simply attract people who are already poor? How does one determine what is cause and what is effect?

The concept of “neighborhood effects” – i.e., the effect of residential space on residents’ behavior – is famously captured in William Julius Wilson’s seminal book, The Truly Disadvantaged. Wilson’s attention to “neighborhood effects” is often a prime focus for HOPE VI studies, given that transformation of social behavior is one of the expected outcomes of HOPE VI mobility programs. However, the engagement of The Truly Disadvantaged for promoting involuntary displacement of poor housing residents is misguided, says Wilson. He explains,

Nowhere do I suggest the forced relocation of the urban poor from housing projects or other centers of concentrated poverty as a policy option. On the contrary, my extended discussion of policy options, which flows from my analysis of the social transformation of the inner city, highlights macroeconomic policy to generate economic growth and tight labor markets; fiscal and monetary policies to stimulate noninflationary growth and increase the competitiveness of American goods on both the domestic and international markets; and a national labor market strategy to make the labor force, including the [B]lack labor force, more adaptable to changing economic opportunities. I also advocated a family allowance program, a child support assurance program, and a child-care strategy.

Other scholars, such as Clampet-Lundquist and Massey, maintain that neighborhood effects are revealed through more than just relocation. Neighborhood effects are also a product of time and space. Clampet-Lundquist and Massey acknowledge that most
studies of neighborhood effect examine behavioral change “at a certain point in time, rather than in a dynamic way.” In other words, assessing a measure of neighborhood effects requires that the resident remain in the neighborhood for a length of time. They suggest that longitudinal studies may be more effective in drawing conclusions about the positive effects of HOPE VI-related mobility. Simply moving to a better environment does not guarantee better social outcomes, especially if the tenant should choose to vacate the environment after a passage of time. A local study by Emory University concurs with this finding:

[S]imply moving families out of a distressed public housing community is not sufficient to ensure that families attain economic self-sufficiency, particularly given the very low incomes of most public housing residents. Successful transitions to self-sufficiency would require on-going community and support services to enable former public housing residents to secure employment and connect to the opportunities provided by mainstream society.

Regardless of duration in a given neighborhood, the fact remains that tenants are “human agents.” No measure of neighborhood effects can be calculated “devoid of human agency.” That is to say, one must consider residents’ choices and decisions in housing selection. The calculation of neighborhood effects must take into account residents’ free will, despite whether or not HOPE VI contributed to their reason for moving.

Locally, studies of HOPE VI effectiveness have been conducted by: (1) Emory University’s Office of University-Community Partnerships (OUCP), (2) Clark Atlanta University’s Southern Center for Studies in Public Policy, and (3) Georgia State University’s Department of Sociology.
First, Emory conducted an evaluation of the McDaniel Glenn housing program. In this study, face-to-face interviews were conducted with residents of the former McDaniel Glenn housing project. The goal of the study was to assess the effects of relocation on the lives of residents formerly residing in McDaniel Glenn and the Mechanicsville/Pittsburgh areas prior to revitalization efforts. Investigators explain,

A baseline interview was conducted between December 2006 and April 2007 and a follow-up interview was conducted between July and September 2009. We also analyzed administrative data obtained from the Atlanta Housing Authority regarding the characteristics of the former residents of McDaniel Glenn. In addition, to provide a comparative perspective on perceptions of housing and neighborhood conditions between former residents of the McDaniel Glenn public housing community and Mechanicsville and Pittsburgh neighborhoods, the evaluation team completed face-to-face interviews with a sample of 100 households each in the Mechanicsville and Pittsburgh neighborhoods at baseline and follow-up. 29

Findings of Emory’s study reveal that the residents, in general, have experienced positive or improved outcomes in living conditions since relocation and revitalization. “Specifically, more than eight out of ten (83%) former residents interviewed in 2009 agreed that the razing and redevelopment of McDaniel Glenn was the ‘right thing to do.’” 30 Some improved areas include,

- Quality of housing;
- General satisfaction with neighborhood characteristics; and
- A stronger sense of neighborliness and community trust. 31

Areas in which residents continue to experience challenges, or at least a lower rate of satisfaction, include,

- Increased household expenses and housing costs;
- Food insecurity;
• Residential instability (i.e., multiple moves and shortened duration of residency);
• Access to public transportation (rate of satisfaction was lower than when residing in McDaniel Glenn, but still rated as at least “good”); and
• An overall decline in access to jobs, adult education, and other human capital resources.32

Emory’s findings, furthermore, reveal that “multiple movers” (i.e., residents who moved more than once since leaving McDaniel Glenn) generally experience greater satisfaction with their current neighborhoods and amenities than those who moved only once.33 Investigators, however, caution against generalizing the outcomes of interview participants with the overall population of McDaniel Glenn residents. It could be that those who chose to participate in the study were the ones experiencing more favorable outcomes than those who chose not to participate.34

Second, the Southern Center for Studies in Public Policy at Clark Atlanta University offered a local evaluation of HOPE VI. The Capitol Homes HOPE VI Evaluation Study: Update #1 is both a qualitative and quantitative look at how relocation impacted the lives of residents formerly residing in Capitol Homes. Researchers maintain,

A prime goal of the HOPE VI program is ‘improving the living environment for residents of severely distressed public housing’ by ‘providing housing that will avoid or decrease the concentration of very low-income families.’ HOPE VI aims to achieve this goal by creating mixed-income communities which offer aesthetically pleasing buildings, open recreation spaces, and a comprehensive array of social services.35

When asked whether or not their living conditions are better than when they were residing in Capitol Homes, a majority of respondents indicated that living conditions are indeed better.36 Others expressed disappointment and worse conditions:
There were some relocated residents who did not think that their quality of living had improved and in some cases considered the living environment a “disaster [with] too many visitors – rats.” Other residents thought that their quality of life had decreased because of added financial burden (sic) caused by having to spend more money on utility bills....

Over time, however, positive sentiments about living conditions post-relocation seem to wane. The percentage of residents who are satisfied with their post-relocation living situations tends to decrease as time in new location increases. Researchers report,

The percentage of respondents that rated their current living situation as better than Capitol Homes has decreased. Overall only 8.6 percent of the respondents rated their overall living situation as better than Capitol Homes, while 37.5 percent rated it as being about the same and 12.5 percent stated that it was worse than Capitol Homes.

Deirdre Oakley of Georgia State University has focused her studies on relocation outcomes and residential segregation (or re-segregation). Along with various cohorts and graduate students, Oakley conducted personal interviews with public housing residents. Prominently featured in her research is the question of race (and racism). Because a majority of poor housing residents are Black, her research seeks to examine whether or not housing policy, as implemented by the Atlanta Housing Authority, is couched in a veil of racism. It is well-noted that the majority of displaced housing residents did not return to AHA-revitalized communities. Rather, the majority of qualified residents were given housing vouchers, through which they could move into market-rate housing.

But vouchers provide for limited options if landlords are at their discretion to accept vouchers or not. Oakley et al. maintain that displaced Black residents tend to relocate to other low-income Black communities (where vouchers are more likely to be accepted), and are therefore, not necessarily afforded the improved living conditions
being touted by the Atlanta Housing Authority. She cites structural reasons for this reality:

The Black neighborhoods are where the majority of voucher subsidized housing is located . . . [A]s the percent of voucher housing increases so do the percents for Black residents and poverty. Thus, it is clear that residents’ choice on where to relocate is constrained by the location of voucher subsidized housing.39

Returning to Revitalized Communities

In HOPE VI data nationwide, it is indicated that very few residents actually return to revitalized housing. Rich et al. state,

According to the HOPE VI Tracking Study, which followed the housing choices of former residents in eight early HOPE VI projects, 19 percent of the households surveyed returned to a revitalized HOPE VI development. Other studies have reported return rates that varied from less than 10 percent to 75 percent, with larger proportions returning to HOPE VI projects that involved rehabilitation as opposed to redevelopment.40

There are various noted reasons in the literature why residents may or may not choose to return to their former communities. Within the McDaniel Glenn community, only 12% of former residents actually returned to the revitalized property.41 However, 71% of the respondents at follow-up expressed an interest in returning.42 In addition to being pleased with the new units, other top reasons residents wanted to return were the familiarity of their previous community, and to be near family and friends.43

But Emory’s researchers found that the mixed-income development at McDaniel Glenn allows for a mixture of income levels, thereby reducing the number of units available for public housing residents. This, in effect, limits the concentration of poor
residents within the same low-income bracket, and therefore, limits the number of residents who actually return. 44

Also, with revitalization come new AHA regulations. For example, the Moving to Work program within the Atlanta Housing Authority allows AHA to be more selective in who returns to the revitalized housing. Residents must meet more stringent guidelines in terms of employment and employability in order to qualify for relocation back to the revitalized property.

And finally, the residents themselves may simply choose not to return to the revitalized community. Particularly those with housing choice vouchers, moving back to the revitalized community may cause residents to lose their voucher, thereby limiting their freedom of movement when selecting housing. 45

**Political Engagement of Public Housing Residents**

Finally, this literature review is not complete without a discussion of resident’s political participation and the right to engage in their own future. Sarah K. Bruch et al. discuss several theories of policy design and their influence on the civic and political participation of the constituents served by the policy. The authors write, “We find that policy designs can have significant effects on civic and political engagement among the poor . . . and such effects tend to be more positive when a policy’s authority structure reflects democratic rather than paternalist principles.” 46 They point out that political disenfranchisement of the poor is not a natural or inevitable phenomenon. Rather, it is a social construct – and one that is particularly unique to the American political system. 47
Bruch et al. examine three different government programs – Temporary Aid to Needy Families (TANF), Head Start, and public housing assistance programs – and discuss how levels of political participation vary with each program policy design.

First, the authors hypothesize that an incorporating authority structure – such as Head Start – maximizes political involvement. For example, in Head Start programs, poor parents are politically empowered by the mandated parental involvement component of the program. “The emphasis on parental participation . . . reflects the program’s origins as a Community Action Program created by the Economic Opportunity Act of 1964, which sought to encourage the ‘maximum feasible participation’ of poor people as an empowerment strategy.”48 Participation by the parents is incorporated into the policy design, thereby, allowing parents the political involvement to engage in their own lives.

A second hypothesis states that a paternalistic authority structure – as found in TANF programs – has a negative effect on political participation. Government workers who have wide discretion to determine rules and mandates as requisites for social service benefits are considered negative influences for poor people’s political involvement. Under this authority structure, aid recipients must contend with a paternalistic policy design – i.e., one in which recipients can receive sanctions for noncompliance of rules.

Finally, Bruch et al. hypothesize that formal-bureaucratic authority structures have a null effect on political involvement. Policies that are entrenched in bureaucratic processes will have little or limited effects on the civic and political participatory levels of residents. According to Bruch et al., these policies rely on centralized processes that seek to “ensure impartial treatment in application and assignment processes. Interactions
between officials and recipients are more limited than in the other programs we consider, emphasizing neither participatory involvement nor directive and supervisory discretion."\(^{49}\)

In essence, Bruch et al. find that the level of political participation is more positive when the authority structure of the policymaker is democratic and participatory. Each of these examples — Head Start, TANF, and public housing assistance — fall along a democratic continuum, with public housing assistance falling somewhere in the middle. Nonetheless, say Bruch et al., if the authority structure of the policy organization is such that the constituents are allowed a voice in policymaking decisions, then the social outcomes for those constituents are more favorable to their wants and needs.\(^{50}\)

In the current dissertation study, this student argues that HOPE VI housing policies as implemented by the Atlanta Housing Authority are exemplary of a paternalistic design. If Bruch et al. advance the notion that paternalistic authority structures “tell poor people what to do,”\(^{51}\) then HOPE VI in Atlanta would fall under this scope. According to many voices of public housing residents, AHA did little to hear their concerns about forced eviction. Rather, the leadership of AHA persisted in their beliefs that demolishing distressed public housing and forcing the relocation of thousands of residents was the best option for the residents. In essence, AHA told residents they had to move, and so they did.

But other reports deny this charge. For example, according to an Emory-led evaluation report, the decision to revitalize the McDaniel Glenn housing community was strategic. It was, in fact, due to the overwhelming amount of community support and
organizational partnerships that McDaniel Glenn was recommended for HOPE VI funds. Furthermore, AHA officials and community organizational leaders reported confidently that the concerns and comments of the McDaniel Glenn residents were incorporated into plans for revitalization. For example, some residents’ concerns included: “community supportive retail, safe and attractive outdoor play space for young children, additional recreational facilities, a community room, a new state-of-the-art early childhood development center, improved safety and security through new streets, sidewalks, and lighting, and greater connectivity among the elements of the McDaniel Glenn revitalization and the surrounding neighborhood.”52

But other stakeholders contradict this assessment. According to the same Emory report, there were some community stakeholders who would have liked a more active and visible role in the revitalization planning process. “One leader of a human services organization in Mechanicsville stated that ‘the community was apprised of the HOPE VI application only once it was determined by the higher ups that that’s what was going to happen.’”53 Likewise, the report went on to say that “McDaniel Glenn residents did not have much of a say in deciding whether the AHA applied for a HOPE VI grant. According to this key informant, ‘the AHA has a tried formula for executing HOPE VI grants, and they realize that there will be some resistance from neighborhood groups and residents.’”54

In summary, the literature is expansive with varying assessments as to whether or not HOPE VI has been successful in its implementation. While few critics would argue that HOPE VI has successfully revitalized “severely distressed” public housing units,
what is at question is whether or not HOPE VI has revitalized the distressed lives of public housing residents. Questions still remain as to how HOPE VI has improved the lives of pre-demolition residents. By most accounts, housing experts agree that dilapidated and distressed public housing does not benefit low-income residents. Furthermore, the concentration of poverty and racial segregation that are so endemic to public housing communities tend to weigh negatively on the social environments of residents.

Alternative theories that speak to the positive impact of public housing on the lives of its residents exist, albeit, not as frequently. One such theory is advanced by Brian A. Jacob, who suggests that public housing is actually beneficial to children and families. He writes,

> public housing may provide benefits that are not available to low-income families in private housing, including adequate quality housing, greater access to social services and a close network of friends and family... Finally, while living in private housing in better neighborhoods and attending better schools may increase academic achievement, some evidence suggests that the disruption of the move itself may have a negative impact on school performance, particularly in the short run. There is a substantial literature that documents the negative association between school mobility and student achievement (Gary Ingersoll et al., 1989; Karl Alexander et al., 1994; David Kerbow, 1996). It is important to note that the analysis here involves *forced* relocation as opposed to those in Gautreaux and MTO in which relocation was voluntary.

In short, Jacob seeks to advance the notion that demolishing public housing does not necessarily lead to improved social outcomes for families and children. On the contrary, public housing may actually hold more benefits to residents than the current literature and HOPE VI proponents would have us to believe. Forced eviction from
public housing to "better" communities may not provide better outcomes overall if the negative effects of leaving family, friends, and stability outweigh those outcomes.

Further support for the benefits of public housing is found in Nicholas Dagen Bloom's book, *Public Housing That Worked*. In this monograph, the author provides an extensive study of public housing in New York, and how, despite some imperfections, it has proven to be a viable solution to providing low-income housing. The details of how New York has successfully managed its public housing are discussed in the policy review in Chapter 5.

In summary, the literature on HOPE VI highlights the general success of HOPE VI implementation – mainly that HOPE VI funds led to the demolition and revitalization of "severely distressed" public housing units. In so doing, it also helped to alleviate the "distressed" living environments of poor residents by deconcentrating poverty in the original sites of public housing communities.

What is yet at issue is how well did the relocation of public housing residents improve their overall well-being? Have residents achieved self-sufficiency as a result of public housing revitalization? Has education outcomes improved for the children? Have householders been able to form new social networks in their new communities, leading to improved job opportunities and higher income potential?

What is broadly lacking in the literature are the direct voices of displaced residents. What this study advances is an analysis of focus group responses from residents of one of Atlanta's public housing communities – Capitol Homes. It offers an indepth look into the relocation experiences of Capitol Homes residents, as depicted in
their own voices. It seeks to analyze what is of most concern to these residents, and offers perhaps an alternative voice to the theories and goals of policymakers and housing experts.

Finally, this study offers a critical look at the migration patterns of poor and minority population groups in Atlanta since the implementation of HOPE VI. It provides a limited response to the post-demolition question, "Where have all the people gone?"
Chapter 3


2. Ibid., 109.

3. Ibid., 116.

4. Ibid.


7. Ibid., 440.

8. Ibid., 434.


15. Ibid.
16. Ibid., 1417.


18. Ibid.


22. Ibid.

23. Ibid.

24. Ibid.


26. Ibid.

27. Clampet-Lundquist and Massey, 130.

28. Ibid.

29. Rich et al., 41.

30. Ibid., 43.


32. Ibid.

33. Ibid., 48.

34. Ibid., 41.


36. Ibid., 12.
37. Ibid., 13.

38. Ibid.


40. Rich et al., 50.

41. Ibid.

42. Ibid.

43. Ibid.

44. Ibid.


47. Ibid., 205.

48. Ibid., 210.

49. Ibid.

50. Ibid.

51. Ibid., 221.

52. Rich et al., 14, 18.

53. Ibid., 18.

54. Ibid.

CHAPTER 4
RESEARCH METHODS AND DESIGN

This research offers a case study analysis of HOPE VI in Atlanta. Although there are numerous articles and reports on HOPE VI as a national initiative, this research examines the effects and outcomes of HOPE VI policy as implemented by the Atlanta Housing Authority. Thus, this study offers a single-case design with embedded multiple units of analysis.

Robert K. Yin explains the goal of the case study in conducting research. “In brief, the case study method allows investigators to retain the holistic and meaningful characteristics of real-life events – such as individual life cycles, small group behavior, organizational and managerial processes, neighborhood change, school performance, international relations, and the maturation of industries.” Furthermore, Yin offers a basic definition of a case study: “The essence of a case study, the central tendency among all types of case study, is that it tries to illuminate a decision or set of decisions: why they were taken, how they were implemented, and with what result.”

Within this single case study, there are various units of analysis. First and foremost are the resident surveys. This survey is intended for former residents of Atlanta’s public housing units, residing particularly during the years of 1990 to 2010. It is an attempt to understand how the demolition of public housing units affected the lives of residents. Therefore, primary data was gathered from former public housing residents.
A second unit of analysis is the community stakeholder interviewee. To buttress the voices of public housing residents, this study incorporates primary data from personal interviews. Stakeholders within communities surrounding pre-demolition public housing were asked to sit for a 30 – 45 minute interview in an effort to gather their views and opinions on neighborhood changes post-demolition. Community stakeholders expressly targeted for this study include church pastors, educators, political and civic leaders, and social service providers. During the course of the research process, managers from Atlanta public branch libraries also became vital and unexpected sources of information, and were included as interviewees.

Secondary data was taken from the Capitol Homes baseline and evaluation update studies. Survey and focus group responses were examined using a text analysis due to the paucity of primary survey data collected.

Other data utilized in this study are taken from the U.S. Census American Factfinder and the American Community Survey. Data from these sources include poverty rates for families per census tract, and individuals per county, taken from the 2000 Census and the 2010 Census. Table 1 shows what media were used, what dates data were collected, and in what form data were used. (See Table 1.)

Conducting a case study analysis in this research is useful in examining how HOPE VI funds were put to use in Atlanta. What were the decisions made by the Atlanta Housing Authority? Why were these decision made, and what were the results?
The case study, says Yin, “is preferred in examining contemporary events, (and) when the relevant behaviors cannot be manipulated.” In other words, respondents’ answers to the survey or interview questions are not manipulated by the investigator.

**Table 1. Data Resource Table**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DATA SOURCE OR MEDIUM</th>
<th>DATES COLLECTED or OBTAINED</th>
<th>HOW DATA OR MEDIUM WERE USED</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Webpage: Alexander-Study.info February 2013 thru January 2014</td>
<td>Recruitment of Subjects</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Twitter: @ATLHousingStudy February 2013 thru January 2014</td>
<td>Recruitment of Subjects</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Original Resident Survey (via SurveyMonkey) February 2013 thru January 2014</td>
<td>Survey Data Gathering, Primary Unit of Analysis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Community Stakeholder Questionnaire (For Interviews) February 2013 thru January 2014</td>
<td>Interview Data Gathering, Primary Unit of Analysis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Survey and Focus Group Responses Capitol Homes Baseline and Evaluation Update Studies November 2013</td>
<td>Secondary Text Analysis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>U.S. Census 2000 and 2010 American FactFinder and American Community Survey December 2013 thru February 2014</td>
<td>Comparative Analyses of Race, Poverty, and Spatial Migration</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Rather, in this study, the survey and interview questions are gathered in an effort to elucidate occurrences within a contemporary event – i.e., HOPE VI-led public housing demolition in Atlanta.
Furthermore, policy analysis in this study is grounded in public choice theory. In public choice theory, the decisions of those in power are examined. Public choice theory assumes an interaction between public officials, bureaucrats, and the interests of the general public. In an ideal society, policy decisions on public housing might be achieved by housing authority officials after systematic input from the general public, or the housing residents themselves. Although reports from the Atlanta Housing Authority suggest that residents were allowed verbal input into the decision-making, viewpoints from critics and residents suggest otherwise. For example, an article by the Atlanta Progressive News (APN) point out that at least some residents did not wish to move. It states,

[W]hile the majority of residents attending association meetings at Bowen Homes and Bankhead Courts say they want to move, this does not reflect all of the communities. The majority of residents at Hollywood Courts and Palmer House have signed petitions stating they do not want to move. APN has no information regarding the wishes of residents at Herndon Homes, Thomasville Heights, or Roosevelt House.⁴

Furthermore, some reports cite statements made by housing association representatives. For example, Bankhead Courts’ residents association president, Jeff Walker, says that the demolition and forced evictions were unfair. “We didn’t ask to be moved,”⁵ says Walker.

If housing authority officials make policy decisions based on the perception of improved social welfare of its constituents, then an examination of the social lives of residents – from their perspective – will shed light on the efficacy and practicability of those decisions. Thus, survey and focus group responses from former public housing
residents, along with interviews from community stakeholders, will provide the data for this policy analysis.

A survey has been designed to gather the opinions and perspectives of residents who lived in pre-demolition Atlanta public housing and were affected by demolition and involuntary eviction. It consists of ten (10) questions, plus a statement of certification, if taken online. The online statement of certification asks if the respondent is a former Atlanta public housing resident. If answered yes, the respondent is taken to the 10-question survey. If answered no, the respondent is exited from the survey.

The survey is available online at www.surveymonkey.com/s/PublicHousing.

This researcher sought to locate potential resident respondents by speaking to various community association groups. Such groups included Neighborhood Planning Units (NPU) H, I, and T. Also, AHA affordable housing tenant association meetings were addressed: Barge Road and Cosby Spear. Also, postcards were printed and distributed by hand at local Atlanta Public Library branches, and sent via U.S. mail to local churches.

Potential respondents had the option of taking the survey on paper. Twitter posts indicated this availability. The principal investigator also made paper copies available when attending community or NPU (neighborhood planning unit) meetings. Furthermore, a handful of surveys (8 – 10) were sent via U.S. mail to apartment housing managers (at their request), along with return addressed envelopes. None of the surveys were returned and no surveys were taken via paper hardcopies.
Sample and Data Coding

Data for this research consist of three units of analysis: (1) primary data from survey responses of pre-demolition public housing residents, (2) secondary data from focus group resident comments published in two HOPE VI evaluation reports, and (3) primary data from interview responses of key community stakeholders.

Locating potential survey respondents and interview participants was challenging at best. The original online survey yielded only three (3) respondents after nearly three (3) years online. Initial efforts to locate potential respondents were through word of mouth beginning in 2011. By December 2012, more concerted efforts were made to locate former public housing residents and potential respondents.

In December 2012, 758 churches around metropolitan Atlanta were identified, including churches in Fulton County (City of Atlanta), Clayton, Dekalb, Douglas, and Fayette Counties. Of those 758 churches, 147 email addresses of senior pastors or key church administrative personnel were gleaned from their websites, and initial contact was made via email. The email introduced the project to the pastor and requested his/her participation and support in locating potential survey respondents.

For those churches whose email addresses were not located, a postcard was designed and sent via U.S. mail to the church address. A total of 500 postcards were printed; however, only 200 churches were selected for mailing (due to a shortage of funding). The remaining postcards were distributed throughout the community at public libraries, community or NPU meetings, or given to interviewees for distribution amongst their constituents.
Two (2) batches of emails were also sent to Atlanta Public Schools. Sixty-eight (68) email addresses were collected from the schools' websites, and two (2) emails were sent to a total of 68 APS schools. The first batch of emails was sent in the Spring of 2013; the second batch of emails was sent in the Fall 2013.

Overall, an aggregate of 130 emails were sent over the course of three years – from January 2011 through December 2013 – to church pastors, school educators, social service providers, community leaders, and political leaders.

In addition to email, postcard mailings, and word of mouth, another strategy used was social media (Twitter). By posting comments, requests, and updates to Twitter (@ATLHousingStudy), viewers were directed to a static webpage (Alexander-study.info), which offered detailed information about the study, and included a direct link to the online survey. Any person who is (or was) an Atlanta public housing resident and was affected by HOPE VI could click on the link to take the survey. Furthermore, anyone from any geographic location could potentially view the Twitter posts and respond accordingly, even those residents who might have moved out of state.

To support survey data, interview questions were also designed for community stakeholders. Church pastors and community librarians were particularly targeted for interviews. In the initial stages, the Atlanta Public School (APS) teachers and principals were also targeted. However, due to stringent guidelines for conducting research within its system, APS was eventually eliminated as a target population.
In addition, interviews were also conducted with an apartment housing manager, community leaders, and a social worker. These stakeholders were targeted for their access and insight into the lived experiences of public housing constituents.

The evaluation studies of Capitol Homes provided secondary data. A total of 537 householders relocated from Capitol Homes and provided survey and focus group data for the 2003 baseline study. Of this population, 101 persons participated in focus groups. Also, 195 householders relocated to other conventional public housing (CPH), and 342 relocated using the Housing Choice Voucher program (HCV). Demographics for this population include: 91.1% female; 99.4% non-Hispanic; 99.3% African American; and 99.4% single. "The average age of CPH householders (48.5) is 10 years older than the average HC householder (37.6)."

Children (ages 6 – 12) account for a large percent of the HCV households (22.1%), as well as a large percent of young adults. Adults younger than age 24 account for 18% of the CPH population and 22.1% of the HC population. Finally, older adults (age 62 and over) account for 19.5% of the CPH population.

A total of 685 households were part of the 2004 evaluation study update. In this study, 72 residents participated in seven (7) focus groups. Demographically, not much changed since the 2003 baseline study. Within this population, 90.9% of householders were female, 99.4% non-Hispanic, 99.2% Black, and 99.4% single. Also, in the 2004 study, 166 residents were from conventional public housing households, 330 were Housing Choice householders, and 189 households had been terminated.
In addition, three (3) residents responded to the original online survey through SurveyMonkey. Of these respondents, two (2) were in the 31-50 year age group, and one (1) was 51 years or older.

A total of 263 focus group responses from the 2003 baseline study were coded and analyzed for the purposes of this dissertation project. From the 2004 evaluation update, 455 focus group responses were coded and analyzed. The total aggregate number of resident responses coded and analyzed is 718.

A text analysis of words, phrases, and sentences of the residents was conducted, establishing eighteen categories or topics of concern. They include: SATISFACTION (i.e., with one or more aspects of the relocation experience); DISSATISFACTION (i.e., with one or more aspects of the relocation experience); MONEY OR LACK THEREOF; PROXIMITY (to bus, schools, shops, hospital, etc.); COUNSELING OR ASSISTANCE; CHILDREN AND/OR FAMILY; CRIME OR LACK THEREOF (i.e., feelings of safety or security, peace and quiet); AMENITIES (e.g., washer and dryer, carpet, space, etc.); HOUSING COMPLAINTS (i.e., with maintenance or physical structure); MOVING BACK (i.e., to Capitol Homes); EMPLOYMENT OR ADULT EDUCATION; AHA MISINFORMATION (i.e., perceptions of unconcern for residents); HOUSING CHOICE voucher program (i.e., Section 8, vouchers, etc.); SELF-ADVOCACY; MEDICAL OR MENTAL HEALTH issues (including disability); POWER AND POLITICS; EVICTION OR FEAR OF HOMELESSNESS (e.g., not knowing where they would go); and COMMUNITY CONNECTION THROUGH CHURCH INVOLVEMENT (or CCCI).
The categories are not mutually exclusive. Any one response may contain coding for several categories. For example, a respondent may express satisfaction with their new home, but express concerns about excess bills, about which she is dissatisfied. In this case, the response would be coded for three categories: SATISFACTION, MONEY OR LACK THEREOF, and DISSATISFACTION.

Although Survey Monkey offers a text analysis tool, it was not feasible to utilize it with the secondary data. Had this project yielded sufficient primary survey responses, the Survey Monkey text analyzer could have been used to calibrate the responses into categories, and to generate charts and tables. Instead, the secondary data responses were examined manually, categorized and color coded, calibrated for standardization, and then entered into a spreadsheet using Microsoft Excel. The Excel spreadsheet was used to generate the charts and graphs found in Chapter 4.

The coding process was necessarily meticulous. First, responses from the baseline study (n = 263) were obtained online and simply copied electronically into a word processing tool (Microsoft Word). From there, responses were read through and coded using different colors of text highlighting. The color coding made it easier to calibrate the frequency of categories. After an initial coding process, about 13 categories were identified. A second and third read-through helped to refine the process and eventually yielded a total of 18 categories.

Responses from the evaluation update (n = 455) were received in hardcopy, and presented a couple of challenges. First, in order to code them, each response had to be painstakingly typed into the computer, again using Microsoft Word. However, the most
challenging aspect of working with these data is the fact that these responses contained bolded words and phrases followed by a number in parentheses. The original researchers attempted to reduce the number of repetitions in the responses by bolding frequent words or phrases, and then placing within parentheses the number of times the word(s) or phrase(s) appeared in responses. Thus, an additional 1,166 words and/or phrases were counted in the calibration of categories. Although 455 complete responses were typed into the computer, the actual number of words coded into categories is inflated due to the addition of repetitive phrases or words.

Finally, after having written the findings and discussion (and after being several days removed from the coding process), the responses were read through a final time to ensure that there were no needed adjustments or changes in how the data was coded. This, hopefully, helped to ensure a more rigorous analysis of the data.

Interview data was analyzed compositely. Ten (10) community stakeholders agreed to sit for a one-on-one interview with the principal investigator. Representation came from church pastors, library workers, apartment housing managers, social service providers, and a retired educator. Local politicians were also contacted; and while there was strong interest among some, none consented to the interview.

Limitations

The survey was designed and made available online at Survey Monkey. While the online availability was intended to achieve accessibility, it is not without its challenges. For example, there were no mechanisms in place to prevent someone from
taking the survey multiple times. Furthermore, an online survey does not guarantee that
the respondent is an actual public housing resident. However, the consent form and
statement of certification offered at the beginning of the survey was intended to
encourage integrity of response and identification. (The full consent form is included in
Appendix A.)

The primary barrier to collecting data from the residents was locating former
residents of public housing. Although social media was helpful in getting the word out
about the study, this was not enough to get the residents to actually take the survey. The
webpage and survey were viewed by a few curious people, but only three persons
actually completed the survey.

Five hundred (500) postcards were designed, printed, and distributed to churches,
public libraries, and at community neighborhood meetings where residents were believed
to frequent. Although positive interest was expressed from residents and community
stakeholders at neighborhood planning unit (NPU) and community meetings, there was
obviously an unspoken barrier to completing the survey.

In the Capitol Homes baseline and evaluation studies, it is acknowledged that the
principal investigator “established early working relationships” with the Atlanta Housing
Authority. 9 Perhaps residents in the Capitol Homes studies felt compelled to cooperate in
these early studies since they were still receiving assistance from AHA. On the contrary,
an independent doctoral student whom they had never met may not have elicited the
necessary trust to gain access to their thoughts and voice. Even the hardcopy surveys that
were mailed to housing managers (at their request) were never returned.
During the course of three (3) years, two AHA employees were contacted. Early in the project design (2011), phone calls were made to the Office of Communications, and subsequent emails were sent to the Chief External Affairs Officer (CEAO). The goal at that time was to secure AHA data on the number of housing units demolished and the number of residents relocated.

In an email to the CEAO, dated April 13, 2011, the following data was requested:

- List of public housing developments and number of units prior to demolition;
- Names and number of units of replacement housing;
- Number of families displaced;
- Number of families eligible and receiving vouchers;
- Number of families not eligible to receive vouchers.

Although several phone conversations transpired between the CEAO and student investigator, the data were not made available.

In November 2011, AHA’s Vice President of Innovation and Strategy (VPIS) voluntarily reached out to the student investigator by telephone. She indicated that the CEAO had asked her to call. Although she advised that residents could not be made available for this study due to privacy and confidentiality issues, she did ask for an abstract to the study, which was subsequently sent to her via email on November 28, 2011. A second email was sent to the VPIS on February 13, 2012 after receiving no response to the November email. There was also no reply to the second email. Follow-up phone calls during this time also yielded no return call. The VPIS was contacted again by telephone in the fall of 2013 following the departure of the housing authority’s CEO. This time, the call was returned. It was during this phone conversation that the
VPIS advised as to the online availability of evaluation studies on Capitol Homes, Grady Homes, McDaniel Glenn, and Harris Homes. Because the Capitol Homes study included resident responses, and because the student also had the evaluation update study in-hand, responses from these studies were used as secondary data.

A third barrier to data collection involved the Atlanta Public School system (APS). For several months, numerous attempts were made to arrange interviews with APS teachers and principals. After receiving little response from the educators, phone calls were made as follow up to the emails. Finally, in September 2013, an APS administrator advised by phone that a study proposal must be submitted to APS’ Office of Research & Evaluation for prior approval. However, due to the extensive review process that conflicted with the expected completion of this project, the research design was modified to exclude active duty APS personnel as potential interviewees. It is with regret that this important component (educational outcomes) was omitted from the study.

Efforts were made, however, to reach retired, inactive educators through word of mouth. As a result, data in this study include interview responses from one retired educator.

The lack of primary survey data was extremely problematic in achieving the goal of this study. Without benefit of pre-demolition addresses, forwarding addresses, or telephone numbers of residents, attempts to locate public housing residents and obtain their cooperation and participation were widely unsuccessful. Initially, it was believed that residents were concerned about possible backlash from the Atlanta Housing Authority. However, once the postcards were distributed to the public libraries, several
phone calls were received by the student investigator from potential respondents. There were two primary concerns or requests made by the prospective respondents: (1) payment for taking the survey, and (2) help in getting their needs met. Though sympathetic to the challenges faced by the residents, the student investigator was not able to promise either. There was no compensation available to pay residents for taking the survey, and there are no specific long-term plans or means beyond the dissertation to offer support services to respondents. Given the myriad social challenges faced by public housing residents, the academic needs of an independent graduate student and total stranger ultimately provided little incentive to allow access to residents’ voices and opinions.

Computer access may also have been a barrier to completing the survey. Although the majority of phone contacts with former residents came through the public library – where the postcards were widely distributed – few residents took advantage of the computer access provided by the branch library. Future attempts to reach public-assisted housing residents may require a dedicated and private location where residents can take the survey, along with an incentive of food or money to get them there. Based on comments by the librarians, food is a strong incentive to getting patrons into the library for events such as workshops and informational meetings.

There were limitations also in the collection of secondary data. For example, in the Capitol Homes baseline study, focus group responses were compiled in an ongoing list without benefit of the questions preceding them. However, it does appear that like
responses are grouped together, and therefore, coding for categories was made easier because of grouping.

Focus group responses in the evaluation update study are listed following the inclusion of researchers' questions. However, a limitation to coding and calibration in this study is that researchers attempted to avoid duplication in typing. Words, phrases, and sentences that were repeated often by more than one resident were bolded, tabulated, and the frequency placed in parentheses. This actually made coding all the more cumbersome.

Furthermore, the Capitol Homes studies, like The HOPE VI Resident Tracking Study, do not include pre-relocation baseline data. All of the responses pertain to post-relocation outcomes. Therefore, another limitation to this study is the lack of pre-relocation data. Although quite short in length, the original survey seeks to capture some aspects of residents’ living conditions prior to demolition and relocation. The goal was to draw comparisons between pre- and post-relocation living conditions.

A copy of the resident survey is included as Appendix B. The interview questions are included as Appendix C.

Nonetheless, resident responses from the Capitol Homes baseline and evaluation update studies provide secondary data for post-relocation analysis.

Finally, a potential limitation was the lack of GIS software, which is no longer available in the University computer lab. However, the mapping tool in the U.S. Census’ American FactFinder allowed for the successful creation of spatial maps in the absence of GIS software.
Chapter 4


2. Ibid., 17.

3. Ibid., 11.


7. Ibid.


CHAPTER 5
FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

In general, HOPE VI outcomes across the nation have revealed mixed results. On the one hand, residents who were relocated due to HOPE VI demolition or revitalization report "moderately enhanced" outcomes over pre-demolition public housing conditions. Jones and Paulsen state: "A key of any examination of HOPE VI is that nearly any location outside of the most severely distressed public housing is likely to be an improvement for the residents . . . ." Yet, results also indicate that HOPE VI did not meet some of its targeted goals "because new neighborhoods are still significantly associated with the measures identified as problematic in the HOPE VI literature." According to Jones and Paulsen, "the new neighborhoods may still be areas that are troubled by crime, poverty, unemployment, and racial segregation."

By analyzing original (online) survey data, interview responses, and focus group responses from two evaluation studies on the effects and outcomes of relocation for residents of Capitol Homes, this project seeks to assess whether or not HUD’s goals for HOPE VI were met. Although HOPE VI has been criticized for the obscurity of its goals, Jones and Paulsen identify five key areas that HOPE VI has sought to address across the nation. These goals are coordinate with the goals of the Atlanta Housing Authority:

1. to improve living conditions of residents of severely distressed public housing through demolition and renewal projects (Gilderbloom, 2008; HUD, 2010; Popkin et al., 2004).
2. to revitalize communities in an effort to reduce the concentration of poverty;

3. to create opportunities for residents to become self-sufficient through the use of services that provide various types of job training and employment;

4. to reduce public housing residents' exposure to incidents of crime; and

5. to reduce the amount of racial segregation.

In addition to the above, the Atlanta Housing Authority has established a subset of goals and objectives stemming from HOPE VI-related policies:

- develop quality living environments in mixed income communities;
- enhance AHA's economic viability and sustainability;
- build AHA's human development and supportive services efforts to increase self-sufficiency.

Goals and Outcomes

Goal 1: Improving the Living Conditions of Residents

Focus group responses from the Capitol Homes Evaluation Studies reveal mixed findings. In the baseline study (2003), the majority of residents indicated a greater level of dissatisfaction than satisfaction. Of the 263 responses analyzed, 29% of the responses contained language expressing a level of dissatisfaction with one or more aspects of their relocation and living conditions. Only 19% of the responses contained verbiage indicating a level of satisfaction (see Figure 1).
apartment,” yet included within the same response a complaint about maintenance. Or, many residents may have expressed satisfaction with the quality of their new neighborhood, yet forged a complaint about lack of transportation to shops or Grady Hospital.

Interestingly, the Capitol Homes evaluation update (2004) yielded more statements of SATISFACTION than in the 2003 baseline study. In the evaluation update, 78% of responses (n = 455) contained verbiage indicating SATISFACTION, while 43% of the responses contained verbiage indicating DISSATISFACTION. Again, responses coded for SATISFACTION include (but are not limited to) such verbiage as: “I’m very satisfied,” “I love my neighborhood,” and “It’s quiet [or peaceful].” Language coded for DISSATISFACTION include (but is not limited to): “I don’t like . . . , “Mine is worse,” or “I want to move” (see Figure 2).

Overall, data indicate that residents seem more satisfied in the evaluation update (2004) than in the baseline study (2003). This could reflect the fact that they have had more time to settle into their new surroundings. Whereas 18% of responses reflect residents’ intent to move back to the revitalized Capitol Homes community in the baseline study (2003), only 5% indicate a desire to move back in the evaluation update (2004). Furthermore, the baseline evaluation reveals that 6% of the responses reflect a fear of eviction or uncertainty as to where residents would move, as opposed to only 1% in the evaluation update. This is captured in the category, FEAR OF EVICTION OR BECOMING HOMELESS. Not surprisingly, residents in the baseline study expressed more fear or apprehension about where they would end up following eviction (6%) than
those in the evaluation update (1%). Having settled in their new environment, residents in the evaluation update did not express many concerns about eviction or homelessness.

In the original survey data (online), two out of the three residents indicated that their quality of life is “better” now than before relocation. Only one respondent stated that quality of life is “worse.” No comments were provided as explanation.

POWER AND POLITICS is another category where residents seemed to mellow in the 2004 evaluation update. Whereas 6% of responses in the baseline study (n = 263) indicate a sense of powerlessness in residents’ choice of housing, only 2% of responses in the evaluation update (n = 455) contain language indicating powerlessness. For example,
language that was coded for this category might include such statements as: “It wasn’t my choice,” “...I had no choice,” “I’m stuck,” “I had to take it,” “They can and will manipulate you,” or “They will push you around.” While all statements regarding choice were included in this category, the majority of these statements pertain to feelings of helplessness and powerlessness. Of the total collective responses (n = 718), less than 1% indicate that residents felt a sense of empowerment or personal choice in their living arrangements. On the contrary, the majority of responses coded for POWER AND POLITICS indicate that residents felt they had little or no choice in when and where they would move. (It is important to note, too, that the majority of responses coded for POWER AND POLITICS came from the baseline study (see Table 2).

Following SATISFACTION and DISSATISFACTION, issues pertaining to MONEY OR LACK THEREOF were of primary concern to the residents. In both studies, money was prominent in their language. In the baseline study (n = 263), 13% of responses contained verbiage pertaining to money, while in the update evaluation study (n = 455), 44% of responses contained verbiage about money. Collectively, 34% of responses included verbiage about money issues (n = 718). This is of interest since in both Capitol Homes studies, only one question was posed to the residents about money (or income, specifically). In the baseline study, one out of 24 questions (.04%) was about money: “Would you say that your overall financial living condition/income has improved, stayed the same or declined since your participation in the Housing Choice program?” Likewise, only one out of 32 questions (.03%) posed to the residents was about income in the 2004 update study: “Would you say that your income has increased,
Table 2. Categories and frequency table for Capitol Homes evaluation studies.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CATEGORICAL TOPIC</th>
<th>CAPITOL HOMES (Baseline) 2003</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>CAPITOL HOMES (Update) 2004</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>TOTAL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SATISFACTION</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>354</td>
<td>78%</td>
<td>56%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DISSATISFACTION</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>29%</td>
<td>195</td>
<td>43%</td>
<td>38%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MONEY OR LACK THEREOF</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>207</td>
<td>45%</td>
<td>34%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PROXIMITY TO SHOPS, SCHOOLS, BUS, HOSPITAL ETC.</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>135</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>24%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CRIME OR LACK THEREOF (SECURITY)</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>89</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>18%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHILDREN OR FAMILY</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>92</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>17%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AMENITIES (WASHER/DRYER, CARPET, HVAC, SPACE, YARD, ETC.)</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>99</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>17%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>COUNSELING OR ASSISTANCE</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>120</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td>24%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HOUSING COMPLAINTS, MAINTENANCE, STRUCTURAL ISSUES</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MOVING BACK TO CAPITOL HOMES</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EMPLOYMENT OR ADULT EDUCATION</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AHA MISINFORMATION, UNCONCERN FOR THEM</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HOUSING CHOICE, VOUCHERS, SECTION 8</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SELF-ADVOCACY</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MEDICAL AND MENTAL HEALTH ISSUES, DISABILITY</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>POWER AND POLITICS</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FEAR OF EVICTION OR BECOMING HOMELESS</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>COMMUNITY CONNECTION THROUGH CHURCH INVOLVEMENT (CCCI)</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

stayed the same or declined in the last year?” Respondents (in both studies) were not questioned specifically about excess bills, having to pay utilities, or challenges making ends meet. Yet, 34% of responses collectively contained verbiage about money issues.

For example, in the 2004 evaluation update study, researchers posed a question to residents about *Barriers to Finding and Sustaining Housing using Housing Choice.*

The majority of these responses (75%) contained language pertaining to money issues – e.g., utility bills or rent. Most of them were complaints about utility bills being too high. Although the question did not specifically query residents about money issues, the issue of money was prevalent as a “barrier” to finding and sustaining housing.
Goal 2: Revitalizing Communities and Reducing the Concentration of Poverty

One of the overarching questions considered in this research is where did public housing residents go following demolition, eviction, or relocation? If the razing of public housing units within the city of Atlanta resulted in a deconcentration of poverty, then where have displaced families gone since public housing demolition? Did families relocate to other areas of poverty, or were they, in fact, able to move into lower-poverty communities?

In this study, data were compiled from the U.S. Census Bureau in an effort to determine which metropolitan area counties saw a significant increase in rates of poverty and racial segregation. Poverty rates were pulled from the U.S. Census Bureau's website, and data were gathered from the 2000 and 2010 censuses. A comparative analysis of the data between 2000 and 2010 reveals significant trends in population.

While the data for this study do not track relocation addresses for families formerly residing in pre-demolition public housing, comparisons can be made for poverty rates in communities before and after the implementation of HOPE VI. Within this study, ten (10) metro area counties were examined for poverty rates overall. The following charts, graphs, and maps tell an interesting story as to how HOPE VI has impacted poverty concentration across selected parts of metropolitan Atlanta.

Figure 3 shows a graphic comparison of poverty rates for individuals. This bar graph shows poverty rates in the City of Atlanta and across surrounding counties during a 10-year span. It is worth noting that the poverty rate within the City of Atlanta is virtually unchanged between Census 2000 and Census 2010.
Poverty concentration is defined at various levels across the literature. For example, Wilson establishes “poverty areas” at a rate of at least 20% per census tract.\textsuperscript{11} So do Georgia State University’s Oakley et al.\textsuperscript{12} Other rates of high-poverty have been defined at 30% and above, based on the Gautreaux project,\textsuperscript{13} while still other rates of “extreme-poverty” have been described at 40% and above per census tract.\textsuperscript{14,15,16} By the same token, “low” rates of poverty have been defined at “no more than 10%” per census tract.\textsuperscript{17}

In this study graphics that follow, “low” poverty rate is established at less than 20% and is visually represented in the graphics using the color green. “High” poverty concentration is established at 25% and above, and is represented with the color red.
Poverty concentration between 20% and 25% are color coded as yellow, establishing the notion that these areas are approaching high poverty levels.

It should be noted that the color scheme on the spatial maps are limited. Because the maps were generated using a built-in tool in the American FactFinder, only gradients of one color could be selected for each map. For example, if a map has census tracts ranging in the “high” poverty rate of concentration, only a graduated color scheme of red is permitted. The built-in tool does not allow for all three colors – red, yellow, and green – to be represented in one map, corresponding to “high,” “approaching high,” and “low” levels of poverty, respectively. By the same token, if a county has census tracts only in the “low” rate of poverty range, then the darkest shade of green will represent the highest concentrations of poverty in that particular county, yet remaining in the “low” range (i.e., below 20%). Graphs generated with Microsoft Excel, however, employ all three colors, as necessary, since they are easily manipulated by the end user.

A primary goal of Renee Glover and the Atlanta Housing Authority was to deconcentrate poverty in Atlanta. Reviewing the poverty rates in Fulton County (where most of Atlanta’s pre-demolition public housing units were located), we can compare how the rates of poverty have changed between the 2000 Census and 2010 Census.

Figures 4 and 5 offer a spatial comparison of high poverty concentration in Fulton County by census tract. Areas shaded in the dark red have poverty rates at 25% and above. While high poverty concentration is quite evident in 2000 – before HOPE VI implementation – it is interesting that, in Fulton County, there is an increase in the number of census tracts at the “high” poverty level in 2010, as revealed by the map.
Figure 4. Spatial concentration of poverty in Fulton County. (Source: U.S. Census 2000)

Figure 5. Spatial concentration of poverty in Fulton County. (Source: U.S. Census 2010)
comparisons. Areas shaded by the lighter pink are areas approaching high poverty. The rates of poverty in these pink areas are between 20% and 25%, and are represented on the following graphs in yellow.

Figures 6 and 7 show changes in the poverty rates in Fulton County by census tract between 2000 and 2010. Each of these census tracts were characterized by high rates of poverty in 2000, and are still in the high range in 2010 (distinguished by two shades of red). In 2000, there are thirty (30) census tracts at the "high" poverty rate. By 2010, there are 35 census tracts in the "high" poverty range.

Figure 6. High poverty concentration in Fulton County by census tract. (Source: U.S. Census)
Figure 7. High poverty concentration in Fulton County by census tract. (Source: U.S. Census)

Also, notice that although census tract 37 had a significant reduction in its rate of poverty, it is still above 40% poverty in 2010. The same is true of census tract 86.02. Even more startlingly are census tracts that began with high rates of poverty prior to HOPE VI demolition, but increased in poverty concentration after HOPE VI – e.g., census tracts 17, 23, 28, 38, 39, 48, 55.02, 58, 63, 67, 68.02, 73, 74, 78.07, 78.08, 82.02, and 106.01.

Figures 8 and 9 show census tracts that were at least 20% poverty, but less than 25% in 2000, distinguished by the yellow color coding. Areas in the yellow range in 2000, but increasing to the high poverty area in 2010 include: 21, 40, 62, 66.02, 81.02, 83.01, 83.02, and 85. Notice also those census tracts in the low-poverty area (in green)
that are increasing to the “approaching high poverty” (in yellow) level – i.e., census tracts 52, 76.02, 78.05, 78.06, 80, 81.01, 92, 105.07, 105.10, 106.03, and 106.04.

Other than Fulton County, Dekalb County is the only other county examined here that had areas of high-poverty concentration during the 2000 census (see Figure 10). Census tract 206 had a poverty rate of 38.1% in Census 2000, and census tract 237 had a poverty rate of 36.2% in Census 2000. By Census 2010, thirteen (13) census tracts had high poverty concentration rates in Dekalb County (see Figures 11 and 12). Of those thirteen (13) census tracts, eight (8) of them were not identified in the 2000 Census (see Figure 12).
Figure 9. Poverty concentration in Fulton County by Census Tract. (Source: U.S. Census)

Figure 10. Spatial concentration of poverty in Dekalb County. (Source: U.S. Census 2000)
Figure 11. Spatial concentration of poverty in Dekalb County. (Source: U.S. Census 2010)

Figure 12. Poverty concentration in Dekalb County by census tract. (Source: U.S. Census)
Furthermore, eleven (11) census tracts in Dekalb County were characterized by low poverty (e.g., less than 20%) in Census 2000 (see Figures 12 and 13). However, by Census 2010, two (2) of them had spiked to high-poverty rates (see Figure 12). Census tract 231.03 had a poverty rate of 11.2% in Census 2000, but spiked to 33% by Census 2010. Likewise, census tract 219.08 had a poverty rate of 12% in the 2000 Census, but reached 36.3% in the 2010 Census. The remaining nine (9) census tracts (i.e., 208.02, 213.01, 219.09, 225, 231.02, 234.10, 234.11, 236.02, and 236.03) that started with low poverty in 2000 have surged into the “approaching high poverty” range by Census 2010 (see Figure 13).

Figure 13. Poverty concentration in Dekalb County by census tract. (Source: U.S. Census)
Although Cobb County did not have rates by census tracts ranging in the high-poverty area in Census 2000, there were two (2) census tracts “approaching high poverty” – i.e., census tracts 307 and 308. After HOPE VI implementation, twelve (12) census tracts now fall either into the “approaching high poverty” range or the “high” poverty range. They are: census tracts 303.44, 304.11, 304.12, 304.14, 307, 308, 309.04, 310.04, 311.01, 311.15, 311.16 and 313.1 (see Figures 14, 15, and 16).

![Thematic Map of Income in 1999 below poverty level - Percent of families](image)

**Figure 14.** Spatial concentration of poverty in Cobb County. (Source: U.S. 2000)

The remaining counties examined in this study – Cherokee, Clayton, Coweta, Douglas, Fayette, Gwinnett, and Henry – were all characterized by low-poverty concentration in Census 2000. Cherokee, Douglas, and Fayette counties remained in the low-poverty range for all census tracts in Census 2010. However, Clayton, Coweta, and
Figure 15. Spatial concentration of poverty in Cobb County. (Source: U.S. 2010)

Figure 16. Poverty concentration in Cobb County by census tract. (Source: U.S. Census)
Gwinnett counties all have census tracts that surged into the high-poverty range in Census 2010.

Figures 17 and 18 show comparisons in poverty concentration in Clayton County between Census 2000 and Census 2010. Prior to HOPE VI implementation, Clayton County had no levels of poverty concentration in the “high” area, nor “approaching high level.” The highest levels of poverty concentration (in the dark green) are between 10% and 17%.

Figure 17. Spatial concentration of poverty in Clayton County. (Source: U.S. Census 2000)

However, Figure 19 shows those census tracts that have entered into the “approaching high levels” of poverty and the “high” level of poverty. Census tracts
Figure 18. Spatial concentration of poverty in Clayton County. (Source: U.S. Census 2010)

Figure 19. Poverty Concentration in Clayton County by census tract. (Source: U.S. Census)
403.02, 403.03, and 406.11 had low poverty in 2000, but have increased to levels at 25% or above in 2010. Census tracts 403.06 and 403.08 are also characterized by “high” poverty, but were not identified in the 2000 U.S. Census.

Census tracts 404.1, 405.14, and 405.18 were in the low-poverty range in 2000, but have entered into the “approaching high poverty” range in 2010. Note that census tracts 403.07, 404.15, 404.17, 405.19, and 405.22 were not identified in the 2000 U.S. Census, but are also in the “approaching high poverty” range.

Coweta County, likewise, only had poverty rates of up to 14% in census tracts during Census 2000, but yielded a poverty rate of 28% in census tract 1706.01 by Census 2010 (see Figures 20, 21, and 22). (Notice that census tract 1706.01 is not identified in the Census 2000, but is spatially captured in the 10% - 14.4% range in Figure 20.)

Figure 20. Spatial concentration of poverty in Coweta County. (Source: U.S. Census 2000)
Figure 21. Spatial concentration of poverty in Coweta County. (Source: U.S. Census 2010)

Figure 22. Poverty concentration in Coweta County by census tract. (Source: U.S. Census)
Census tract 1707 is "approaching high poverty" at 22% in 2010 (see Figure 22), but is captured on the 2000 spatial map at 12%.

In Gwinnett County, there were no census tracts with high-poverty concentration in 2000 (see Figure 23). The dark green areas in Figure 24 capture poverty rates at only 10% - 15.1%. By Census 2010, eleven (11) census tracts [six (6) of which were not identified in Census 2000] soared into the high-poverty range (see Figures 24 and 25). Five (5) census tracts are in the "approaching high poverty" range in Census 2010, with three (3) of them having started out in the low-poverty range in Census 2000 (see Figure 25).

![Thematic Map of Income in 1999 below poverty level - Percent of families](image)

**Figure 23.** Spatial concentration of poverty in Gwinnett County. (Source: U.S. Census 2000)
Figure 24. Spatial concentration of poverty in Gwinnett County by Census Tract. (Source: U.S. Census, 2010)

Figure 25. Poverty concentration in Gwinnett County by Census Tract. (Source: U.S. Census, 2010)
And finally, Henry County was characterized by low-poverty in 2000 (see Figure 26). By Census 2010, only two (2) census tracts had risen to “approaching high poverty” range: i.e., census tract 701.13 at 20.4% and 705.01 at 21% (see Figures 27 and 28). None of the census tracts in Henry County reached “high” poverty level in Census 2010.

Figure 26. Spatial concentration of poverty in Henry County. (Source: U.S. Census 2000)
Figure 27. Spatial concentration of poverty in Henry County. (Source: U.S. Census 2010)

Figure 28. Poverty concentration in Henry County by census tract. (Source: U.S. Census)
Goal 3: Creating Opportunities for Residents to Become Self-sufficient

Closely related to MONEY OR LACK THEREOF is the category, EMPLOYMENT OR ADULT EDUCATION. This category is intended to capture residents’ goals for personal development in order to move towards self-sufficiency. A distinction was made between responses that capture the goal of achieving or maintaining employment versus responses that capture income as a monetary amount (i.e., either increasing or decreasing). EMPLOYMENT OR ADULT EDUCATION captures responses that pertain to personal development or sustainability rather than income amount, which would fall into the MONEY OR LACK THEREOF category.

Interestingly, the EMPLOYMENT OR ADULT EDUCATION category occurred more frequently in the evaluation update study than in the baseline study (9% versus 2%, respectively). Collectively, 7% of the responses contained language relating to employment and/or adult education. If one of the goals of HOPE VI is “to create opportunities for residents to become self-sufficient through the use of services that provide various types of job training and employment,”\(^{18}\) then perhaps the relocation efforts contributed to residents’ increased concern for self-development.

Responses pertaining to services received through AHA are coded under COUNSELING OR ASSISTANCE. The questions include: Residents’ Experiences with AHA Relocation Services, Residents’ Experiences with the Delivery of Counseling Service, Experiences with the delivery of moving services, and Effectiveness of the Community Support Services program. This category appears in 20% of responses across the board – i.e., in the baseline study \(n = 263\), the evaluation update \(n = 455\),
and collectively overall \((n = 718)\). It is important to note that this category was second in frequency in the baseline study. This makes sense, as it is indicative of researchers’ attempts to assess the immediate effectiveness of AHA support services. In the subsequent evaluation update, residents were further removed from the provision of services, and therefore, this topic may have dropped in its rank of importance.

Another category identified is AHA MISINFORMATION. In the literature and in HOPE VI evaluation studies, there have been findings to indicate that residents are either confused or distrustful of the information they receive from AHA. This notion is also borne out by comments from interviewees (e.g., public librarians), who indicated that patrons turned to them for assistance because they did not trust information from AHA.

Overall, the level of trust towards AHA did not change much from the baseline study to the evaluation update (8% and 5%, respectively.) Comments coded in this category include such statements as: “When I needed y’all [AHA], you weren’t there for me;” “When you leave your name on the answering machine they never call you back, because they (sic) not interested in you;” “. . . they need to treat us right;” “. . . they talk real nasty to you;” “I feel that if they wanted to do something for us, they could;” “they [white people] want the city back and that’s what they (sic) getting.”

Another resident elaborated in her comments:

As a component of going through the HOPE VI process, we were supposed to do a self sufficiency plan. In my self-sufficiency plan — me and several other tenants of Capitol Homes chose to do entrepreneurship. Before and during relocation, AHA never took that into consideration. They destroyed and eliminated that entrepreneurship part so we have no
place to work. They never gave us support. They never brought in a
counselor for entrepreneurship. They [did] not recognize our plan like
they said.19

Closely related to residents’ perceptions of AHA is whether or not residents felt a
sense of empowerment to help themselves. A category for SELF-ADVOCACY was
created for comments expressing the need to advocate for oneself.

Findings suggest that residents seemed slightly more prone to voice an attitude of
self-help in the baseline study (7%) than in the evaluation update (2%). Statements such
as: “I found my own home,” “I painted my own kitchen,” “I did all of my shopping
around [for housing] myself,” “I got out there and hustled,” and “You got to do it on your
own,” were all typical of residents’ sense of self-advocacy.

In the original online survey, 66% of the respondents indicated that they moved
voluntarily, as opposed to a forced eviction. One respondent (33%) was forcibly evicted.
Residents who relocated on a volunteer basis might be indicative of respondents who
were more willing to take the online survey. Given findings indicating levels of mistrust
towards AHA and HOPE VI-related outcomes, perhaps this apprehension led to
unspoken barriers to taking the original online survey.

And finally, self-sufficiency is closely related to issues of transportation. If
residents can move around with relative ease, then they are more likely to feel self-
sufficient. Thus, PROXIMITY to schools, day care centers, public bus transportation,
shopping centers, and Grady Hospital is another important category that reflected
prominently in the responses. Most of the residents were pleased that their new housing
unit was located near public transportation and shops. Comments include, but are limited
to: “I wanted it to be convenient – in the reach of everything . . . grocery stores, schools – all that. So it’s convenient because it’s within walking distance to everything;” “Right here’s where everything at. I’m right next door to the bakery. I’m right by the grocery store. I’m right by the bus stop and right by all the day care centers even though I don’t need ‘em. Everything I need is right down here;” “I enjoy living near the MARTA stop right by my door;” “I’m close to MARTA and the store;” and “it’s convenient.”

However, a common theme in the responses was that Capitol Homes was closer to Grady Hospital, from which they felt somewhat removed in their new surroundings.

Goal 4: Reducing Public Housing Residents’ Exposure to Incidents of Crime

Of fairly equal importance to residents are CRIME OR LACK THEREOF and CHILDREN AND FAMILY. In the original online survey, 66% of the respondents indicated that crime was a primary challenge while living in public-assisted housing. However, in the evaluation studies, crime was reduced significantly in the living environments of the residents. In the evaluation responses collectively, 18% of all responses contained language pertaining to crime or the lack thereof. Many residents spoke of the “peace and quiet” of their new environment, which they enjoyed for the safety of their children and for themselves. Responses reflected an increased sense of security due to the absence of “drug boys/dealers” in their new surroundings. For example, comments about crime (or the lack thereof) include, but are not limited to: “It’s quiet. [A] different environment than what I had in Capitol Homes;” “I’ve gotten more things than I was able to have because when I was in Capitol Homes, I was scared people
would break into my house if I had this or if I had that. But now I don’t have a fear of
that;” “There ain’t nobody hanging out in front of the house;” “It’s still a drug area;” “I
like it because it’s security. We got security that walks around 24/7. It’s a gated
community;” “I don’t know the thugs now like I knew the thugs in Capitol Homes;” “I
was right in the dope trap;” and “I ain’t up there where the trouble is.”

The category of CHILDREN AND FAMILY was reflected in about 17% of the
responses collectively, with the evaluation update study reflecting more prominently than
the baseline study (20% versus 11%, respectively). Most of the responses involving
children were closely related to the lack of crime in the new surroundings. For example,
parents often expressed that they wanted a “better environment” for their children. Also,
parents seemed deeply concerned with the potential for their children to play safely near
their home (e.g., in safe playgrounds or parks). Comments about activities and recreation
for the children include, but are not limited to: “They [the children] can run all the way
around my house and play as they want to;” “They [the children] don’t have a play-
ground. They don’t have no where to play, they got to ride their bikes in the street;”
“[M]y children can go out and ride they (sic) bikes in the street;” “[T]hey have a bike
activity for the kids;” “So overall just the children going outside to play without having to
worry about their safety;” and “There is nowhere for my kids to play ‘cause my kids can’t
ride bicycle, skate . . . Too strict of rules for the kids.”

MOVING BACK TO CAPITOL HOMES was also a prominent theme in the
baseline study (18%), but not so much in the evaluation study update (5%). In the
baseline study, most of the residents who indicated an opinion about whether or not to
move back expressed an interest in going back to Capitol Homes. Although many of the responses were non-committal, prominently featured in the responses was concern that criteria for moving back would be more stringent. Examples of such responses include: “They (sic) going to be way stricter than when it was just regular Capitol Homes,” and “We won’t be able to do nothing.” The residents also feared mandatory background checks and having to pay relocation expenses back to AHA. “[T]hey gon’ do a background check, you can’t have nothing on your background before you can move back;” “Your background is checked, [and] how you pay your bills;” “You got to pay all the deposits back . . . and you have to have good credit.” Overall, residents from the baseline study seemed distrustful of the process and doubtful that they would be allowed to return.

Although fewer residents spoke of returning to Capitol Homes in the evaluation update, those who did expressed an interest in returning. None of them voiced any concerns about stringent rules; however, one resident did question whether or not money would have to be paid back.

Respondents of the original online survey indicated they were now residing in non-AHA affiliated rental units (one house and one apartment), and one respondent is now a homeowner. None of the respondents moved back to revitalized housing.

Goal 5: Reducing the Amount of Racial Segregation

The distribution of race in the metropolitan Atlanta area during a 20-year span (i.e., 1990 to 2010) has noticeably shifted (see Figures 29, 30, and 31). Given that the goal of HOPE VI was to reduce racial segregation in the city of Atlanta, it is remarkable
Figure 29. African American and race distribution by county. (Source: U.S. Census 1990)

Figure 30. African American and race distribution by county. (Source: U.S. Census 2000)
that the concentration of African Americans in Fulton County (which encompasses the city of Atlanta) has shifted only slightly. Whereas in 1990, African Americans represented nearly 50% of the city’s population (49.9%), the percentage of African Americans in Fulton County dropped to 44.6% in 2000, and slightly lower at 44.1% in 2010.

In real numbers, the total population in Fulton County increased 42% from 1990 to 2010. During this same time span, the African-American population increased by 25%; Caucasians increased by 32%; and all others increased in population by 600%! While this does not directly speak to the levels of racial segregation in areas where pre-demolition public housing once stood, it does implicate an influx of other minority
populations into the city, thereby weakening the concentration of African Americans who largely populated Atlanta’s public housing.

**Other Findings**

As already stated, only three (3) residents completed the online survey. Although few in number, when asked about overall quality of life, 66% of the respondents (n = 2) indicated that their quality of life is better. Only one respondent (33%) indicated that quality of life is worse.

Of all data analyzed, an unexpected finding is in the COMMUNITY CONNECTION THROUGH CHURCH INVOLVEMENT (CCCI) category. As stated earlier, initial efforts to reach out to community stakeholders was directed at churches and local pastors. It was believed that local pastors would have key insight into the lived experiences of residents who are members or constituents in their congregations. Furthermore, it was believed that church involvement is an important component in the lives of public housing residents. Churches were, therefore, targeted as viable resources in examining community connectivity.

The investigator in this study sought to examine responses reflecting a theme of “spirituality” as a proxy for church involvement. However, issues pertaining to church involvement did not figure prominently in the responses. In fact, less than 1% (before rounding) of responses contained church-related or “spiritual” themes.

Interviews with local church pastors, however, were informative. Of the pastors interviewed, only one was familiar with HOPE VI prior to my contacting them. This
particular pastor was very familiar with the Atlanta Housing Authority, and even acknowledged a “partnership” between AHA and his nonprofit organization. The nonprofit organization was birthed out of the outreach ministries of the church, and evolved into a separate 501(c)3 entity. It is through this organization that the pastor is involved with AHA business.

The nonprofit organization owns 32 units of project-based apartments. Funding for the organization has come from loans and from the city of Atlanta. Other partners include Fulton County, which provides social workers to assist residents; and a local seminary that provides counseling for married couples.

All pastors interviewed had mixed opinions about the razing of Atlanta public housing. Despite overall appreciation for the improved aesthetics of public housing units, all pastors interviewed believed that the community and the residents were negatively impacted. One pastor, commenting on the loss of community, stated: “[R]egardless of how people felt about those housing developments, there was community.” Most of the pastors interviewed concurred. Chief among the complaints was that the people scattered. All pastors interviewed within the city of Atlanta stated that they lost church members as a result of public housing demolition. Residents were scattered to Clayton, Dekalb, Cobb, and Douglas counties, the pastors said. The people to whom they hope to minister are the very ones who were forced to leave the area. “They had to go where they could find housing,” stated one pastor.

In the original online survey, the three respondents indicated that they moved to Cobb, Dekalb, and Fulton counties.
When asked what they would like to see in Atlanta’s housing policy, most of the pastors agreed that they would like to see displaced residents return to revitalized housing, or at least to the area. Two of the pastors believed that the mixed-income model is a viable solution to housing problems, however, almost all of the pastors expressed concern that those who need affordable housing the most are not receiving it. Concerns about ex-convicts and women with children were strong. For example, one pastor believed that a criminal record unfairly prevents someone in obtaining needed housing. As he so aptly explained, “People living in deprivation are more prone to criminal charges than people who are not, and especially people of color.” He went on to state: “Some of them were ruled out (of housing opportunity) due to felony convictions. This relegated them back to the streets or jail. We have to rethink our strategy towards those who have been convicted. They ought not to continue to be penalized.”

Likewise, this same pastor also believed that more flexibility should be extended to women with children. Most of the pastors agreed that bad credit histories and stringent rules for moving into revitalized housing are unnecessary barriers to housing poor women and children. “You can’t just pick the ‘cream of the crop’ and only house them,” stated one pastor. “We rule out people who really need housing,” he said.

Discussion

Findings in the original baseline study were calibrated differently than in this study. For example, researchers in the baseline study found that the majority of respondents were satisfied with their quality of life after relocation. They write: “In
every category assessed on quality of life in the focus groups, a majority of respondents report they are satisfied (29.9%), somewhat satisfied (23.2%), or very satisfied (10.4%) with their post-move experience.\textsuperscript{20} This reflects a collective of 63.5% respondents who are satisfied with their post-relocation experience. How this differs from the current study is that the assessment in the baseline study is one-dimensional. That is to say, respondents appear to answer affirmatively on SATISFACTION, exclusive of any dimension of DISSATISFACTION. As stated earlier, in this current study, responses are coded multi-dimensionally. The categories of SATISFACTION and DISSATISFACTION are not mutually exclusive. A single response could very well contain a dimension of satisfaction overall, yet also express a level of dissatisfaction on some aspect of the housing unit or the relocation experience. One category was not captured at the expense of the other.

Furthermore, data in the Capitol Homes baseline study consisted of survey as well as focus group responses. While the survey captured responses using a Likert-like scale (e.g., ranging from “very satisfied” to “very dissatisfied”), the focus group captured qualitative data that are more richly detailed. Researchers of the baseline study acknowledge that “there are often substantial disparities between the questionnaire survey and the focus group comments which tend to be much more critical of their HOPE VI experiences.”\textsuperscript{21}

It is stated above that the goals of HOPE VI may not have been fully achieved because new neighborhoods are typically saddled with the same social ills and characteristics as the communities from which residents relocated. This is true for
residents of Capitol Homes, at least during the time of the evaluation studies. A summary of neighborhood status from the baseline study states that relocatees who moved to conventional public housing units were more likely to move to “Bowen, McDaniel Glenn, University, Carver, Herndon, Grady Homes and Thomasville Heights.” Furthermore, most of these households relocated to “block groups with slightly higher percent (0-5%) [B]lack than the referenced Capitol Homes block group.” Thus, Goal 5, “Reducing the amount of racial segregation” was not achieved for this population.

For Goal 2, “Reducing the concentration of poverty,” researchers of the baseline study found that the relocatees who moved to conventional public housing did not necessarily fare better in terms of moving to neighborhoods with less poverty concentration. They summarize their findings:

Movers to the Villages at Carver, Herndon, and Bowen Homes, 36 households, found their new neighborhoods to be at least as poor as Capitol Homes. (As defined here, neighborhoods encompass more than the immediate area around the AHA property.) Twenty-three (23) households moved to AHA properties – Crosby Spears, U-Rescue, Grady Homes, Englewood Manor – in less poor block groups. The remaining house-holds moved to McDaniel Glenn, University Homes, Thomasville Heights, and other AHA properties with essentially equal poverty characteristics.

Similar findings are borne out in the current study. The maps and graphs indicate that census tracts in Fulton County (where conventional public housing is sited) are not necessarily devoid of high-poverty concentration. On the contrary, twenty-seven (27) census tracts that began in the high-poverty range in 2000 continue to be characterized by
high-poverty concentration in 2010. An additional eight (8) census tracts have moved into the high-poverty range in 2010 from the “approaching high poverty” range in 2000.

Housing Choice (voucher) relocatees have fared better than relocatees who moved into conventional public housing. Sixty-two percent (62.5%) of Capitol Homes relocatees selected the Housing Choice voucher program. Of these householders, the majority of them improved their poverty status by moving to communities with greater racial diversity.\(^25\)

The expected goals of HOPE VI were that all residents, regardless of housing preference, would improve their economic status, living conditions, and become self-sufficient. The expectation of policymakers was that living in close proximity to neighbors of mixed-income would improve residents’ social networks, therefore, leading to improved life chances. Researchers in *The HOPE Resident Tracking Study* state,

One of the premises of the HOPE VI program is that deconcentrating poverty and creating mixed-income communities will benefit the poor. Low-income families will interact with neighbors in their new communities, forming new social networks. These networks are hypothesized to offer a range of benefits for original residents, including positive role models for adults and children, access to information about economic opportunities, and peer groups for children and youth that are less likely to support delinquent activity. However, survey respondents reported fairly low levels of social interaction with neighbors.\(^26\)

Despite strong expectations, findings in the baseline and evaluation update studies indicate that residents do not necessarily seek out social networks with their new neighbors. Although many residents spoke of their appreciation for “quiet neighbors,” many also expressed their tendency to keep to themselves. Examples of such comments from the baseline study include: “I don’t deal with people in my neighborhood,” “I stay to
myself,” “I choose not to interact,” “I’m not wanting to know my neighbors,” and “I don’t even speak.” From the evaluation update study, comments about new neighbors also revealed a lack of familiarity with them. Most of the residents expressed a favorable, but casual relationship with neighbors: “Well I know them (but) I don’t hang out with them,” “I just speak to them and say ‘hey,’” and “I speak and keep going.” In both studies, residents did not confirm the tighter social networks with new neighbors as anticipated by HOPE VI policymakers.

But researchers of the baseline study point out an important fact. Residents from Capitol Homes are not a homogenous group. They are quite diverse, consisting of: “the work-capable, the disabled, the educated and uneducated, the elderly, and the young.” Policymakers, therefore, should not expect all public housing residents to bond and form tight-knit relationships. Population groups tend to live amongst those who are like them. This applies to race, ethnicity, age, and socioeconomic status. Therefore, any future studies or analyses must take into consideration the needs of a diverse population, not necessarily a homogenous group.
Chapter 5


2. Ibid.

3. Ibid.

4. Ibid., 88.

5. Ibid., 87.

6. Ibid.

7. Ibid.

8. Ibid.

9. Ibid.


14. Ibid., 112.

15. Wilson, Kindle e-reader, Location 1006.

17. Ibid., 110.

18. Jones and Paulsen, 87.

19. Tenant response from *Capitol Homes Baseline study*.


21. Ibid., v.

22. Ibid., ix.

23. Ibid.

24. Ibid.

25. Ibid., x.


27. Holmes et al., *Baseline Study*, xii.
CHAPTER 6
POLICY OUTCOME EVALUATION

"The test of any policy or program is how well it produces the desired outcomes, and at what cost."¹ Public policy must be evaluated on "what the policy intended, how the policy was implemented, and what happened to the people whom the policy was supposed to affect."²

Policy evaluation, according to James H. Spencer, should examine more than the intended outcomes of policy. Rather, policy evaluation must also examine the unintended outcomes that were experienced by policy beneficiaries.³ While this policy review examines intended outcomes of HOPE VI policy – e.g., to deconcentrate poverty – it also examines the unintended outcomes impacting the lives of Atlanta’s poor residents.

When examining anti-poverty policies, Spencer maintains that policies – since the 1930s – have been implemented as either people-driven or place-driven. He writes,

The defining characteristic of each approach is the target of policy investment. People-based programs target individuals or households, whereas place-based ones target particular poor areas and neighborhoods. Thus, for example, wage subsidies, housing vouchers, transportation vouchers, and other sorts of direct transfers of valued assets to individuals are people-based strategies, whereas business tax credits for specific areas, investments in improved fixed-place public transportation, and improved infrastructure are examples of place-based strategies.⁴
Spencer offers an “empirically-driven ‘people-place’ policy framework” for examining anti-poverty policies. Since the 1960s, says Spencer, policies have promoted both people and place approaches, usually within the same legislation. Such an example is found in HOPE VI. However, says Spencer, it is challenging for federal legislators to develop a “one-size-fits-all” approach to policymaking given the varying differences in people and places across regions. For example, residential segregation varies from city to city. How Atlantans view their housing resources may differ from how Chicagoans view theirs. Again, a policy such as HOPE VI engages both a people policy and a place policy. While the overriding goal of utilizing HOPE VI funds was to replace “severely distressed” housing, there is also a people component. Ridding the city of dilapidated housing structures will help to deconcentrate poverty, but will also lead to improved lives, to include, for example, better job opportunities, better educational outcomes, and better overall health among public housing residents.

Furthermore, an emphasis on one approach versus the other (i.e., people versus place) can be problematic, says Spencer. The avoidance of a singular approach is harmful to those needing assistance because one approach is sacrificed at the expense of the other. Spencer, therefore, offers a theoretical policy framework that simultaneously engages both people and place policy approaches. He attempts to develop a “new heuristic model for understanding antipoverty policy in the United States that may help scholars, state, and federal legislators and others ask complex questions about the effectiveness of the many approaches currently implemented to fight spatially concentrated poverty.” In light of Spencer’s policy framework, this policy evaluation
examines the intent, accomplishments, and critiques of the Atlanta Housing Authority’s HOPE VI policy implementation. Policy suggestions are offered that takes into consideration the multifaceted social needs of Atlanta’s poor population.

The Intent of AHA and HOPE VI

The number one essential function of local housing authorities is public accountability, according to David A. Smith, a financial services advisor for affordable housing initiatives. All other services are merely technical. Smith explains,

A housing authority holds a public trust – to provide quality housing at very low cost to those who are least able to find it in the private marketplace. In essence, they are publicly accountable charitable institutions, receiving public subsidy (via the indirect collection agent of government) and deploying it for public benefit – affordable housing and healthy low-income communities.¹⁰

How to deploy government subsidies to benefit low-income communities is the goal of public policy. HOPE VI is but one federally-subsidized approach to combat spatially concentrated poverty. Through the expenditure of HOPE VI funds, the intent of the Atlanta Housing Authority was to rethink and revamp how public housing is offered and managed. Prior to the implementation of HOPE VI, says Glover, “More often than not, AHA did not fulfill even its most basic mandate – to provide ‘safe and decent’ housing. Its forty-three properties were in deplorable condition . . . It should have been obvious to anyone who was paying attention that the practice of concentrating poor people in public housing was not working.”¹¹
However, says Glover, public policy is often based on false assumptions as to who comprises the poor and why. Generalizations and assumptions often inform public policy that negatively and disproportionately impact the lives of low-income groups. Glover writes,

For decades, our society has struggled with the social issues surrounding poverty. Some believe that people are poor because they were born into the wrong family, race or culture, while others believe poverty is a matter of being unlucky, unwilling or incapable. Sound reasoning shows us that there is no single reason why, at any given time, an individual has fewer resources. Yet, public policies are often based on such generalities or assumptions, and that’s wrong.12

The political opinions, assumptions, and decisions of policymakers are what led to HOPE VI policy, ultimately resulting in the demolition of Atlanta’s public housing. In addition, the assumptions of Glover and the AHA held that improving the physical environment of public housing residents along with the deconcentration of poverty would lead to an improved quality of life for the residents.

Borrowing from sociological theory, assumptions are often held by the political power structure that the poor cannot make decisions in their own best interest, cannot thrive in “mainstream” society, and most importantly, are viewed as the proverbial “other.” The problems of the poor are often characterized as “pathologies,” rather than attributable to the structural and social institutions that perpetuate poverty. Bureaucrats within municipal power structures are seen as more capable of determining the best outcomes for marginalized groups than they themselves. The power structure – in its attempt to remedy these “pathologies” of the poor – develops public policy emanating
from the assumption that poor people must live up to their potential,\textsuperscript{13} and are incapable of doing so without political help.

For example, Glover states: "In order to realize their potential, these families and individuals must be nurtured and protected from the pathologies that have become endemic to poverty-stricken communities."\textsuperscript{14} Likewise, a report by the National Housing Law Project sums up this outlook:

The emphasis on wholesale displacement and exclusion to accomplish income-mixing in HOPE VI suggests a pessimistic attitude about the ability of public housing residents to achieve greater self-sufficiency. This is a toxic brand of pessimism that assumes that public housing residents as a class are somehow unable to realize their potential as individuals, to participate more fully in the broader economy and society. Pessimistic assumptions of this kind are contrary to basic American values.\textsuperscript{15}

However, while "pessimistic assumptions" about the poor prevail, problems within governmental structures are characterized as emanating from within "the system," and not as inherent flaws within bureaucratic personalities. In other words, when considering the government, problematic characteristics are attributable to "the system," and not to the people within the system. For example, in an AHA publication, Glover writes,

[L]aw-abiding residents . . . questioned why a system was allowed to exist when it so overwhelmingly favored thugs and predators over children, mothers and the elderly. Ultimately, all families learned they couldn't trust housing authority officials, elected officials, or government officials of any ilk because they had been compromised and entrapped by the system itself.\textsuperscript{16}
Notice that it is “the system” that “favored thugs over children, mothers and the elderly.” Glover does not implicate bureaucrats as favoring thugs and predators. Rather, the bureaucrats are merely “entrapped by the system itself.”

To reiterate, when one perceives weaknesses in the poor, the weakness is presumably inherent within the person, not in the structural system that contributes to the so-called “weakness” – e.g., unemployability, poor education, etc. Again, those in positions of power not only create inequitable social structures, they also give definition to who needs “fixing” and who does not.

Politics, says Spencer, “drive policy.” The type of policy that gets legislated is related more to partisan political environment than to the historical evolution within which populations are dealt. In other words, antipoverty policy is correlated with “core beliefs” found within partisan parties. Says Spencer, antipoverty policy support may also be bolstered by the potential effectiveness of the policy on the lives of the poor. However, Spencer maintains that well-intentioned antipoverty policies have done little to advance the lives of policy beneficiaries. “At worst,” says Spencer, “they seem to have solidified the intergenerational nature of the underclass by subsidizing barriers to economic opportunities, diminishing the expectations of the poor, or gentrifying poor neighborhoods.”

Barney Simms (now retired from AHA) gives voice to a changing paradigm shift in the Atlanta Housing Authority. The goal of AHA in using HOPE VI funds is to remedy the trend towards a paternalistic approach to policymaking. He states,
This is a dramatic shift in policy and worldview from the early 1990s, when the prevailing philosophy across the nation was that public housing residents were somehow flawed and that society needed to care for them. That paternalism has smothered potential for generations. Everyone – man, woman and especially the children – should have the same rights and opportunities to compete as anyone else.21

The intent of HOPE VI policy, therefore, is to deconcentrate poverty and to find sustainable alternatives to “warehousing” the poor, says Glover. But, examined in this study is the question of whether or not Atlanta residents were brought to the table of discourse during AHA meetings with partners and developers. Were the voices of residents fully represented in those discussions?

If the goal of AHA policy was to effect positive outcomes of public housing residents, then it would behoove the housing authority to consider the voices of the intended beneficiaries. Although HUD stipulates the integration of beneficiaries in HOPE VI policymaking, there is no indication in the literature that AHA effectively included residents. According to residents questioned in the Capitol Homes studies, residents were merely informed of AHA decisions. They were not brought to the table prior to decisionmaking.

The National Housing Law Project (NHLP) is most critical in its assertion that residents lacked involvement in the HOPE VI process. Despite HUD’s own mandate that residents be allowed full participation in the entire HOPE VI process, the NHLP insists that residents were not granted this right. HUD, according to NHLP, never issued regulations that would have allowed residents to enforce their rights of participation. Instead, HUD has primarily relied on Notices of Fiscal Agreements (or NOFAs) to
administer the HOPE VI program."²² "By refusing to issue regulations, HUD has violated its own policies regarding public rulemaking."²³

This research study and policy review, therefore, set as a primary goal the illumination of public housing residents' experiences and their migration patterns following public housing demolition. First, what were the experiences of public housing residents prior to demolition? Second, what happened to residents once the demolition of public housing forced them to relocate to other housing – either other conventional public housing or private-market housing? Were HUD goals met? Have residents achieved better outcomes as a result of HOPE VI-led demolition and revitalization of public housing communities?

Although the literature is interspersed with criticisms about lack of resident tracking following relocation, there are, in fact, two well-known studies that have attempted to address this issue. *The HOPE VI Resident Tracking Study* is an early and retrospective examination of relocation outcomes by residents from eight (8) HOPE VI sites across the country. Subsequently, *The HOPE VI Panel Study* documents residents' preferences for replacement housing and tracks residents from five (5) sites developed since 2001. Both studies were commissioned by HUD to track the post-relocation outcomes of public housing residents.

Although *The HOPE VI Resident Tracking Study* provides an overview of HOPE VI through multi-city case studies, Atlanta was not included in the tracking study. Furthermore, there are variations in findings across the literature in terms of how effective HOPE VI was in its impact on the lives of families. In a 2010 report, it states: "there
is no consensus in scholarly literature regarding the outcomes, cause and effect relationships, and appropriate empirical methodologies for examining residential mobility outcomes accompanying public policy interventions.”24 Researchers, however, continue to “explore new empirical techniques and various quasi-experimental research designs to establish more convincing cause and effect relationships.”25

Given that Atlanta has been touted as a HOPE VI success, and given that Atlanta is the first major city to have demolished all of its public housing stock (with the exception of a few senior high-rises),26 this policy review provides an important addition to the growing literature on HOPE VI outcomes. This study has sought to provide clarity on two research questions: (1) Did the implementation of HOPE VI policy in Atlanta produce the desired outcomes as originally set forth by HUD, and (2) To what extent did public housing residents have a voice in policy-making decisions? As an innovative policy initiative, understanding its effects on families and the surrounding communities is key to developing subsequent housing policy in Atlanta and around the nation.27

**Did Hope VI in Atlanta Meet the Goals Established by HUD?**

The initial goals of HOPE VI policy in the city of Atlanta were,

- To improve the living environment for residents of severely distressed public housing through the demolition, rehabilitation, reconfiguration, or replacement of obsolete projects (or portions thereof);

- To revitalize sites on which such public housing projects are located and contribute to the improvement of the surrounding neighborhood;
• To provide housing that will avoid or decrease the concentration of very-low income families; and
• To build sustainable communities.\(^{28, 29}\)

Goal 1: To Improve the Living Environment for Residents

There is little dispute among HOPE VI analysts that improving the structural units of public housing communities was achieved. HOPE VI funds did indeed help to finance the demolition, rehabilitation, reconfiguration and replacement of obsolete public housing units. What has been achieved is the development of quality, attractive, low-density housing units that have replaced the high-density, dilapidated, and “severely distressed” units that served the housing needs of Atlanta’s poorest residents. The improvement of “brick-and-mortar” structures is indisputable. However, what is yet to be determined is whether or not the removal of these “severely distressed” public housing units led to an overall improvement in the living environment of low-income residents.

As stated earlier, HOPE VI incorporates both a place-based and a people-based approach to implementing housing policy. Improving the living environment of residents is both a place policy as well as a people policy. The place policy refers to the brick-and-mortar structure of public housing. The people policy refers to other non-tangible components of living environment.

Merriam-Webster defines “environment” as “the aggregate of social and cultural conditions that influence the life of an individual or community.”\(^{30}\) It involves a sense of community. Therefore, let us establish that “environment” is more than the physical structure of housing – that is, “brick-and-mortar.” Rather, “environment” also
encompasses non-physical and social components. The goal of this policy review, then, is to examine to what extent HOPE VI impacted the living environments of low-income residents – i.e., socially, physically, and economically.

According to Crowley, "[t]he one improvement that studies of HOPE VI outcomes have consistently shown is that people feel safer." Feeling safe, secure, and removed from criminal influence is important to one’s overall sense of well-being. If the physical environment is free from criminal activity, then families are perhaps able to focus on improving their quality of life through education and employment.

In the focus group responses, residents discuss the totality of their living conditions – e.g., physical structure of the units, location, acquaintance with neighbors, and the safety of their children. Missing from these findings, however, are educational assessments and outcomes. How have children fared in schools as a result of HOPE VI relocation? Although findings in this study reveal that children and family are important to respondents, the focus group responses do not indicate educational improvement in the lives of the children.

In addition, very little is indicated as to how the changed physical environment has impacted health or physical well-being. Other than proximity to doctors’ offices and Grady Hospital, residents did not indicate whether or not relocation impacted their overall state of health.

One frequent concern expressed by Renee Glover is that public housing residents find the opportunity to use their “God-given talents.” She writes: “The true intent of the work . . . was never to make mere brick-and-mortar improvements. The overarching goal
was to create holistic environments that encouraged and inspired public housing residents to unlock their God-given human potential. But how does one determine, define, and evaluate "God-given human potential?" How is this goal objectified in housing policy, and how does one measure the outcome? What role do residents play in achieving their own "God-given human potential?"

The paternalistic nature of AHA policymaking effectively renders public housing residents powerless to effect change in their own lives. Glover implies that residents cannot achieve real improvements in their lives without the "nurturing and protection" from poverty and racial segregation that only policymakers and housing experts can provide. Yet, Glover, by her own admission, is a product of racial segregation. She writes,

Racial segregation was a painful part of my past. But my family and my social network did not allow it to define my life, limit my prospects, crush my character, or hinder my dreams. As a consequence of my upbringing, when I interact with Atlanta public housing tenants who are confined by the modern-day version of racial and economic segregation, I see children of God, who are blessed with unlimited human potential and are destined to become the next leaders of our nation.

The implication of this statement is that the social networks that helped to define and shape her life are presumably absent in the lives of public housing residents. It was not housing policy that ignited positive change in her life. Rather, it was family and social networks. Yet, Glover persists in her belief that innovative housing policy is the primary key that will unlock human potential in her low-income constituents.

Interestingly, research reveals that the residents themselves find HOPE VI expectations rather impertinent. For example, the notion that residing in a mixed-income
community will improve the life chances and social mobility of low-income residents is viewed by residents as insulting, paternalistic, and condescending. Despite their low economic status, some residents do not view themselves as “needy” or in need of “fixing.” This disempowering characteristic of Atlanta’s housing policy is one that many critics would like to improve.

Critics of HOPE VI also point out that little attention is paid to the social networks already existing within public housing or low-income communities. Prior to demolition, many residents may have enjoyed strong social ties with a network of friends and family in close proximity to their residence. These tightly-knit social networks were often relied upon for childcare or other family assistance. Relocation may have led to a loss of these vital social networks. As Popkin et al. state, “HOPE VI relocation disrupted these social ties, leaving many feeling less secure, uncertain where to turn when they encountered problems, and often simply lonely and isolated.”

And so, in evaluating the impact of HOPE VI on the living environments of public housing residents, analysts can point to the undeniable improvement in housing structure and aesthetics, as well as the elimination or reduction in criminal activity from residents’ daily living environment. However, unintended outcomes of HOPE VI may be found in other social components – e.g., the elimination of social networks.

The mixed-income model of public housing has gained interest across the nation. But despite HUD’s enthusiasm for the mixed-income model, the NHLP reports that there is little empirical evidence to support the theory that this model actually improves the lives of residents. Community cannot be artificially created by having residents “share
the same physical space." Community must be developed over time with persons who share identity and interests.

Future housing policy should consider how best to relocate residents without destroying vital ties to the community. For example, local pastors indicated the severance of relationships with public housing residents as a result of HOPE VI relocation. If church involvement is used as a proxy for community connection, then severance from this important network is one that policy-makers may want to consider in future policy development. Collaborating with church leaders, local librarians, and community social workers (in addition to the residents themselves) will ensure that all stakeholder voices are adequately heard in policymaking decisions.

Goal 2: To Revitalize Sites and Contribute to Neighborhood Improvement

There is little dispute within the literature that the razing of dilapidated public housing structures contributed to a more pleasing neighborhood aesthetic. This met the primary goal of demolishing "severely distressed" housing under HOPE VI. But while the goal of revitalizing housing structure was inarguably met, what about the overall improvement of the neighborhood? How has public housing revitalization contributed to neighborhood improvement? What does "improvement" entail? Who gets to define what is or is not "improvement?" Is it policymakers and housing leaders, or residents who call the neighborhood "home?"

Focus group responses from the evaluation studies reveal residents' comments and opinions regarding the revitalized sites. Most residents who commented on moving
back to the revitalized sites did not remark on the surrounding neighborhood. Residents were primarily concerned with the direct impact to their personal lives – e.g., having to undergo background checks or repayment of moving expenses.

However, the most detailed and academic comments regarding neighborhood revitalization came from interviews with property managers. Because they are “in the business” so to speak, they viewed the situation with a more critical eye. For example, one property manager praised the razing of Atlanta’s public housing because it rid communities of large tracts of blighted real estate, which, in his opinion, leads to the potential for crime. He is also in support of mixed-income communities because having low-income families reside amongst higher-income families, he says, will raise the standards for personal conduct. He states, “Their (public housing residents’) living standard is so low that they weren’t capable of assimilating in a neighborhood that have (sic) higher standards for personal conduct.” Furthermore, he asserts that the housing policy must allow residents to marry and maintain their housing vouchers. Penalizing voucher holders for getting married (by terminating housing assistance) will only lead to illegitimate families, which tends to breed cycles of poverty. In other words, the very conduct that housing policy is designed to prevent is inadvertently reinforced by the policy.

The aggregate of stakeholder comments do not reveal that the surrounding neighborhoods are necessarily better. Granted, crime has decreased in the affected areas. Poverty, overall, is less visible. But the quality of living for low-income residents is not necessarily better.
Workers “in the trenches” – i.e., social workers, librarians, etc. – have strong opinions as to how HOPE VI has impacted the community. For example, stakeholders who perform direct services to the residents indicated that the residents were “scared” during the demolition and relocation processes. The consensus among providers is that the residents did not have sufficient knowledge as to how to pay utility bills or how to fill out applications for assistance. Furthermore, there was a general lack of trust towards AHA amongst the residents. Residents sought help from local librarians rather than AHA. Also, county social workers saw an increase in “walk-ins” seeking housing following AHA demolition.

Again, while the intended goal of HOPE VI was to revitalize neighborhoods, the unintended outcome was that it destroyed communities. Prior to demolition and relocation, the residents looked out for one another. They also looked out for persons in the community whom they trusted – e.g., local branch librarians. As one librarian stated, “They told me to ‘watch my back.’ They looked out for me.”

Furthermore, the stated goal of neighborhood “improvement” is not defined clearly. Other than a reduction in crime, deconcentration of poverty, and racial desegregation, for what other “improvements” were housing leaders aiming? As one religious interviewee stated, housing officials were not sensitive to the fact that people were being displaced. “The intent of HOPE VI sounded good, but quite a few (residents) fell through the cracks,” he said.
Goal 3: To Decrease the Concentration of Very-Low Income Families

A primary goal in HOPE VI policy implementation is to decrease the concentration of low-income families by developing the mixed-income model of public housing, or by utilization of housing vouchers in low-poverty neighborhoods. The intent of such dispersal policies is good in theory. However, the reality can lead to unintended outcomes. An important question to consider is: Where do poor people go when displaced from public housing in the inner city?

It has been established that many of the public housing residents chose to move to private market housing with the use of a voucher rather than return to the revitalized community. But voucher relocation does not guarantee that the householder will obtain housing in low-poverty communities. While poverty deconcentration was achieved in pre-demolition areas, did concentrated poverty simply move to the suburbs and outlying areas?

While many researchers have not been able to answer this question, Boston provides a more definitive response. He tracks residents' relocation outcomes for several public housing communities between 1995 (pre-demolition or revitalization) and 2001 (following revitalization). The housing communities include: Clark Howell, John Eagan, East Lake, Grady Homes, McDaniel Glen, and Bowen Homes. Of the revitalized communities (Clark Howell, John Eagan, and East Lake), 47% of pre-demolition residents exited the public housing system by the year 2001. Of those remaining, 23% of residents moved to other housing projects, 17% moved to mixed-income communities, and 60% moved with housing vouchers. Likewise, of the communities not revitalized...
(Grady Homes, McDaniel Glen, and Bowen Homes), 51% of residents exited public housing assistance by the year 2001. Of those remaining within the AHA system, 63% remained in the same housing projects, 12% relocated to other projects, 1% returned to mixed-income housing, and 24% utilized housing vouchers.  

Holliday and Dwyer (2009) discuss poverty in suburban areas. While extant literature largely focuses on poverty in inner-city rings, they claim, studies have been scarce in examining poverty in the suburbs. However, Holliday and Dwyer write: “Recent evidence suggests that suburbs grew even more stratified at the end of the twentieth century, with substantial increases in poverty in some areas (Lucy and Phillips, 2000; Frey, 2001; Orfield, 2002; Puentes and Warren, 2006; Murphy, 2007).”

One theory reflected in the literature, say the authors, is that suburban poverty is a reflection of poverty in the inner city. That is to say, boundaries between inner city and suburbs are pushed further out as residents from the inner city relocate to the outer rings of metropolitan areas. They maintain: “Scholars conclude that suburban poverty represents the spread of central city problems outward, with similar patterns of disinvestment, population transition, and economic decay (e.g., Lucy and Phillips, 2000; Murphy, 2007).”

But much of the literature on suburban poverty is outdated, say Holliday and Dwyer, “and more sophisticated approaches in both ecological and place stratification traditions suggest a more complex spatial pattern of suburban poverty, and a more diverse set of determinants.” For example, the deconcentration of poverty in the City of Atlanta does not necessarily implicate public housing demolition as a primary or significant
determinant of suburban poverty. According to Holliday and Dwyer, "suburban poverty cannot be interpreted solely as the extension of central city poverty."\textsuperscript{44} Rather, other determinants of suburban poverty might include migration to the suburbs for job-related reasons.\textsuperscript{45}

Deirdre Oakley and cohorts have also written extensively on HOPE VI relocation outcomes, both in Atlanta and in Chicago. For example, Oakley and Burchfield suggest that displaced public housing residents – most of whom are African-American – tend to relocate to predominantly Black neighborhoods perhaps because of familiarity and comfort with like-populations.\textsuperscript{46} In a study of HOPE VI in Chicago (2009), they make the case that although public housing residents were forcibly evicted out of the "projects," they were nonetheless relocated to other low-income neighborhoods.\textsuperscript{47} The authors state that "voucher housing tends to be spatially clustered in disadvantaged neighborhoods; there is a clear link between these spatial trends and where relocated public-housing families are likely to move."\textsuperscript{48} In other words, displaced public housing residents in Chicago were not evenly relocated across the metropolitan area. Rather, they were "concentrated in poor Black neighborhoods on the south and west sides of the city."\textsuperscript{49}

These findings regarding spatial relocation of displaced public housing residents can lead one to question the goal of HOPE VI policy. Is the goal of HOPE VI, really, to relocate residents to upwardly mobile communities, or merely to deconcentrate poverty in the inner city? In the City of Atlanta, was the goal of utilizing HOPE VI funds to demolish public housing a matter of revitalizing real estate, or reinvesting in the lives of
real people? Was HOPE VI a concerted effort to enhance poor people’s lives, or was it a
disguised attempt to enhance the city’s racial and socio-economic balance in preparation
for the 2006 Olympic games?

Findings from HOPE VI studies may lead to questions as to whether or not
federal housing policies actually look to potential relocation outcomes when formulating
policy. As Oakley and Burchfield conclude, HOPE VI policy does not consider
relocation outcomes in its stated goals. Therefore, the original stipulation of the 1949
Housing Act – i.e., “providing decent housing in a suitable living environment for all
U.S. citizens” – has not been met in HOPE VI policy.⁵⁰

Was HOPE VI, therefore, a significant determinant in suburban poverty in
metropolitan Atlanta? Given that transportation was a prominent concern amongst
survey and focus group respondents, we can surmise that displaced residents may have
moved to a nearby suburban or county area. Figure 3 (in Chapter 5 of this paper) shows
poverty rate increases or decreases in the City of Atlanta and surrounding counties
between 2000 and 2010. While rates of poverty shifted in various census tracts within
Fulton County (Figures 4 and 5), the overall poverty rate for the City of Atlanta has not
shifted from 2000 to 2010 (24.4% and 24.3%, respectively). However, there are
significant increases in overall poverty for several surrounding counties. In the decade
spanning 2000 to 2010, Clayton, Cobb, Coweta, Dekalb, Douglas, and Henry counties
have all had significant increases in poverty rates, while Fayette and Gwinnett counties
have had poverty rates doubling or more. The only two counties examined that have not
seen significant increases in poverty rates are Cherokee County (from 5.3% to 7.7%) and
Fulton County (from 15.7% to 15.9%). So, while the razing of Atlanta's public housing may have alleviated the concentration of poverty in pre-demolition communities, it did not significantly alter the rate of poverty in Fulton County or the City of Atlanta overall.

Findings from this study and others suggest that future endeavors to formulate a national housing policy should take into consideration potential relocation outcomes for displaced families. This may be challenging given the fact that public housing residents are not a homogenous group. Rather, they represent diversity in race, culture or ethnicity, age, family size, educational attainment, employment and employability, health, and socioeconomic status. The needs of the poor vary no less than the needs of the general population. However, the needs of the poor can be exacerbated by lack of access to needed resources such as transportation, income, or quality healthcare.

Goal 4: To Build Sustainable Communities

In addition to demolition of severely distressed public housing, a primary goal of HOPE VI is to build sustainable communities. AHA established as one of its goals: "To rebuild communities, not just housing." In sustainable communities, residents continue to prosper and thrive through job attainment, decent and affordable housing, and quality education for their children. Businesses and services are available and accessible to its residents, such as quality child care, recreation, health care, and after-school programs. However, researchers are unclear as to whether or not HOPE VI has met this goal.

One important factor in sustainability is the viability of mixed-finance, mixed-income communities. Popkin et al. maintain that a mixed-income model has several
advantages. Mixed-income developments are generally better managed communities than conventional public housing communities. Mixed-income developments foster a more positive social environment, attract and retain higher-income tenancy, create better schools, and attract better community services such as shopping or job opportunities. Overall, mixed-income developments are more attractively designed and provide a stable, long-term environment for residents.54

The mixed-income housing model is a planned HOPE VI strategy for achieving sustainability and economic integration. Regulatory changes in 1996 led to the Mixed-Finance Rule, which allowed housing authorities to leverage a mixture of public and private funding to revitalize and develop public housing.55 In addition, the “1998 Quality Housing and Work Responsibility Act (QHWRA) also contributed to progress in leveraging new funds for public housing.”56

According to Popkin et al., the success of mixing private funds with HOPE VI funds is more likely if new construction public housing developments also address social needs of the community.57 Nonetheless, the viability of sustaining mixed-funding projects over the long-term has yet to be determined. Popkin et al. maintain,

Each element of a mixed-income, mixed-finance project – public housing, market rate, and tax credit units – must be financially feasible, marketable, and sustainable over the long term. Although a number of HOPE VI developments have achieved these goals in the short term, the extent to which they can weather neighborhood and market changes over the years is yet to be determined. If some housing authorities – or their private partners – are unable to continue to attract a mix of residents, maintain rental income, and service their financial obligations, the viability of the new public housing units could be at risk.58
Despite the potential positive outcomes of mixed-income models, other data have not supported guaranteed benefits to low-income residents. Popkin et al. point out that evidence is still emerging about exactly how mixed-income communities function and how they benefit low-income residents (Popkin, Buron et al. 2000). For example, research conducted to date suggests that there is relatively little interaction between higher- and lower-income residents of mixed-income developments and that the interactions that do occur are relatively superficial (Brophy and Smith 1997; A. Smith 2002). Further, the one study of short-term employment outcomes found no evidence that lower-income residents were more likely to find jobs as a result of living in a mixed-income housing development (Rosenbaum and Stroh 1998). Thus, while it is clearly feasible to create a healthy mixed-income development that will attract higher-income residents and provide a pleasant and safe community for all residents, it remains less clear what conditions are required to ensure that living in these communities will have substantial payoffs for the social and economic status of low-income families over the long term.59

In an unpublished study outlined by Popkin et al., Xavier de Souza Briggs compared movers with non-movers (or residents who remained in traditional public housing). In his findings, Briggs “found relatively little evidence that movers had significant interaction with their new neighbors or gained access to social capital. In fact, a number of movers maintained ties to their previous neighborhoods, returning regularly to attend church or socialize.”60

Yet, theories abound that HOPE VI-led mixed-income environments will have a positive effect on the poor. For example, The HOPE VI Resident Tracking Study states, Low-income families will interact with neighbors in their new communities, forming new social networks. These networks are hypothesized to offer a range of benefits for original residents, including positive role models for adults and children, access to information about economic opportunities, and peer groups for children and youth that are less likely to support delinquent activity.61
Despite these theories, findings from the Tracking Study indicate low levels of interaction between respondents and their new neighbors, a finding that mirrors comments made in the Capitol Homes baseline and evaluation update studies. Therefore, future policy developments should revisit the assumption that low-income residents are eager to form social networks with upper-income neighbors and vice-versa. Policymakers should seek input from low-income residents to ascertain their needs and levels of comfort in moving towards sustainability and self-sufficiency. Housing leaders, policymakers, and stakeholders alike should assume that all residents have preferences for where they reside, not just middle- and upper-income residents. Efforts should be made to allow low-income residents more choices in where they reside, even if they must remain in traditional public housing.

One unexplored concern among some analysts is whether or not mixing incomes will have a reverse impact on other populations groups. While proponents of mixed-income communities laud the positive influence upper-income groups will have on low-income residents, little has been discussed about reverse influence. Will behaviors found among low-income groups transfer upwards into other population groups and beyond (for example, the working poor)? Ronald D. Utt writes,

While housing vouchers have generally received strong support from most conservatives, some conservative-leaning analysts oppose vouchers because they may have an adverse impact (through income mixing) on those who have successfully struggled to escape poverty but nonetheless are still close to the edge, in terms of income and neighborhood, and thus vulnerable to slipping back.62
Utt further maintains that “HOPE VI . . . rests on the presumption that the poor among us are susceptible to certain negative influences from other poor households from which other income classes apparently are immune.” He advances the notion that middle-class residents are not supportive of the voucher program out of fear that they will have imposed on their neighborhood increasing crime and economic deterioration. But, if middle-class residents are, in fact, immune to negative influences from lower classes, then why would they reject income-mixing? Utt argues in favor of more research and analysis in this area.

And so, an important question for future policy development is: Does an improved social environment inevitably lead to sustainability and self-sufficiency? Do low-income residents achieve economic self-sufficiency over the long-run simply by living in close proximity to middle- and upper-income residents?

Utt argues that HOPE VI has been largely credited with many of the improvements in social outcomes following relocation, when in fact, there may be other contributing factors. He argues that many social ills are due to low income, not inadequate housing. People residing in public housing do so because of low income. It is not the reverse. In other words, HOPE VI analysts tend to blame low-income (and the consequences thereof) on lack of housing opportunity, when, in fact, lack of housing opportunity is a result of low income. HOPE VI proponents presume that once the housing environment is improved, so will income improve.

But, Utt argues that policies to address improved social outcomes must primarily focus on strategies to improve jobs and income. Policies should focus on personal
development rather than community development. "Perhaps a more productive approach might be to consider major revisions . . . based on approaches that emphasize the fundamentals of human advancement and put the burden of improvement on the beneficiary, rather than on the manipulated neighborhood environment," says Utt.

Sheila Crowley advances a similar theory. She maintains that policy interventions that fail to take into consideration the reality of poverty on the life chances of those living in it will not prove successful or sustainable. She writes: "Interventions that focus only on people's limitations or that deny their reality will fail. Interventions that either romanticize or pathologize the people to be helped and that are not based on a complete, accurate assessment of a family or a community are disempowering, reducing chances for positive change. False promises deepen alienation." In other words, Crowley believes that HOPE VI, overall, never sought to empower residents to live up to their "God-given potential," as Glover has proclaimed. Rather, HOPE VI has only led to false promises that have left residents in still precarious living situations. Given that the evaluation studies have determined that residents did not take full advantage of counseling services offered by the Atlanta Housing Authority, the outcomes of HOPE VI did not measure up to the promises made to residents.

In short, outcomes leading to sustainability have yet to be determined by HOPE VI evaluations. Numerous studies to date have increasingly shown that, although tremendous gains have been made in improving the aesthetics of public housing stock, more research is needed to ensure that low-income residents are able to fully realize positive outcomes for a better quality of living, self-development, and self-sufficiency.
Did public housing residents have a voice in policymaking decisions?

Whether or not the voices of residents were adequately represented in policymaking discussions is up for debate. Depending on whom you ask, the perceptions may vary.

According to the 1992 *Final Report of the National Commission on Severely Distressed Public Housing*, residents were included in some of the preliminary research conducted by the Commission. The *Final Report* indicates that the Commission spoke "extensively with residents from some of the most and the least livable public housing developments in America...."66 Other reports have also suggested that residents were involved. Renee Glover, in Atlanta, discusses face-to-face meetings between residents, herself, and the Board of Directors.67

Despite these reported meetings, one of the chief complaints from residents was their "lack of involvement and active participation in decisionmaking concerning their communities."68 In the evaluation studies, comments made by former residents of Capitol Homes indicate that they were only invited to informational meetings. The residents allege that decisions by AHA and their partners were already made when the residents attended the meetings. Housing leaders merely informed residents as to what would happen, respondents insist. "Residents report that they were deceived even in the application process [for obtaining HOPE VI grants], when sign-in sheets for informational meetings about HOPE VI were used as documentation that the people who attended the meeting supported the application."69
But HOPE VI grants were constructed with the stipulation by HUD that public housing residents are consulted and involved in the planning for revitalization prior to demolition. Residents, some officials believe, should have a voice in the design and development of where they will reside. However, while housing officials in Atlanta made attempts to yield to the “spirit of the law,” inconsistencies in the statutes may have contributed to a lack of full compliance.

For example, according to the Harvard Law Review, HUD’s Revitalization Grant Agreement for fiscal year 2001 does not allow for residents’ full involvement. Because the Grant Agreement is expressly between HUD and the public housing authority (PHA), residents cannot be considered third-party beneficiaries of the grant. “By denying residents standing as third-party beneficiaries, HUD and PHAs reap the political benefits of a stated commitment to protecting residents’ rights, while effectively ensuring that those who hold those rights cannot enforce them.” At best, says the Harvard Law Review, residents’ input came only after substantial plans had been all but cemented by “consultants, architects, developers, and PHA officials.” Evictions and the razing of their homes were often seen by some residents as unfair. As one resident from Bankhead Courts stated, “We didn’t ask to be moved.”

Popkin et al. maintain, “[r]esident participation is particularly important during efforts to transform public housing properties into mixed-income communities, because it gives residents a stake in their new communities . . . Residents often fear change, particularly when it comes to creating mixed-income communities, because of concerns about displacement.”
This notion was indeed borne out in the Capitol Homes responses. Residents who participated in the focus groups were apprehensive about moving back to the revitalized housing. Responses pertaining to moving back were characterized by concerns for stringent rules, new neighbors, and credit or background checks. Many of the residents believed that they would not be allowed back (based on their credit background), or that they would eventually be evicted for a minor infraction (e.g., cooking out on their porch).

However, in an Emory study on the McDaniel Glenn revitalization (another housing project), residents were mostly favorable in their opinion of public housing demolition. In the Emory study, “more than eight out of ten (83%) former residents interviewed in 2009 agreed that the razing and redevelopment of McDaniel Glenn was the “right thing to do.”

**Critiques of HOPE VI Policy Implementation in Atlanta**

The Atlanta Housing Authority employed two housing assistance strategies in the implementation of HOPE VI policy. First, mixed-income communities are at the heart of AHA’s neighborhood revitalization efforts. Second is the distribution of housing vouchers – i.e., through the Housing Choice Voucher Program (HCVP).

The literature is laden with commentaries on both strategies. However, there is yet to emerge a general consensus as to which strategy is the preferred or more ideal strategy. One scholar, Robert C. Ellickson, overwhelmingly favors housing choice voucher assistance.
Ellickson maintains that tenant-based housing vouchers will allow tenants and prospective tenants the same respect and credibility as non-assisted renters to make demands on landlords should a dispute arise. With the portability of a housing voucher, should a tenant become dissatisfied with the rental unit for any reason, he or she can simply vacate the property and move to another dwelling of his or her choice.75 However, the portability of vouchers also lends itself to the reconcentration of poverty in rental housing. If mixed-income housing proves to be unsustainable, or if the very low-income residents are unable to secure housing in the mixed-income units, then the most vulnerable residents will likely end up in other communities with concentrations of low-income families.76 Voucher-holders are more likely to seek rental housing in communities where they are most comfortable, and this may include communities with like ethnicity and economic status.77

In project-based housing, the favorable outcomes projected by developers and public housing authorities are not quite as favorable as anticipated. Project-based housing, says Ellickson, has “lock-in” effects – that is, effects that all but hinder tenants from relocating if and when the unit becomes unsuitable.78 In addition, project developers and project managers are less likely to respect the needs or desires of unit dwellers.79 Given that the units are government subsidized, developers and project managers are beholden to the government agency who is subsidizing the unit – not to the unit dweller. Furthermore, should the renter or unit dweller become dissatisfied with the unit, and given the long waiting list for project-based assistance, he or she is less likely to vacate the unit for fear of losing the housing subsidy. In short, project-based housing assistance
is not portable as are housing vouchers. If a tenant vacates a project-based unit, the housing subsidy is also relinquished.

In terms of economic and/or racial integration, neither project-based housing nor tenant-based housing is ideal. Both strategies have their drawbacks. Regarding economic integration, housing vouchers may offer more success than project-based, mixed-income housing. In the latter housing community, residents may experience stigmatization. In project-based housing, residents know which units are subsidized and which are not, thereby adding an unnecessary stigma to families living in subsidized units. Furthermore, tenants of project-based housing may eventually come to resent their higher-income neighbors if efforts to “keep up with the Joneses” are frustrated.80

However, the same stigma and frustration associated with project-based housing does not necessarily occur with the use of vouchers. When families move into neighborhoods using housing vouchers, their subsidized status can go undetected, thereby increasing their likelihood of integrating successfully into the community.81

On the other hand, attempts at racial integration may fall short with tenant-based housing vouchers. Renters with housing vouchers are more likely to select communities of like-individuals. Tenants tend to prefer neighborhoods consisting of their own racial or ethnic group, and therefore, racial integration is often compromised with voucher portability.82

Overall, in Ellickson’s estimation, housing vouchers, such as in the Section 8 program, are perhaps a preferred strategy for achieving economic integration in housing assistance.83 “The program was specifically targeted to serve the needs of families
paying more than half of their income for rent, a situation HUD refers to as ‘worst case’
housing need.”84 “Families who receive a Section 8 voucher must pay thirty percent of
their income towards rent, and the voucher covers the remaining cost.”85

Although vouchers allow renters wide latitude in housing choice, the downfall is
that landlords also have a choice in whether or not to accept the voucher. Critics point
out that landlords in affluent or Anglo-dominated communities can “simply refuse” to
accept the vouchers, thereby limiting the “desegregative effects” of housing choice.86
Furthermore, critics also question whether or not private market rental housing can
accommodate the number of residents evicted from conventional public housing.87

Since its inception in 1992, HOPE VI has undergone changes in “legislation,
regulation, implementation, and practice.”88 But researchers have highlighted the fact
that public housing authorities, at least in the early days of HOPE VI, have failed to keep
track of residents following relocation. According to Popkin et al., “we know relatively
little about the impact of the transformation of public housing, including basic informa-
tion about where former residents of HOPE VI developments – and their children – have
moved.”89

A major point of contention between HOPE VI advocates and its detractors is that
a majority of pre-demolition residents were not able to return to the original site of
revitalized housing. In early HOPE VI evaluation studies, researchers suggested that
fewer than 50% of original residents will return to the revitalized public housing sites.
Findings from a 2003 study by the U.S. General Accounting Office (GAO) indicate that,
“grantees expected 46 percent of residents to return. At the extremes, 40 sites expected
fewer than 25 percent of original residents to return, while 31 sites expected 75 percent or
more (U.S. GAO 2003b)."90 Popkin et al. maintain that “these tenants were the ones who
suffered the terrible conditions of distressed public housing – and, per the commission’s
report, were intended to benefit from the revitalization. For this reason, the housing
authority – and society – has an obligation to ensure that at minimum, original residents
do not end up worse off than they were before.”91

On the other side of the argument, HOPE VI proponents suggest that residents
who did not return to the original public housing site may have been ones who no longer
qualify for public housing assistance under new guidelines. Furthermore, residents who
moved into private housing – with or without housing choice vouchers – may have
wanted out of public housing anyway. In the opinion of some, “HOPE VI should not be
judged on the basis of what has happened to them.”92

**Housing Policy Models That Work**

This study has examined the implementation of HOPE VI in Atlanta. While
largely a success by most analyses, it is but one model. Another model of public housing
that, by some accounts, has also worked is found in the New York City Housing
Authority (NYCHA). Nicholas Dagen Bloom outlines in detail how NYCHA has
managed to maintain its public housing stock, despite its many challenges. Despite
enduring crime, vandalism, and a tenancy comprised of New York’s poorest – the
NYCHA has stayed the course. For this reason, revitalization of New York’s housing
stock is a feasible option. Demolition, however, is not.93
The New York public housing system is one of the largest employers in the city, and houses thousands of the city’s working poor. It is also the largest public housing authority in the nation.94 To dismantle its affordable housing system would be to turn away solid, working families, who although struggling, are nonetheless managing under this system. Likewise, although the housing authority continues to struggle with its myriad challenges to the housing infrastructure, the employees are carrying the load. The facilities are repaired when broken – even at astronomical costs – and crime is managed with a mixture of law enforcement and tenant “eyes on the street.” The NYCHA employs a crime prevention strategy called Crime Prevention through Environmental Design (CPTED). “CPTED . . . consistently reduces crime by 20 percent because the redesign reduces crimes of opportunity. Essentially the system gives tenants control of their spaces . . . .”95

The NYCHA, for decades, operated under the model of a welfare-state. It housed the poorest of the poor, despite major challenges in housing administration. Its intentions were good. If the city were going to provide affordable housing to those who needed it, then it sought to focus on the neediest of the needy first.

But, these good intentions can also backfire. This policy of “the worst shall be first” can also lead to a race to the bottom. Families in search of available (and affordable) housing will find little incentive for upward mobility if they are aware that “the worse shall be first.” Remaining poor under this model would ensure continued housing provided by the city’s housing authority. Why, then, should the poor seek market rate housing? But since the 1990s, the NYCHA is gradually undergoing a
paradigm shift. No longer does it look to house the poorest of the poor; it is now looking to offer affordable housing to the working poor.\textsuperscript{96}

Bloom makes the point that the success of NYCHA is not due to its staff doing everything right the first time. Rather, it is due to “constant revision and updating to meet new challenges” and “good public administration.”\textsuperscript{97} In short, efforts have been taken to revitalize housing structures without having to displace its residents.\textsuperscript{98} Bloom states,

Renovation . . . includes new windows, façade renovation (replacing and repointing brickwork), elevator replacement, new stainless steel front entrances, and extensive landscaping. This is not touch-up work but complete overhaul of buildings by private contractors working for NYCHA. The results are dramatic to say the least. Billions of dollars set aside for renovation sounds like a great deal of money, but it is important to remember that this large amount is spread across a system housing over four hundred thousand people.\textsuperscript{99}

Another factor which may contribute to the working relationship between NYCHA and housing residents is the fact that many of the NYCHA employees are also tenants. According to Bloom, 29\% of the housing authority employees were tenants in 2004. “Approximately one-third of employees, then, have a personal stake in the well being of NYCHA as a whole.”\textsuperscript{100} The Resident Advisory Board – “a city-wide tenant organization composed partly of resident association presidents” – encourages tenant input and participation in the authority’s annual decision-making.\textsuperscript{101} This helps to reduce the system of paternalism that is often endemic of housing authority structures.\textsuperscript{102}

Furthermore, many of the tenant youth help to maintain the grounds during the summer months. Residents, thus, have a working and amicable relationship with the
housing authority, and all stakeholders work together to ensure the success of the housing complex.

The end result of all this effort is evident to the naked eye. In spite of the fact that crime and vandalism remain endemic to New York’s housing system, the average NYCHA project today has limited or no exterior graffiti, neatly kept grounds . . ., shading trees, modern windows, glazed brick lobbies and hallways, slow but satisfactory elevators, and mostly tidy interiors. NYCHA has succeeded by pursuing a modified philosophy of environmental determinism.  

Finally, community centers are also a hallmark of New York’s public housing. “Over more than a decade more than $100 million has been spent on sixty-two new or renovated facilities (with twelve more underway); almost 70 percent of NYCHA’s centers have experienced some renovation.” These community centers may include large spaces for multipurpose activities such as dance, art, computer learning, cooking, fashion shows, spelling bees, and even studio recording.  

New York City Housing Authority (NYCHA) chose a model of “selective housing.” That is to say, the focus shifted from housing the poorest of the poor to housing the working poor. Its focus is on affordable housing, not welfare housing. NYCHA chose not to concentrate families of very poor people; rather, they chose to turn their attention to the working-poor who are better able to pay “a more reasonable proportion of the cost” of housing. Under the welfare-state, it was the working poor who could not secure low-income housing because the “race to the bottom” model ensured that public housing went to the homeless and emergency cases. 

In summary, it is the housing management scheme of the NYCHA that is credited with the sustainability of its public housing program. Bloom concludes with this state-
ment: “The long-term success of Hope VI redevelopment projects in other cities is still unknown, but beyond reducing poor people to a minority of the redeveloped site (one of the primary activities of Hope VI) these new projects will only prosper to the extent that new management practices emerge.”

What’s Next for HOPE VI and a National Housing Policy?

Undoubtedly, HOPE VI has many notable “successes.” In particular, many blighted and distressed housing units have been demolished and replaced with quality, well-designed, mixed-income developments. Crime has been reduced in many of the formerly blighted areas. And overall, families feel safer.

Despite the aesthetic success of revitalized housing units, questions still remain as to whether or not the HOPE VI initiative was successful for public housing residents. Critics of HOPE VI and advocates for the poor have continued to point out the lack of affordable housing made worse by public housing demolition. For example, Popkin et al. state: “Most seriously, there is substantial evidence that the original residents of HOPE VI projects have not always benefited from redevelopment, even in some sites that were otherwise successful... As a consequence, some of the original residents of these developments may live in equally or even more precarious circumstances today.”

Crowley summarizes this point:

While HOPE VI has resulted in the removal of blighted buildings and the development of some lovely new homes, it also has resulted in the involuntary displacement of tens of thousands of poor, predominantly African American families from their homes and communities, made the housing situation for some of the nation’s most vulnerable citizens even
more precarious, and exacerbated the shortage of affordable homes for people in the lowest income brackets. The promise (and rhetoric) of HOPE VI as a means of improving opportunities for residents of distressed public housing never matched the reality. Many more displaced residents were promised improved housing and economic uplift than have actually received both or are ever likely to . . . Overall, more people who lived in public housing communities redeveloped under HOPE VI were hurt by the program than helped. Thus, the core tenet of government intervention in the lives of its citizens – “First, do no harm” – has been violated.110

According to Nunnally and Carter, structural discrimination continues to account for much of Black Americans’ inability to rise up the socioeconomic ladder. Furthermore, pathologizing the dilatory behaviors of poor Blacks “can be detrimental for the advancement of social policies that can enhance the socioeconomic conditions of [B]lacks.”111

But others continue to blame the poor for their lack of social mobility. According to a 1991 national study, nearly 52% of all Black Americans believe that poor Blacks are to blame for their own poverty. A failure to take advantage of opportunities is cited as a contributing factor.112 This outlook by powerful Black Americans – such as found within AHA – speaks to the paternalistic nature of decision-making in HOPE VI implementation.

The implementation of Atlanta’s HOPE VI policy initiative intersects with both race and poverty. HOPE VI – as implemented by the Atlanta Housing Authority – disproportionately impacted African Americans and other families of color. Given that the majority of Atlanta’s pre-demolition public housing residents were African-American and poor, HOPE VI policy decisions made by the Atlanta Housing Authority would have done well to consider what level of impact HOPE VI policy would have on this
population group. A question to ponder is whether or not any other population group – poor or otherwise – would have allowed for such an undemocratic process in housing policy development without political mobilization. What other population group has had to endure forcible displacement in the recent U.S.? Dominant population groups would hardly tolerate evictions *en masse* without a political fight.

The reality is that poor people lack the resources to attain political leverage. Without political leverage, the poor are often hard-pressed to realize personal or individual agency that will move them out of poverty. In the absence of agency, African Americans continue to bear the brunt of disproportionality in urban politics, no matter how well-intentioned the policy.

Jerome Rabow et al. discuss a type of “learned helplessness” that sets in when poor populations believe that they have no ability to control their own environment. Within the context of HOPE VI and housing relocation, if the poor have come to believe in the insolvability of their “distressed” living conditions prior to demolition, then the motivation to control future situations is diminished. Furthermore, when people believe that fate controls their outcomes, they are less likely to engage in goal-oriented behavior. In order to alleviate states of “helplessness,” residents must believe that their own actions can influence the outcome of their situation.

While there are certainly other racial groups that were impacted by HOPE VI – e.g., Hispanics – Black families have become the proxy for poverty in urban cities. The poor are the disenfranchised. Not only were public housing residents spatially
displaced, the decisions of the Atlanta Housing Authority also led to their political displacement as well.

The deconcentration of poverty in public housing inevitably leads to the dispersal of African Americans and the dispersal of community. Edin and Kissane discuss poverty among African Americans, particularly in light of the recent economic downturn in the U.S. According the National Bureau of Economic Research, the recent recession in the U.S. began in December 2007 and ended in June 2009, a critical time in Atlanta's HOPE VI implementation. One cannot ignore the fact that public housing for Atlanta's poorest residents was being systematically demolished at the height of the recession. Furthermore, marked by a deteriorating labor market, the recession is the longest in U.S. history since World War II, lasting 18 months.\textsuperscript{117}

According to Federal Reserve Chair, Janet Yellen, several indicators (other than the unemployment rate) point to a slow-recovering economy:

1. Wages are slow to rise. Over the past few years, wages have only increased by 2% per year — "very low by historical standards.”

2. Too many Americans (about 7 million) are having to settle for part-time employment rather than full-time employment.

3. Fewer people are leaving their jobs voluntarily (for fear of not finding another one).

4. Employers are reluctant to hire new employees. And,

5. The labor force participation is low (at 63%).\textsuperscript{118}
Furthermore, more employees are relying on low-wage jobs. According to an article published by CNNMoney, "They’re not just teenagers or spouses – they’re workers whose families depend on them... These low-income breadwinners now make up roughly 14% of all workers in the country – the highest share on record since at least the 1980s...."[119]

Industries most likely to see low-wage earners include “restaurants and bars, agricultural production and private households – like maids and nannies.”[120] Although this articles does not specifically discuss the feminization of poverty (i.e., the notion that women are disproportionately represented in low-wage jobs), these statistics should invite strong consideration by housing policymakers given that the face of public assisted housing is increasingly single females with children.[121] “Families headed by single women of color now predominate in subsidized housing,”[122] says Howard. No longer do families “fit the traditional model of husband and wife and children”, and therefore, nontraditional families should be reflected in housing policy. As Howard states, when government attempts to define “family,” housing policy can exclude families from accessing affordable housing based on archaic concepts of what constitutes “family” and what does not.[123]

Given the slow economic return following the recent recession, policymakers should consider the diversity of population when formulating housing policy. Comments from interviewees in this case study can inform policy considerations. For example, many of the interviewees expressed concern for women and children left in precarious housing situations with little benefit of support services. Interviewees feared the
possibility of homelessness for these families and educational challenges for children who are not stably housed. Furthermore, how we choose to treat the poor through policy—especially those with children—will have a direct impact on the future of poverty in America. Housing policy should address social issues that are particular to this population, yet flexible enough to meet the diverse needs of all householders.

Howard emphasizes that housing policy for the poorest of the poor should address both gender and race. Popkin agrees. She argues that “public housing transformation cannot achieve more than limited impact on the well-being of HOPE VI families without addressing race directly.” Using “poverty as a proxy for race,” says Polikoff, has not worked.

Further still, Buron et al. contend that future HOPE VI policy should also address crime in its revitalization efforts. They maintain,

if original residents are the source of crime, then occupancy and screening criteria need to be enforced to keep people who are creating an unsafe environment from returning to the development. If neighborhood residents are the source of the crime problem in and around the development, then the housing agency needs to work with the police and community groups to implement crime reduction strategies in the neighborhood.

But as one interviewee pointed out, it is low-income residents who live on the margins of society. And when one is living on the margins, he is more likely to engage in noncompliant or deviant behavior. Once caught up in the criminal justice system, access to social services and housing becomes problematic, thereby, further exacerbating efforts to secure a stable environment. As the interviewee stated, these persons need housing.
too. Depriving them of affordable housing will only create a vicious cycle of poverty, crime, and unstable housing, leading to a perpetual crisis in urban social problems.

These perspectives may lead to service innovations in future HOPE VI or housing policy. Not only does HOPE VI revitalize or replace outdated, dilapidated housing, it also provides funds for needed social services. "Services provided include a range of programs designed to help residents move toward self-sufficiency, such as case management, education, job training, and child care."¹²⁷ But, more efforts should be made towards utilization of these services. Research has already shown that few residents have taken advantage of support services offered by the Atlanta Housing Authority and HOPE VI.¹²⁸ Why is this so? According to Rabow et al., "(a) structural analysis approach alone does not explain why the most severely oppressed seldom rise up, let alone receive the benefits of poverty programs (Zurcher, 1970; Feagin, 1975)."¹²⁹ There may be other factors (e.g., cultural or psychological) that explain why poor families do not take advantage of support services offered. If the poor have learned a sense of helplessness in situations beyond their control, then they may be likely to view subsequent situations as also beyond their control. What is key, says Rabow et al. is that the poor learn to realize that "one’s behavior can effect change."¹³⁰ (italics in original)

This current study found that residents either did not utilize support services to the extent which policymakers had envisioned, or the residents found working with social services personnel problematic. Many residents complained that social service workers were not attentive to their needs. Residents could not get in touch with workers, or their phone calls went unreturned. Furthermore, according to interviewees in this study,
residents were often distrustful of social service workers, preferring instead to seek assistance from local branch librarians or county social workers.

Future housing policy should, therefore, include better provisions for social services to families before and after relocation. For many critics, the revitalization of "brick-and-mortar" housing is not enough to lift public housing residents out of the myriad challenges they face. Supportive services are necessary to assist many residents and families in relocation, job readiness, education, financial counseling, mental health, and childcare services. As pointed out in the Panel Study, housing choice vouchers force residents to deal with the real world – e.g., "findings units (sic), negotiating relationships with landlords, and managing utility payments." Support services are needed not only for those exiting public housing, but for new public housing residents who move into revitalized units.

In addition to supportive services offered by the housing authority, Rankin and Quane maintain that institutional resources can serve as barriers to social isolation. If poor residents are socially isolated due to their poverty status, then community institutions such as "businesses, schools, churches, social clubs, voluntary associations, and community organization" may provide the access and assistance needed to overcome social challenges. They further maintain that the poor are "doubly disadvantaged," that is, "by the individual experience of poverty and by the concentrated poverty of the neighborhoods in which they reside." However, one might add that the poor have a triple disadvantage if also belonging to a racial and/or ethnic minority group. This multi-level of disadvantage, say Rankin and Quane, can foster adaptive behaviors
that are incongruous to mainstream societal behaviors. Jennifer Price Wolf agrees. She examines poverty from various sociological perspectives, and advances the idea that poverty can become "a way of life." She explains by stating that "mainstream organizations operate under cultural values that differ significantly from those of African-Americans. When poor [B]lacks, with less exposure to mainstream social norms, fail to achieve as much as whites, this lack of success is often seen as evidence that [B]lacks are less competent, intelligent, or motivated than whites." However, Wolf departs from conventional wisdom that holds the poor responsible for their own upward mobility. Rather, she places the burden on social institutions. She advances the notion that mainstream organizations must become "bicultural" instead, "adapting to the strengths and beliefs of multiple racial groups." If organizations fail to adapt to their minority and poor constituency, then only those who are able to adapt – i.e., whites and the middle- and upper-classes – will ever prosper.

This brings us back to the provision of support services by housing authorities. Although housing authorities have a great deal of latitude in how and what services are provided, services should be tailored towards the specific needs of the residents, some critics say. "For example, if there is a large population of elderly or disabled residents, the site should consider an on-site health care facility, or if there are a large number of children under age 5, an on-site day care facility would be appropriate. HUD has given HOPE VI grantees tremendous flexibility in designing a service package that meets the needs of the residents." However, due to the wide variation in support services design, evaluating the overall effectiveness of support services is challenging, analysts say.
The future of policy formation leaves plenty of room for researchers to test new and alternative theories in housing policy. While HOPE VI implementation largely centered around the deconcentration of poverty, Curley maintains that there are drawbacks to deconcentration theories. First, says Curley, while the concentration of poverty arguably leads to various social ills—e.g., crime, a lack of social capital, etc.—an obvious drawback to dispersing poverty is that long-held social networks are also lost. Despite low socioeconomic status, public housing residents do indeed form community. As one interviewee stated, regardless of the condition of public housing units, pre-demolition public housing, nonetheless, provided community. In fact, it is because of poverty that community is formed. Residents form tight social networks in order to help one another with child care, financial support, or job networking. Forcing residents to move from a long-term residence may deprive them access to friends and family who lived in close proximity to one another. Findings in this study suggest that this may be the case with former Capitol Homes residents. The baseline and evaluation studies both include comments suggesting that residents are not forming close networks with their new neighbors.

Buron et al. discuss similar findings:

Unsubsidized households and voucher holders are less likely than public housing residents to report having friends and family in the area and reported the lowest levels of interaction with their neighbors. Our in-depth interviews suggest that the low levels of interaction are associated with a number of factors including lack of opportunity (e.g., neighbors are not around during the day), language or cultural barriers, and personal preferences for keeping social distance from neighbors.
Another drawback to deconcentration is the lack of positive effects on employ-
ability. Says Curley, “research does not show that [HOPE VI] is successful in preparing
residents for or connecting them to the job market.” Residents are not finding
employment through their association with “weak ties.” As has been already stated,
forming social networks with new neighbors is but a theory of policymakers. There is no
empirical evidence to support this theory, nor does it represent the reality of residents’
lives.

A final drawback is that demolition of distressed housing inevitably leads to fewer
affordable units for those most in need. Housing policy should address the needs of all
populations who need housing. It should not generate even more challenges for people
already in precarious living situations.

One key area that seems lacking in this HOPE VI discourse is homeownership by
the lowest-income population. According to the data, residents desired more assistance
in the areas of homeownership and entrepreneurship. According to Landis and McClure,
“Homeownership has been the cornerstone of federal housing policy for nearly 80
years....” Homeownership is associated with better outcomes for residents such as
residential stability, better upkeep of the housing unit, and higher educational
achievement for children. Furthermore, Landis and McClure maintain that “the central
theme of U.S. housing policy since the early 1990s has been to expand homeownership
among minorities and other previously underserved groups.” But, is support for
homeownership more favorable than appropriations for rental subsidies?
The path to homeownership for low-income families is met with numerous barriers, some of which include: a general lack of knowledge about buying a home, a lack of financial resources or savings, poor credit history, a lack of affordable housing, questionable mortgage lending practices, and discrimination. Furthermore, research has shown that it is even more challenging for minority groups to own a home. Given that pre-demolition HOPE VI public housing communities are predominantly African-American, barriers to homeownership disproportionately affect African Americans over White residents. Grinstein-Weiss et al. state, “In addition to predatory lending practices, numerous studies have shown that, even after controlling for other factors, minorities are more likely than Caucasians to have their mortgage applications denied... African Americans were denied conventional home loans twice as often as Caucasian applicants (24 per cent versus 12 per cent...).”

Heather MacDonald offers an evaluation of housing policy during the Clinton Administration (1993-2001). She writes,

The first and most politically powerful item on Clinton’s agenda was expanding homeownership, especially among minorities and impoverished inner-city communities, constituencies that had felt excluded during the Reagan/Bush years. Expanding homeownership was a politically astute theme, differentiating federal policy sharply from direct subsidy programs such as public housing that had undermined popular support in the past (Dreier, 1997). Homeownership offered a way to reincorporate disenfranchised racial minorities into the political (and economic) mainstream, and to address racial discrimination in a way that was far less threatening than housing integration, and far less expensive than traditional federal housing programs.

Michal Grinstein-Weiss et al. advance the use of Individual Development Accounts (IDAs) in promoting homeownership. “IDAs represent a community-based
program that encourages asset accumulation for the purpose of homeownership, education or business development.”150 Participants receive financial counseling and are educated in the home-buying process. “Unlike other programs..., IDAs encourage saving behaviors by using public and private funds to match participants’ deposits.”151 Thus, in tandem with public-private partnerships of HOPE VI housing revitalization, perhaps public-private partnerships can also be used to help finance first-time home mortgages. Matching funds are provided by both government and private sources. With this type of assistance, low-income homebuyers may overcome many of the barriers and challenges to homeownership.152

HUD Assistant Secretary, Sandra Henriquez, concurs. “To be truly successful, any future programs will have to be designed as public-private partnerships.”153 “I want to make public and private collaborations … the rule rather than the exception at our public housing authorities,” she says.154

But Grinstein-Weiss et al. maintain that simply promoting homeownership is not sufficient to fostering saving behavior of low-income residents. Rather, sustainable institutional support mechanisms must be in place to encourage saving behavior (e.g., direct deposit, incentives to saving, financial counseling and education, and credit repair).155 They explain,

Study findings suggested that institutional factors, not merely individual characteristics, were important to saving performance. Sustainable homeownership in the United States represents both an individual and a societal stepping-stone to prosperity. Therefore, it is vital that low-income Americans are afforded equal access to the institutional savings vehicles that have long benefited middle- and upper-income Americans by helping them achieve and maintain prosperity.156
What is missing in this discourse is a thorough examination of social structure as it relates to poverty. Within the United States, there are structural factors that contribute to why people are poor. Poverty is not happenstance, nor is it always personal or pathological. Poverty is structural. Granted, there are those who do not or cannot find the internal motivation to overcome economic and cultural barriers to self-sufficiency. But why do barriers exist in the first place? Contrary to the theories that Glover purports, bureaucrats are not merely “caught up” in social systems. Rather, social structures are hierarchical and exist to create and perpetuate systems of inequality.

Overall, critics point to a desire for a national housing policy reform that will allow for greater involvement by the residents in the redevelopment of public housing. Nonetheless, despite criticisms of HOPE VI, the majority of analysts agree that HOPE VI did much to revitalize public housing and alleviate low-income residents of the most severe of distressed living conditions. Success notwithstanding, critics still question whether or not depriving residents of the communities in which they are most comfortable is indeed the best policy. “Goetz contends that rather than focusing on poverty deconcentration, public policy should be based on a broad antipoverty agenda that includes revenue sharing, inclusionary zoning, eradicating housing discrimination, and ending exclusionary land use practices.”

And finally, a point to consider in future housing policy is the alleviation of fear and anxiety in relocation processes. As stated in the Panel Study, HOPE VI movers are “involuntary” movers. Despite reported levels of satisfaction with relocation outcomes, residents were still forcibly displaced from homes, communities, and social
networks they may have occupied for years. Partnering with community leaders whom residents trust – such as branch librarians or church leaders – may help to improve relocation outcomes. Religious association can help to alleviate feelings of isolation and helplessness. According to Oscar Lewis, religion can perhaps offer residents a shared identity with a community of faith, and may thereby lead to housing stability and better overall outcomes.160

This research study has raised important questions about housing policy, public housing demolition, involuntary displacement, and relocation. Granted, HOPE VI provided a giant step towards alleviating the distressed lives caused by “severely distressed” housing units. Nonetheless, a major concern in housing policy is the ability to track the location of public-assisted housing residents. If the goal of housing policy is to improve the lives of individuals and families with the greatest need, then it would behoove policymakers to keep track of where these individuals and families reside. Without a well-designed tracking system of residents’ relocation, the future of housing policy is irresolute at best.

A challenge in designing a viable tracking system is residents’ preference for privacy. Many of the voucher holders indicated their preference for voucher-assisted housing because it allowed more freedom, flexibility, and privacy than relocating to revitalized public housing units. Interestingly, however, the Panel Study found that the majority of residents preferred the stability and support of returning to revitalized public housing, “because they find the prospect of searching for housing in the private market overwhelming.”161 Furthermore, residents in the Panel Study “expressed mistrust of the
Housing Choice Voucher program, which was described as 'less permanent,' 'less flexible,' and 'more expensive' than living in public housing.\textsuperscript{162}

Finally, this policy review would not be complete without a word about homelessness in America. Howard points out that those who utilize public housing assistance in America do not represent the full population who needs such assistance. Less than a third of the population needing public-assisted housing actually receive it, says Howard.\textsuperscript{163} Given that there are approximately 633,782 homeless persons in the United States (according to the latest 2012 figures),\textsuperscript{164} a discussion on subsidized housing is remiss without including this population. Critics continue to worry about the potential for homelessness when residents continue to live in precarious housing. With fewer public housing units available to meet the growing need for affordable housing, homelessness must remain on the radar of national housing policy.

In summary, a national housing policy prescription should: 1) take into consideration the needs of a diverse population group – e.g., women and children, racial groups, ex-convicts, etc.; 2) offer support services that are accessible and responsive to the needs of policy beneficiaries; 3) include a homeownership component in addition to rental options; 4) promote partnerships with religious or faith-based organizations in order to relieve fear and anxiety on the part of residents; and most importantly, 5) allow for extensive engagement by all community stakeholders, especially the residents. A national housing policy should lead to the best possible outcomes. It should not leave vulnerable residents in a continued state of precariousness.
Research has shown that what matters most in promoting and achieving positive social outcomes in families and children are occurrences within individual households, and less what happens in the broader community. Housing policy is about real people, not just real estate. The future of housing policy should ensure that all beneficiaries – especially the residents – are brought to the table of discourse. As subtle as it is, there remains an underlying assumption in HOPE VI policies that the poor are incapable of decision-making in their own best interest. The power structure continues to wield its power, making decisions on behalf of the poor, whether or not the poor oppose it. In the end, what matters most are not the academic theories of policy experts. What matters most is that the voices of public-assisted housing residents – the people – are heard and adequately considered in policymaking decisions. Housing policy should not originate from a presumed social deficit in poor people. Rather, a national housing policy should allow extensive engagement of all beneficiaries in an effort to ensure that common goals and aspirations of all citizens are met.
Chapter 6


4. Ibid., 548.

5. Ibid., 547.

6. Ibid., 548.


17. Spencer, 561.

18. Ibid., 558-559.

19. Ibid., 562.

20. Ibid., 546.


23. Ibid.


25. Ibid.

26. Oakley et al., 1 and 2.


33. Ibid., 148.


40. Ibid.

41. Ibid., 156.

42. Ibid.

43. Ibid., 157.

44. Ibid., 172.

45. Ibid., 159.


63. Ibid., 255.

64. Ibid., 259.
65. Crowley, 234.


69. Crowley, 235.


71. Ibid., 1487.


73. Popkin et al., *A Decade of HOPE VI*, 39.

74. Rich et al., 43.


77. Ellickson, 1015.

78. Ibid., 1000.

79. Ibid., 998.

80. Ibid., 1010.

81. Ibid., 1011.

82. Ibid., 1010.
83. Ibid., 1010-1011.


85. Ibid.

86. Ibid.

87. Popkin et al., A Decade of HOPE VI, 35.

88. Ibid., 2.


90. Popkin et al., A Decade of HOPE VI, 28.

91. Ibid., 27.

92. Ibid., 28.


94. Landis and McClure, 332.

95. Bloom, 256.

96. Ibid., 245.

97. Ibid., 258.

98. Ibid., 250.

99. Ibid., 252.

100. Ibid., 254.

101. Ibid., 261.

102. Ibid., 261.

103. Ibid., 255.
104. Ibid., 258.

105. Ibid., 260.

106. Ibid., 245.

107. Ibid., 267.

108. Popkin et al., *A Decade of HOPE VI*, 4.

109. Ibid., 3-4.

110. Crowley, 229.


112. Ibid., 435.


114. Ibid., 423.

115. Ibid., 424.


119. Ibid.

121. Howard, 98.

122. Ibid.

123. Ibid.

124. Polikoff, 76.

125. Ibid.

126. Buron, 115.


128. Holmes, Baseline Study, xiii.

129. Rabow et al., 419.

130. Ibid., 425.


132. Holmes, Baseline Study, xiii.


134. Ibid.


137. Ibid.

138. Ibid.
139. Popkin et al., *A Decade of HOPE VI*, 38.

140. Ibid., 39.

141. Buron, 112.

142. Curley, 112.

143. Landis and McClure, 325.

144. Ibid., 326.


147. Popkin et al., *A Decade of HOPE VI*, 29.

148. Grinstein-Weiss et al., 65.


150. Grinstein-Weiss et al., 64.

151. Ibid.

152. Ibid., 65.

153. NAHRO, “Q&A with HUD Assistant Secretary Sandra Henriquez,” *Journal of Housing & Community Development* (January/February 2010), 13.

154. Ibid., 15.

155. Grinstein-Weiss et al., 78.

156. Grinstein-Weiss et al., 77.

157. Popkin et al., *A Decade of HOPE VI*, 4.
158. Polikoff, 75.


161. Ibid., 8-5 and 8-6.

162. Ibid., 8-9.


APPENDIX A

HOPE VI STUDY CONSENT FORM

Study Title: “Where Have All The People Gone? A HOPE VI Policy Review and Geospatial Analysis”

Principal Investigator: Valerie J. Alexander (doctoral student)

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Faculty Advisor: Dr. William H. Boone      Phone: (404) 880-8719      Email:
WBoone@cau.edu

Prospective Participant:

You are invited to take part in a research study about the effects and outcomes of public housing demolition in Atlanta.

About the study: This study will examine the effects and outcomes of public housing demolition in the city of Atlanta. A federal housing initiative called HOPE VI was implemented in Atlanta for the purpose of demolishing public housing units. The study will survey former public housing residents to determine how their lives have changed since moving out of public housing.

In addition, the study will look at communities of former public housing residents to analyze broad patterns of relocation. No individual residence will be identified. Rather, broad patterns of relocation will be examined to understand the consequences of forced evictions.

As a study participant, you will be invited to do one of the following:

Survey participants – You will be asked to complete a simple questionnaire containing 10 questions. Your participation is strictly voluntary.
Interview participants – You will be asked to give approximately 30 minutes of your time for a one-on-one interview with the principal investigator (doctoral student listed above). Your participation is strictly voluntary.

As a participant in this study, your participation is strictly voluntary and your responses are strictly confidential. No personal identifying information will be captured or maintained in the data records. There is no known risk to the participant. However, study participants will have the opportunity to contribute to social science knowledge that pertains to affordable housing issues in Atlanta.

Should you have any questions about the study at any time, you may contact the principal investigator (listed above), or faculty advisor, Dr. William H. Boone at (404) 880-8719 or wboone@cau.edu.

Statement of Consent: I have read the above statement and have had my questions answered to my satisfaction. My participation in this study is strictly voluntary, and I have not been coerced in any way by anyone.

Participant’s signature ___________________________ Date ____________
APPENDIX B

FORMER PUBLIC HOUSING RESIDENT SURVEY

This survey is intended for former residents of Atlanta’s public housing units during the years 1990 to 2010. It is an attempt to understand how the demolition of public housing units affected the lives of residents. The survey is optional; however, your thoughtful answers are appreciated.

The researcher is a doctoral student of political science at **Clark Atlanta University**. Any questions or concerns should be directed to: Valerie J. Alexander, Valerie.Alexander@students.cau.edu, or advisor, Dr. William H. Boone, wboone@cau.edu. *Thank you for your participation!*

**ONLINE STATEMENT OF CONSENT:** I have read the above statement and have had my questions answered to my satisfaction. By taking this survey, I certify that I am currently OR have been a resident of Atlanta public housing. My participation in this study is strictly voluntary, and I have not been coerced in any way by anyone.

1. Gender: □ Male □ Female
2. Age group: □ 18 – 30 □ 31 – 50 □ 51 and above
3. Are you a former resident of Atlanta public housing? If so, which one(s)? *(please check all that apply)*

- □ Bankhead Courts
- □ Bowen Homes
- □ Carver Homes
- □ Clark Howell Homes
- □ East Lake Meadows
- □ Herndon Homes
- □ Hollywood Courts
- □ John Eagan Homes
- □ John Hope Homes
- □ Jonesboro North
- □ Jonesboro South
- □ Kimberly Courts
- □ Leila Valley
- □ Martin Street Plaza
- □ Mechanicsville
- □ Palmer House
- □ Roosevelt House
- □ Techwood Homes
- □ Thomasville Heights
- □ University Homes
- □ U-Rescue Villa
- □ Other (please specify)
4. How long were you a resident of Atlanta public housing? *(please check one)*

- □ 0 - 5 years
- □ 6 - 10 years
- □ 11 - 15 years
- □ 15 - 20 years
- □ More than 20 years

5. What was your reason for moving? *(please check one)*

- □ Voluntary move to other housing
- □ Eviction (for reasons other than demolition)
- □ Forced eviction (involuntary move due to demolition)

6. In what type of housing do you now live? *(please check one)*

- □ Apartment
- □ Rental single-unit house
- □ Own home
- □ Shelter
- □ Living with a friend or relative
- □ None (living in car or on the street)
- □ Other (please specify)

7. Did you have school-age children while living in public housing? □ Yes □ No

8. What benefits did you enjoy while living in public housing? *(please check all that apply)*

- □ Affordable rent
- □ Family support
- □ Close to transportation
- □ Close to other resources (e.g., doctor’s office, grocery store, etc).
- □ Other (please specify)

9. What challenges did you face while living in public housing? *(please check all that apply)*

- □ Financial
- □ Employment
- □ Lack of transportation
- □ Child care
[Box options: Health issues, Isolation from family, friends, or other support systems, Problems with landlord, Crime, Other (please specify)]

10. Overall, would you say your life today is better or worse than when you were living in public housing? In what ways?

- Better

- Worse
APPENDIX C

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

(for Community Stakeholders)

This study seeks to provide an analysis of housing policy as implemented by the Atlanta Housing Authority (AHA). As such, community stakeholders (e.g., churches, religious organizations, schools, etc.) have been identified that were located in near proximity to the former public housing communities.

1. What is your role or job title within this church or organization?

2. How long have you been in this position? How long have you been in this organization or location?

3. What is the overall purpose of your organization?

4. What outreach services (if any) does this church/organization provide to the surrounding community?

5. Prior to this study, have you been familiar with the HOPE VI initiative as implemented by the Atlanta Housing Authority?

6. In your opinion, what were the initial goals of HOPE VI?

7. If applicable, how was your job affected by policy changes in housing (e.g., housing demolition) as a result of HOPE VI?

8. In your opinion, what has been the positive impact(s) of HOPE VI on the lives of your constituents and the community that you serve?

9. In your opinion, what negative impacts have occurred in the lives of your constituents and the community that you serve as a result of HOPE VI?
10. What overall changes would you like to see in housing policy in the city of Atlanta?
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