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Neighborhood Institutions, Facilities, and Public Space: A missing Link for Social Capital?

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Abstract

This paper contributes evidence from a longitudinal study of public housing relocatees in Boston, Massachusetts. Through the federal HOPE VI program, households were relocated from a poverty-concentrated public housing community to different types of housing and neighborhoods. This study assessed the extent to which individual, household and neighborhood characteristics were important for residents' social capital. Quantitative and qualitative methods highlight the central role neighborhood institutions, facilities, and public space can play in shaping social capital. Multivariate analyses of survey data indicate that neighborhood facilities and public spaces such as parks, libraries, and recreation facilities, were strong predictors of generalized trust and shared norms and values among neighbors—key dimensions of social capital. Further, in-depth interviews with relocated women revealed the ways in which neighborhood spatial arrangements can shape social encounters and relations in the neighborhood. A discussion of the ways in which public space and neighborhood structure can shape interactions and contacts with neighbors is presented, and implications for policies aimed at improving poverty neighborhoods and low-income people's access to social capital are considered.

I Introduction

Social capital has been defined as the resources that are available through social networks and relationships based on trust, shared norms, and reciprocity (Coleman, 1988; R. D. Putnam, 2000) and is thought to be important for one's "life chances." As with economic capital (money and assets) and human capital (education and skills), social capital is not equally distributed among people or groups. Some have argued that differences in social capital are rooted in differences in neighborhood composition (Wilson, 1987). The resources and information that flow through social networks in a poverty-concentrated community, for

example, may be quite different than the resources that come through social networks in an economically mixed neighborhood. Thus, inadequate access to social capital has been added to a growing list of conditions characteristic of high-poverty neighborhoods (i.e. poor housing quality, crime and social disorder, pervasive joblessness) that put residents at a severe disadvantage for escaping poverty and achieving upward mobility. The idea that neighborhood demographics affect residents' access to social capital has informed urban housing policies that seek to alter the demographic makeup, as well as housing conditions, in poverty neighborhoods.

Redeveloping poverty-concentrated neighborhoods into mixed-income or mixed-tenure communities is a method being used in the U.S. and across Europe in an effort to improve low-income people's access to social capital, and to enhance overall neighborhood livability and social cohesion. The U.S. HOPE VI program (Housing Opportunities for People Everywhere), for example, was established in 1993 to redevelop the "most severely distressed" public housing projects in the nation (see S. J. Popkin, Katz et al., 2004). By reducing the concentration of poverty and the housing density in the developments, building housing that blends in with the surrounding community, creating streets that connect the developments to the abutting areas, strengthening management, and providing supportive social services, the HOPE VI program seeks to transform blighted areas of concentrated poverty into new mixed-income communities of opportunity (U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, 2008a). The initiative targets housing developments that suffer from physical deterioration, high rates of crime, chronic unemployment, welfare dependency, inadequate services, and high concentrations of extremely poor residents, minorities, and single parent families. In order to redevelop these areas, HOPE VI involves the large scale relocation of residents, most of whom relocate off-site to private market housing with portable vouchers¹ or to other traditional public housing developments. Some of these relocated households return to the new mixed-income housing when it is completed while others remain permanently off-site. Changing neighborhoods then, either through relocation or redevelopment, is thought to improve the opportunity structure for lower-income people in

¹ The Housing Choice Voucher Program, formerly known as the Section 8 program, was created in 1974 to assist "very low-income families, the elderly, and the disabled to afford decent, safe, and sanitary housing in the private market." This portable voucher program enables such households to select their own units in the private market. "The housing voucher family must pay 30% of its monthly adjusted gross income for rent and utilities, and if the unit rent is greater than the payment standard the family is required to pay the additional amount" (U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, 2008b). The original program name is used here since that is what most residents know the program as.

part by improving access to social capital.² The assumption is that mixed communities are richer in trust, shared norms and resourceful social networks. Further, mixed communities are thought to provide lower income people greater opportunities to connect with people who adhere to “mainstream” norms of work and family and to tap into better job networks. The goal of this research is to assess how individual, household, and neighborhood characteristics might affect the social capital available to low-income residents who were relocated to different types of communities with the HOPE VI program.

II Research and literature

The notion of social capital has emerged in recent decades as a popular concept to describe a unique and important set of resources that can both depend on and enhance our economic and human capital (Bourdieu, 1986; R. Putnam, D., 1993). As the resources that flow through social networks, and generalized trust, norms, and reciprocity, social capital helps facilitate “productive activity” that can benefit individuals as well as groups (Coleman, 1988; R. D. Putnam, 2000). Yet, social capital has a variety of attributes according to different theorists. For example, Xavier de Souza Briggs (1998) conceptualizes social capital as having two key network dimensions: supportive social ties that help individuals *get by* in life and bridging ties that provide individuals with leverage to help them *get ahead* in life. Robert Putnam (2000) distinguishes “bonding” social capital from “bridging” social capital, where bonds typically connect people who are alike and bridges connect people who are different from one another. Similarly, Granovetter (1974) emphasized the difference between strong ties and weak ties, where strong ties are close contacts with whom we frequently interact and weak ties are those we see infrequently but who loosely link us to difference circles. In addition, the degree to which social ties are “multiplex” (i.e. where neighborhood ties overlap with work ties) and have intergenerational closure (i.e. where one’s children’s friends are the children of one’s own friends) can influence the ability of networks to effectively sanction behavior (Coleman, 1988). Further, Sampson and colleagues (1997) highlighted the importance of collective efficacy—the shared trust, expectations, and values among neighbors that promote mechanisms of informal social control—as important indicators of social capital.

² Relocating low-income households from poverty-concentrated neighborhoods to more mixed areas (without redeveloping the original community) is an alternative strategy that was employed in the U.S. with the Moving to Opportunity demonstration program (MTO).

In recent decades, social capital has gained a great deal of attention in urban poverty discussions, as it has emerged as a possible mechanism through which neighborhood poverty may affect low-income residents' life chances. William Julius Wilson (1987), in his influential book *The Truly Disadvantaged*, argued that concentrated poverty leaves residents devastatingly isolated from mainstream society—primarily middle-class people who follow conventional norms for work, family, and community, and the institutional base they help sustain in local communities. In high-poverty areas, residents' social capital is thought to be limited since their neighborhood life (and presumably their social worlds) involves interactions and exchanges primarily with other severely disadvantaged people. With minimal contact with employed and economically stable people, residents in poverty-concentrated communities have limited access to information and opportunities necessary for upward mobility. Such isolation and limited opportunity structure may trap residents in a cycle of poverty and can create an environment where residents are routinely exposed to and may come to accept behaviors and norms that clash with those of mainstream society. Wilson's thesis prompted a flood of studies examining the relationship between neighborhood disadvantage and individual outcomes. These studies have found strong correlations between neighborhood poverty and individual outcomes such as employment, welfare participation, and child delinquency, even when controlling for individual and family characteristics (Brown & Richman, 1997; Jencks & Mayer, 1990; Leventhal, Brooks-Gunn, & Kamerman, 1997; for reviews see Mario L. Small & Newman, 2001). However, the mechanisms through which neighborhood poverty operate remain unclear. The latest wave of “neighborhood effects” research has brought social capital and social networks to the forefront of numerous academic and policy discussions as a potential mechanism through which neighborhood disadvantage might be channeled.

While today our social worlds are less likely to be bound by our neighborhoods of residence due to advancements in communication and transportation (Guest & Wierzbicki, 1999; Wellman, 2001), for some the neighborhood is still the place where a considerable share of social ties are developed and maintained (particularly for the poor and elderly whose mobility is more limited). Nevertheless, research tells us that social networks often play an important role in helping low-income people to “get by” and “get ahead” in life, and that neighborhoods of residence can shape these networks. Such studies have identified some of the beneficial and limiting qualities of low-income people's social networks. Several well-known ethnographic studies have documented how low-income people negotiate social networks to access resources for survival (Liebow, 1967; Stack, 1974). In *All Our Kin*, for

example, Carol Stack (1974) described the complex exchange networks low-income women developed as a mechanism to cope with the hardships of poverty and *get by*. While such networks may provide access to valuable resources and support, they can also constrain individual mobility due to strong group obligations (Portes & Landolt, 1996; Stack, 1974) and can leave women vulnerable to “draining” ties that repeatedly draw resources and support without reciprocating (Curley, 2008a). In terms of *getting ahead*, some studies have suggested that having diverse social networks that include ties to people of different socioeconomic status and ethnicity can be important for accessing information and resources for upward mobility (Briggs, 1998). Granovetter’s (1974) early research supports this reasoning with his finding that people most often find jobs through *weak* rather than close ties. Thus, there is “strength in weak ties” because weak ties channel new and different sources of information. Living in a poverty concentrated neighborhood is thought to limit such information flows since the people residents are likely to meet and interact with are most likely disadvantaged like themselves. Accordingly, changing the social composition of lower-income people’s neighborhoods through relocation or redevelopment is thought to improve their prospects of interacting with working residents who could be useful job contacts. There is also a sense that mixed communities may have greater collective efficacy, which enables residents to effectively sanction unwanted behavior, thereby reducing exposure to crime and social disorder (Sampson et al., 1997).

Aside from the more qualitative social network literature, quantitative social capital studies suggest that certain individual and neighborhood attributes may be associated with varying degrees of social capital. While the dimensions of social capital often differ from study to study, common measures include levels of trust, shared norms and values among neighbors, and social networks. Individual and household characteristics such as education, income, employment status, presence of children in the household, and length of residence have emerged as being correlated with various dimensions of social capital (for review see Forrest & Kearns, 2001). Some studies have found that people with more education and higher incomes have larger and more geographically dispersed social networks in part because they are less constrained by limited resources to travel (Fischer, 1982). Unemployed people, in contrast, tend to have more neighborhood-based social ties since they depart the neighborhood less regularly (Fischer, 1982); and households with children are thought to have greater social capital because they typically spend more time in the community and have multiple avenues for connecting with people in the neighborhood (Kleinhans, Priemus, & Engbersen, 2007; Saegert & Winkel, 2004). Others offer evidence suggesting that income

and employment may have a positive correlation with social capital (Kleinhans et al., 2007; Saegert & Winkel, 2004) and that concentrated disadvantage at the neighborhood level (Wilson, 1987) or the building level (Saegert & Winkel, 2004) may have a negative correlation with social capital. Dekker and Bolt's (2005) findings caution that socioeconomic status may be associated with some but not all types of social capital. Further, length of residence may have a positive association with social capital, as people become more embedded in their communities and get to know their neighbors over time (Coleman, 1988; Saegert & Winkel, 2004). There is also some evidence that diversity may have a negative association with social capital, as residents in homogeneous communities are more likely to trust their neighbors and be involved with their community (Fischer, 1982; R. D. Putnam, 2007).

While theory and research suggest that living in neighborhoods of poverty concentration may have a detrimental effect on individuals' access to social capital, does relocation to more economically mixed areas have the reverse effect? Mixed-income communities are thought to reduce social isolation and be better places to build and access the social capital necessary for upward mobility. By decreasing poverty concentration through relocation or redevelopment, lower-income residents might be more exposed to higher-income people and diversify their social networks to include them. However, few studies have provided evidence that relocation or redevelopment programs like HOPE VI improve low-income residents' access to social capital. In fact, studies on both sides of the Atlantic show little social mixing among higher and lower-income people in redeveloped mixed communities (Brophy & Smith, 1997; Buron, Popkin, Levy, Harris, & Khadduri, 2002; Curley, 2008a; Kleinhans, 2004; R. Smith, 2002; van Beckhoven & van Kempen, 2003), suggesting that increased residential proximity does not necessarily promote social interaction. While one study assessing the Moving to Opportunity (MTO) program found that moving to a low-poverty neighborhood increased the chances that adults would have friends who graduated college or earned more than \$30,000 a year, only eight percent of participants in the study had found a job through a neighborhood tie, and no differences existed between those in high and low-poverty neighborhoods (Kling, Liebman, & Katz, 2005; Orr et al., 2003). Others have similarly found that low-income movers tend not to receive job information from their new neighbors, challenging the assumption that higher-income neighbors will be useful or willing job contacts (Curley, 2008a; Kleit, 2001). Further, HOPE VI researchers have found that relocation often breaks up strong social networks, which could reduce access to social support—another important form of social capital (Clampet-

Lundquist, 2004; Curley, 2008a; Greenbaum, 2002; S. J. Popkin, Levy et al., 2004; Saegert & Winkel, 1998). Despite the lack of consistent evidence that relocation and income mixing initiatives result in social interaction among lower and higher income households, some remain enthusiastic about the potential social effects of altering the composition of poverty-concentrated neighborhoods (Van Kempen, 2008).

Other factors that have received much less attention—but also hold potential for helping us understand how social capital may be developed and maintained in neighborhoods—include neighborhood institutions, facilities, and public spaces. In *The Truly Disadvantaged*, Wilson (1987) highlighted the role local social institutions play in maintaining stability in neighborhoods. He argued that one consequence of the out-migration of the Black middle-class from American cities in the 1970s was the removal of an institutional base and the stability and social control it brought to these neighborhoods. As the working and middle-class families left for the suburbs, so too did the businesses and services (i.e. grocery stores, churches, banks, restaurants) that catered to (and were supported by) these families. The resulting lack of institutional stability compounded with the increasing concentration of economic deprivation to create socially isolated communities with few resources to leverage political and economic investment.

A strong institutional base is important not only for providing necessary services and goods, but also for helping residents realize their common values and goals. With the publication of *Bowling Alone*, Putnam (2000) raised alarm about the declining civic engagement of Americans. He argues that declining participation in formal membership-based organizations, religious institutions, and politics (i.e. voting) is indicative of a broader trend of declining social capital, which may threaten the democratic and social fabric of our society. Peterson, Krivo, and Harris also point to the importance of such institutions: “When local organizations that link individuals to each other and to broader political and economic institutions are less prevalent, commitments to mainstreams values are less likely to be encouraged, socialization to conformity is undermined, and the resulting *indirect* social control is weakened” (Peterson, Krivo, & Harris, 2000, p. 34). Thus, neighborhood institutions, facilities, and public spaces may have an important effect on the development and preservation of social capital because of the opportunities they offer for social interaction and informal social control. In multivariate analyses of census and crime data Peterson and colleagues found that the presence of recreation centers reduced violent crime in areas with extreme economic deprivation, suggesting that such facilities and their programs may have an important social control function (Peterson et al., 2000, p. 55). Neighborhood institutions

may provide a channel for neighborly relations where trust, shared expectations, and a willingness to intervene in one's community (i.e. collective efficacy) can develop. In their analyses of resource inequality, social processes, and spatial dynamics that might predict rates of homicide, Morenoff and colleagues (2001) found that the number of local organizations alone was "relatively unimportant" (p. 553). They suggest, rather, that the impact of local organizations and social networks is limited to their ability to "promote the collective efficacy of residents in achieving social control and cohesion" (p. 517).

Small's (2006) research suggests that neighborhood institutions and their connections may play an important mediating role between neighborhood poverty and well-being. This research suggests that as "resource brokers" and sites for social interaction, neighborhood institutions are important for understanding the complex process of resource access for the urban poor. Small and McDermott (2006) found that neighborhood poverty had a positive relationship with the number of organizational resources in the neighborhood (such as grocery stores, pharmacies, childcare centers). The number of establishments increased as the poverty rate increased and as the proportion of foreign-born residents increased; but the number of establishments decreased as the proportion of Blacks increased. In another study, Small and colleagues (2008) examined the inter-organizational ties of childcare centers in New York and found that centers in high-poverty neighborhoods were better-connected and had more referral and organizational ties. Their findings challenge the general belief that concentrated poverty weakens the capacity for strong local organizations. Their findings also raise questions about the assumed positive effects of housing dispersal and deconcentration initiatives on low-income people's access to resources.

While some have suggested that local institutions and neighborhood facilities may play a mediating role in the link between concentrated disadvantage and crime (for a review see Peterson et al., 2000), and between institutions and neighborhood stability (Wilson, 1987), few have examined the relationship between local institutions, facilities, and public spaces and the promotion and maintenance of social capital. However, some qualitative studies, though not necessarily making connections to social capital, have considered the role public space can play in helping people develop "public familiarity" and in encouraging interactions (Lofland (1973), Blokland (2003), Sztompka (1999)). Neighborhood public spaces and institutions, therefore, may provide residents with opportunities to encounter and observe each other, which over time, can generate public familiarity and trust in others—a key dimension of social capital. Public space may also help foster a sense of community, as (sometimes very diverse) people come together to display and legitimate their identities in public space

(Holland et al., 2007). As people and groups compete for access to public space, identities are formed, contested, and negotiated in the public realm (Mitchell, 1995; Lofland, 1998). By providing the stage for repeated encounters, these spaces enable individuals to gain valuable information about each others' habits and patterns of living, which may lead individuals to identify with a group (i.e. neighbors), even without having any formal ties to others (Blokland, 2003; Lofland, 1973; Sztompka, 1999). Thus, even "cursory" everyday interactions in the public realm may be part of the social capital building process in a neighborhood context (see Kleinhans et al., 2007; Vertovec, 2007; Völker et al., 2007).

In general, the role between public spaces or neighborhood institutions and social capital has been under-theorized and under-researched. A few exceptions of quantitative studies come from Europe and include those of Van Bergeijk and colleagues (2008), whose research found that use of neighborhood facilities had a positive effect on social networks in distressed neighborhoods undergoing renewal in the Netherlands; and Völker and colleagues (2007) found that neighborhood facilities had a positive effect on the creation of 'community,' which they measured as the extent to which residents reported there is a lot going on in the neighborhood, that contacts in the neighborhood are good, and that one feels safe and is respected in the neighborhood. Lastly, Dekker and Filipovic (2008) found that residents of large housing estates in the Netherlands and Slovenia who reported problems with the upkeep of public space and local services were less positive about social contacts in the neighborhood and had fewer social ties in the neighborhood than those who were satisfied with public spaces and services. Besides these few studies, no other quantitative studies are known that consider the role neighborhood institutions, facilities, or public spaces may play in producing or maintaining social capital. Thus, the discussion of public space is remarkably lacking in the social capital literature. By further examining the extent to which public spaces and neighborhood institutions and facilities are important for residents' social capital, this study seeks to fill a notable gap in the literature and advance our understanding of social capital.

III The Study

This research continues the inquiry into the determinants of social capital, focusing specifically on the social capital of residents who were relocated from a public housing neighborhood as part of the HOPE VI program. When the redevelopment of the original site was completed in 2006, some households had moved back to the restructured neighborhood, but more than half remained in their relocation units for a variety of reasons related to choices

and constraints.³ The goal of this paper is to assess the determinants of social capital for different types of relocatees—those who lived in the new mixed-income community, those who remained permanently relocated off-site with housing vouchers, and those who remained off-site in other poverty-concentrated public housing developments. The key research question is: To what extent are neighborhood characteristics (particularly facilities, institutions, and public spaces) important for residents’ social capital?

A unique contribution of this study is the examination of the impact neighborhood conditions such as facilities and public space, perceived safety, and neighborhood problems, may have on residents’ social capital. While others have predicted different dimensions of social capital using demographic and household data (see for example Dekker & Bolt, 2005; Kleinhans et al., 2007), little is known about the additional role of neighborhood characteristics. This study is also distinctive in its systematic comparison of different types of relocatees, which enables the assessment of whether those in mixed-income communities, for example, fare differently in terms of access to different dimensions of social capital. Lastly, the study combines quantitative survey data with qualitative interview data, in an effort to provide a well-informed picture of relocatees’ experiences in building and accessing social capital in their new neighborhoods.

Data sources and methods

The data for the study were collected as part of a broader longitudinal evaluation of the Maverick Gardens HOPE VI program in Boston, Massachusetts.⁴ Selected for HOPE VI redevelopment in 2002, Maverick Gardens was originally constructed in 1941 in line with the typical “barracks” style design for public housing built in the U.S. in the post-World War II era. The development was located on an eight acre site at the end of a dead-end street, consisted of twelve brick buildings (413 units) with flat roofs surrounded by paved interior walkways, and had no streets running through it. One side of the development abutted a run-down park with remarkable views of Boston Harbor and the city beyond. Its location across the harbor in East Boston meant Maverick was somewhat isolated from the larger Boston community: in order to get downtown and to most other Boston neighborhoods, one must drive over a toll bridge or through a tunnel under the harbor (both requiring a \$3 toll), or take the subway (\$3 round trip). While its physical location contributed to some feelings of isolation, Maverick Gardens was situated only about two blocks from the bustling Maverick

³ (See Curley, 2004; Curley & Fitzgerald, 2007).

⁴ The evaluation was conducted by the Center for Urban and Regional Policy at Northeastern University.

Square, which houses a subway station and numerous restaurants, shops, and services catering to the large local Hispanic population. At the beginning of the HOPE VI program, the Maverick Gardens population was 47% Hispanic, 26% African-American, 15% Asian, and 12% white (Fitzgerald & Curley, 2003). According to the 2000 U.S. Census, Maverick Gardens was in a census tract with a poverty rate of 43% and a non-white population of 50% (U.S. Census Bureau, 2000).⁵

The Maverick HOPE VI program lasted from 2002 until 2007, with demolition and the relocation of residents beginning in 2003 and construction ending in 2006. When the redevelopment was completed in late 2006 and all new units were occupied, just under half of the original 375 households (48%) returned to the new mixed income community, which was renamed Maverick Landing. Those who did not return remained permanently off-site in other public housing developments (23%), with portable vouchers (17%), in market rate housing (3%), or in homes they purchased (2%).⁶ This paper examines the social capital of residents in the three main relocation groups: HOPE VI (the new community), public housing, and vouchers. Two key data sources were used: the final post-HOPE VI resident survey and repeated in-depth resident interviews.

A longitudinal resident survey was conducted in order to track changes in resident outcomes over time. The surveys covered a wide range of topics, including relocation, neighborhood conditions, social service usage and service needs, social networks, employment, income, economic stability, and adult and child health. Survey instruments were adapted from the HOPE VI Panel Study survey (S. Popkin et al., 2002), and implemented prior to relocation/redevelopment, one year later (in the middle of relocation/demolition), and six months after the redevelopment was completed. This paper draws on data from the final resident survey only.

The survey interviews were conducted by a multi-lingual staff of sociology and social work graduate students who had prior survey and/or community work experience.

⁵ Maverick stands out from many other HOPE VI sites in a number of important ways. First, Maverick was a relatively small development with fewer units and less density than many other public housing developments around the country. For example, Maverick had 413 units and no high rise buildings, compared to Chicago's Cabrini-Green development which at one time housed 15,000 people or Robert Taylor Homes which housed 27,000 people (see <http://www.thecha.org>). In addition, compared to many other public housing communities, Maverick was not as isolated from transportation and other services and was in a prime real estate location with waterfront views of the downtown urban landscape. The population of Maverick also differed in that nearly half the population were of Hispanic origin, compared to many other HOPE VI communities where residents were predominantly African-American (S. Popkin et al., 2002). Further, the Greater Boston housing market for rentals was among the tightest in the country during the Maverick HOPE VI program (2002-2007), with relatively high and steadily increasing prices and low vacancy rates (vacancy rates were about 3% for the greater Boston area in the year 2000 compared to the national average of 7%) (Comey, Briggs, & Weismann, 2008).

⁶ Another 6% were evicted or abandoned their units and were not tracked by the housing authority.

Interviewers completed a half day training session covering topics such as confidentiality procedures, the role of the researcher, accurate data collection, understanding the survey questions, arranging interviews, explaining the study, and overcoming objections. The program manager held weekly briefings with all interviewers in order to obtain updates and discuss any issues regarding the survey and completing interviews with residents. Further, a random sample of completed surveys was selected, and the program manager phoned the respondents to verify several answers to the survey questions as a quality control measure. Surveys were translated into Spanish and Vietnamese and interviewers read all questions out loud and recorded respondents' answers on the surveys. The majority of survey interviews were held in residents' homes, lasted about an hour each, and respondents were provided a \$25 gift card to a local supermarket for their time.

This paper presents data from the final of the three resident surveys. Of the 216 baseline survey respondents, 134 completed the post-HOPE VI survey (a response rate of 62%). In addition, a supplemental sample of other original Maverick households who were not surveyed at baseline was added to the final survey in order to expand the sample of post-HOPE VI respondents and broaden our understanding of a larger number of affected households from the different relocation groups. Of the 110 additional residents that were randomly selected, 65 residents completed the post-HOPE VI survey (a response rate of 59%). In 2007, a total of 199 final post-HOPE VI surveys were completed with original Maverick residents, including 105 who were living in the new mixed-income HOPE VI community, 41 who were residing off-site with their vouchers, 40 who were off-site in other housing developments, and 13 who were off-site in private market housing, homes they purchased, or doubling up with family or friends. In-person surveys were completed with residents in Spanish (48%), English (47%), and Vietnamese (5%). The sample consisted mainly of female heads-of-households from a variety of racial/ethnic backgrounds (51% Hispanic, 18% Caucasian, 18% African-American, 10% Asian), about half of whom were employed (48%). Many respondents had low levels of education (41% lacking a high school diploma) and low incomes (66% earning less than \$16,000 per year) (see Appendix B for further sample demographic information). Overall, the survey sample is comparable to the larger population of original Maverick tenants (i.e. in terms of race/ethnicity, employment status, and relocation outcomes, for example).

Lastly, repeated in-depth interviews were conducted with 30 women from the original community over the course of the evaluation, and these interviews provided rich data on HOPE VI impacts and on the processes through which relocation and redevelopment affected

residents' lives. Themes covered in the semi-structured interviews ranged from social networks, economic stability, and health, but the data relevant for the research question explored in this paper center on social capital, including the establishment of trust and social connections in the neighborhood.⁷ The sample for the in-depth interviews consisted of women who had lived at Maverick Gardens for at least two years prior to HOPE VI and who were relocated in the first phase of the program.⁸ The in-depth interviews were limited to female residents due to the high percentage of female-headed households in public housing. The sample was stratified to include women from the three main relocation groups: 11 on-site movers (37%),⁹ 10 Section 8 movers (33%), and 9 public housing movers (30%). Half of the women spoke primary languages other than English, and eight were interviewed in Spanish. Participants were recruited for the study via mail, phone, and/or in person visits.

The 30 women were first interviewed in 2004 (one year after relocation) and follow-up interviews were conducted every 6-12 months through the end of the HOPE VI program evaluation (a total of 5 rounds of interviews).¹⁰ Interviews were held in residents' homes and conducted by the author and a Spanish-speaking ethnographer. All interviews were tape-recorded, lasted between 1.5 to 2.5 hours; and participants were paid \$25-\$30 per interview for their time. Tapes and field notes were transcribed, systematically coded, and analyzed using QSR N6, a qualitative data analysis program.

Analysis strategy

For the quantitative data, linear regression models were used to assess the best predictors of social capital. A social capital index was used as the dependent variable and independent variables included individual, household, and neighborhood characteristics. For the qualitative data, a combined deductive/inductive approach was used for coding the data according to the research questions and hypotheses regarding changes in social networks and neighbor relations; in addition to allowing themes and concepts to emerge from the data

⁷ This qualitative component of the research was also part of a dissertation study that focused particularly on changes in social networks, economic stability, and health; and was funded in part with a HUD Doctoral Dissertation Grant (see Curley, 2006, 2008a).

⁸ During the first phase of relocation (in which 116 households relocated) 41% of residents moved on-site (to older units that were scheduled for redevelopment in a later phase of the program), 39% moved to other public housing, 18% moved with Section 8 vouchers, and 2% moved out of subsidized housing altogether.

⁹ Because the community was redeveloped in phases, some households were able to relocate on-site into older vacant units that were scheduled for demolition in a later phase.

¹⁰ The response rate per interview ranged from 93% for the first three interviews, 83% for the fourth interview, and 80% for the fifth interview.

through open coding. Inter-rater reliability was checked with a colleague who coded a random sample of transcripts using the developed coding scheme.

Measures

The dimensions of *social capital* used for the analysis in this paper consist of an index of *generalized trust, shared norms, and values*, measured as the mean response to 11 items (Cronbach's $\alpha = .78$). Respondents were asked about levels of trust and shared norms among neighbors, whether neighbors are willing to help each other, whether people are respectful and generally get along with one another, and whether people in the neighborhood are capable of solving problems in the neighborhood. Responses ranged from a low of 0 to a high of 1 (See Appendix A for a detailed list of all indices).

Neighborhood institutions, facilities, and public spaces were assessed with a 15 item index that measured the availability of local services and shared spaces such as churches, employment and job-training services, libraries, child care, recreation for youth and adults, after-school programs, supermarkets, health care facilities, transportation, food pantries, and parks or playgrounds (Cronbach's $\alpha = .74$).

Relocation group refers to the final relocation outcomes for participants and is a proxy for poverty concentration in their current neighborhood. Those who remained permanently relocated with vouchers are living in more economically mixed areas (with poverty rates averaging 14%), as are those living in the new HOPE VI community (renamed "Maverick Landing"). Although HOPE VI created a "mixed-income" community at Maverick Landing, we do not know the current poverty level of the new community since the most recent US Census was from the year 2000 (prior to redevelopment). For the purposes of this paper it is assumed that the new Maverick Landing is a more mixed income neighborhood due to the relocation of many low-income households out of the community and the introduction of higher income residents into market-rate units. In contrast, public housing movers live in census tracts with poverty levels averaging 31% (compared to the pre-HOPE VI Maverick census tract, averaging 43% poor) (2000 US Census).¹¹

¹¹ Voucher holders also live in areas that are less concentrated with racial/ethnic minorities (35% on average) than public housing movers (42% on average) (compared to the pre-HOPE VI Maverick census tract, averaging 50% non-white).

Neighborhood satisfaction was measured with a question asking respondents how satisfied they were with their current neighborhood. Responses ranged from very dissatisfied (1), somewhat dissatisfied (2), somewhat satisfied (3), and very satisfied (4).

Neighborhood problems was measured with a 13 item index (Cronbach's $\alpha = .96$) assessing residents' perception of the severity of crime and social and physical disorder. Responses ranged from a low of 0 (no problem) to a high of 1 (some/big problem). Problems in this index included shootings, attacks/robbery, rape/sexual attacks, people selling drugs, people using drugs, gangs, groups of people hanging out, police not coming when called, graffiti, lack of outdoor lighting, trash in parking lots, sidewalks, and lawns, unattractive common outdoor areas, and lack of recreational space.

Safety was measured with an 8 item index (Cronbach's $\alpha = .79$) that assessed feelings of safety and the presence of and satisfaction with police patrols in the neighborhood. Scores ranged from a low of 0 (unsafe) to a high of 1 (safe).

Place attachment was measured as the mean response to 4 items assessing the extent to which respondents felt at home in their neighborhood, felt that it was a good place for them to live, that it is very important for them to live in their particular community, and whether they expected to live there for a long time (Cronbach's $\alpha = .82$). Scores ranged from a low of 0 (weak place attachment) to a high of 1 (strong place attachment).

Demographic information that was collected included age, gender, race/ethnicity, marital status, presence of children in the household, education, income level, employment status, and length of residence in their current neighborhood.

IV Findings

In order to assess the predictors of residents' social capital and the relative importance of individual and neighborhood characteristics, a linear regression model was created using data from the resident survey. The *generalized trust, shared norms, and values* dimension of social capital was used as the dependent variable; and independent variables included various individual, household, and neighborhood characteristics (most of which were associated with

social capital in earlier bivariate tests).¹² Table 1 presents the outcomes of the final model, which included measures of race/ethnicity, language, length of residence, relocation group, neighborhood satisfaction, safety, place attachment, neighborhood problems, and neighborhood institutions, facilities, and public space. This model is very robust—explaining 76% of the variance in social capital. The analysis indicates that three factors are statistically significant predictors of social capital: neighborhood institutions, facilities and public space; place attachment; and safety. Interestingly, none of the demographic and household variables are significantly associated with social capital after controlling for the other variables in the model. Further, there is no significant relationship between relocation group (here used as a proxy for neighborhood income mix) and social capital. This is in contrast to the policy assumption that creating the right social mix in a neighborhood will produce desired levels of social capital, thereby improving the livability of the neighborhood and life chances of low-income people. Rather than neighborhood type (i.e. relocation group), this regression model indicates that other factors—neighborhood institutions and public space, place attachment, and safety—are most important for social capital.

¹² For a more detailed discussion of bivariate results and discussion on how different dimensions of social capital (i.e. social support, social ties, civic engagement, trust) are interrelated, see (see Curley, 2008b for a more detailed look at bivariate analyses and how different types of social capital are interrelated)

Table 1: Predicting social capital: generalized trust, shared norms, and values

Independent variables	B	SE
<i>Relocation group</i> (Dummy variables)		
Public Housing	-0.025	0.032
Voucher	-0.007	0.025
HOPE VI (reference)		
<i>Race/ethnicity</i> (Dummy variables)		
White	0.036	0.029
Other	0.006	0.033
African-American	-0.008	0.029
Hispanic (reference)		
<i>Speaks English</i> (0 = No, 1 = Yes)	0.027	0.024
<i>Years lived at current address</i>	0.001	0.010
<i>Neighborhood satisfaction</i> (0 = very/somewhat dissatisfied, 1 = very/somewhat satisfied)	0.037	0.044
<i>Neighborhood institutions, facilities & public space</i> ***	1.061	0.084
<i>Neighborhood safety</i> *	0.146	0.060
<i>Neighborhood problems</i>	-0.026	0.048
<i>Place attachment</i> **	0.182	0.053
*p<.05, **p<.01, *** p<.001		
N	177	
F	47.68	
Sign F	0.000	
R ² (adjusted)	.76	

The findings indicate that social capital is higher in areas with more of these neighborhood resources such as institutions, facilities, and public spaces (for each unit increase in neighborhood resources, social capital increased 1.06 points). Resources such as churches, parks, recreation facilities, employment centers, and even supermarkets may be important for social capital because they can provide opportunities for both casual exchanges and more meaningful interactions, and thus opportunities for building and accessing social capital in the neighborhood context. In addition to the importance of these neighborhood resources, *place attachment* is also a significant predictor of social capital. With each unit increase in place attachment, social capital increased .18 points. However, the data do not establish causality, and it is likely that social capital and place attachment reinforce each other. It could be that stronger place attachment leads to greater social capital; or that with higher levels of social capital, people develop greater place attachment. The significance of place attachment here is consistent with Kleinhans and colleagues (2007) who also found a

strong relationship between place attachment and social capital in their multivariate analyses of survey data in the Netherlands. Further, in an examination of the link between place attachment and individual and neighborhood characteristics, Livingston and colleagues (2008) too found a link between what they call social cohesion or social networks and attachment to place in the UK. Despite the link between social capital and place attachment having been established in several studies, the direction of causality remains unclear.

Lastly, *safety* is also a significant predictor of social capital in this study—with each unit increase in safety, generalized trust, shared norms, and values increased .15 points. This finding implies that feeling safe in one's community is conducive to greater levels of trust and positive neighborly relations. Consequently, feeling unsafe may have a “chilling effect” on social relationships (Saegert and Winkel, 2004) and lead to social withdrawal (Skogan, 1990). However, it is also possible that strong social capital contributes to feelings of safety by strengthening informal social control. Sampson and colleague's (1999), for example, found that strong collective efficacy (shared norms, trust, and the willingness to intervene for the public good) was associated with lower crime rates—even in high poverty areas. Their work highlights the importance of collective efficacy and informal social control for discouraging unwanted behavior.

While the quantitative survey data provide an informative picture of the relative importance of different individual, household, and neighborhood characteristics for residents' social capital, the data can not explain how or why neighborhood institutions, facilities and public space, or feelings of place attachment and safety contribute to generalized trust, shared norms, and values among neighbors. Data from the in-depth interviews with residents provide important clues about the ways in which these factors may shape these important dimensions of social capital. Specifically, the data offer examples of how neighborhood facilities and public space can influence encounters and interactions with others in the neighborhood, as well as how feelings of safety, attachment to place, and the spatial arrangements of neighborhoods and public space can be closely interconnected.

Neighborhood structure and the arrangement of public space were common themes that arose when relocatees talked about getting to know their neighbors and making new ties in their new communities. In describing their encounters and relations with new neighbors, residents often made comparisons to Maverick, their old public housing community, highlighting the differences in community designs and the availability of public space that they felt influenced their exchanges with neighbors. These differences were particularly salient for those who moved from public housing to private market housing. Moving out of

Maverick Gardens and into private market housing (i.e. with a voucher) meant moving from a community that had a unique built environment. The “super-block” arrangement of buildings at Maverick (prior to HOPE VI redevelopment), the walkways that wove their way throughout the housing development, the unmistakable lack of shops and streets running through the community, the building entryways, hallways, and stairs that were shared by multiple households, the common mail room and management office, and the relatively high population density are some of the features that, in combination, made Maverick (and other traditional public housing developments in the US) noticeably different than most other neighborhoods.

While the physical arrangement of the buildings and public space in such communities might be described as isolating, stigmatizing, devoid of “defensible space” (i.e. creating safe havens for crime committed by outsiders who can easily evade authorities in such an environment) (Newman, 1972), some features of the built environment were cited by residents of the current study as important in shaping neighbor relations, a sense of place attachment and community, and feelings of safety. For example, Nilda, a twenty-three year old mother of three children who lived at Maverick for four years prior to relocation, talked about the sense of belonging and community she experienced at the old Maverick and how public spaces in the neighborhood facilitated social networks and exchanges with others.

...At Maverick, we used to sit down at the park; all the neighbors gathered and had conversations; or [we would] go to the office and talk to the staff. This way we shared, supported each other. ...We were all one family. And we used to get along well. ...We supported each other; we also consulted each other on things that happened to us in Maverick. We helped each other a lot.

Her comments suggest that neutral public spaces like parks and semi-public facilities or institutions like community centers or management offices provide important opportunities to meet neighbors for conversation and support.

The resident interviews uncovered numerous other examples of how the spatial arrangement of neighborhood buildings, facilities, and public spaces can influence the likelihood and frequency of contact among neighbors. The old Maverick community, by housing many families in close quarters and with its particular neighborhood spatial configuration, inevitably led to repeated occasions for interacting with neighbors. The environment fostered social ties that were “multiplex” and had intergenerational closure, for example, where one’s children’s friends were the children of one’s own friends (Coleman, 1988). These dense, overlapping networks enhanced residents’ support systems and

contributed to their collective efficacy (Sampson et al., 1997) since residents knew each others' kids and often felt a shared responsibility to monitor them (i.e. from apartment windows) and report misbehavior to their parents. As Josie's comments suggest, these spatial and social dimensions of the environment at Maverick also contributed to feelings of belonging, safety, and accommodated neighbors' supportive exchanges.

...Well, in Maverick you knew everybody. You knew each others' kids, you knew their parents, their cousins, their uncles. So everywhere you went, everybody knew who you was. So you felt fine. ...You knew everything that happened at Maverick. ...It's like Maverick is just one big bubble.

...Upstairs, downstairs, across the hall, three buildings over. ...That's the thing you liked about living in a small place like that. You can go three doors over and be like, "Can I borrow a cup of sugar?"

Living in a high density community like Maverick where common areas and public spaces encouraged (or even required) recurring encounters with the same people on a daily basis meant that most residents had a baseline knowledge of who belonged in the area and who didn't. In essence, the arrangement of buildings and public space promoted *public familiarity*. While the public familiarity that can develop in such spaces may remain at the level of facial recognition of neighbors, for many of the Maverick residents in this study it led to more meaningful repeated social interactions, the development of social ties, and a sense of belonging and community. Some were deeply affected by the loss of community that occurred with the HOPE VI redevelopment, and their comments indicate that the altered population of residents at Maverick (a mix of old and new residents) and the change in the use of shared public space play a role. Suzie offered a description of her community at Maverick prior to redevelopment.

The buildings were old and there were problems but we were a community and we knew each other; it was a community of years, united for good or bad.

The residents who returned to the rebuilt Maverick neighborhood connected the changes that occurred to the social environment to the changes in the built environment.

I was very sad to see my old apartment go. But I like it here because I have a nice apartment with a view. But I loved the old Maverick, even with the roaches. Because everyone knew everyone and you didn't lock your doors behind you. Now no one wants to know anyone—they shut their doors and stay to themselves.

There was a time you could put your head out the window and ask someone to go to the store for you and you could hear the kids playing. You can't hear the kids playing anymore and it's sad.

...no one sits around outside on the porch and talk. Things are different now. Even my old neighbors that I knew [before] that live in this building don't talk. No one stops to talk anymore.

Even some residents who were not very social with other neighbors benefited from a sense of community at the old Maverick. Milly explained that she felt an affinity with her neighbors: “You know they are good neighbors because they are in the same boat as you.” Stephanie felt a similar kinship with other neighbors and discussed how this affinity sometimes made daily routines easier.

That's one thing I love about the projects. I'm not put on the spot. If my children's friend comes over and I only give the kids two cookies each and that's it – they are happy with that! And it's not embarrassing.

No one here is going to stare at me when I'm having my brother repair my car in the street. They are going to know that I'm doing it because I can't afford to bring it to the shop.

While the spatial configuration and public spaces of the Maverick housing development contributed to many residents' tight-knit social networks, their attachment to the community, feelings of safety, and their sense of belonging, others felt the same dimensions of the built environment reduced their privacy and sometimes led to relationships with neighbors that were overbearing and even “draining” (see Curley, 2008a for a detailed discussion of draining ties). Several relocatees who moved to private market housing with vouchers talked about how moving away from “the projects” eliminated the hassle of neighbors constantly being involved in each others' business and led to an increase in privacy. Relocating out of Maverick, then, provided some the opportunity to step back and regain their sense of privacy and anonymity. Katherine, a mother of two teenage daughters, explained:

For me – it's good [living in private market housing with a voucher]. ...I don't like bothering with other people; I don't like other people knowing my business – I like it. When you live in the projects, it's like – don't get me wrong, I'm not putting it down – that's where I grew up. But you got like all these different smells from all these different foods; everybody who blares their stereo, who's slamming their door; who's yelling at their kids; or who's knocking on your door to use your phone or borrow something; or who's looking out the door to see when you bought something or when you're having company—I don't miss that *at all*. It's a total different way of living [here], you know – it's not my own house but I have my own space. It's bright, it's private, my landlord – he doesn't bother me.

For Jocelyn, a single mother of two boys who moved to a residential neighborhood in Boston with a voucher, the peace and quiet of the area and the distinct privacy it granted her

was a welcome reprieve. The street to which she moved was entirely residential, and although she could no longer send her 10 year old son to get something at the corner store (because there were no stores nearby) and the neighborhood offered little opportunity for social interaction, she was satisfied with the community. Even after living in her new neighborhood for three years, she knew only one neighbor by name (her landlord who lives in the downstairs apartment of the two-family home), and could recognize the faces of only three others on the street. However, her level of comfort and feeling at home in the neighborhood may be closely tied to the public familiarity she has developed on her street. Everyday, an unmarked space on the sidewalk across the street turns into the school bus stop for her son and three other children. In this undefined public space, whose use is transformed only briefly twice a day as children are picked up in the morning and dropped off in the afternoon, public familiarity is established with other parents who wait with their children. Through such repeated encounters, whether they are at the bus stop, the grocery store, or the nearby park, people can gain an awareness of neighbors and their everyday routines. Although their encounters may appear to be routinized and mundane, and their relationships may remain informal, the public stage through which they observe each other helps build familiarity (Blokland, 2003; Lofland, 1973, 1998). While Jocelyn knew the other parents only by face, enough trust and familiarity developed through these repeated encounters to the point where she felt confident that they would watch her son when she sent him to the bus stop alone some mornings. Jocelyn was pleased with this spatial structure of the neighborhood and she valued the privacy it affords. Although this same configuration might lead others to feel lonesome and isolated, for Jocelyn, who had a supportive social network made up of relatives and friends who lived elsewhere (and with whom she visited regularly by car), her minimal contact with neighbors was sufficient, and she found it a pleasant place to live.

Other voucher holders also recognized the different interaction patterns among neighbors in their new communities and attributed these to the spatial differences of their neighborhoods. Josie, a single woman in her mid-thirties, moved with her voucher to an adjacent community just north of Boston. She rented an apartment on the third floor of a three-family house on a residential side street that consisted of mostly other two and three-family buildings. When asked about her new neighbors (whether she had gotten to know them at all, socialized with them, etc), Josie explained that because many residents in her new neighborhood own their homes and/or have their own yards, they do not congregate in public places – outside entrances or in parks – like her old neighbors did at Maverick. She said: “since everybody in Chelsea has a house, they tend to stay on their own property and do what

they want to do.” In essence, the spatial arrangement of her new neighborhood did not facilitate interaction the way her old public housing community did.

Shakira, a single mother of three school-age boys who also moved to private market housing with a voucher, similarly offered a spatial explanation for her lack of interaction with neighbors in her new community. She said:

You don't see a lot of people just hanging out [here]. Everybody's like stays to themselves. They don't bother nobody. ...I guess when you're living in the projects, you see a lot of people coming out.

The lower population density in her new community and the arrangement of homes with their individual back porches and/or yards was a stark contrast to Maverick, the high-density public housing development she had moved from, where twelve or more households departed and entered from the same entryway every day, and where children and mothers frequently gathered on the front steps or on the park benches across the street.

While many relocatees appreciated the newfound privacy that came with the structure of their new neighborhoods, others experienced increased isolation and talked about how the neighborhood spatial arrangements impeded their ability to get to know their neighbors or make new ties. Nilda became lonely and frustrated with her lack of interaction with neighbors in her new community, and she suggested that the absence of shared public space may play a role.

The neighbors here are quiet; they are always inside their apartments. They don't share. I don't like that. Maybe it's because we don't have any park around here where we can sit and talk. ...Here – I don't know my neighbors. ...Life is very sad here. But people don't let me get close to them. When I go out I say ‘hi’ and that is it.

Nilda's comments suggest that without public spaces like parks, neighbors may have little opportunity to meet one another, develop social ties, or a sense of community. Public spaces and local facilities may be so essential because they enable people who repeatedly encounter one another to have brief exchanges or more lengthy conversations, without the efforts and obligations required of more formal meetings.

Neighborhood structure and public space: shaping interaction and ties with outsiders

In addition to shaping encounters and relations within a community, neighborhood structure and spatial arrangements can also influence encounters and relations with people from outside the community. The distinguishable structure of public housing neighborhoods was cited by residents as severely limiting their interactions with non-residents due to the

heavy social stigma associated with their communities. Some residents carefully negotiated relations with “outsiders” in order to avoid revealing their residence in a public housing development, and the rejection, embarrassment, and humiliation that could accompany such a revelation. Stephanie, a mother of three children who was relocated to a different public housing development, hated the fact that she lived in a community that was so stigmatizing. She talked about the stark physical image of her current public housing community, a development built in the typical “barracks style” of the 1950s and which has an ominous feel both on the interior and exterior. Although Maverick was similar in its brick superblock construction, this housing development was different in that it was located on the edge of a steep hill with a large cross (50 ft. high) rising from a vacant lot (owned by a church) at the edge of the development. “What I don't like is that it's up on the hill. I don't know – it looks like some kind of crazy asylum with the cross like that. Like I love the cross, I believe in God, and the cross is nice. I don't mean to say it's the cross. It's like the way it's located on the hill – the visual of it isn't pretty.” Stephanie went on to explain how her fear of being judged by where she lives influences her relations with people from the ‘outside’.

People see the projects ...and there is a prejudgment that comes along with that. And I don't know – unfortunately, the majority right off the bat consider you to be a piece of shit. So you know, I don't know which one is gonna be like ‘you know, it's just low-income – they just don't make that kind of money.’ And I don't know which parents are gonna say like, ‘piece of shit.’ So I know that I try to protect my kids all the way. ...Because the majority of poor people – I don't know if they get depressed or what the hell it is. But it's true – the majority I see – and I live here – they go and they drink, they do this, they do that, they do all that shit. You know, you got a regular person who just doesn't have it that way and then they look at me like I'm you because so many people do it.

Stephanie's comments illustrate how the physical structure of public housing projects, by carrying such a strong negative stigma, results in prejudice towards the individuals residing there and can have a negative impact on their social capital (i.e. by shaping their encounters and ties with others). She alludes to the different uses of public spaces in these communities contributing to the negative image and social stigma attached to all its residents.

... And the ones that I see hanging out [in public spaces], they're drinking, they're swearing, they're smoking. And what I don't like is there is a place and time to do that; go to the bar. Get your drink over there. But that's part of living here. And then it makes me look ignorant when company comes. ...when you're hanging out and you're drinking with Christmas lights and there is a barbecue out front and I bring somebody over or my kids bring someone over – we're not only looking poor – because you can *clearly* tell what the projects look like. You automatically know my income when you see the building. So I hate that there is no lying about it.

Because of its discernible neighborhood structure and different uses (or misuses) of public spaces in her public housing community, Stephanie manages her relationships and her children's relationships with outsiders to avoid the disclosure of information regarding their place of residence since, previously, such disclosure had produced a significant amount of embarrassment and was pivotal in marking the end of such relationships. One tactic she used was forbidding her daughter from inviting classmates to her house after school (although she allowed her daughter to play at others' homes) and not allowing her daughter to accept rides home from her school-mates' parents so not to reveal that they lived in "the projects."

Another woman, Gianna, who moved to the same public housing neighborhood as Stephanie, felt that the physical characteristics of the area influenced her family and friends' ability and willingness to visit her, and thus contributed to her increased isolation. Gianna's family and friends described her community as "the dungeons," in part, because it is a bleak looking community and quite isolated from transportation, stores, and other conveniences. She explained:

Well, it [relocation] changed my life because over there [at Maverick]... I had like close friendships with people. When I moved here, I lost contact with all the people from Maverick. ...For some people that I used to see over there, they think I moved so much further away. I don't know why. ...My nieces and them, they used to get off at the train and just walk down. But nobody likes getting off [here] and walking up. Even the ones that drive, they feel like I am living in the dungeons.

While Maverick also stood out in its stark appearance, Gianna's family and friends were willing to visit because it was near the train—and not isolated on top of a hill. Gianna's and Stephanie's experiences indicate that neighborhood spatial arrangements, facilities, and public spaces can affect not only relations within a community but also relations with others outside the neighborhood.

V Conclusions

In this study we explored the factors that contribute to low-income residents' social capital. Both quantitative and qualitative methodologies helped to uncover an important and understudied connection between social capital and neighborhood facilities, institutions, and public spaces. Multivariate analysis identified the significance of the availability of these neighborhood resources, and to a lesser extent, feelings of place attachment and safety, as they mattered more for generalized trust, shared norms and values among neighbors than all other individual, household, and neighborhood factors examined. The residents in the study

who had access to more neighborhood resources, and who had feelings of place attachment and safety, were more likely to trust their neighbors and perceive shared norms and values.

Data from the surveys and in-depth interviews with residents living in different types of housing and neighborhoods revealed that such neighborhood resources are important for generating and/or sustaining generalized trust, shared norms and values, and social relations, precisely because it was through such institutions and public spaces where residents got to know their neighbors and where they developed and maintained social ties in the community. In addition to this rather straightforward process, local facilitates and public spaces can also contribute to generalized trust and shared norms among neighbors in a more subtle way: by providing the stage for *public familiarity* to develop. Repeated encounters in such spaces may build public familiarity as people gain valuable information about each other (i.e. about habits and patterns of living) that enable them to identify (or dis-identify) with a group (Blokland, 2003; Lofland, 1973; Sztompka, 1999). In her study of urban dwellers, Lofland pointed out that when “conventional encounters occurred repeatedly in a single public locale, they become... one of the mechanisms by which total strangers are transformed into personally-known others” (1973, p. 168). Thus, neighborhoods devoid of shared public spaces and institutions may leave residents with few opportunities to observe each other in this way, and as a result, residents may be less likely to trust their neighbors or develop relationships with them. Childcare centers, parks, libraries, and recreation facilities offer places where residents can congregate both informally and formally and observe each other in public; and repeated encounters in such spaces can build public familiarity, a basic component to trust. Even routine everyday encounters in a neighborhood, therefore, should not be overlooked since they may be important parts of the social capital building process.

In addition to neighborhood facilities and public space, feelings of place attachment and safety were also significant predictors of social capital in multivariate analysis (though less powerful than neighborhood facilities and public space). Further, attachments to place and feelings of safety were closely interwoven in residents’ narratives of having trust and social relations with people in their old and new neighborhoods, suggesting there is an important relationship between feelings of attachment to place and safety and social capital; although the direction of the relationship is unclear.

Policy implications and future research

Transforming poverty concentrated housing developments into mixed-income or mixed-tenure communities has become popular practice in urban policy in the U.S. as well as

in Europe. Aside from the improvements in housing quality, one expectation of this approach is that lower-income people living in a more mixed environment will have greater access to social capital. Yet, numerous studies have found that such initiatives do not produce anticipated impacts on at least one dimension of social capital—social networks. The current research suggests that this approach may also not have the desired impact on another important dimension of social capital—generalized trust and shared norms and values. The empirical evidence based on multivariate analyses indicates that social capital depends not on neighborhood income mix, but on neighborhood facilities and public space, feeling attachment to place, and feeling safe. Thus, the connection between income mix and social capital made by some policymakers and academics may be overstated. Dekker and Bolt similarly found that socioeconomic status (i.e. higher income and greater education) was not associated with strong levels of social capital, suggesting that social mixing may be “a counter-intuitive strategy to strengthen social cohesion” (2005, p. 2468). The qualitative evidence from the current study also suggests that spatial arrangements of neighborhoods and public spaces are significant for residents’ encounters with others, and subsequently, for the development of public familiarity, trust, and social relations in neighborhoods.

Therefore, any initiative that seeks to enhance the social capital of lower-income people and increase the social cohesion of urban neighborhoods (whether it’s an urban redevelopment program or not) must take into account the important role of neighborhood structure, public spaces, and facilities. Building, preserving, and/or improving public spaces, neighborhood facilities, and institutions that serve a variety of residents, making communities safe, fostering a sense of community and attachment to place, and providing residents opportunities to observe and meet one another may be a more effective strategy for improving low-income people’s social capital and generating social cohesion than simply trying to create the ‘right’ social mix in their community. Improving neighborhood resources for lower income people may be particularly important not only because of the potential impact on this dimension of social capital, which research indicates is important for collective efficacy and social order, but also for the simple fact that good quality services and resources can compensate for lower individual resources. Further, good quality and accessible resources in the neighborhood may reduce the likelihood of low-income residents “draining” or being drained by other lower-income people. Lastly, the import functions of public space in promoting familiarity, shared norms, trustworthiness, and social contacts, (which can enhance collective efficacy and reduce social disorder in a neighborhood; see Sampson and Raudenbush 1999), should be kept in the forefront of any discussion of urban redevelopment.

Public space can play an important role in enhancing everyday life and the social cohesion of communities, and policies and initiatives that support or allow the privatization of public spaces in urban areas must also consider how these changes may negatively affect the social fabric of the area (Holland, Clark, Katz, & Peace, 2007).¹³

A key contribution of this study is that it highlights the importance of neighborhood resources for an important dimension of social capital. While prior research has suggested that neighborhood institutions are important for the stability of communities, few have considered the role local facilities and public spaces play in the social capital building process among residents. Thus, neighborhood institutions and public spaces should be considered in future research and policy discussions on social capital and neighborhoods. Both qualitative and quantitative methodologies should be used to further assess the extent to which and the ways in which different types of neighborhood resources and public spaces (and their different features) may be important for different dimensions of social capital. For example, future research should differentiate between different neighborhood resources to assess whether certain institutions or public spaces are more useful meeting places, better promote familiarity and trust, or provide greater access to resources or other social capital-building opportunities.

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¹³ See Smith (1996) and Lofland (1998) for further discussion on the privatization and regulation of public space. Smith argues that in many cities zero-tolerance policies have criminalized undesirable inhabitants (i.e. homeless people, beggars), and public spaces have been transformed, purified, and privatized in order to accommodate and attract new higher-income urban dwellers, investors, and tourist consumers.

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